

Householder Extensions and Alterations

Supplementary Planning Document

Draft February 2020





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Introduction

Purpose of the SPD

This Householder Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is part of the Borough's Development Plan and aims to provide clear guidance in relation to extensions and alterations to residential properties in order to improve the quality of householder development. The Council supports development that allows the residents of the Borough the opportunity to make the most of their property in a positive way, not just for them but for their neighbours and the surrounding area.

The visual impact extensions can have on the quality of an area as well as individual properties, and therefore the character and appearance of the Borough as a whole is extremely important. Also, the impact that extensions can have on the ability of neighbouring residents to enjoy their own properties is significant.



National and Local Policy Background

This SPD is guidance to expand on National Planning Policy and policies in the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Local Plan. This SPD updates and replaces the former Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 2: Householder Extension Guide, which was adopted in 2004.

This SPD also provides further detail in relation to National and Local Plan Policy requirements, which can be viewed [online](#).

This SPD is linked to the following Local Plan Policies:

- SD3 - Housing Strategy
- SD5 - Natural, Built and Historic Environment
- SD8 - Sustainable Design Principles

In addition, the National Design Guide establishes the principles of good design and sets out the components which should be used for all developments. These components are the layout, the form and scale, the appearance, landscape, materials and detailing.

For further information, please view the National Design Guide [online](#).

This document does explore several constraints which must be checked, nevertheless it is your responsibility to check all constraints, such as flood risk, have been considered when planning your proposal.



Section 1: Before Starting Work



1.1 Do I need Planning Permission?

If you would like to extend or make alterations to your home, you should first enquire if you need planning permission. You may be required to apply for planning permission to carry out a wide range of work, including raised decking, fencing, driveways, outbuildings, patio areas, porches, installation of flues, antennas and conservatories as well as extensions. Also, under restrictions made by planning conditions and Article 4 Directions, planning permission may be required.

However, your proposal may be 'permitted development' and will not require planning permission. It is important you seek advice from the Council's Planning Development Services team before beginning any work. You can visit the Stockton Borough Council's [website](#) for more information.

For further guidance, you can also use the Government's Interactive House on the Planning Portal [website](#) and the Government's Technical Guidance document. Please also refer to the Householder Extensions and Alterations Checklist on page 29 of this document, as there may be specific restrictions to your property.

1.2 Talking to your Neighbours

Before carrying out any works to your property, it is also a good idea to discuss your proposals with any neighbours that may be affected.

When a planning application or a prior approval application is submitted, the Council will consult all land adjoining neighbours and occupiers which may be affected by your development proposal. Please also refer to Section 1.5 - Other Consents to check what else may be required other than planning permission.

1.3 Submitting a Planning Enquiry

If you are proposing to carry out any extensions or alterations to your property, it is recommended that you submit a planning enquiry.

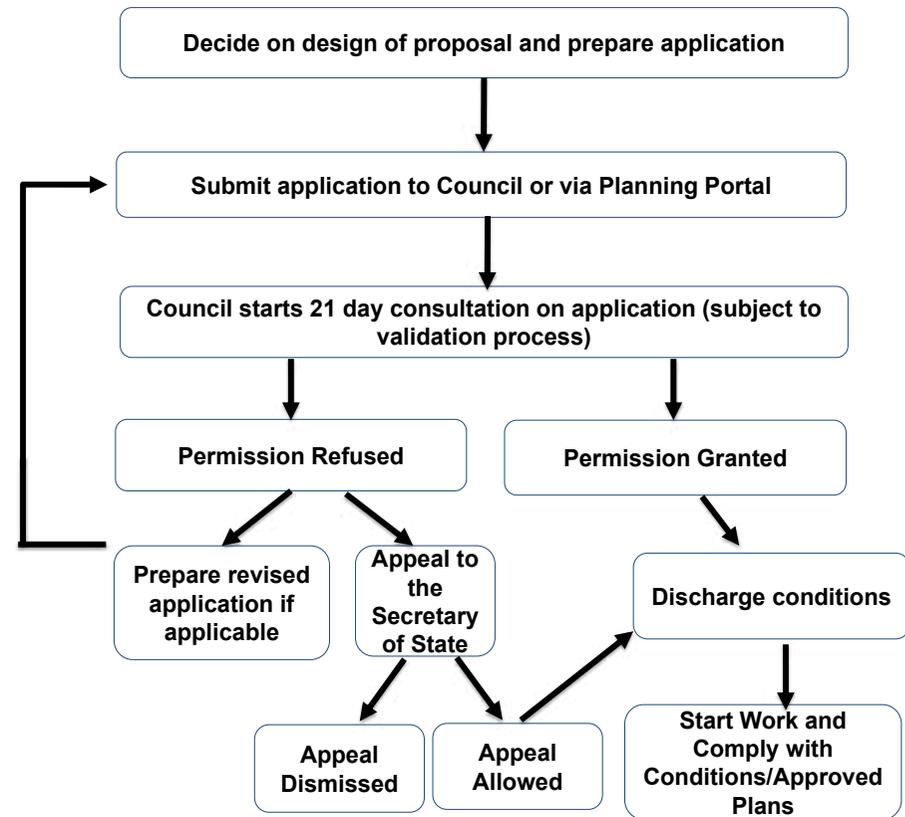
The enquiry service is simply split in to two steps. Firstly, it can provide feedback on whether your proposal requires planning permission. Secondly, the enquiry service can provide an opinion if your proposal is likely to be considered favourably as well as any other relevant information, such as design comments and the correct application form and fees. To submit a planning enquiry, use the online enquiry form on the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council [website](#).

1.4 Submitting an Application

Detailed information on what is required to be submitted with your planning application can be found in the Validation Checklist on the Council's website. Please also refer to the Householder Extensions and Alterations Checklist on page 29 of this document.

You may also want to get technical advice from an architect or surveyor, who will draw up plans for you if required. Once you have gathered all of the information you need, further details on how to submit a planning application can be viewed on the Stockton on Tees Borough Council Website.

The flowchart opposite provides the basic steps in the process of a planning application.



1.5 Other Consents

Consents other than planning permission may be required for your extension or alterations and work should not be started until all necessary consents have been obtained. Other consents which may be required are:

Building Regulations

Building Regulations consent is separate to planning permission and may be required whether or not planning permission is needed. Most building work will need Building Regulation Consent, which relates to the building and safety aspects of any alteration.

This could include minor works, such as replacing windows and doors as well as the removal of load bearing walls. You should check with the Council's Building Control department to find out if consent is required before starting work.

Party Wall Act

The Party Wall Act provides a framework for preventing and resolving disputes in relation to party walls, boundary walls and excavations near neighbouring buildings.

A building owner proposing to start work covered by the Act must give adjoining owners notice of their intentions in the way set down in the Act. Adjoining owners can agree or disagree with what is proposed.

Dropped Kerb/Crossing

For any enquiries relating to a dropped kerb/crossing outside of your home, please contact the Council's Care for your Area team on 01642 391959 or careforyourarea@stockton.gov.uk

This list is not exhaustive and you may need other permissions, such as from utility companies, restrictive covenants and the onus is on you to ensure all relevant permissions are in place.



Key Links and Contacts

- [Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Website](#)
- [Planning Portal Website](#)
- [Governments Technical Guidance](#)
- [Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Building Control Team](#)

1.6 Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

Conservation Areas are areas that the Council has designated because they have special architectural or historic interest. Additional rules apply to the extension, alteration or demolition of some buildings and structures in these areas, which could also include an Article 4 Direction. Therefore, planning permission may be required for most works, such as, for the installation of; dormer windows in a roof, satellite dishes and erection of walls/fences.

To check if your property is within a Conservation Area, you can view the Council's Interactive [Local Plan Policies Map](#).



Any proposed development in a Conservation Area should respect the character of both the property and the area and any key architectural features retained. The materials used in any development will be especially important and traditional materials and styles, such as timber windows and doors, are generally more appropriate than modern ones.

A Listed Building is a building, object or structure that is of national importance in terms of architectural or historic interest. Where a building is listed, it may be necessary to apply for Listed Building Consent to carry out any works. You can view the Council's Validation Checklist for further guidance on what is required to be submitted with Listed Building Consent applications. Applications relating to heritage assets may need to submit a heritage statement to explain how these issues have been addressed in the submission.

If you intend to carry out any works to a Listed Building or a property within a Conservation Area, it is advised that you submit a planning enquiry to determine what may be appropriate prior to applying for planning permission or Listed Building Consent.

Tree Preservation Orders and Trees within Conservation Areas

Planning permission or relevant written consent may be required if you would like to carry out any works to a tree, which is covered by a Tree Preservation Order or located within a Conservation Area. In order to check if a tree is covered by a Tree Preservation Order or in a Conservation Area, contact the Council's Planning Development Services team.

Anyone who carries out works to a Listed Building, a tree covered by a Tree Preservation Order or a tree located within a Conservation Area without the correct consents may be guilty of committing an offence and could be fined.





Section 2: Design Principles

Proposals should be designed to complement and enhance the character of the street and the wider area as well as the property. Any extensions should be located and designed to minimise the impact upon neighbouring properties. The following are the general design principles for all developments.

2.1 General Design Principles

Scale and Proportion

The scale and proportion of any works undertaken should be in keeping with the property and surrounding area. As a general rule, extensions should be subservient to and not over-dominate the house or neighbouring properties. Your house type will also have an impact on the proposed works which will be considered acceptable. Therefore it is important to consider the character and context of your house and the surrounding area.

Garden Area and Landscaping

It is important to think about the size of your development and the garden area/amenity space within your boundaries, so your land does not become over developed.

In most cases, it is necessary to leave a useable amount of private garden area. The area of undeveloped garden space should reflect the surroundings. For example, if the property is located within an area where large gardens are significant to the character of the area or where reduced garden space is common, such as in terraced properties with rear yards then it should be taken into consideration.

The existing landscaping and boundary treatments, which preserves the character of an area, such as hedges, plants and trees, should also be retained in the interests of visual amenities and biodiversity of the area.

Accessibility and Safety

You should consider how any proposed works will affect accessibility around the property for all, including disabled people. It is important to take into account how any proposal will affect common tasks such as storing and bringing in and out household waste or cutting front and rear lawns. You may also be required to consider any change to car parking arrangements and access to your property. In relation to safety, please view the Homes Design Guide on the Secured by Design website.



Materials and Architectural Features

The Council will normally insist that the materials used for any extension or detached building match or complement the property.

New bricks, stones and roofing tiles should match or complement in terms of sizes, textures and colour. Key architectural features from the main property, such as window and door sizes and styles, string courses, lintels and eaves detailing, should also normally be replicated in new extensions. This ensures that the extension is integrated well with the property.

Where there is difficulty matching materials, appropriate alternatives should be sourced that still maintain the character of the street and complement the property.



Diagram 1: Style and proportion

2.2 Window Separation Distances

It is extremely important to have an adequate gap between neighbouring properties to prevent a significant impact and minimise any loss of privacy from developments. The Council will seek a minimum of 21 metres separation distance to be maintained between the main habitable room windows of facing residential properties and the extension. Where a side extension would face the rear of a neighbouring property (or a rear extension would face the side of the neighbouring property), the Council will seek a minimum of 11 metres between the windows of the main habitable rooms. The distances are demonstrated in the diagram opposite.

These distances will increase if there is a variation in ground levels between the properties or a difference in the number of stories (where a property of over 2 stories is involved). As a minimum, the separation distance should be increased by 3 metres for every 1 metre rise in ground level. Please refer to diagrams overleaf.

Innovative design solutions and creativity in external and internal layouts to reduce the impact of a development could be applied to achieve satisfactory levels of privacy and may in some instances allow a reduction in the separation distance. In addition, the standard may be applied more flexibly if individual circumstances allow, as each application is considered on its own merits.

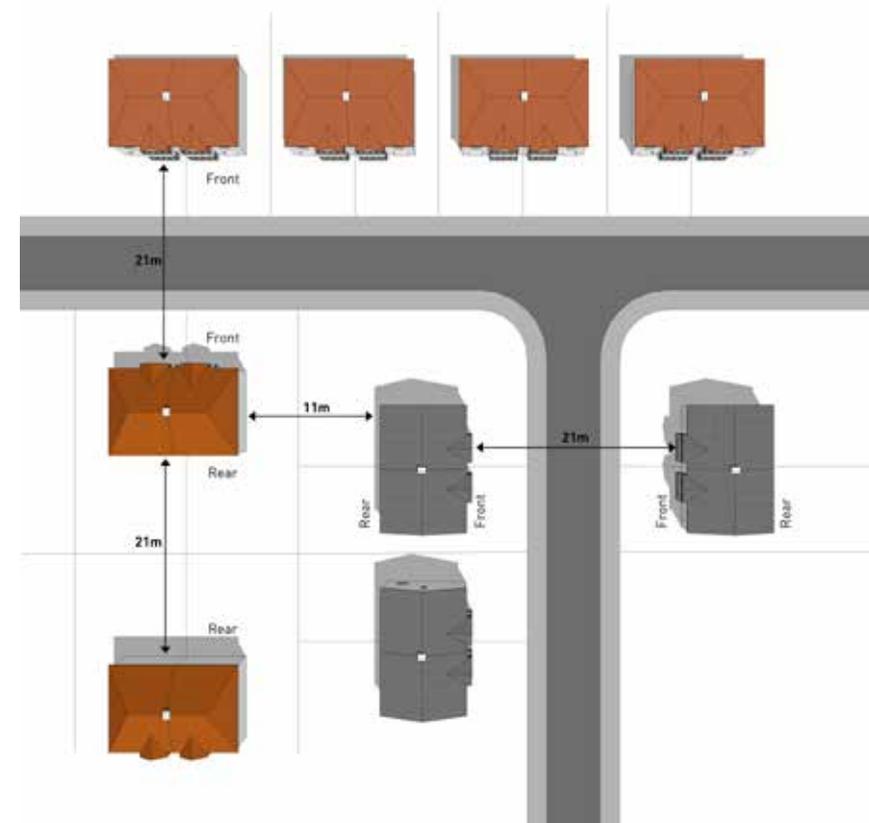


Diagram 2: Separation distances

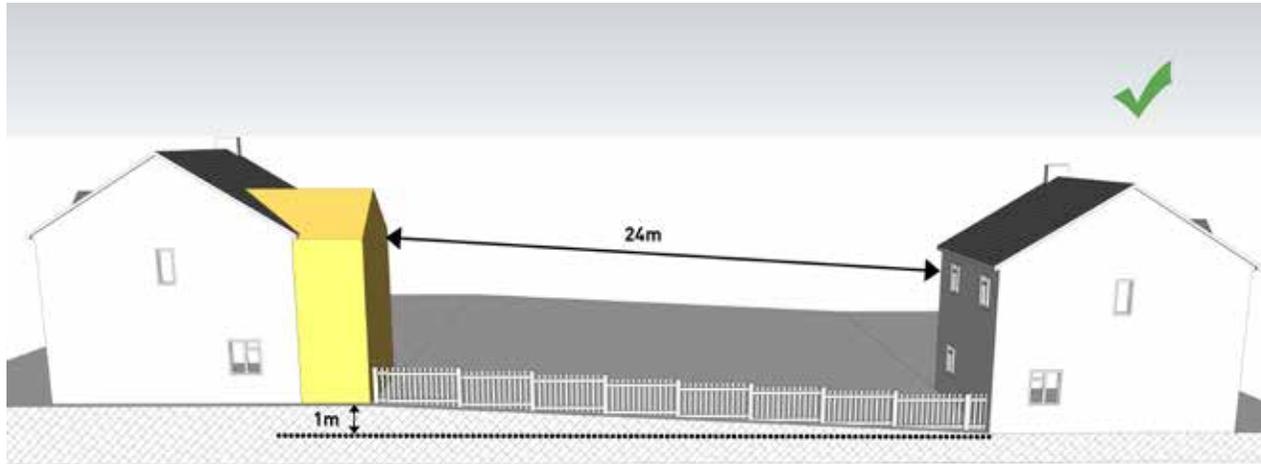
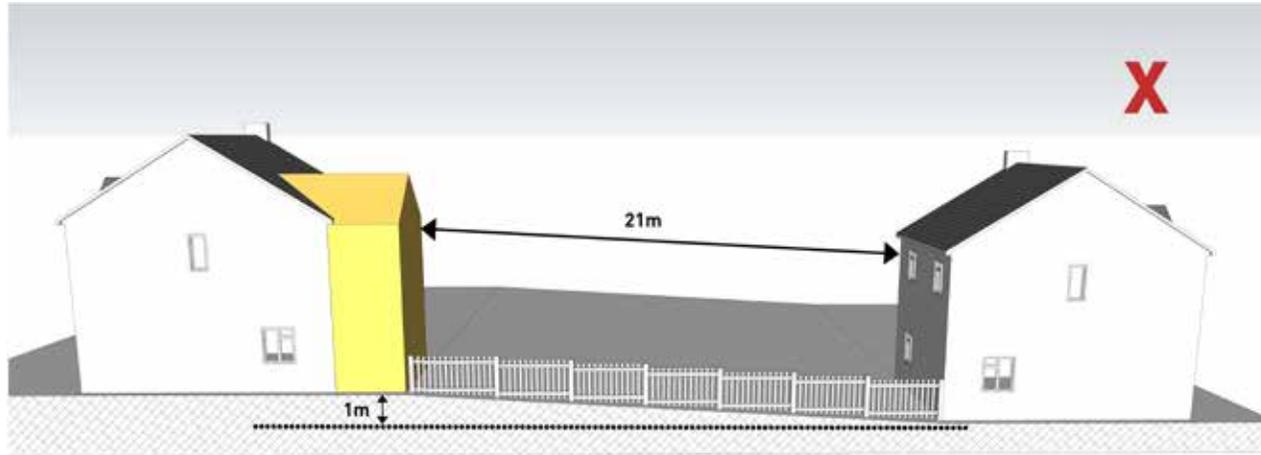


Diagram 3: Level changes and separation distances

2.3 Privacy and Overshadowing

Extensions should not lead to the overshadowing of neighbouring main habitable room windows or private garden areas to an unreasonable degree. For a single storey rear extension, 3 metres from the original rear elevation should generally be appropriate, however this is dependent on various factors, including the scale, orientation and form of the extension as well as the house type and impact of neighbouring properties.

45 Degree Standard

The 45 degree standard applies to two-storey extensions with a greater than 3 metre projection from the rear elevation of a property. This tool is used in order to assess the potential impact of a proposal and maintain privacy and amenity for neighbouring properties. To calculate, a line is drawn from the centre of your neighbour's nearest ground floor main habitable room window which is perpendicular to the proposed extension. If the line crosses the site of the proposed extension, in some instances, the Council may expect the extension to be reduced in size.

60 Degree Standard

The 60 degree standard follows the same principle as the 45 degree standard but relates to single storey extensions and involves a widening of the angle of the line to 60 degrees. This allows for single storey extensions generally having less bulk and causing less overshadowing than two-storey extensions.

Extensions will not be accepted where they lead to a notable loss of privacy for neighbouring residents. An impact on privacy can often be avoided or minimised through siting windows away from neighbouring properties and ensuring a sufficient separation distance is maintained.

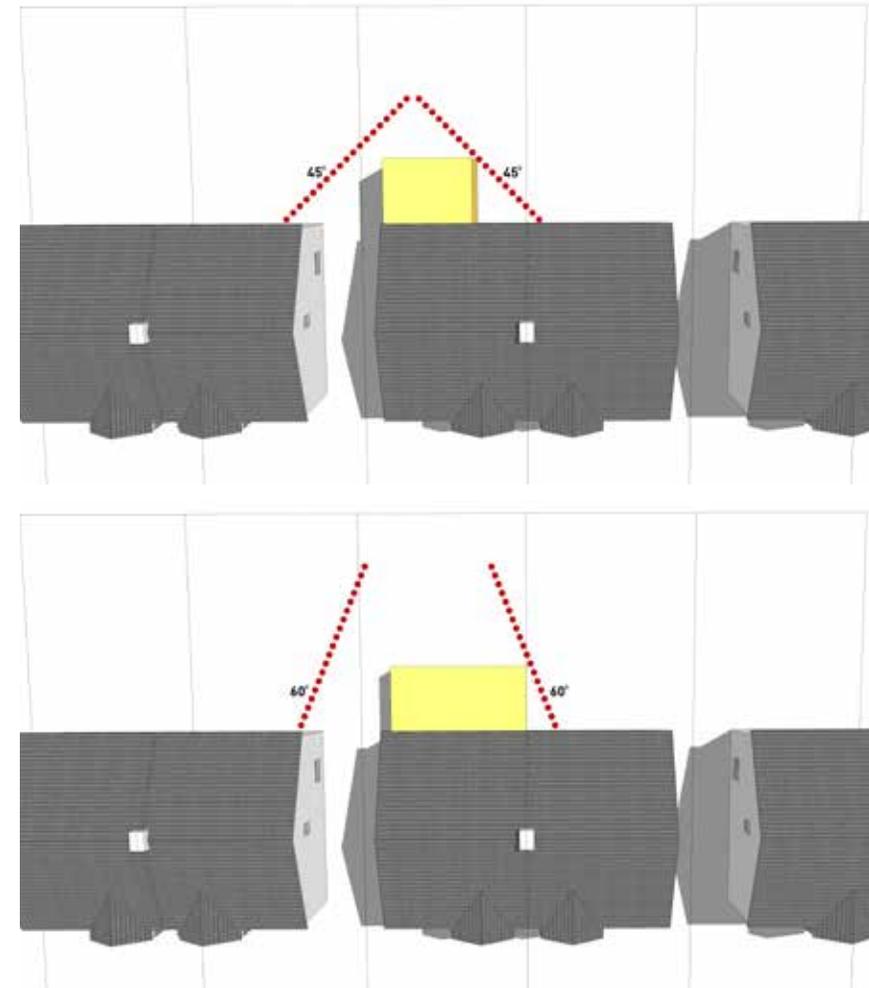
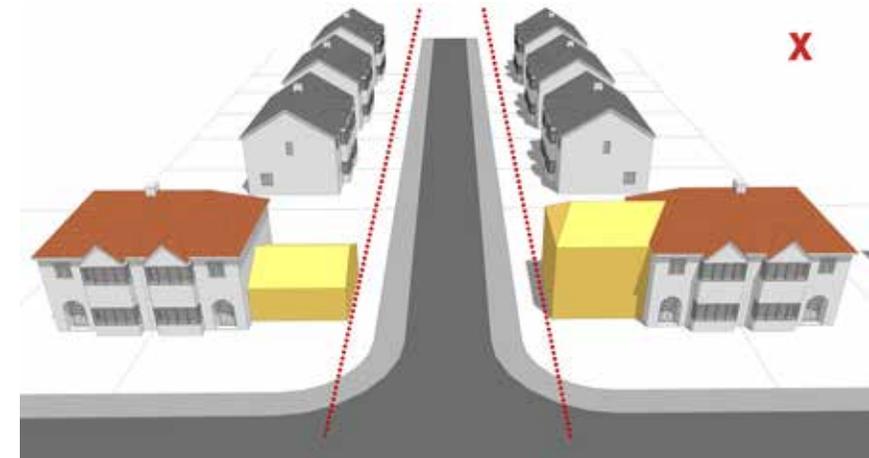


Diagram 4: 45 and 60 degree standards

2.4 Corner Plots

Extensions on corner properties should follow the front building lines of properties on both streets and should allow sufficient visibility for pedestrians and motorists. This may prevent, or restrict the size of, an extension to the side of a property in this situation.

Properties on corner plots often have frontages onto two roads and must respect the character and appearance of both in terms of scale and design. Therefore, a continuation of the main dwelling should incorporate features into the corner extension. An extension to the side of a corner property is unlikely to be appropriate where there is an open character to the area or spacious corner plots are a feature of surrounding streets.



Extensions fail to conform to building line and are of inappropriate scale relative to main dwelling

2.5 Car Parking

Where an extension will provide an extra bedroom at a property or the proposal will involve the loss of a car parking space, such as through a garage conversion or from being built on an existing driveway, it will be expected that:

- Any loss of car parking, as a result of the proposed works, is re-provided within the property boundary and / or
- Any additional requirement, as a result of an increase in the number of bedrooms, is provided within the property boundary.

The Council's Local Design Guide SPD provides advice on the required number of car parking spaces for the size of your property, and the minimum size of a car parking space / garage for it to be considered acceptable.

If you need to re-provide or create additional car parking, it is important to consider the accessibility of your property in terms of the position of dropped kerbs and gates, as well as the layout of the space which is available and the balance between the amount of soft and hard landscaping within your boundary. Please refer to the Garden and Boundary Treatments section of this SPD for further details.



Extensions are of appropriate scale relative to main dwelling and conform to existing building lines

Diagram 5: Corner Plots



Section 3: Detail Design



3.1 Front Extensions

Porches are popular extensions to the front of properties and modest porches are rarely harmful to the character of an area. However, extensions to the front of properties will generally be visible in the street scene and must be designed to complement the area, as well as the original property.

In areas where there is a particularly uniform appearance or a dominant front line to the properties, extensions to the front of a dwelling, other than modest porches, are unlikely to be appropriate. Front extensions should ensure that sufficient car parking is still retained in line with the standards in the Local Design Guide SPD.

Front extensions are more likely to be appropriate if a dwelling is of an individual design or there is a staggered or indistinct building line. However, they should still match the design features of the original property and avoid being obtrusive.



Diagram 6: Scale and design of porch is out of character within the streetscape

3.2 Side Extensions

An extension to the side of a property will normally be very visible from the street and should be of a high quality design and reflect the character of the area. They should normally have a roof that matches or complements the original property. Flat roofs should be avoided, unless they are already a feature of the main dwelling.

Unless properties are widely spaced, side extensions have the potential to create a 'terracing' effect between closely set detached properties or pairs of semi-detached properties. Normally a gap of at least 1 metre is required between the outside wall of the extension and the boundary. The extension should also be set back from the front of the house by a minimum of 1 metre, at least at first floor level.

Two storey and first floor side extensions may be required to have a roof shape that matches the main property. Due to the potential for terracing, two storey and first floor extensions may also be required to have a ridge height that is lower than that of the main property.

There may be a number of other options which can be used to address terracing and these should be explored with the Council's Development Services team.



Diagram 7: Avoiding a 'terracing' effect



Diagram 8: Pitched Roof vs Flat Roof

3.3 Rear Extensions

Rear extensions, which also includes conservatories, are generally not as visible as front and side extensions, however the design of an extension at the back of a property is still very important. A key objective for the design of a rear extension is to avoid an unacceptable overbearing or oppressive impact upon neighbours or significant overshadowing of a neighbouring property. This can often be achieved by setting the extension in from the nearest common boundary and through reducing the bulk of the extension by, for example, providing a hipped roof.

Windows in the side of the extension nearest to the boundary of a neighbouring property should generally be avoided. Obscurely glazed windows with restricted opening may sometimes be acceptable but it should be noted that, if your neighbour subsequently wishes to develop near their boundary, the outlook that you may have created by placing a window on a common boundary will not be protected.

Terraced houses are often more difficult to extend as they are restricted for space on three sides. Where possible, extensions to terraced properties should be in a form similar to that in Diagram 9. By sharing a pitched roof with the neighbouring property, the perceived size may be reduced and the impact on light and amenity will be lessened.



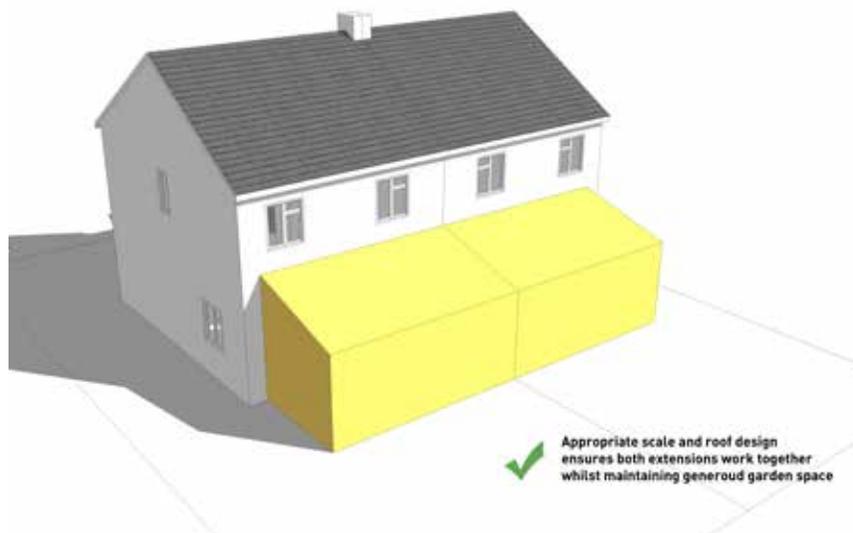
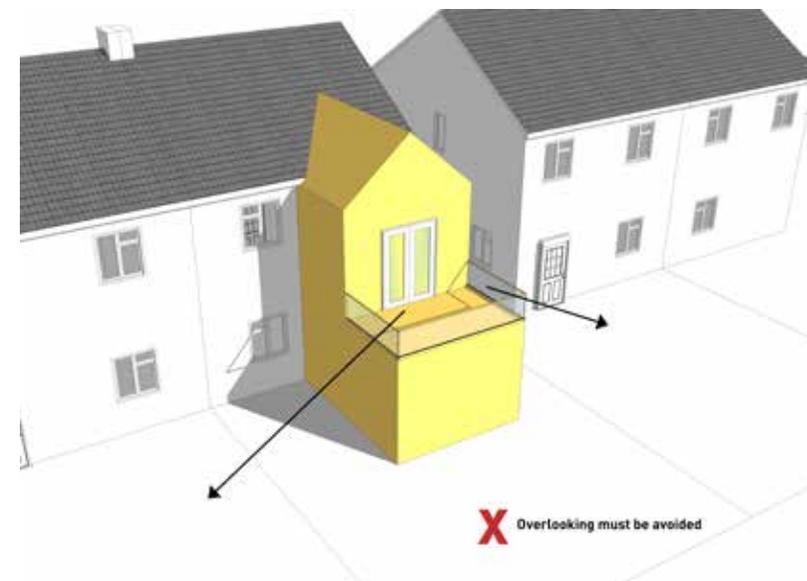
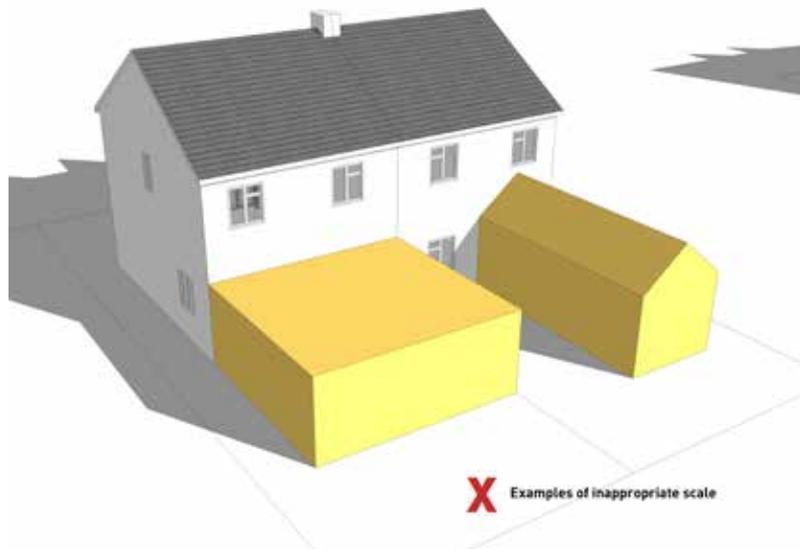


Diagram 9: Designing rear extensions

3.4 Dormer Windows and Loft Conversions

Loft conversions can be a good way of increasing space within your property, especially if you have limited area for other extensions. Alterations to the roof of a building are particularly visible and it is important that the design of any alterations is considered carefully and in proportion with your property.

It is advised to avoid large, flat-roofed dormers and dormers which are the full width of the roof. More traditionally shaped dormers with pitched roofs are more likely to be acceptable and multiple smaller dormer windows will be preferable to a single large window.

In general, dormers should be set in from the edge of the roof, the ridge and the eaves, and should reflect those in the main property.



Diagram 9: Large flat roof dormer vs smaller pitched roof dormers



3.5 Garages and Detached Buildings

The size and design of a garage or detached building must remain in proportion with the house in order to reduce the impact on the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties and gardens. An attached garage will be judged in the same way as a single storey side extension.

Detached garages and outbuildings will not normally be acceptable forward of the property. If you are planning a double garage, two doors can often be more appropriate than one large door to offset the horizontal emphasis.

Detached outbuildings and garages should be designed with a roof shape that fits in well with the main property and flat and monopitched roofs will rarely be considered appropriate. Where buildings are very large, a multi-gable roof may sometimes be appropriate to reduce the impact of the building.

In order to allow for the parking of vehicles and some other domestic storage, a single garage should generally have minimum internal dimensions of 6 metres x 3 metres and a double garage should have minimum internal dimensions of 6 metres x 5.5 metres.

If you are proposing to use the garage or detached building for another use other than vehicle or domestic storage, planning permission may be required, therefore please contact the Development Services Team.

Annexes

Annexes can provide additional accommodation for dependent relatives. As well as fitting in with the character of the property and street, annexes should be attached to the main home where possible and avoid the appearance and creation of a separate independent dwelling. The annexe should be able to convert back to form part of the main house.

If the annexe is an extension to the main property, the principles which are set out previously in this document for the relevant extension, such as a side or rear extension should be followed.

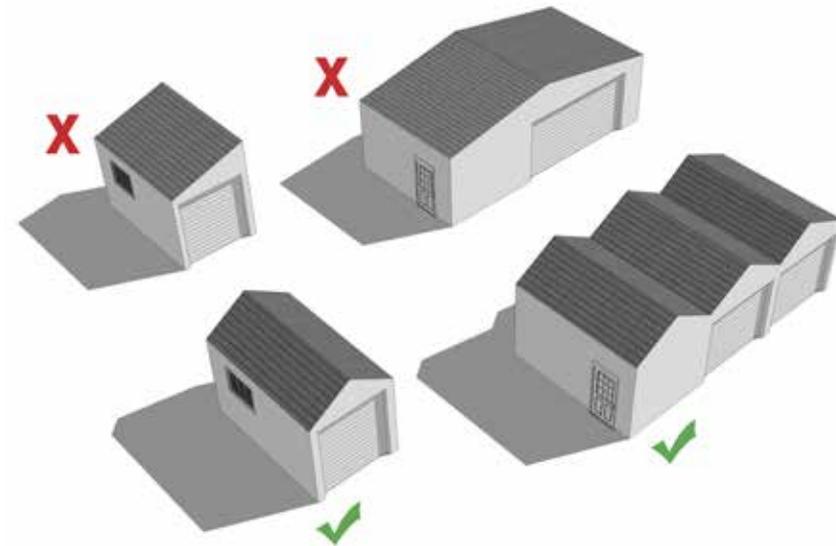


Diagram 10: Designing roof shapes for detached buildings

The use of an annex as ancillary accommodation will be controlled by a planning condition or a legal agreement to ensure it remains as a single planning unit.

If the Annex is a new building which is separate from the main dwelling or the conversion of an existing detached garage or outbuilding, the following principles apply:

- It should be subordinate, in terms of size and scale to the main house.
- The siting and design of the annex should support a connection to the main house, so it could not be used as an independent dwelling.
- The building should be in proportion with the use and contain one storey. The inclusion of a second staircase for an annexe will also be resisted.
- A driveway entrance will normally be expected to be shared with the main dwelling as well as the amenity space.

3.6 Balconies, Raised Decking and Terraces

Balconies, Raised Decking and Terraces may not be acceptable if there is significant overlooking of a neighbouring garden/yard or a main living room window. They can also lead to an increase in noise and disturbance as a result of the extended use of the garden area, therefore can have a significant impact on the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties. As a result, balconies, are not encouraged, other than in exceptional circumstances or situations where a Juliette balcony is in keeping with the design of the property or character of the area. For the purposes of planning, a Juliette balcony is treated as a window, and a velux balcony window is treated as a balcony.

Balconies and raised decking are more likely to be approved in relation to detached dwellings with spacious gardens or where the location of the development does not impact on the neighbours. They should generally be well contained, screened and avoid dominating the existing property.

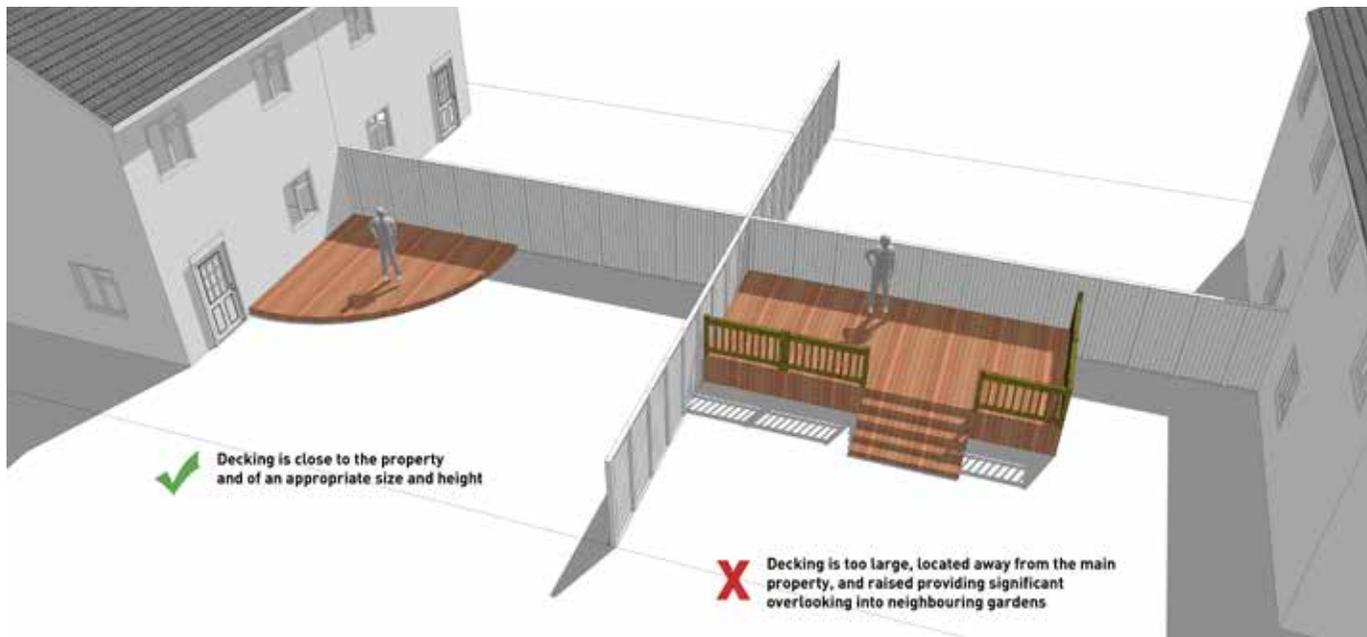


Diagram 11: Raised decking

3.7 Gardens & Boundary Treatments

Gardens

When considering alterations to front garden space to accommodate driveways and hardstanding, it is recommended that the homeowner considers a balanced approach to the amount of hard and soft landscaping that is being provided. An excessive area of hardstanding within the front garden can provide a negative impact on the streetscape and can greatly alter the setting of the building.

Where new hardstanding is proposed, a permeable surfacing solution should be considered that allows water to drain through to the ground below. In instances where this approach cannot be achieved, then only a small area of the garden should be covered by hardstanding, allowing water to drain into the remaining soft landscaped areas within the curtilage of the garden.

While loose gravel is normally accepted as a permeable surface, the Council does not encourage the use of loose gravel in footpaths and driveways which meet the public footway, as the stones can overspill onto the footway causing damage to the surface and make public drains less efficient. Should a loose gravel surface be proposed then it is recommended that a minimum of 1 metre hard standing is provided between the public footpath and the loose gravel area.



Diagram 12: Surface water flow

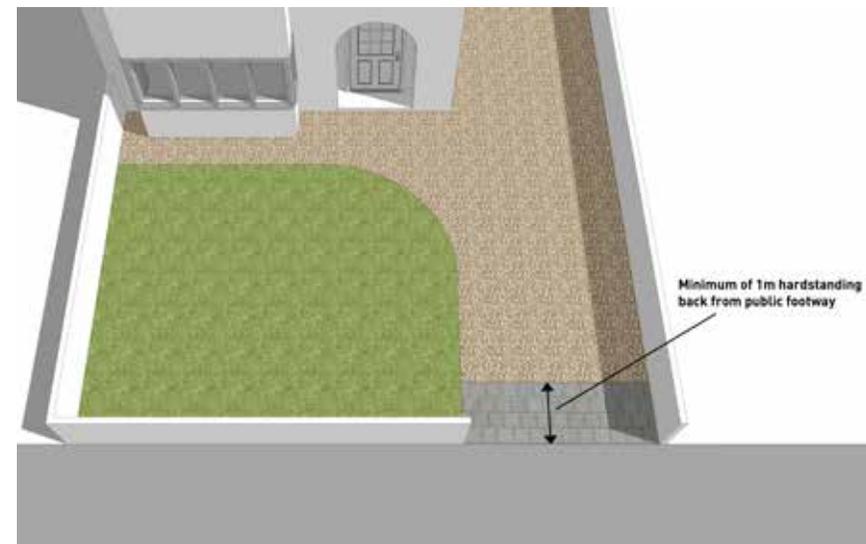


Diagram 13: Loose surfacing adjacent to public footway

Boundary Treatments

Boundary treatment is a means of enclosure around a property and includes walls, fences, railings, hedges, trees, gates and other features.

Where alterations to front garden boundaries occur, careful consideration must be taken to ensure that the proposed materials and detailing fit in well with the property and surroundings. Where there is a dominant form of boundary treatment within the street, your proposal will be expected to be consistent with these structures. In addition, where hedgerows and trees are important features of an area, these should be retained to maintain character and biodiversity. Planning permission is not required to plant hedgerows or trees and they can be a good way to create a boundary instead of erecting a wall or fence.

It is also important to consider the height and materials proposed for boundary treatments along the side of the property and within rear gardens to ensure that the height and material choice do not impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties.

Alterations to boundary treatments to the front of properties or in prominent locations within established open-plan estates will rarely be acceptable as they could disrupt the open character of the street and harm the visual amenity of the area. Likewise, any enclosure that would obstruct public highway visibility, or cause a potential danger to public highway safety will be unacceptable.



3.8 Micro Renewable Energy Generation

The installation of renewable energy technologies, such as solar panels, wind turbines, as well as ground or air source heat pumps, biomass systems and combined heat and power (CHP) systems can be a good way of reducing energy consumption as well as household energy bills. The Local Design Guide SPD will provide some guidance on the range of renewable energy technologies. It is important to consider the siting of any equipment and the impact on the neighbouring properties and surrounding area. Micro renewable energy generation will not be supported in key views or on Listed Buildings or in prominent elevations in Conservation Areas.



Householder Extensions and Alterations Checklist

- View the Interactive House on the Planning Portal Website to check if planning permission is required.
- Read the Government's Technical Guidance for additional advice.
- Check if your property is located within a Conservation Area on the Council's Interactive Local Plan Policies Map.
- Check if your property is a Listed Building with the Council's Development Services Team.
- Check if any other consents are required for your proposal, such as Building Regulation Consent.
- Check if there are any restrictions on your property, such as through planning conditions with the Council's Development Services Team.
- Submit a planning enquiry through the Council's website using the online enquiry form before submitting a planning application.
- View the Council's Validation Checklist to find out what you need to submit with your planning application.
- Speak to all your neighbours about your proposal.
- Think about the design and location of any proposal alongside your surroundings as well as your property.
- Ensure you have a useable amount of garden area remaining.
- Check the materials and detailing of any extension matches your property.
- Maintain adequate separation distances to you neighbouring properties.
- Apply the 45 standard as appropriate.
- Check the minimum level of car parking spaces required within the boundary of your property if the proposal involves the loss of a car parking space.

Glossary

Amenity	A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the inter-relationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquillity.
Article 4 Direction	It restricts the scope of permitted development rights either in relation to a particular area or site, or a particular type of development anywhere in the authority's area. Where an article 4 direction is in effect, a planning application may be required for development that would otherwise have been permitted development. An article 4 direction is made by the local planning authority.
Boundary Treatment	The way in which the borders of a property or space are defined using physical structures or features such as fences, walls and hedges.
Building Line	The line formed by the frontages of buildings along a street.
Conditions	Requirements attached to a planning permission to limit, control or direct the manner in which a development is carried out.
Dormer	A roofed structure, often containing a window, that projects vertically beyond the plane of a pitched roof.[1]
Eaves	The point at which the top of the wall meets the roofline.
Gable	The triangular part at the top of the end wall of a building, between the two sloping sides of the roof.
Habitable Room	Any room used or intended to be used for sleeping, cooking, living or eating purposes. Enclosed spaces such as bath or toilet facilities, service rooms, corridors, laundries, hallways, utility rooms or similar spaces are excluded from this definition.
Hipped Roof	A roof which has four slopes instead of the two slopes of the ordinary gabled roof.
National Planning Policy Framework	Sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
Overbearing	A term used to describe the impact of a development or building on its surroundings, particularly a neighbouring property, in terms of its scale, massing and general dominating effect.
Overshadowing	The effect of a development or building on the amount of natural light presently enjoyed by a neighbouring property, resulting in a shadow being cast over that neighbouring property.
Permitted Development	Permitted development rights are an automatic grant of planning permission which allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application.
Restrictive Covenant	Binding conditions that are written into a property's deeds or contract by a seller to determine what a homeowner can or cannot do with their house or land under particular circumstances . Release from or variation of a covenant is via the Lands Chamber of the Upper Tribunal.
Ridge Line	Generally the highest point of the roof except for the chimneys, where the slopes meet.

Contacts

Stockton-on Tees Borough Council

Website – www.stockton.gov.uk

Planning

Municipal Buildings

Church Road

Stockton-on-Tees

TS18 1LD

Tel: (01642) 526022

Email: planningdevelopmentservices@stockton.gov.uk

Building Control

Municipal Buildings

Church Road

Stockton-on-Tees

TS18 1LD

Tel: (01642) 526022

Email: building.control@stockton.gov.uk

Planning Portal

The Planning Portal provides guidance on planning and Building Regulation matters and can be used for the submission of planning applications.

Website – www.planningportal.gov.uk

