

# Supplementary Planning Document

GRAVESHAM  
LOCAL  
PLAN

## Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide

October 2021



*Delivering a Gravesham to be proud of*



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## 1 Introduction

1.1 Extensions and alterations to a home can be an economical way of ensuring it can meet a household's present and future needs. In seeking to meet such needs it is important to ensure that any extensions or alterations to a home are well designed, well-built and sympathetic to their surroundings. By doing so we can ensure that there are no adverse effects on the original house, immediate neighbours, the local view of the street, as well as the character and appearance of the local area.

1.2 It is not always possible for a house to be extended or altered to meet the requirements of a household. For example in certain instances the proposal may be out of scale and proportion with the original house, there may be insufficient space around the original house to accommodate an extension without detrimentally impacting the availability of private amenity space, whilst in other instances an extension may create unacceptable levels of overlooking or overshadowing of neighbouring properties.

1.3 Within Gravesham there is great variety in the type, style, age and quality of housing. Many areas within the Borough have a distinct character which, with the quality of the buildings, their layout and landscaping have become much cherished. Due to the nature of the Borough it is not possible for this guidance to cover every possible scenario, the guidance does however encapsulate what the Council will take into account when judging whether or not an application is acceptable in planning terms. Only in a limited number of instances will there be justified planning reasons for departing from this guidance, for example when an innovative design solution is put forward.

1.4 The document is intended to provide design guidance on extensions and alterations, for use by applicants, planning agents, architects, members of the public affected by such proposals, elected Members of the Council and others such as the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation. It is intended to apply to dwelling houses only, and not to flats, maisonettes or other non-self contained dwellings.

## 2 Why do we need design guidance?

2.1 Planning applications need to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are other material considerations, the development plan should be the starting point.

2.2 The Development Plan for Gravesham currently comprises the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies Map, September 2014; Saved policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review, November 1994; and the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan, September 2020.

2.3 This guidance document builds upon a number of the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy policies (September 2014), but in particular Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles. There are a number of other planning policy and guidance documents which are material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF), the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), the National Design Guide and other documents adopted by the Council such as Supplementary Planning Documents. When making a planning application to the Council, it is important that you consider the requirements of all relevant documents that form the Borough's Development Plan and material considerations.

2.4 The NPPF identifies that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. A good development should function well, be visually attractive, be sympathetic to local character and history and help establish or maintain a strong sense of place. It also requires that "Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents"

2.5 [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.

### 3 Aims of this guidance

3.1 The main aims of the guide are to:

- Expand on planning policies set out in the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework
- Raise awareness of the value of good design and how it can benefit a home that is being extended or altered
- Protect the residential amenity of neighbours and enhance the local built environment

### 4 Status of this guidance

4.1 This guide will have the status of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and has been prepared in line with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated regulations and guidance on Supplementary Planning Documents. Supplementary Planning Documents are used together with the Development Plan and other material considerations to guide decisions on planning applications by the Council.

4.2 Supplementary Planning Documents adopted by the Council are available on the Council's website at <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/supplementary-planning-guidance/supplementary-planning-guidance>

### 5 Building Regulations

5.1 The majority of extensions and some alterations to a property, regardless of whether or not they require planning permission, will require Building Regulations consent. Planning permission and Building Regulations consent are two separate requirements, obtaining planning permission does not mean that you have obtained Building Regulations consent, and vice versa. For further details regarding Building Regulations consent please visit the Council's website at <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/building-regulations/overview> .

## 6 Party Wall Act

6.1 If you intend to carry out work on, or within close proximity to, your neighbour's boundary or party walls, you will need to consider the requirements of the Party Wall Act. This is designed to resolve disputes, which may arise between neighbours when building work is carried out. The basic requirement of the Act is that you notify your neighbour of the intended work. For further advice and guidance please visit the Government's website at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/party-wall-etc-act-1996-guidance>

**Please note: The Party Wall Act is not administered by the Council and is a private matter between you and your neighbour(s)**

## 7 What constraints could affect your plans to extend / alter your house?

7.1 When planning permission is required it is important to understand the constraints on your property that may affect the acceptability of your proposal in line with the Council's Development Plan. This guidance applies to all proposals for residential extensions and alterations. It is recommended that you seek pre-application advice before progressing with your proposal (see Paragraph 8.5).

7.2 Gaining pre-application advice is particularly important, if your property is a listed building or lies within a Conservation Area where a particularly sensitive approach is required. Much of the Borough lies within the Green Belt and the eastern half of the Borough lies within the North Kent Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These designations can also affect the acceptability of your proposal to extend your property or erect a building in your garden.

### Conservation Areas

7.3 Conservation Areas are protected for their architectural style and historic interest. The Borough's Conservation areas vary in size, ranging from the expansive Windmill Hill Conservation Area, to the much smaller Milton Place Conservation Area. Conservation Areas are often centered on listed buildings, but other features of merit, such as open spaces, trees, historic street patterns, or items of historic or archaeological interest may also contribute to the special character of a Conservation Area.

7.4 Adopted Policy CS20: Heritage and the Historic Environment, in line with the NPPF, and saved Policy TC3: Development Affecting Conservation Areas require development to preserve and enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area. Where located within a conservation area, the design of an extension and materials used for construction, must preserve or enhance the character of the area and compliment the original property and adjoining properties.



7.5 In the majority of cases extensions and additions which front a highway in a conservation area will require planning permission. There are also greater restrictions on alterations to the rear of dwellings, buildings within the curtilage, alterations to windows, doors, roofs, cladding, balconies, raised platforms and satellite dishes. This list is by no means exhaustive and it is always recommended that you check prior to undertaking works in a conservation area in order to establish if permission is required. Some conservation areas have Article 4 Directions removing certain classes of permitted development rights. In these cases, alterations such as replacing windows and doors, or the removal of front boundary walls alterations may require planning permission.

7.6 Planning Permission may also be required for the demolition of some outbuildings and boundary walls. For further details regarding Conservation Areas, please visit the Council's website at <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/heritage-and-conservation/conservation-areas>

## Listed Buildings

7.7 Listed buildings are protected for their intrinsic architectural/historical importance. Special consideration needs to be given to the architectural and historical integrity of the building or groups of buildings when considering an extension or alteration to a property, and to its setting when considering a building within the curtilage.

7.8 Any internal or external alterations to a listed building will require Listed Building Consent. All extensions and some alterations to the external fabric or any new buildings within the curtilage of a listed building will also require planning permission. Even relatively minor works, such as painting, may affect the character of a listed building, so it is advisable to seek pre-application advice from the Council if your building is listed. To find out if your property is listed please visit <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>.

## Green Belt

7.9 Much of the Borough is rural in character and the majority of the rural areas are designated as Green Belt. In considering extensions to residential properties in the Green Belt, the Council will require proposals to meet the policy requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and the criteria set out in Saved Local Plan Policy C13: Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside.

7.10 Residential extensions may have a significant impact on openness. A limited extension to an existing dwelling may not be considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt provided that it does not result in disproportionate addition over and above the size of the building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was originally built. Any extension which would result in a disproportionate addition would constitute inappropriate development which is by definition harmful to the Green Belt. The Gravesham Local Plan Policies Map shows the extent of the Green Belt in Gravesham and is available on our website at <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/local-plan/gravesham-local-plan-core-strategy>

## Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

7.11 Parts of the rural area fall within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a designated exceptional landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are precious enough to be safeguarded in the national interest. The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty offers dramatic views, vibrant communities, a rich historic and cultural heritage and diverse wildlife, and habitats making it a worthy landscape for national protection.

7.12 For all proposals, the prime consideration in such areas is the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. Particular attention will be given to the siting, size, form, materials and detailed design of proposals. Permitted Development rights are reduced in these areas in order to retain the natural beauty. The Gravesham Local Plan Policies Map shows the extent of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Gravesham and is available on our website at <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/local-plan/gravesham-local-plan-core-strategy>

## 8. Is planning permission required?

8.1 Some extensions to a house do not always require planning permission. This is known as 'Permitted Development.' Permitted development is subject to strict criteria, for example relating to height, depth, positioning and materials choices. There are certain types of permitted development that also require 'prior approval' from the council before work can be undertaken to your home. This is explained in more detail through the "[Permitted development rights for householders: technical guidance document](#)", further information can also be found on the Council's website at: <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/planning/guide-planning> and on the Planning Portal at [https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200125/do\\_you\\_need\\_permission](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200125/do_you_need_permission).

8.2 The regulations relating to [permitted development](#) are complex, and subject to change from time to time. To avoid any confusion as to whether your house benefits from permitted development rights, you are strongly advised to seek advice from the Council before carrying out any development, by applying for a Certificate of Lawful Development in order to obtain a formal view from the Council.

8.3 It should also be noted that a previous planning permission for your site may contain planning conditions that remove the permitted development rights for future development. Housing built from the 1960s onwards is more likely to have had some or all of its Permitted Development rights removed when permission was first granted, especially in higher density developments.

8.4 Particular care must be taken if the property is a Listed Building; within a Conservation Area, affected by an Article 4 Direction (these often apply in Conservation Areas), or is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In these circumstances different regulations apply.

## Pre-application Service

8.5 The Council runs a pre-application service which provides an avenue for you to articulate your proposal to the Council and seek initial views from the Council before committing further resources to a project and applying for planning permission if required. We can help ensure your proposal meets all the relevant requirements which helps to avoid unrealistic expectations and delays. Further details can be found on our website at:

<https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/apply-for-planning-permission/pre-application-service>

## What you need to provide with your application

8.6 The Council has recently published its Local List of Validation Requirements, which sets out the type and quality of drawings and information that will be required to accompany planning applications, in order to provide a degree of certainty and clarity to assist applicants. The requirements are proportionate to the nature and scale of your proposal, and following the Local List of Validation Requirements can reduce unnecessary delays in validating and determining a planning application.

The main list and explanatory guides are available here: <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/apply-for-planning-permission/local-list-of-validation-requirements>

## Enforcement

8.7 Failure to obtain planning permission (where it is required) can lead to enforcement action being taken by the Council and the possible requirement to remove any extension or alteration built without planning permission. Similarly, it is important to build what has been given permission. Where works are undertaken that do not accord with the approved drawings, enforcement action may be taken and it may be necessary to significantly alter or rebuild an extension in order to comply with the planning permission.

8.8 With regards to works carried out to a Listed Building, it is also a criminal offence (under English law) to carry out works that require Listed Building Consent without such consent being obtained from the Council. The offence is committed by the person who carried out the works (possibly a builder) and by anyone who caused them to be carried out (someone instructing a builder). It is not a defence to say that the fact that the building was Listed was not known.

## 9 Key Principles for new development

9.1 All the following design guidance must be taken into account.

### Character and design quality

Any proposed extensions and alterations to a house should respect the original character of the existing dwelling, complement and correspond with the character of neighbouring properties and the local area. It should be noted that this does not always mean an exact replication of the existing character.

9.2 Your proposal should reflect and respect the original character and respond to its features. In order to achieve this as a starting point all residential extensions and alterations should be subordinate to the host property/building, allowing the original building to remain dominant.

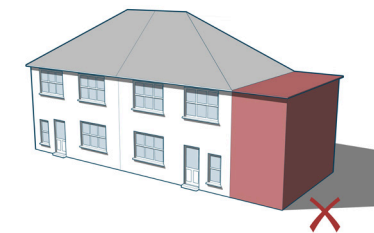
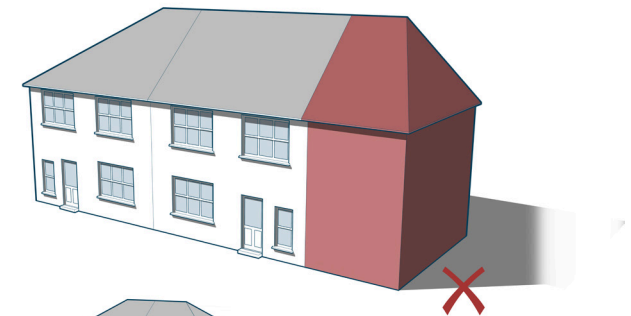
9.3 Matching roof styles and pitches should be used in new extensions and new extensions should normally not be larger, higher or forward of the existing dwelling unless they echo an existing characteristic in the local area. It is usually preferable for an extension to have a lower roofline and be set 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 main roof is flat).

9.4 In Conservation Areas, or where schemes would impact upon the setting of a Listed Building, or directly impact a Listed Building itself, the character and appearance of the area is more sensitive to new development. More advice regarding heritage consideration generally, and on the specific character of the Borough's 23 Conservation Areas, as well as appraisals or management plans relating to specific areas is available on the Council's website at:

<https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/heritage-and-conservation/conservation-areas>



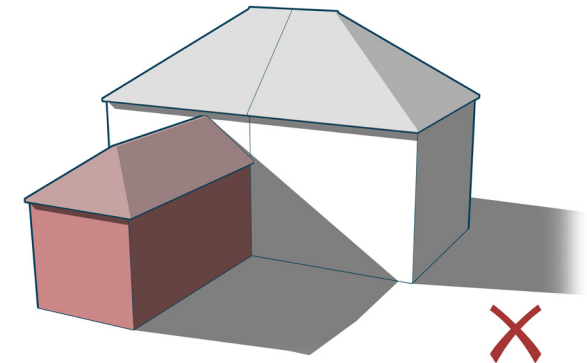
Matching roof style and pitch subordinate to the original dwelling with roof extension stepped down and extension stepped back at the front.



Incorrect extensions in terms of position, scale and roofline.

## Overshadowing

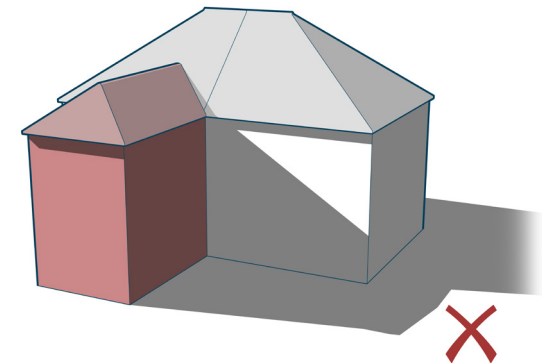
9.5 Depending upon the orientation and position of neighbouring windows and private amenity areas, problems of overshadowing can occur from an extension. This is particularly so if the neighbouring property is to the north of the proposed extension. Extensions should not create an unreasonable amount 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 and private gardens. 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. When considering overshadowing the Council will have regard to the 45 / 25 degree rule (see Appendix 1), as well as the Vertical Sky Component (VSC) Average Daylight Factor (ADF) and the Annual Probable Sunlight Hours (APSH) methods where necessary. See the BREEAM guidance for detailed information on these.



Where a an extension would result in a significant reduction in light or cause overshadowing planning permission may not be granted.

## Privacy

9.6 It is important that new development sustains the privacy of neighbouring dwellings. 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 should be no direct overlooking into neighbouring habitable rooms or private amenity spaces of neighbouring gardens. There may be a requirement for privacy screens to the end of raised decks or balconies. Careful consideration should be given to window positions to ensure no windows on the boundary with neighbouring properties cause harmful overlooking and to ensure that windows above the ground floor retain adequate privacy distances. It may be possible, in some cases, to use high level and obscure / translucent glazing.



## Overbearing and Outlook

9.7 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 detail

9.8 Architectural details such as sills, 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 proportions, size, materials and opening style should also reflect the existing dwelling.

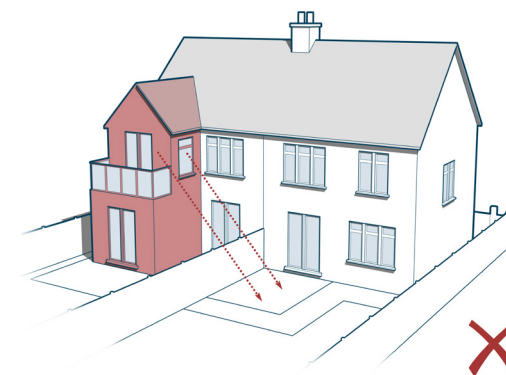
## Materials

9.9 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.

## Gardens and trees

9.10 These are an important element of the character of the property, the visual amenity and biodiversity of the locality. Extensions should maintain a garden area that allows for practical use and reflects the established character of the area and the size of the house. Householders should retain as much soft landscaping in their garden as possible, whilst trees within and adjacent to the site should be protected from damage or removal where new extensions are proposed.

9.11 Some trees in the Borough are protected for their outstanding value by a tree preservation order (TPO), they may also be subject to protection if they are within a conservation area. If this is the case, the Council will need to consider the risk to any protected trees when determining the planning application.



Careful consideration should be given to window and balcony positions to ensure no windows on the boundary with neighbouring properties cause harmful overlooking. Ensure that windows above the ground floor retain adequate privacy distances.



To ensure adequate privacy levels are retained, there should be no direct overlooking into neighbouring habitable rooms or private amenity spaces of neighbouring gardens.

## 10 Extensions and Alterations

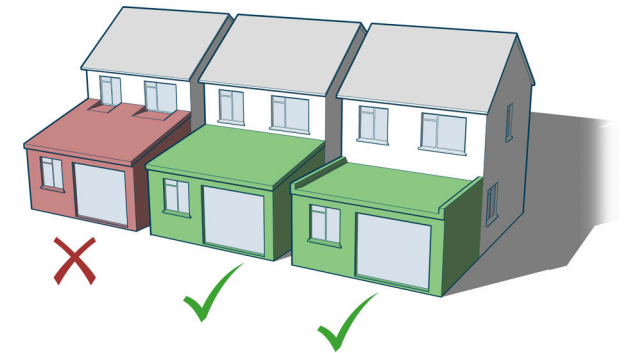
10.1 This section outlines the type of residential extensions and alterations that the Council may consider acceptable. Each planning application will be considered by the Council on its merits on the basis that each property is different.

### Rear Extensions

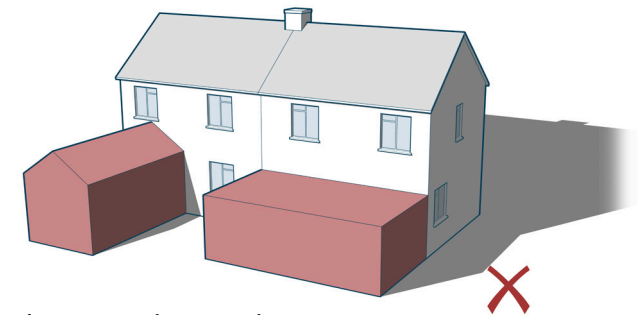
#### Single Storey Rear Extensions

10.2 Single storey rear extensions are not normally visible from the street so are usually less visually intrusive than other extensions. However, these extensions can still have an impact on neighbouring amenity, including access to sunlight, daylight and outlook. To resolve these potential issues, single storey rear extensions should be designed to ensure that:

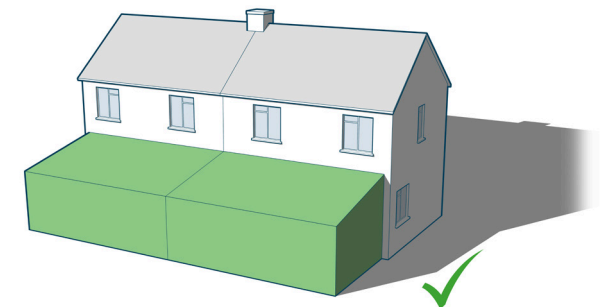
- Depth: The extension does not dominate the original property. This can cause the site to appear overdeveloped, and cause long dark internal spaces to be formed. Extensions to extensions will generally not be supported.
- Height: Single storey extensions should not rise above the window sill level of any first-floor windows. Care should be taken to limit the height of extensions where they abut neighbouring property boundaries, especially where extensions are of significant depth (above 3m deep).
- Width: Generally, extensions should not be of greater width than the original building.
- Design: Whilst flat roofs on low visibility rear extensions might be acceptable, care should be applied to extensions to properties on open corners. Pitched roof extensions to single storey properties should use roof shapes which reflect the pitch and type of roof of the original building.
- Materials: Generally, using matching external materials and window/door frames. In some instances, contemporary design may be appropriate, through the use of high-quality materials and design which complements the original house and has minimal impact on neighbouring properties.
- Overlooking: Extensions should avoid inserting any flank windows, or involve raised platforms where they would allow new, or increased overlooking views into neighbouring gardens/properties.



Single storey extensions should not rise above window sill level of any first floor window.



Inappropriate scale.



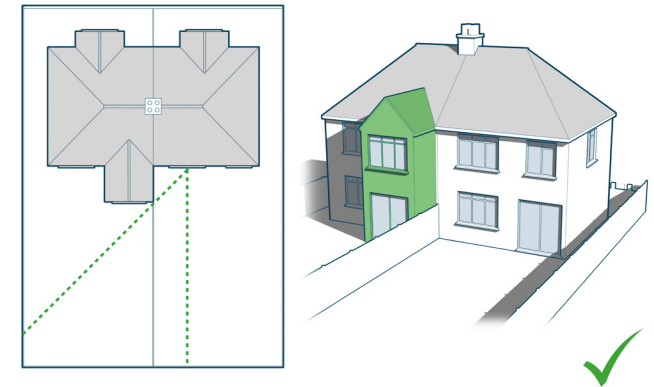
Appropriate scale and roof design ensures both extensions work together.

- Light/Outlook: The 45 / 25 degree rule will primarily be used to assess the impact of the extension on neighbouring light / outlook.
- Garden Space: Adequate garden area for the enlarged house should be retained following development

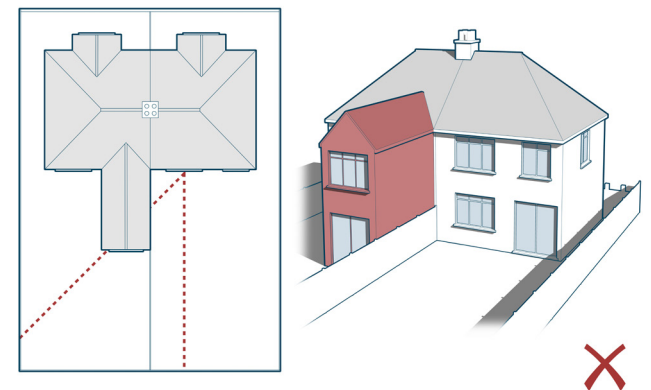
### Two Storey and First Floor Rear Extensions

10.3 Two-storey rear extensions are often desirable as they create more space within a home, however they are not appropriate in all circumstances e.g. mid-terraced properties, and need to be carefully designed to avoid negatively impacting neighbouring properties. Proposals for two-storey rear extensions should consider the surrounding context, and ensure that:

- Depth: The extension does not dominate the original property. This can cause the site to appear overdeveloped, and cause long dark internal spaces to be formed. Extensions to extensions will generally not be supported.
- Height: two storey extensions can have very significant impact on neighbouring amenity, so should generally not be built up to site boundaries with neighbouring gardens / properties.
- Width: Extensions should not be of greater width than the original building.
- Design: Taller extensions are of greater visibility, and should incorporate roof designs to reflect, tie in with and not overwhelm the main property's roof. Patterns and proportions of windows should reflect the host building and local character.
- Materials: Using matching external materials and window / door frames is especially relevant for two storey extensions.
- Overlooking: Extensions should avoid inserting any flank windows, or involve raised platforms where they would allow new, or increased overlooking views into neighbouring gardens / properties.
- Light / Outlook: The 45 / 25 degree rule will be used to assess the impact of the extension on neighbouring light / outlook.
- Garden Space: Adequate garden area for the enlarged house should be retained following development.



A two storey extension should comply with the 45 degree rule. (See Appendix 1).



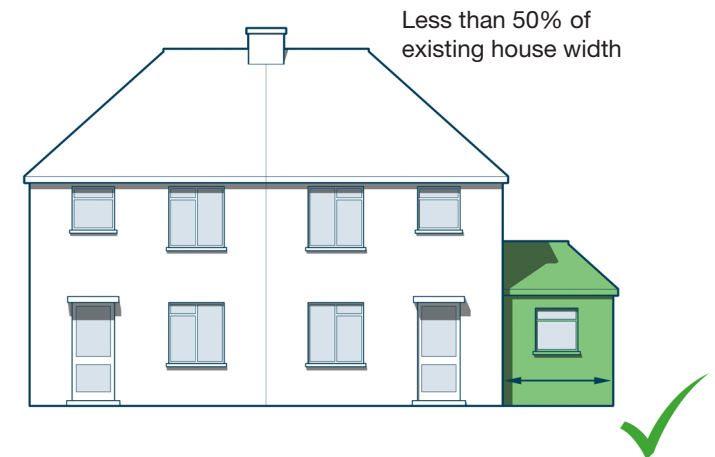


## Side Extensions

### Single Storey Side

10.4 Side extensions should consider the impact on the character and appearance of both the host building and the street. Care is also needed when considering the relationship between any proposed extension and the boundary with neighbouring properties, as the separation between properties can provide access routes to the rear of the property and in some locations are part of the character of the area. Depending on the orientation of the neighbouring property, side extensions also have the potential to impact their amenity. To ensure these potential issues are resolved, single storey side extensions should be designed in accordance with the guidance below.

- **Footprint:** Extensions should generally aim to appear subservient to the original building by lying behind the main front building line, though where designed well or having regard to positive local character, other approaches can be supported.
- **Height:** Extensions that directly abut a neighbouring boundary should be designed to minimise impact on neighbouring amenity.
- **Width:** Extensions should generally be no greater than half the width of the original building.
- **Design:** Extensions are of greater visibility, and should incorporate roof designs to reflect the main property's roof. The use of flat or false pitched roofs visible from the street should be avoided. Patterns, design and proportions of windows should reflect the original building and local character. Walls to extensions should not form the site boundary with the public highway, as these can be oppressive and encourage antisocial activities.
- **Materials:** Matching external materials and window / door frames should be used.
- **Overlooking:** Extensions should avoid inserting any flank windows where they would allow new, or increased overlooking views into neighbouring gardens / properties.
- **Light / Outlook:** The 45 / 25 degree rule will be used to assess the impact of the extension on neighbouring light / outlook.
- **Garden Space:** Adequate garden area for the enlarged house should be retained following development.



The extension is the correct scale, proportion and width, and has the same roof design as the original house.

## Two Storey Side

10.5 Two storey extensions can have a more significant impact on the appearance of the street. Care is also needed when considering the relationship between any proposed extension and the boundary with neighbouring properties as the separation between properties can provide access routes to the rear of the property and in some locations are part of the character of the area. Depending on the orientation of the neighbouring property, side extensions also have the potential to impact their amenity. To ensure these potential issues are resolved, two storey side extensions should be designed in accordance with the guidance below.

- **Footprint:** Extensions should generally aim to appear subservient to the host building by lying behind the main front building line, though where designed well or having regard to positive local character, other approaches can be supported. See advice of extensions to corner properties in the following section.
- **Height:** Extensions should not exceed the eaves height of the host building.
- **Width:** Extensions should generally be no greater than half the width of the host building. The existing rhythm of the street, including for example characteristic gaps between properties, the symmetry of pairs of semi-detached homes or groups of terraced houses, should not be unreasonably interrupted. A minimum gap of 1 metre should be retained between the extension and the flank boundary.
- **Design:** Extensions are of greater visibility, and should incorporate roof designs to reflect and generally be subservient to the main property's roof. The use of flat or false pitched roofs visible from the street should be avoided. Patterns of windows should reflect the host building and local character. Walls to extensions should not form the site boundary with the public highway, as these can be oppressive and encourage antisocial activities.
- **Materials:** Matching external materials and window / door frames should be used.
- **Overlooking:** Extensions should avoid inserting any flank windows where they would allow new, or significantly increased overlooking views into neighbouring gardens / properties.
- **Light / Outlook:** The 45 / 25 degree rule will be used to assess the impact of the extension on neighbouring light / outlook.

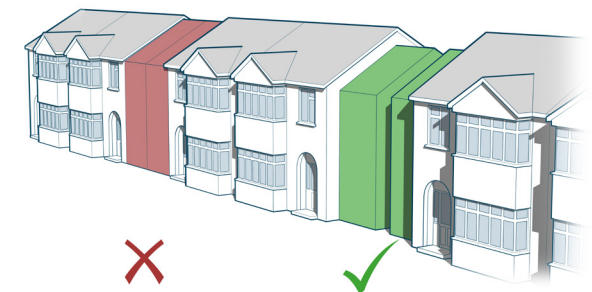


Ground floor set back 0.5m



Unacceptable flat roof

Two storey side extensions should be subordinate in scale to the original house.



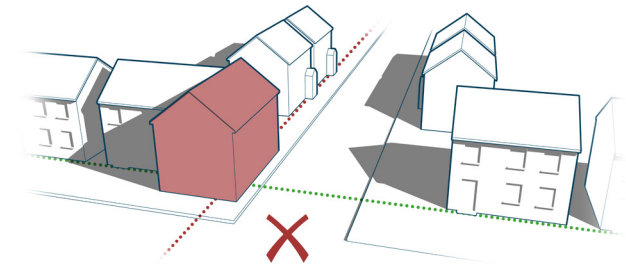
Side extensions should be set back and set in to avoid the 'terrace effect'.

- **Garden Space:** Adequate garden area for the enlarged house should be retained following development
- **Bin Storage:** Adequate provision for discreet storage of waste bins in the front garden

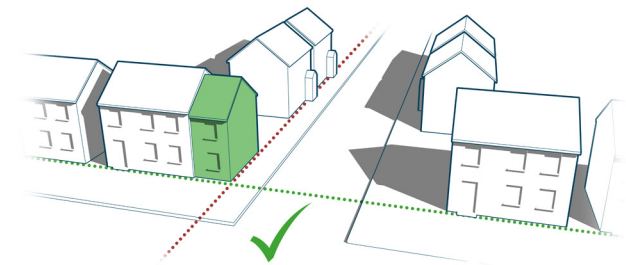
### Extensions to houses on Corner Plots

10.6 Corner plots may provide opportunities to create large extensions that face onto the return road and in some cases can create a landmark building feature. Their location makes them highly visible from two streets and can provide an opportunity to improve the appearance of an area. Houses on corner plots may have capacity for two-storey extensions that extend to the side or rear. Extensions should follow the relevant advice given in preceding sections and ensure:

- **Building Line:** Development should generally reflect the surrounding building lines where they are a key and clear part of the local character. Any projection forward of the building line on the return street must be very carefully considered as this will be highly visible. This may be resolved through the massing (such as stepping), fenestration or material treatment of the proposal. Views along the return street to the proposed building should be understood and taken into account.
- **Roof Form:** The relationship between the roof of the existing property and an extension on a corner is carefully considered.
- **End Walls:** Extensions that result in overbearing end walls, including blank, uncharacteristic gables, or flank walls, will generally not be acceptable. Walls to extensions should not form the site boundary with the public highway, as these can be oppressive and encourage antisocial activities.



Development should not dominate the street corner.



Development should generally reflect the surrounding building lines

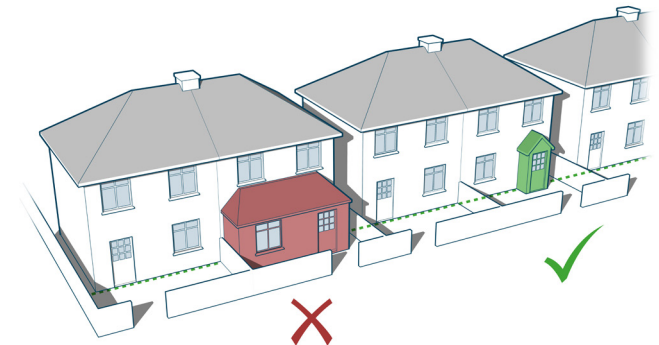
## Front Extensions & Porches

10.7 Front extensions can change the character of the original building and where poorly designed have a negative impact on the appearance of the street; due to their visibility these kind of extensions are most likely to have an impact on the wider street scene and are generally discouraged. It is therefore important to invest a high level of design quality in such proposals following the guidance below:

- **Design:** Front extensions must be designed to respond to and enhance the character of the existing dwelling and street.
- **Scale:** The scale and design of new porches should respond to the existing dwelling.
- **Existing Features:** Care should be taken to preserve the appearance of existing features, such as bay windows, and avoid porches that would impact these by subsuming their form or erasing their prominence. Existing porches that are open to the street, and are an original feature that form part of a local pattern of development, should generally not be enclosed.
- **Car Parking:** Extensions or porches should not result in the retention of front parking spaces of inadequate depth.



The scale and design of a new porches should respond to the existing dwelling.



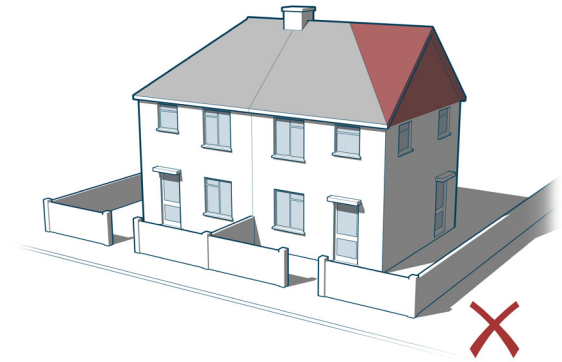
Large extensions which break the building line and do not respect the scale of the house will be rejected.

## Roof Extensions

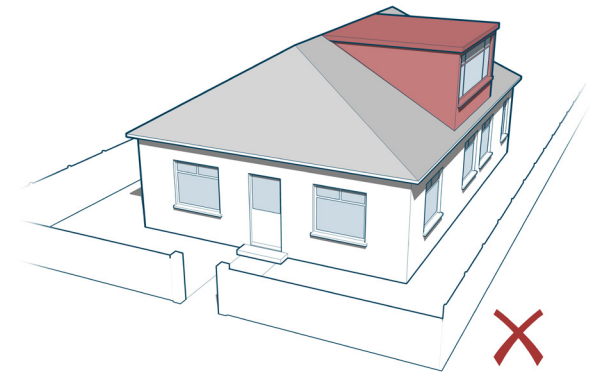
### Side roof extensions

10.8 The use of loft space to provide additional accommodation can often provide more space for relatively little cost, using natural light through the use of skylights. Roof extensions, such as dormer windows or box extensions which project out from the roof slope, should be used where there is a need to enlarge the useable floor space within a loft or where they are more characteristic of the area. Extensions and alterations to roofs should be set away from the gables, hips, eaves and ridge of a property and follow the guidance below:

- **Height:** Should be lower than the existing ridge-line.
- **Massing:** Should not wrap around two-sides of a hipped roof unless in special circumstances where it can be justified; this will be judged on a case by case basis. Dormers should not overwhelm the roof slope within which they are to be placed, being sited well clear of the roof edges and eaves.
- **Alignment of Windows:** Should include window position and design which reflects the position, design and character of windows to the lower levels of the host building.
- **Detail:** Large blank facades on dormers can have an overbearing appearance and will not generally be acceptable.
- **Unbalancing:** If proposing a hip to gable roof extension, this should not interrupt or unbalance the pattern of roof form visible from the street.



Hip-to-gable extensions that impact the symmetry of houses and the character of the street will be refused.



A dormer with a flat roof which extends from eaves to the ridge of the roof is not considered good design and is likely to be rejected.

## Rear Roof Extensions

10.9 Whilst in many instances, rear roof extensions can be undertaken without permission under permitted development, these can and have had a harmful effect on roofscapes. When assessing planning applications, a high standard of design shall be required. Rear roof extensions and alterations should be set away from the gables, hips, eaves and ridge of a property and follow the guidance below:

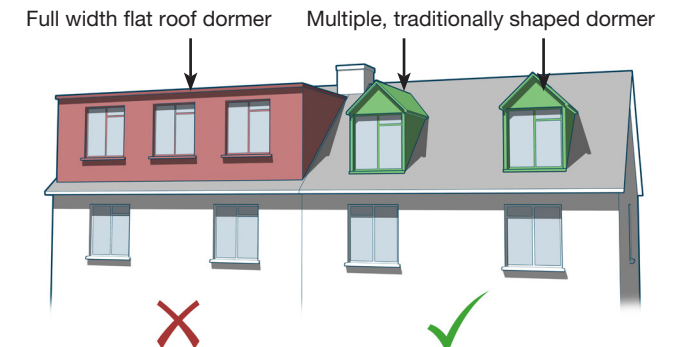
- **Height:** Should be lower than the existing ridge-line, and original ridgeline treatment should be retained.
- **Massing:** Should not wrap around two-sides of a hipped roof unless in special circumstances where it can be justified; this will be judged on a case by case basis. Dormers should not overwhelm the roof slope within which they are to be placed.
- **Alignment of Windows:** Should include window position and design which reflects the position, design and character of windows to the lower levels of the host original building.
- **Detail:** Large blank facades on dormers can have an overbearing appearance and will not generally be acceptable.

## Front Roof Extensions

10.10 It will generally not be acceptable to create dormers on the front of a property where there is not an existing established character of such forms in the immediately surrounding street scene.



Rear and side dormers that are in proportion and in keeping with the design of the house will be considered favourably.



Full width flat dormer is both out of character in terms of scale and design whereas multiple, traditionally shaped dormers compliment the property.

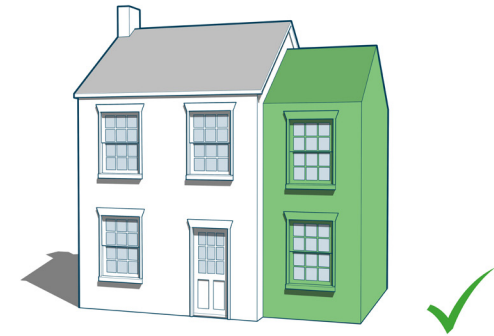
## Doors & Windows

**10.11** Unless they are Listed Buildings, houses (not flats or maisonettes) may have permitted development rights (unless these have been removed) that enable changes to windows and doors. Although minimal in each case, such alterations have a cumulative effect when carried out in historic areas. Due to the need to protect some of the Borough's most historic areas, the Council has made Article 4 Directions in Conservation Areas which remove some permitted development rights. In other circumstances, changes to doors and windows still need to be of a 'similar appearance' to those within the existing property.

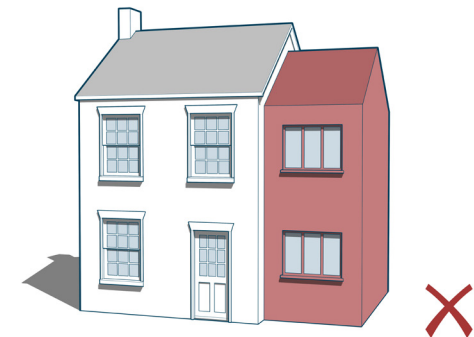
**10.12** Windows are a defining feature of a building. Poor window design and placement, and inconsistency of design and size can disrupt the appearance of buildings and the rhythm of the street scene.

**10.13** Where proposed as part of extensions, or where proposals relate to window or door alterations only, the key considerations to observe are:

- The type, proportions, frame pattern and materials of the new windows and doors should match those of the original house.
- The proportion of windows is particularly important in successfully integrating an extension with an existing building, as this could affect the appearance of the property regardless of whether it needs planning permission. For example, an extension to a house with windows of vertical proportion should not have windows that are square or horizontal in proportion
- New windows should be arranged to line up vertically and horizontally with those of the original house, to give a sense of balance and proportion.
- The ratio of solid wall to window should reflect that of the original house or local buildings. The number and size of windows in an extension should be limited to those absolutely necessary; otherwise the elevation would appear too cluttered.



Style and proportions of windows reflecting the original property.



Style and proportions of windows out of character with original property.

## Outbuildings & Garages

### Outbuildings

**10.14** An outbuilding should normally only be used for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the house. Examples could include common buildings such as garden sheds, other storage buildings, garages, and summer houses. A purpose incidental to a dwelling house does not include use as separate self-contained accommodation, or other primary living accommodation incorporating such components as a bedroom, bathroom, or kitchen. Proposals to provide separate accommodation or a commercial use (unless it constitutes working from home) in an outbuilding requires planning permission.

**10.15** Outbuilding should not deprive the existing property of adequate private garden space and should be subordinate in scale to the existing dwelling and to the plot. In assessing proposals, the Council will consider factors such as the scale, height, proximity to boundaries, roof design, finishing materials and prominence in the street scene or rear garden environment.

**10.16** As with all extensions, outbuildings should not detract from the character of the area (this is especially important where the outbuilding will be visible from the street) and should be unobtrusively located to the side and rear of the existing dwelling. They should also not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the surrounding properties in terms of noise and disturbance created through access or overlooking / overshadowing of existing properties.

### Garages

**10.17** Detached garages should reflect the design, materials, character and style of the existing property. Garages should not be located in a position which would detract from the attractiveness of the street scene. Usually garages should be positioned to the side of a dwelling.

**10.18** In order to properly function as car parking, garages should provide clear internal dimension of 5.5m (length) x 3.6m (width) for one car and 5.5m by 6m width for 2 cars.



## Materials & Details

**10.19** The choice and use of materials for an extension or alteration can significantly impact the appearance of a dwelling. Choice of materials should consider the neighbouring properties and ensure:

- In areas where there is a strong sense of character through the use of particular materials, extensions and alterations should use materials that respond to this character. Where appropriate, this may allow the introduction of new, high-quality materials, including in historic environments where contemporary materials may be used to offer a contrast to the appearance of traditional materials and enhance the qualities of and provide a clear distinction from the original fabric.
- Materials chosen to match the existing dwelling are carefully chosen to consider the effects of weathering and time. This is crucial where materials need to match the existing.
- The long-term wearing of materials is considered. Materials such as render and wood can wear drastically if poorly detailed and not maintained, particularly if north facing.
- The reuse of materials where possible for a repair or extension. Elevations which are visible from the street, including roofs, should be prioritised in the reuse of materials. A mixture of old and new materials is more appropriate on rear-facing elevations, and should ensure that similar colours, textures and sizes are used to those of the original roof covering.

**10.20** Innovation or the use of new materials will be encouraged, except where it detracts from the character of an area.

## Front Gardens & Parking

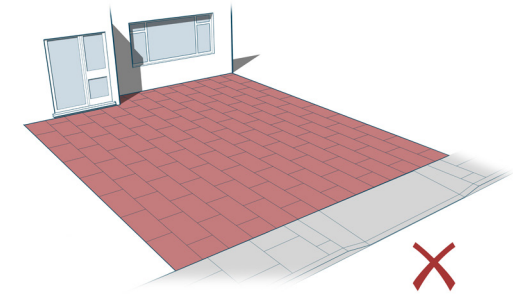
**10.21** The laying of hard surfaces to the front gardens of houses often do not require planning permission. More advice is available on our website here: <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/parking-and-roads/dropped-kerbs/overview>

Where planning permission is required, account will be taken of the need for additional off road parking provision and the following considerations will apply:

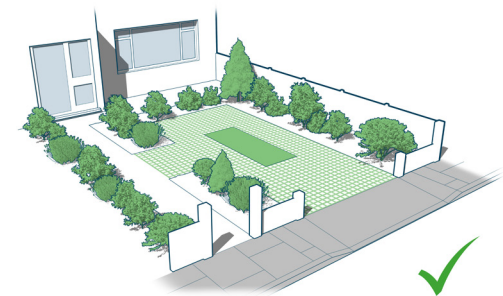
- Hardstanding should be proportionate to the size of the dwelling and the relevant car parking standards and avoid paving over a significant amount of the forecourt. Soft landscaped planted border along all boundaries should be provided in all spaces not specifically defined as parking or turning spaces.
- Allow sufficient space between the car and the dwelling to allow access to the front door and side of the property. 1 metre should be the minimum space between or around car parking spaces.

- Front garden parking must be designed to avoid cars overhanging the pavement. Car parking spaces a minimum of 2.5m wide (2.7m where spaces adjoin an enclosed boundary) and 5m deep should be provided.
- Should not include gates. Where gates already exist, they must not open outwards and should allow enough space for them to be opened inwardly (if relevant) whilst a car is parked.
- Gates should enable a pedestrian on the footway to have clear visibility of any vehicle exiting (i.e. they should be railings or have some form of transparency) and should not be of a height that blocks visibility of passing pedestrians and should enable visibility from the footway.
- Avoid removing any existing trees or established hedges and introduce new planting wherever possible.
- Introduce permeable paving to new areas of hardstanding to minimise rainwater run-off issues, as per the requirements of Permitted Development.
- There should be no water run-off from the forecourt onto the public highway.
- Where loose surfacing is proposed, a minimum of 1m depth of non-loose hardstanding should be provided at the front edge of the driveway with the public highway
- Repair or restore any original decorative tiled paths that are a characteristic or historic feature of the existing dwelling.
- Pedestrian and vehicle visibility splays should be provided. (See Appendix 1)

**10.22** Aside from the potential need to gain planning permission if a new dropped kerb and crossover is required, applicants must apply for and obtain consent via the relevant landowner (if crossing private / third party land, such as amenity strips) as well as the highway authority.



Hardstanding should be proportionate to the size of the dwelling and the relevant car parking standards and avoid paving over a significant amount of the forecourt.



Soft landscaped planted border along all boundaries should be provided in all spaces not specifically defined as parking or turning spaces. Introduce permeable paving to new areas of hardstanding to minimise rainwater run-off issues, as per the requirements of Permitted Development.

## Front Garden Boundary Treatments

**10.23** Boundary treatments help to define the relationship between a dwelling and the street. They can include garden walls, fences, railings and hedges. Existing boundary treatments and garden walls should be retained where they allow sufficient visibility splays to avoid open planned front gardens. A strong front boundary treatment should be incorporated into proposals, particularly where this is characteristic of the street. Boundary treatments visible from the street should:

- Respond to the design of the dwelling;
- Be consistent with the height of other enclosures on the road;
- Avoid the introduction of different styles along the street. Treatments should reinforce the dominant boundary type along the street, ensuring consistency with the style and age of the property;
- Consider well-maintained planting as an alternative solution and retain any hedgerow;
- Encourage natural surveillance of the street and help design out crime;
- Incorporate visibility splays and sight lines for pedestrian and vehicular safety;
- Hedges are also encouraged given their air quality benefits

## Solar Panels

**10.24** The installation of solar panels (photovoltaic and thermal) on dwellings may be 'permitted development' with no need to apply to the Council for planning permission. There are, however, important limits and conditions which must be met to benefit from these permitted development rights.

**10.25** Solar panels should be sited, so far as is practicable, to minimise the effect on the external appearance of the building and the amenity of the area.

**10.26** Conservation Areas - wall mounted panels must not be fitted to a wall which fronts a highway. Equipment on a building should be sited, so far as is practicable, to minimize the effect on the external appearance of the building and the amenity of the area.

**10.27** Further information on the conditions that need to be met for the proposal to be permitted development can be found on the Planning Portal.

## Glossary

**Main Building line:** A designated line beyond which a building cannot extend.

**Character:** A term relating to Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings, but also to the appearance of any rural or urban location in terms of its landscape or the layout of streets and open spaces, often giving places their own distinct identity.

**Conservation Area:** A designated area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

**Context:** The setting of a site or area, including factors such as traffic, activities and land uses as well as landscape spaces and built form

**Curtilage:** The enclosed space of ground and buildings immediately surrounding a dwellinghouse, typically within the boundaries of a property surrounding the main building and used in connection with it.

**Dwelling/dwelling house:** A self-contained building or part of a building used as a residential accommodation, and usually housing a single household. A dwelling may be a house, bungalow, flat, maisonette or converted farm building

**Elevation:** The actual facade (or face) of a building, or a plan showing the drawing of a facade.

**Flank Wall:** Side wall.

**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.

**Highway:** A highway can be the whole or a part of a highway other than a ferry or waterway, it can be a road or footpath and include bridges and tunnels, it does not have to be a drivable route.

**Hipped roof:** Hipped roof has sloped instead of vertical end.

**Gable end:** The triangular upper part of a wall at the end of a ridged roof.

**Layout:** The way buildings, routes and open spaces are placed or laid out on the ground in relation to each other.

**Listed Buildings:** A building or structure identified by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport as being of special architectural or historic interest. There are three categories of listing: Grade I (the highest quality), Grade II\* and Grade II.

**Original Dwelling House:** Usually defined as a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 where it was built before that date, and as it was built when built after that date but for the purposes of this document, it describes the house as it stands today.

**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.

**Overlooking:** A term used to describe the effect when a development or building affords an intrusive view/outlook over adjoining land or property, often causing loss of privacy.

**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

**Parapet wall:** Walls which project above the surrounding roof level, often around the side or edges of a flat roof or between terraced dwellings.

**Party Wall:** A wall that stands astride the boundary of land belonging to two (or more) different owners.

**Permitted development rights:** Permission to carry out certain limited forms of development without the need to make a full application to a local planning authority, as granted under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order.

**Principal elevation:** The part of the house which fronts (directly or at an angle) the main highway serving the house (the main highway will be the one that sets the postcode for the house concerned). It will usually contain the main architectural features such as main bay windows or a porch serving the main entrance to the house. Usually, but not exclusively the principal elevation will be what is understood to be the front of the house.

**Ridgeline:** The horizontal apex of the roof continued along the length of the roof span.

**Roof light:** A window opening in a roof that allows light to enter the building.

**Roof pitch:** The elevation angle of the roof.

**Roofscape:** View resulting from a blend of roof pitches, sizes and heights within the built environment.

**Street scene/Streetscape:** The view along a street from the perspective of a driver or pedestrian, especially of the natural and man-made elements in or near the street right of way, including roof line, street trees, lawns, landscape buffers, signs, street lights, above ground utilities, draining structures, sidewalks, bus stop shelters and street furniture.

**Subordinate:** Inferior in size to.

**Sustainability:** The principle that the environment should be protected in such a condition and to such a degree that ensures new development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

**Symmetrical:** Balanced, being generally identical on both sides.

**Window sill:** Slab of wood or stone at base of window or part of the window frame. The window rests on the sill and it serves to shed water away.

## Appendix 1

### 45 degree rule

This test should be used where the proposed development is at right angles to the affected window of the neighbouring property:

- Draw a line at 45 degrees upwards from the centre of the affected window.
- Draw a line at 45 degrees sideways from the centre of the affected window.

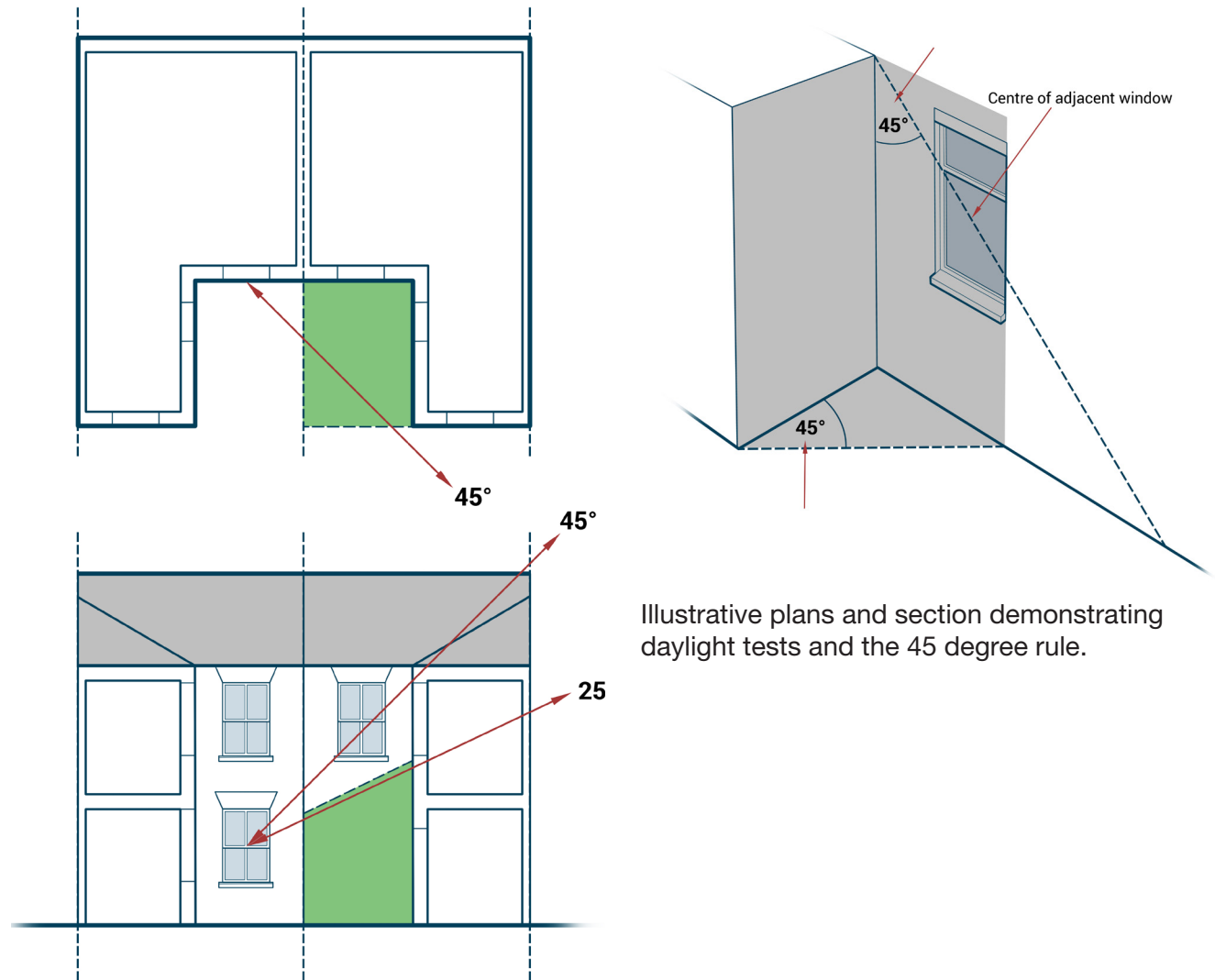
If the proposed development is both higher and wider than these 45 degree lines, there may be an unacceptable loss of daylight to the affected window.

### 25 degree rule

This test should be used where the proposed development faces the affected window of the neighbouring property:

- Draw a line at 25 degrees upwards from the centre of the affected window.

If the proposed development is higher than this 25 degree line, there may be an unacceptable loss of daylight to the affected window.



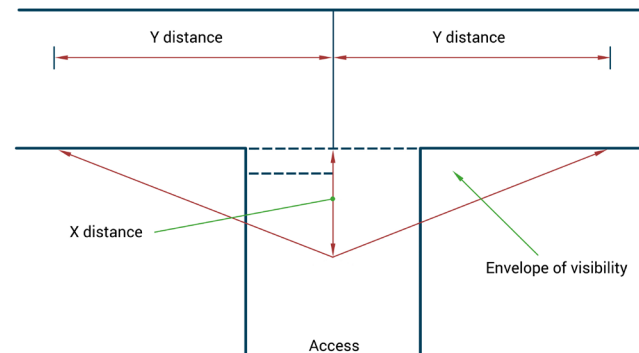
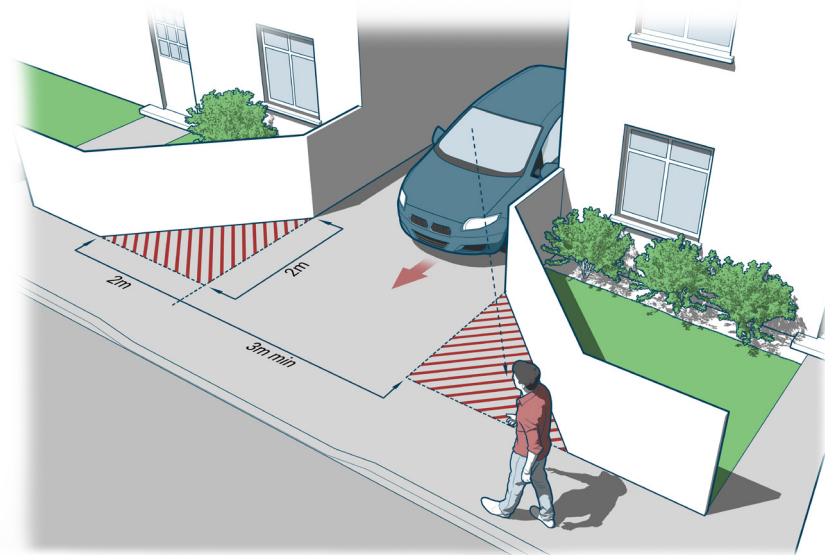
Illustrative plans and section demonstrating daylight tests and the 45 degree rule.

### Building Line



A designated line beyond which a building cannot extend.

### Visibility Splay



For guidance on pedestrian and vehicle visibility splays please refer to Kent County Councils Design Guides on Visibility at <https://www.kent.gov.uk>



