

EXTENDING YOUR HOME

South Derbyshire District Council Supplementary Planning Guidance

Introduction

This guidance has been prepared to help those who wish to make a planning application to extend their home. It has been written in accordance with Housing Policy 13 of the adopted South Derbyshire Local Plan. It updates the previous guidance and takes into account the revised supplementary planning guidance on Housing Design and Layout. The Council is trying to ensure that extensions are in keeping with the main dwelling and the general character of the area and avoid unreasonable impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of nearby dwellings. The guidance does not try to protect the amenities of the applicant, as it is for them themselves to judge how they would be affected.

In some cases planning permission will not be needed to extend your home. An enquiry form can be obtained from the Planning Service. Once you have filled in the form a Council officer will give an opinion (free of charge) as to the need for permission.

Where permission is needed the Council will require drawings that clearly show what is proposed. It is a good idea to use a person qualified and experienced in designing residential extensions. This should help to make sure that a speedy and satisfactory decision is made and avoid unnecessary work and expense to you. Because of the wide variety of house types and street patterns in the area (and therefore possible extensions) planning officers are pleased to discuss preliminary drawings to help to make sure that a scheme is likely to meet the requirements of these guidelines. You may send drawings in or, by prior appointment, call in to discuss them with the officer responsible for your area.

Appearance

With such a wide variety of types of house and layout in the environment there can be no hard and fast rule about how an extension should be designed. This can only be decided by careful examination of a particular building and its surroundings. Special considerations apply to listed buildings and conservation areas and "Historic South Derbyshire" (a further publication available from the Planning Office) will be used to consider the design of proposals affecting these. Outside settlements the Council will try and make sure that the impact on the countryside is minimal – this can mean that an extension is not as large as you may wish it to be.

For all applications, the following points will be looked at:

Scale

What an extension looks like can have an important impact on the character of an area. As a general principle it is a good idea to ensure that an extension looks like a smaller part of the main dwelling, in a way that the main part of the building is not overpowered by it. This becomes particularly important when the main dwelling displays the traditional local distinctiveness of South Derbyshire. However, it is possible to gain a lot of extra space by designing the extension so that it looks smaller than it actually is. For example instead of a

large extension to the side of a house, a smaller side extension and a rear extension could be used to achieve a similar amount of space.

Character and Form

When extending it is usually necessary to reflect the existing character, form and proportion of buildings. This means paying careful attention to gable widths, roof form, angles of roof pitches, the pattern and detailing of window and door openings, eaves and verges and any other particular detail characteristic of the house. The fine detailing of an extension can be crucial in fitting in with the main building. Where streets have an obvious character (e.g. Victorian and inter-war streets) it will be particularly important to ensure careful attention to detail. In more modern housing estates, where dwellings are not all the same, there can be more flexibility, but the general principles set out above will still be looked at. In some cases, for example in a street of houses set at regular intervals, care will need to be taken when extending to the side to avoid a 'terraced effect'. [illustration]

Position

The front of a dwelling is generally the most sensitive to alteration. Extensions here may not always be acceptable, particularly where there is an obvious 'building line'. Where an extension is acceptable, the Council will look very carefully at the features that make up the main building, especially roof pitches, window patterns and other architectural details.

Side extensions can also have a significant effect on what a building will look like. Where side extensions are acceptable, particularly if higher than single storey, care should be taken to make sure that they look like a smaller part of the main dwelling. However in some cases, for example at the end of a terrace, the best design solution may be to add an extension at the same height and width as the terrace. Rear extensions should have fewer problems, but two-storey extensions, in particular, should not upset the basic shape and design of the house.

Roof extensions will normally be very noticeable and in some cases may not be acceptable. Small roof dormers with pitched roofs set well below the ridge generally look better because they are less likely to harm the character of a building. Roof extensions to the rear are likely to be more acceptable but must still be in keeping with the building. Flat roofs on two storey extensions will not normally be allowed.

Materials

The use of the right materials is very important and the Council will usually require that materials match the existing building or will want to see samples for approval. Sometimes, for example where an existing building has been rendered, it may be better to use materials that do not match, although it is usually a good idea to find materials that have similar colour, size and texture.

Effect on Neighbours

The effect of an extension on neighbours often causes most concern. Because one person's idea of what is acceptable is not necessarily the same as another's, the Council has written guidelines to be fair to both sides, although it is always necessary to consider proposals on their own merits. Normally, extensions that meet the guidelines will be acceptable. The main issues that concern neighbours are overlooking (or loss of privacy) and overshadowing (or overbearing).

In order to protect the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings from overlooking and to protect privacy, the 'primary' windows of the existing dwellings should not fall within the minimum distance (as set out in the table below) within the sector of view of the 'primary' windows of the proposed extension. These guidelines will be applied on the particular merits of the situation but not to side and 'secondary' windows to either property as this would be likely to result in those applying being unfairly disadvantaged. Where the view between windows can be prevented (e.g. by a screen wall or fence of reasonable height) then the minimum distances may be reduced. Shrubs and trees are not normally reliable as a screen because they may not always be there.

In order to protect windows in existing dwellings from overshadowing, proposed two-storey extensions should not breach the minimum distance within the 'sector of view' of the relevant ground floor 'primary' windows of the existing property. Single storey extensions will be decided on their own merits, on the basis of preserving privacy along the lines set out above.

The guidelines assume that sites are relatively level, with little or no screening and normal ground floor and first floor layouts. The guidance also assumes straightforward identification of front, rear and side elevations. Where situations arise that do not readily fit these guidelines, decisions will be made on the merits of the case.

Guidelines

	Existing Dwelling				
	Lounge/Dining Room (L/DR)	Kitchen	Bedroom (first floor)	Bedroom (ground floor)	Conservatory
Proposed Dwelling					
L/DR	21	18	15	18	21
Kitchen	18	15	12	15	18
Bed (first floor)	21	18	15	18	21
Bed (ground floor)	18	15	12	15	18
Conservatory	21	18	15	18	21
Blank elevation	12	9	N/M	9	9

Definitions

N/M: No Minimum. The application is to be considered on its merits.

Primary window: Main window to a lounge, dining room, kitchen, bedroom or conservatory.

Secondary window: Any subsidiary window to a lounge, dining room, kitchen, bedroom, or conservatory affording light to that room. Side windows to a conservatory will be treated as a secondary window.

Blank elevation: An elevation with either no windows or with windows to rooms other than to a lounge, dining room, kitchen, bedroom or conservatory.

Sector of view: Set out below. (diagram).

All distances are set out in metres.

Where elevations are opposite each other, separated by public areas, such as a road, and having regard to the overall character of the surrounding area, the guidelines may be relaxed.

Sometimes, the garden of neighbouring dwellings will be so long that the distances between dwellings will meet the guidelines regardless of how close to the boundary the new extension would be. In these cases, the view from first floor 'primary' windows in the new extension could lead to a significant loss of privacy to the entire private space of the existing property. In such cases, the Council will try to make sure that the proposed extension is set back a suitable distance from the boundary of the neighbouring dwelling.

Access and Parking

When looking at proposals for extensions, the Council will try and make sure that there is enough parking at the property that meets with current parking standards. As of November 2002 the standards are:

1 Bedroom houses	1.5 spaces
2 & 3 bedroom houses	2 spaces
4 and more bedroom houses	3 spaces