

2018

East Devon District Council Householder Design Guide



HOUSEHOLDER DESIGN GUIDE

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1. Introduction – Purpose and Scope

This document has been prepared in order to offer guidance on extensions to domestic properties and the construction of buildings within their gardens. It is a non-prejudicial guide to encourage good design across the district and to provide advice on how to approach an extension or alteration.

The guidance does not outline what requires planning permission or give information on land ownership or Building Regulations. To enquire whether development requires planning permission or Building Regulations, please contact us or visit www.planningportal.gov.uk.

2. General Principles

Proportion

The size and design of extensions should normally be subservient to the existing dwelling to allow the original building to remain dominant.

Matching roof styles and pitches should be used in new extensions and new extensions should normally not be larger, higher or forward of the existing dwelling unless they echo an existing characteristic in the local area.

It is usually preferable for an extension to have a lower roofline and be set back behind the front building line. In most cases a flat-roofed extension to the front or side, or where clearly visible from the street, will not be supported (unless the original house has a flat roof).

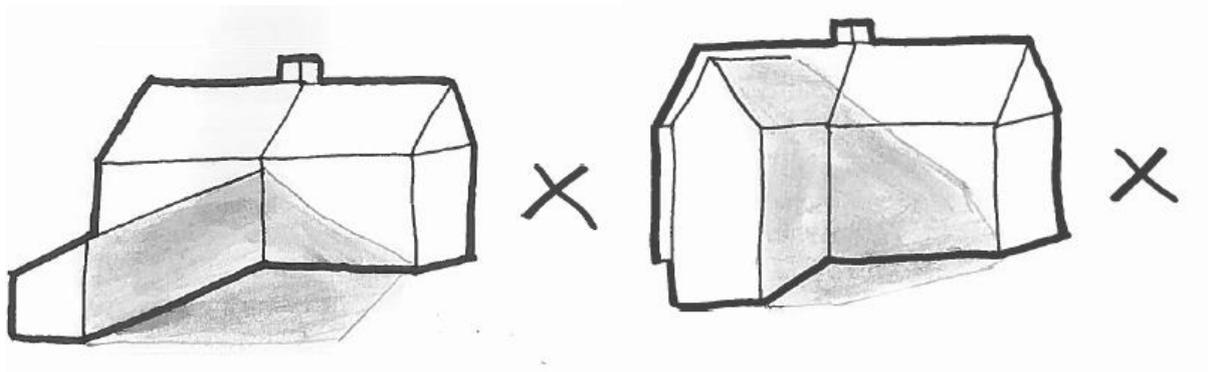


Overshadowing

Extensions should not create an unreasonable amount of overshadowing of neighbouring properties.

Account should be taken of the orientation and position of neighbouring properties, and in particular any impact that the extension will have on neighbouring windows.

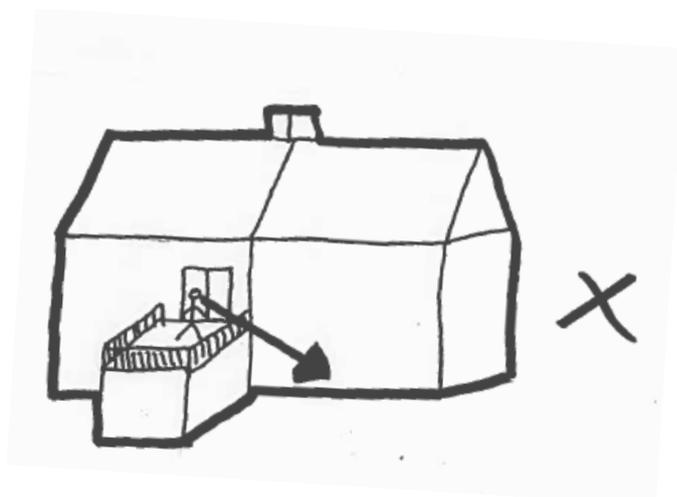
Where an extension would result in a significant reduction in light, or cause excessive overshadowing, planning permission may not be granted. In particular, care should be given when proposing extensions on the boundary with neighbouring properties that are either single-storey with a long projection, or are two-storeys in height.



Privacy

Windows, balconies and raised decking can result in the loss of privacy to neighbouring properties from overlooking of their private amenity areas, or from direct close views into windows.

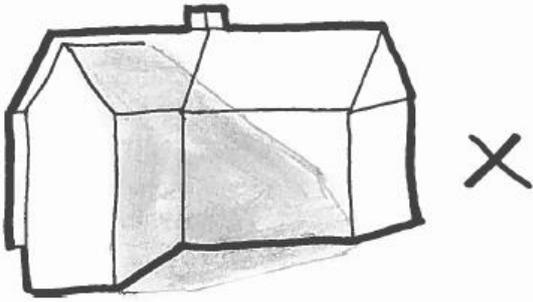
To ensure adequate privacy levels are retained, there may be a requirement for privacy screens to the end of raised decks or balconies and careful consideration should be given to window positions to ensure no ground or first floor windows on the boundary with neighbouring properties allow harmful overlooking and to ensure that first floor windows retain adequate privacy distances.



Overbearing

An extension close to a neighbouring properties window, or a large extension on the boundary can cause a loss of amenity by appearing overbearing and creating a sense of enclosure and dominance.

Careful consideration will therefore need to be given to the relationship to existing neighbouring windows and to the size and design of an extension that may change the outlook from a neighbouring property.



Architectural Detailing

Architectural details such as eaves, barge boards, brick coursing, window positions and sizes on an existing property are part of its character and should be replicated in proposed extensions. Window arrangements, their size, materials and opening style should also reflect the existing dwelling.



Materials

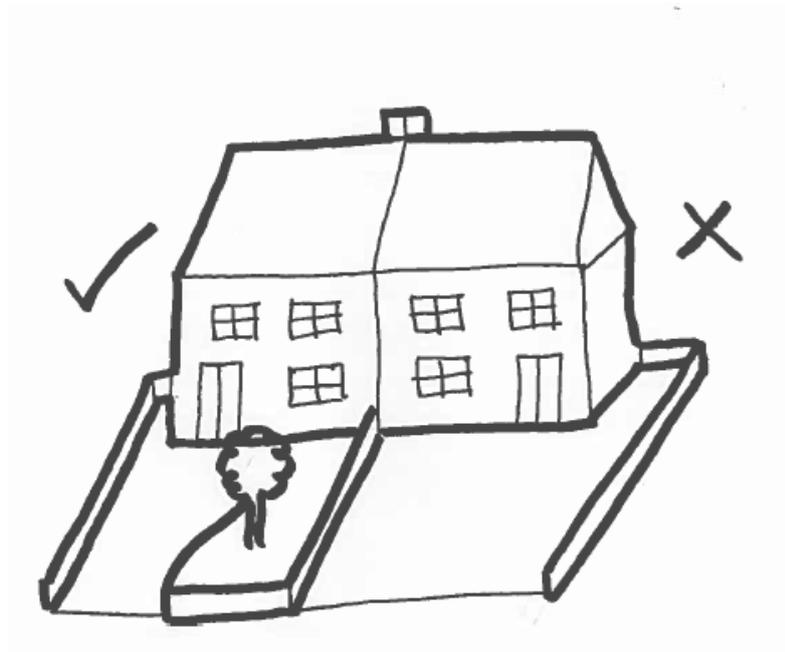
Extensions should normally be constructed using matching materials to the main dwelling. Matching bricks or render should be used along with similar coursing and pointing detailing and colours. Roof tiles or materials should match the existing in terms of materials, texture, colour and size.

Where appropriate, extensions may be constructed of an alternative material if this is consistent with other development in the area and where the extension would still be clearly subordinate to the main dwelling.

Garden Space

Adequate private amenity/garden space should be maintained for the dwelling. Proposals should avoid building over the whole of the garden and where new parking is proposed to the

front of a dwelling, porous materials shall be used or provision made for the drainage of surface water within the site to ensure adequate drainage with some landscaping maintained and boundary walling to soften the impact of the works. Surface water should not drain to the county highway.



Trees

Important trees and hedges should be retained and will need protecting during construction. Trees within a Conservation Area and trees the subject of Tree Preservation Orders cannot be felled or pruned without consent. As a general guide, you should avoid development within 5m of the canopy spread of a tree.

Flood Risk

Extensions proposed within an area at risk of flooding will need to be designed to cope with possible flooding events through the careful use of materials, provision of raised electrical sockets and potentially raised floor levels. Further guidance is available from the Environment Agency.

3. Extension Types

Rear extensions and conservatories

Conservatories

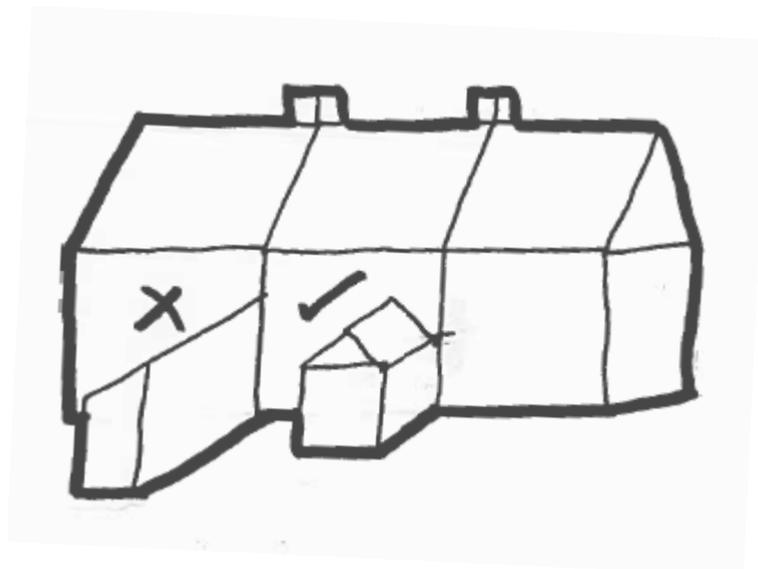
Conservatories are usually an acceptable feature on the rear elevation of a dwelling and in some instances on the side elevation. Conservatories are not usually acceptable on the front elevation, barn conversions or at first floor level.

Where conservatories are close to, or on, the boundary with a neighbouring dwelling, obscure glazing or brick walls should be used to prevent overlooking.

Single Storey Rear Extensions

A wide range of single storey rear extensions can be built without planning permission and are a generally acceptable feature on domestic properties.

Consideration should however be given to the impact from the depth of extension proposed as the further it extends along a neighbouring boundary, the greater its potential impact. In addition, mono-pitched roofs should be avoided where possible as these can result in a taller development on the boundary.



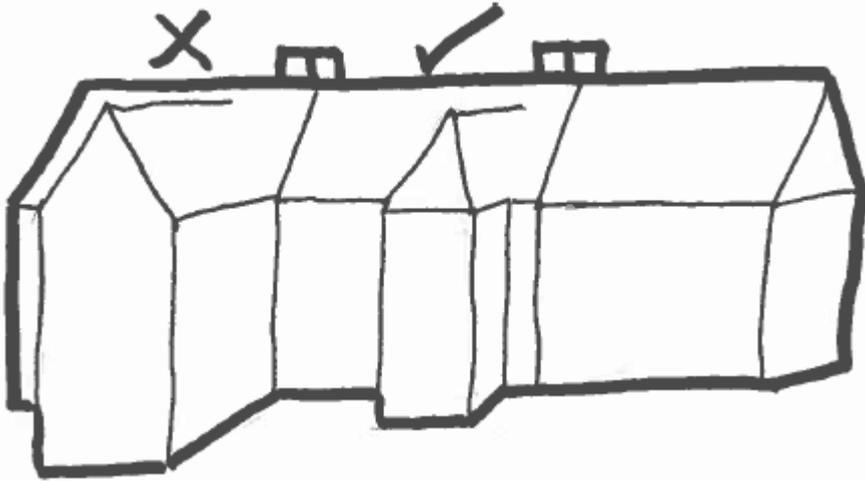
Two Storey Rear Extensions

Two Storey rear extensions should not dominate the host property and careful consideration needs to be given to the depth of projection so that the extension does not create an unacceptable loss of light, overshadowing or oppressive impact upon an adjoining property.

In general, two-storey rear extensions should not exceed 3m if close to/on a shared boundary or 4m in other cases.

The extension should have a similar roof design to the main dwelling.

Setting the extension away from the site boundary/neighbouring property will reduce any potential impact from loss of light and appear less overbearing.

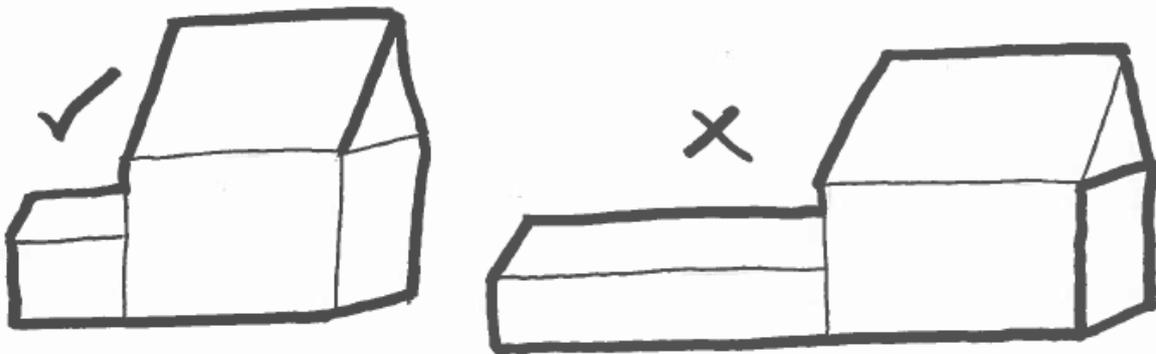


Side extensions

Single Storey Side Extensions

Single storey side extensions are generally acceptable and not all side extensions require planning permission.

However, side extensions of excessive width will not be supported and neither will those on corner plots that extend excessively forward of an existing building line. Generally, side extensions should be of a lesser width than the main dwelling.



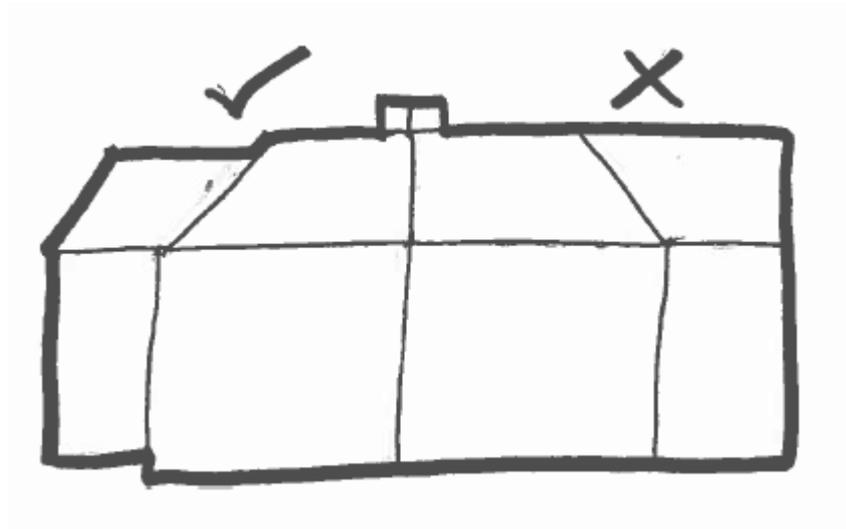
Two-Storey Side Extensions

Two-storey side extensions should generally be set back from the front of the main property with the roof set down and back from the main dwelling. This is particularly important to ensure that pairs of semi-detached dwellings are not unbalanced.

Where the main house has a hipped roof, the extension should have a hipped roof and likewise with a gable. On a gabled property it may be acceptable (depending upon the character of the area) to have a flush extension providing it does not lead to a serious terracing effect.

As with single storey side extensions, the extension should be of a lesser width than the main dwelling.

The extension should match the main dwelling in terms of its materials, proportions and window designs.

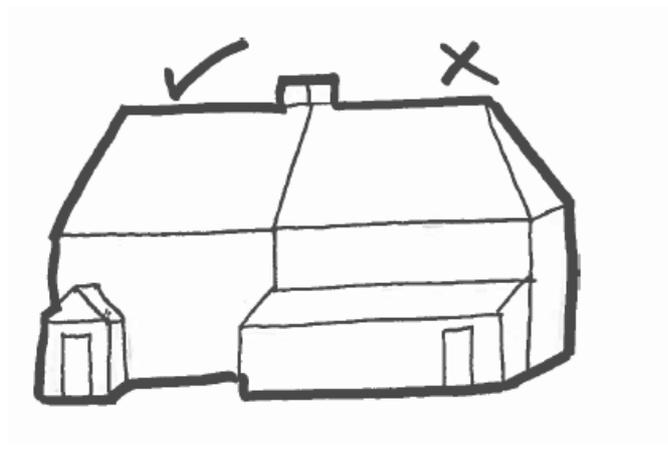


Front Extensions and Porches

Front extensions can often be the most incongruous and can significantly change the character of the dwelling. Bay windows should generally be retained and on most terraced and semi-detached properties, single storey and two-storey extensions at full width will be refused.

Generally on terraced and semi-detached dwellings front extensions will only be acceptable in the form of porches that should be designed to follow and retain the character of the dwelling. The introduction of features such as classical columns will not be accepted unless they are a feature of the existing house.

Small porches can generally be constructed without the need for planning permission but for larger structures, care will be needed to ensure that it does not harm the amenity of neighbouring properties, particularly where a porch is proposed to a terraced property.



Loft conversions and Roof alterations

Loft conversions and alterations to a roof to create rooms in a roof can be a simple way of creating more living space or additional bedrooms.

Care will be needed however to ensure that any associated windows do not overlook neighbouring properties, this can be a problem particularly where dormer windows are proposed to adjoining bungalows. The use of roof lights in such circumstances can be cheaper to install and reduce or remove possible overlooking problems.

Dormers should only be built on a front elevation if this is a characteristic of the existing dwelling or is characteristic of the immediate area. Where dormers are proposed to a front elevation, they should be of a modest size relative to the roof and reflect any architectural detailing.

Pitched roof dormers are preferred to flat roof dormers that are generally only acceptable where already part of the character of the property of immediate area, or located on a rear elevation not visible from the public domain.

The inclusion of balconies within dormer windows should be avoided where this can add to overlooking of neighbouring properties.

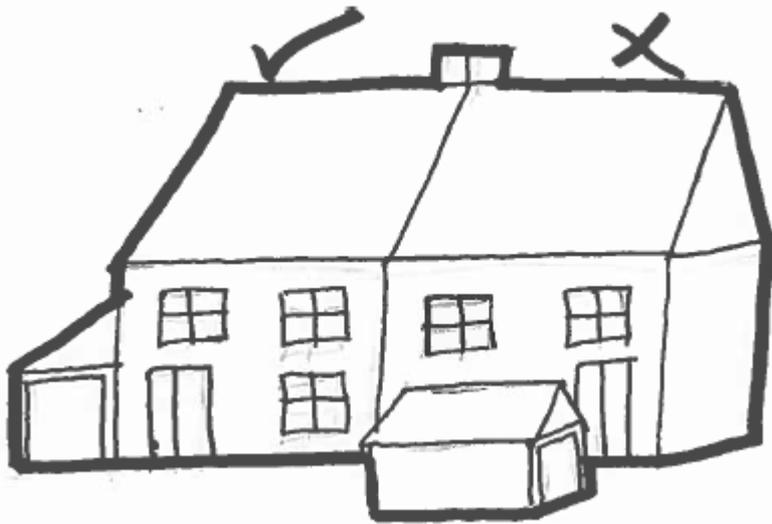
The conversion of a hipped-end roof to a gable-end will usually be unacceptable as it can make a house look odd and unbalanced, particularly if it is part of a semi-detached pair.



Garages and detached outbuildings

Garages

Garages should generally be restricted to rear and side gardens and should not be of an excessive size and height in relation to the existing dwelling and plot. Garages in front gardens will not generally be supported unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no harm to the street scene or it is a currently characteristic of the area.



Detached outbuildings

As with garages, outbuilding should be restricted to side and rear gardens and not be of an excessive size and height in relation to the existing dwelling and plot.

The Council is supportive of the provision of accommodation for a dependent relative (often referred to as a granny annexe). This can mean adding an extension to the family house or building a separate outbuilding to provide additional living space.

The outbuilding should be reliant upon the main house and cannot be sold or let separately from the main house. There is therefore usually reliance upon the main house for meals, washing facilities and other activities and will usually be limited to a single additional bedroom.

Planning permission is unlikely to be granted for large detached annexes with little or no relation to the main house as often there is limited amenity space, car parking and overlooking between windows.

Bungalows to houses

It is unusual for the Council to support the alteration of a bungalow to a two-storey house, unless the immediate area is characterised by a mix of bungalows and houses, as this can have a serious impact upon the street scene and neighbour amenity.

Where a bungalow is semi-detached or terraced, an upward extension is unlikely to be supported.



Vehicle Parking

You should be mindful of the need to retain adequate off-street car parking to serve the dwelling. As a guide we require at least 1 parking space for one-bedroom homes and 2 parking spaces for two-bedrooms or more.

If you are on a classified road, in a Conservation Area or a Listed Building, you are likely to require planning permission to create a new access. In addition, you will need to contact Devon County Council regarding the carrying out of the works off a classified road and you may be required to ensure that a car can enter and leave the site in a forward gear, as such suitable turning space for a vehicle within the site may be required.

The creation of a new parking area to a property often involves the removal of a front garden and its boundary walls or hedge. You are advised to use permeable paving to ensure adequate drainage and to retain some landscaping to the front garden as well as some front boundary planting or walling to ensure a suitable appearance and to deter crime.

4. Other Issues

Submission requirements

Detail of how to submit your planning application and what details are needed to accompany the application are available on the Council's website. The Council has also produced a Validation Document to help to explain the plans and details required with an application as there are specific forms and scaled plans and drawings required, along with a fee.

Common errors that cause delays to the processing of an application include the following:

- Lack of a Scale Bar on the plans;
- Missing elevations;
- Incomplete application form or fee;
- Use of a non-metric or un-recognised scale;

- Site Location Plans not being from a recognised supplier/without a copyright and/or not up to date;
- Lack of tree survey where development is proposed close to a tree.

Permitted Development Rights

There are a number of extensions and alterations that you can carry out to your property without requiring planning permission. Further details on this are available at www.planningportal.gov.uk. Alternatively you can write to the Council and ask whether planning permission is required although there is a small fee for this.

Consulting neighbours

You are advised to speak to your neighbours before carrying out a development and before submitting a planning application. Consulting your neighbours at an early stage can save time and expense by avoiding the need to have plans amended.

Boundaries and Party Wall Act

No part of an extension (including rainwater goods, foundations or canopies) should extend beyond the site boundary without the consent of the adjoining landowner.

High front boundary walls will not be supported unless this is characteristic of an area and you are encouraged to retain existing boundary hedges and walling where possible.

Applicants should be aware that the planning process does not overcome or address issues of land ownership. It does not address issues raised under the Party Wall Act where your neighbours consent may be required prior to carrying out work close to, or on the boundary of, your property.

Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

Proposals for development within a Conservation Area will need to ensure that it preserve or enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The Council will pay special regard to ensuring that the existing character and appearance of the area is at least preserved, if not enhanced.

All extensions to listed buildings, and all works proposing internal alterations to a listed building require 'Listed Building Consent'. A proposal to extend a listed building will therefore require both planning permission and listed building consent in the form of separate applications and decisions by the Council.

Sustainable Design and Construction

Current Building Regulations require new extensions to be built to a high standard and to be well insulated. However, new extensions offer the opportunity for residents to introduce new renewable technologies such as solar panels and water recycling and such measures are encouraged. Solar panels should be fitted flush to the roof (if not free-standing) and should not project about the ridge.

Underground Services

You are advised to consult all relevant bodies (such as South West Water and gas and electricity providers) when carrying out works.

Building Regulations

Regardless of whether you require planning permission, you may require separate Building Regulations approval for the works. You are advised to contact East Devon District Building Control early in the process to establish likely requirements, costs and timescales.