

# RESIDENTIAL DESIGN AND AMENITY



**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**  
August 2025



**BOROUGH OF  
BROXBOURNE**  
[www.broxbourne.gov.uk](http://www.broxbourne.gov.uk)

EM250366



# Index

Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index	02
Introduction	03
Do I need Consent?	04
General Design Principles	05
New Residential Development	13
Internal Space Standards	13
Private Amenity Space	14
Existing Residential Alterations	15
Rear Extensions	15
Side Extensions	16
Roof alterations/Loft conversions	17
Front Extensions and/or Porches	18
Garage Conversions	20
Annexes and Outbuildings	22
Driveways on Front Gardens	23
Contacts for further advice	28





Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

Overview

Applications relating to residential development, including both new dwellings and alterations to existing ones, should have regard to this Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). The SPG supplements the policies in the Borough’s Local Plan and sits within the framework established by the [National Design Guide](#).

Purpose

Broxbourne has both historic centres and newer neighbourhoods, and many have a unique identity and character. Poorly designed developments or alterations to existing housing can have a negative impact on the streetscape and the wider character of the area. This design guide aims to encourage high quality, functional designs that enhance the physical environment, and are sympathetic to existing architectural styles in the neighbourhood.

In accordance with Government advice, Supplementary Planning Guidance may be regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. It helps to explain the Council’s overall approach by outlining a framework of criteria for those preparing planning applications for decision making.

The Council accepts that not all development proposals can be covered by the SPG and not all situations which arise from development schemes warrant the rigid application of fixed standards. Accordingly, the guidance is intended to operate in a flexible manner. Each case will be treated on its own merits, but on the understanding that a reasonable consistency of decision making is essential so that the overall vision set out in the Local Plan can be realised.

Local Plan 2018-2033 (adopted June 2020)

The Local Plan reflects the latest guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework and sets out the Council’s design aspirations for the area.  
The Local Plan is available at [www.broxbourne.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.broxbourne.gov.uk/localplan)

Local Plan Policy DSC1: General Design Principles (p114-5) states that “all developments should have regard to the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance in relation to design.” Other relevant Local Plan policies include DSC2: Extensions and alterations to existing development (p116), H8: Residential Annexes (p127-8) and EQ1: Residential and Environmental Quality (p163).

The Residential Quality Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) supersedes the House Extensions, Conversions and Driveways SPG (2020) and the Borough-Wide SPG (2013 update). The updated document includes a new section on New Residential Developments which includes details of the Nationally Described internal Space Standards as well as private amenity space standards from the superseded Borough-Wide SPG.

THE BROXBOURNE  
LOCAL PLAN

A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOROUGH

JUNE 2020

[www.broxbourne.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.broxbourne.gov.uk/localplan)

Local Plan 2018 - 2033

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# Do I need consent?



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

Some changes to existing houses may fall within a special exemption named “Permitted Development” and may not need planning permission to build. However, these may still require permission under Building Regulations. The Council encourages home owners and architects to look up the [planning portal](#) for guidance on whether or not their proposal falls under permitted development. The [Interactive House/Terrace House](#) on the planning portal website gives advice for general householder planning projects.

Sometimes the Council may have removed some permitted development rights through a planning condition or by issuing an ‘Article 4’ direction. This will mean that you have to submit a planning application for work which normally falls under Permitted Development. The Council recommends that homeowners should check this with the Development Management Officers to verify whether or not they need planning permission for their proposed works.

Some alteration and extensions to your house will require planning permission.

- These include:
- A dormer window in the roof of your house facing the road
  - Most two storey extensions
  - Putting up some large outbuildings and structures
  - Changes in the use of land or buildings e.g. converting a residential unit into a business unit.

You will also need consent from the Council in the following situations:

- Work on a listed building
- Work within a conservation area
- Work on a protected tree or trees within a conservation area
- The display of advertisements



# General design principles



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

- Internal space standards
- Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

- Rear extensions
- Side extensions
- Roof alterations/loft conversions
- Front extensions and/or porches
- Garage conversions
- Annexes and outbuildings
- Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

This section sets out the Design Principles that should be considered when designing all alterations or extensions to existing houses. In addition, you must ensure that your development meets specific design criteria relevant to your extension type as set out in the following pages of this document under [Design Guidelines](#).

## 1. Maintain Character of Street

All proposals should maintain or enhance the character of the street. Your extension should sit comfortably with the main building and with neighbouring houses. Follow these pointers to help ensure the extension is acceptable:

- Take account of the architecture of houses nearby, and the scale and character of development along your street.
- Use a design and materials which blend in with the character and appearance of the existing house.
- Take account of changes in levels between properties, gardens and the road.
- Take account of the angle and position of your house. This may increase the visual effect of the extension in the street scene.
- Ensure that any changes complement the roof of the original house and the surrounding area.
- Leave enough space between houses to retain the original pattern of buildings and gaps on the street.



A front dormer on this row of terraces breaks the strict geometry of the facade and roof form and impacts negatively on the streetscene.

Continued on page 6



# General design principles



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

## 2. Keep in harmony with the original building

Proposed extensions and alterations should not dominate the existing building. They should normally be subordinate to and respect the original house. This can be achieved by:

- respecting the proportions of the existing house.
- using a complementary roof form.
- matching materials and details.
- matching the window style, its proportions and position.
- reflecting the character of the original house.
- the height of the extension should normally be lower than the height of the original building. As an example, this can usually be achieved for a two-storey side extension by stepping down the roof-line and setting back the front building line (see adjoining figure).



This large side extension with matching roof ridge lines and front aligned with the line of the front façade is unacceptable because it makes the house look unbalanced and lopsided.



This smaller side extension is more sympathetic to the original façade as it has a reasonable setback from the front façade and the ridge is lower than the original roof thus allowing due prominence to the original house.



Continued on page 7

# General design principles



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

- Internal space standards
- Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

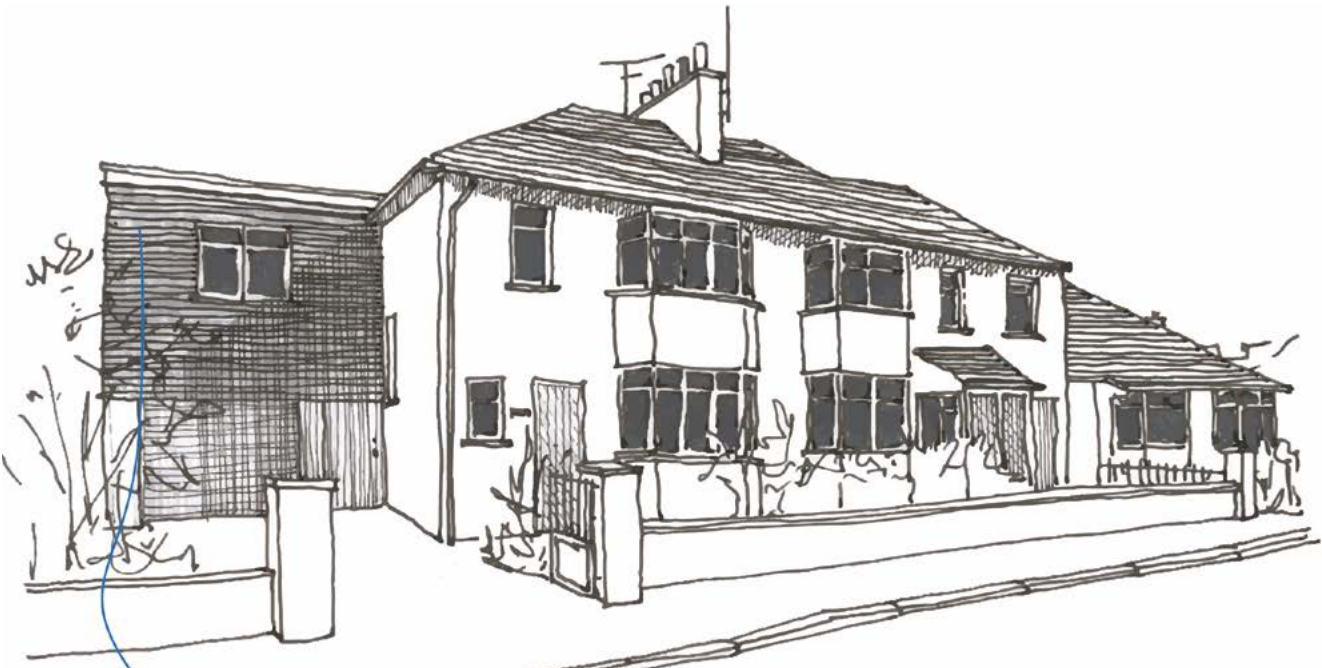
- Rear extensions
- Side extensions
- Roof alterations/loft conversions
- Front extensions and/or porches
- Garage conversions
- Annexes and outbuildings
- Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

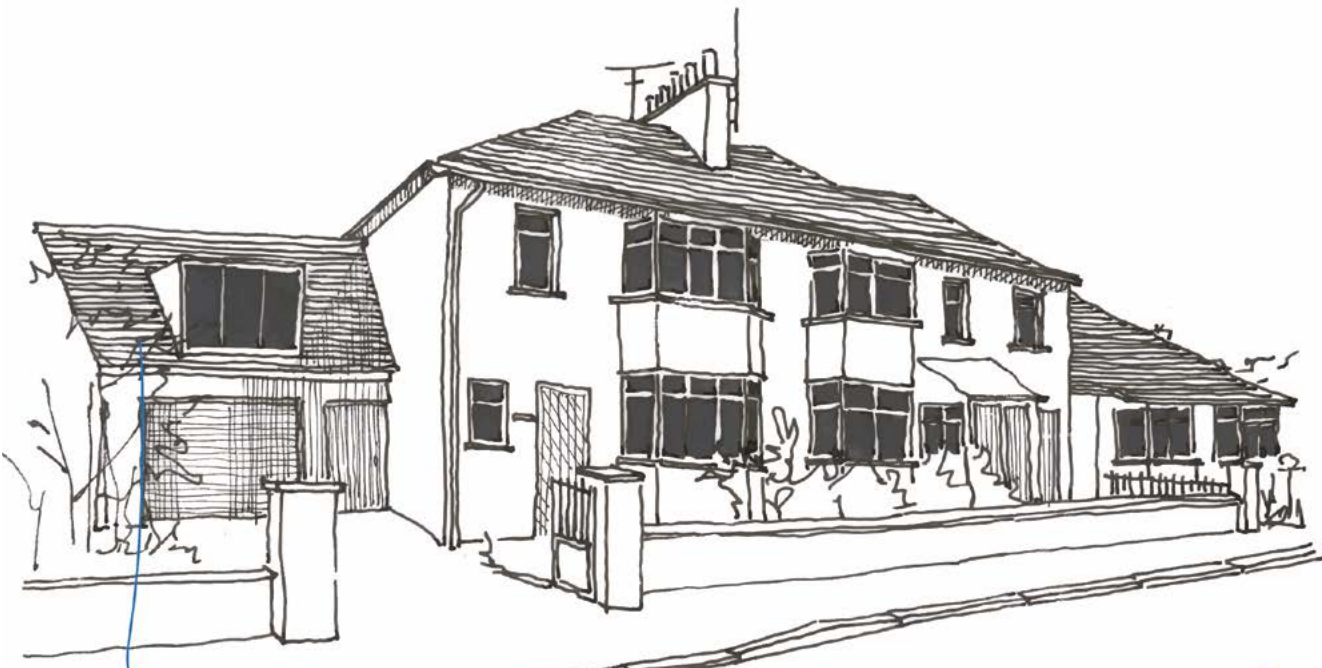
## 2. Keep in harmony with the original building

(continued)

Garage conversions are another example of house extensions where the relation to the existing building needs to be carefully considered.



A flat roofed first floor extension over existing garage detracts from the architectural style of the house and is therefore unacceptable.



The sloping roof of the first floor extension over existing garage complements the roof form of the original house better.





# General design principles



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

- Index
- Introduction
- Do I need consent?
- General design principles
- New residential development
  - Internal space standards
  - Private amenity space
- Existing residential alterations
  - Rear extensions
  - Side extensions
  - Roof alterations/loft conversions
  - Front extensions and/or porches
  - Garage conversions
  - Annexes and outbuildings
  - Driveways on front gardens
- Contacts for further advice

## 3. Amenity of neighbouring residents

Proposals should not have an adverse effect on the living conditions or the amenity of neighbouring residents. Proposals for an extension should not cause the following:

- Loss of light or overshadowing of adjoining properties, particularly loss of light to main windows serving principal rooms such as living or dining rooms
- Loss of privacy by overlooking adjoining properties
- Loss of outlook from adjoining properties
- Sense of enclosure or overbearing impact on adjoining properties
- Loss of garden, landscaping or open space which contributes to local amenity.
- Loss of parking space that is desirable to retain.

Seek the advice of the Council’s Development Management Officers at an early stage to avoid difficulties later.

On assessing proposals for rear extensions, the Council will apply the 45° rule (two storey extensions) or 60° rule (for ground floor extensions) as shown in these diagrams, preventing the neighbouring properties from being overshadowed.

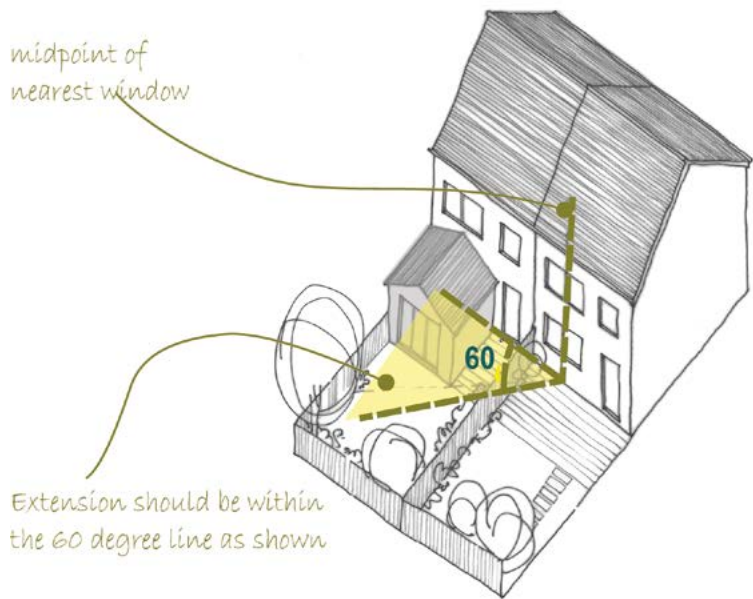
If the new development includes a first floor extension, the ground floor should maintain the 60 degree angle, while the first floor should not exceed 45 degrees.

The reference point is the centre of the neighbour’s nearest habitable room window.

These rules seek to:

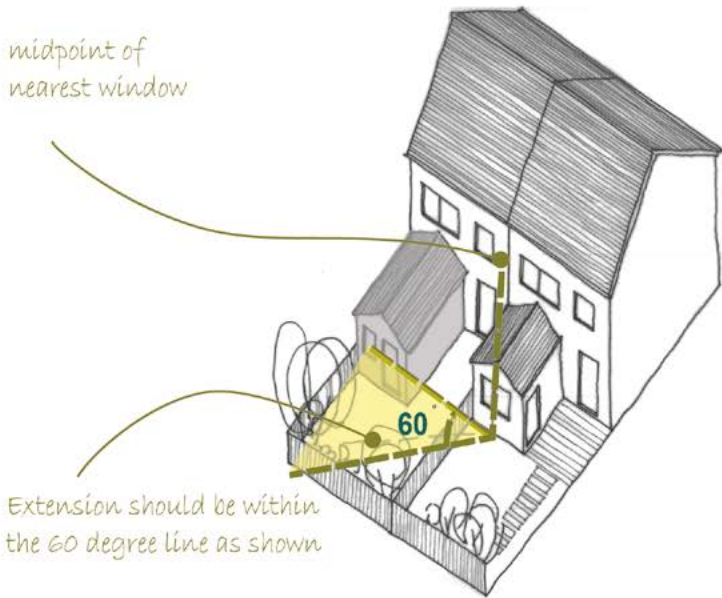
- Maintain a reasonable relationship between existing buildings and extensions;
- Avoid an overbearing visual impact in bulk and proximity to boundaries both from inside adjacent properties and from neighbouring gardens; and
- Prevent excessive daylight loss or overshadowing to habitable rooms of neighbouring properties.

### Ground floor extension (60°)

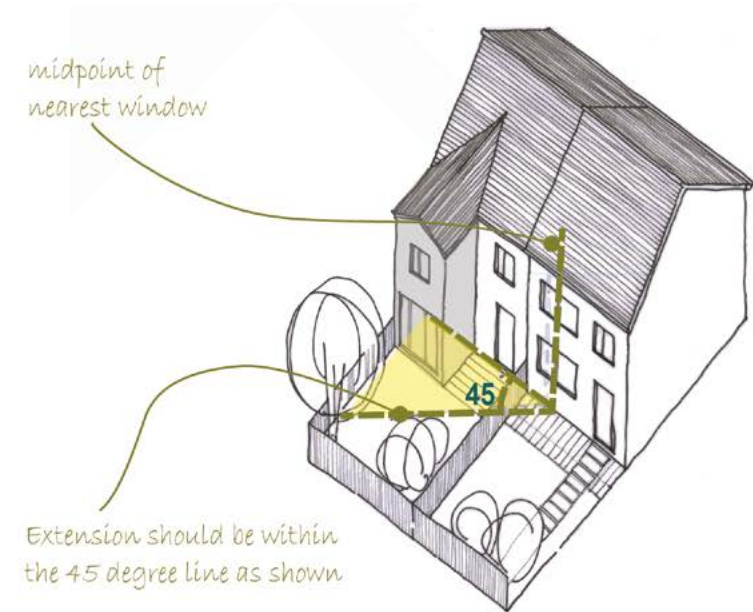


### Existing neighbouring extension

45° for two storey and 60° for ground floor extensions



### Two storey extension (45°)



Continued on page 9



# General design principles



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

## 3. Amenity of neighbouring residents (continued)

### Overlooking and Loss of Privacy

The Council is keen to ensure that all dwellings have attractive open outlooks and adequate privacy. Unnecessary overlooking between windows of habitable rooms of neighbouring properties should be avoided in all cases. All new dwellings or extensions to existing dwellings should be designed with this in mind. The Council will therefore assess all relevant planning applications against the criteria set out in the “Minimum Overlooking Distances” as set out in the adjoining cross-sections.

Overlooking distances on sloped terrain may need to be increased from those stated in the adjoining cross-sections. This is because overlooking may be a greater issue on sloped terrain and houses may need to be further apart in order to maintain adequate privacy. The appropriate distance in such cases will be determined on a case by case basis by the Council’s Development Management Officers.

1 habitable room : a room where somebody might sleep e.g. a bedroom, living room. A bath or kitchen is not a habitable room.

### Minimum overlooking distances



### Minimum distance to enable a reasonable outlook



Continued on page 10





Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

- Internal space standards
- Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

- Rear extensions
- Side extensions
- Roof alterations/loft conversions
- Front extensions and/or porches
- Garage conversions
- Annexes and outbuildings
- Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

### 3. Amenity of neighbouring residents

(continued)

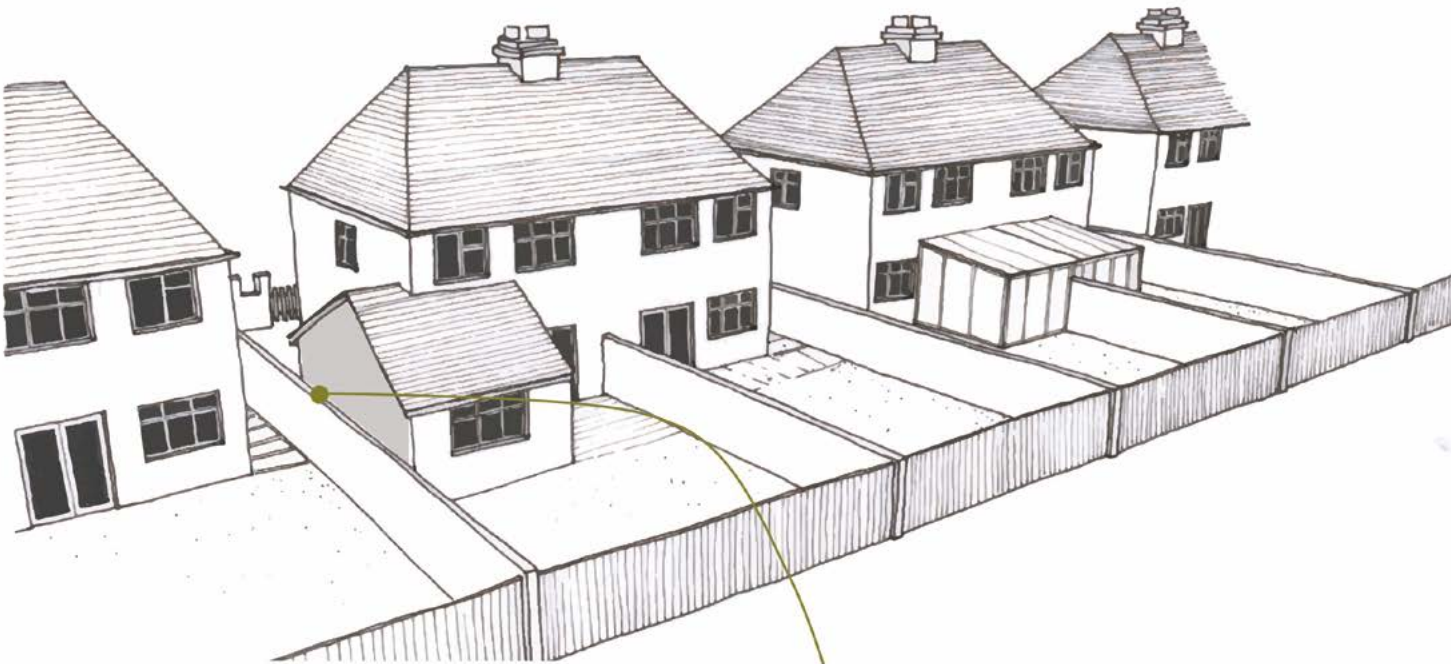
#### Overbearing impacts on adjoining properties

An overbearing relationship is caused when the height and bulk of a proposed extension significantly dominates the outlook of a habitable room or area. This depends on the height of the wall or roof of the extension, the proximity of the side elevations of the extension and neighbouring properties to their boundary, and the location of the main habitable rooms and areas.

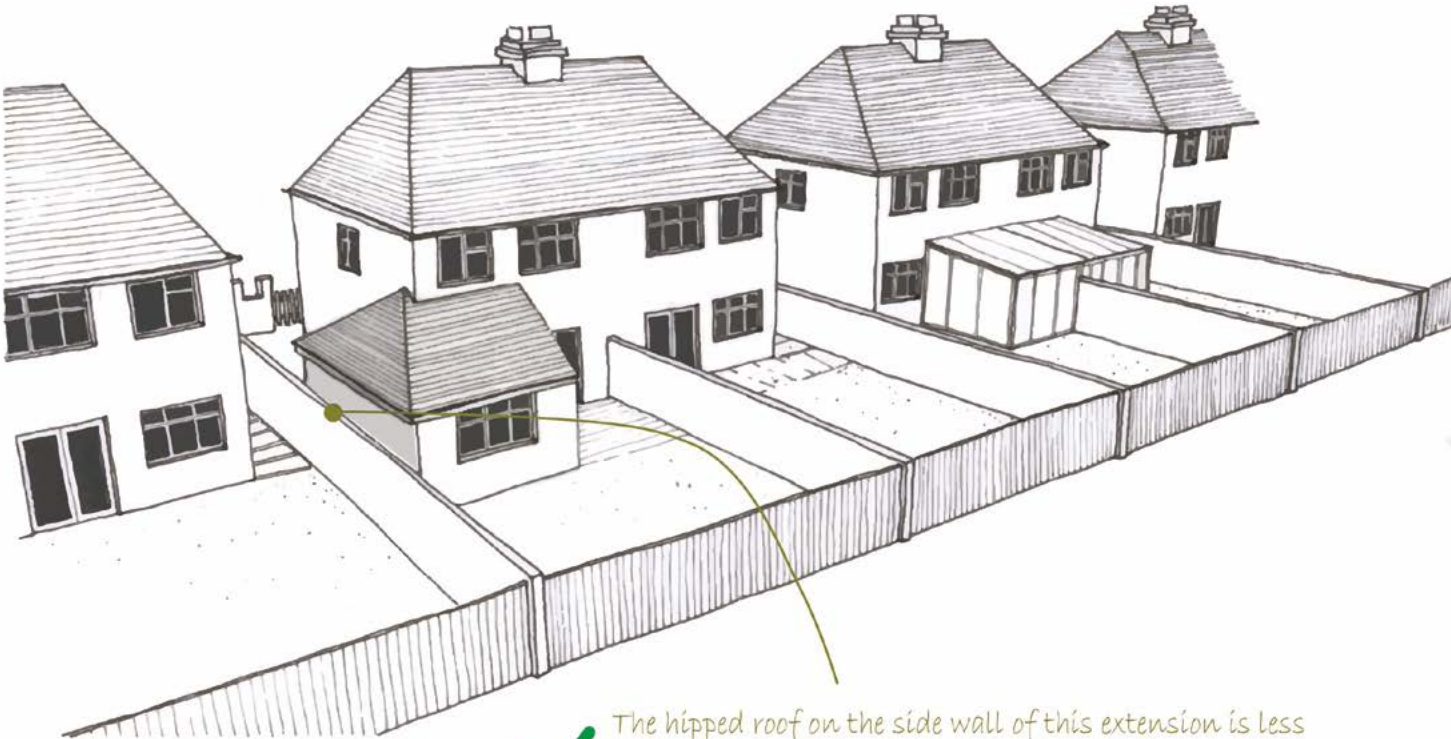
As shown in the adjoining figure, even a single-storey extension can have an overbearing relationship to the adjoining property to the side, if the roof or the top of the side wall extends down the garden such that it would dominate the outlook from the neighbouring property.

The minimum distance between a window of a proposed extension and a blank wall should be 12m. See cross-section on page 10.

All new windows of habitable rooms in a new extension should have an adequate view such as the street or a garden, rather than a blank wall or a bin store.



✗ This rear and side extension with its gable towards the neighbour's garden is overbearing onto the neighbour's usable garden space.



✓ The hipped roof on the side wall of this extension is less overbearing on the neighbour's garden space.

Continued on page 11





Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

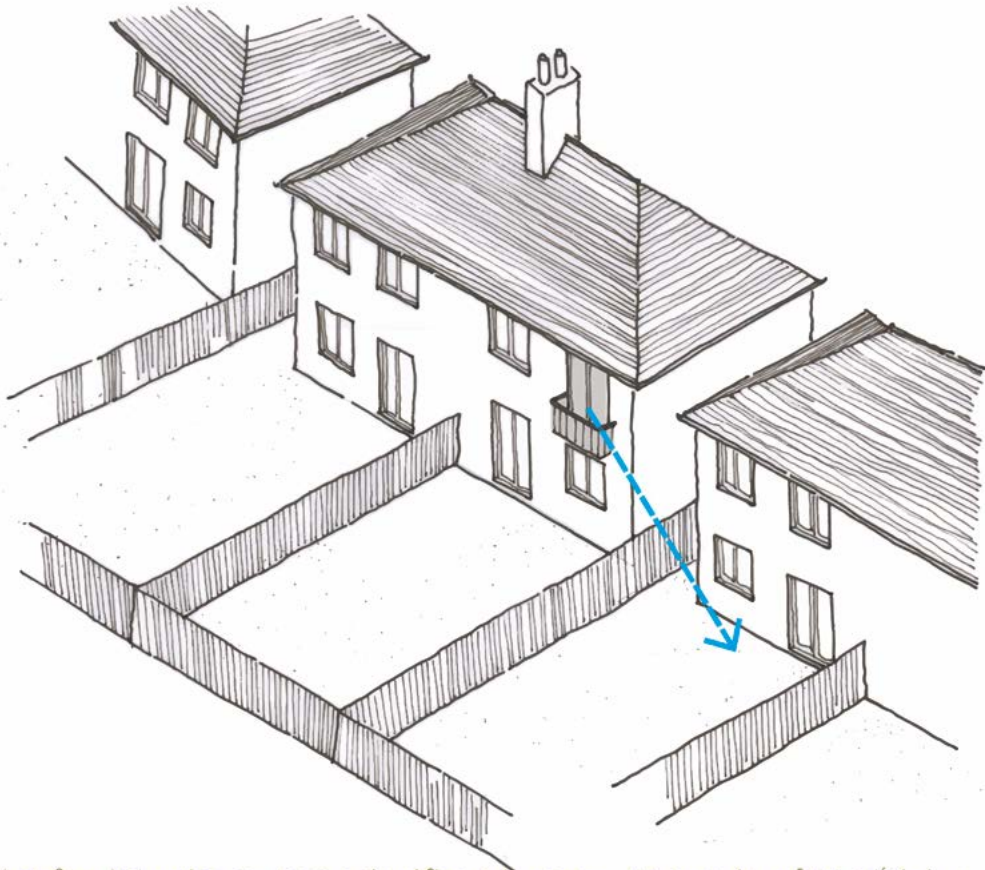
Contacts for further advice

### 3. Amenity of neighbouring residents (continued)

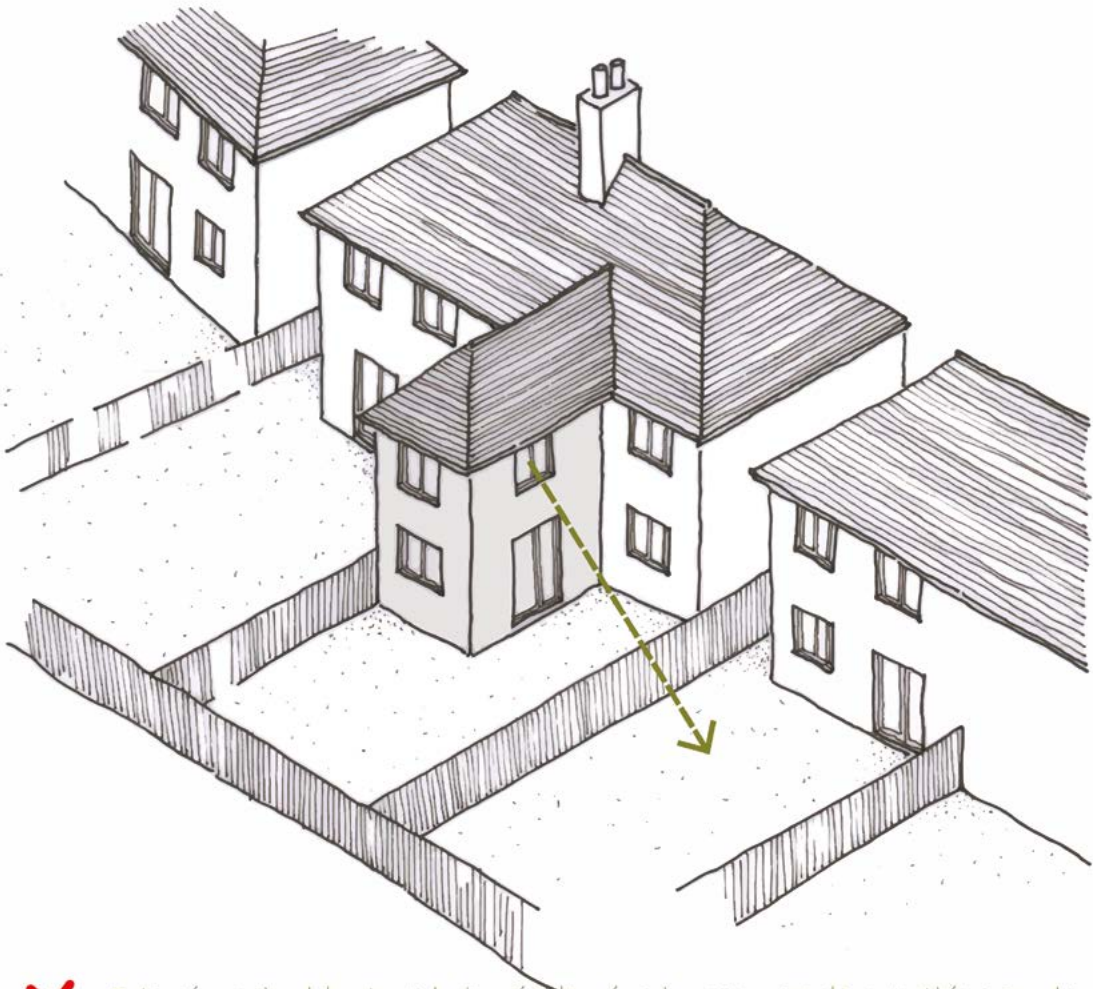
#### Loss of Privacy

First floor windows in the side wall should be avoided. When they are necessary, they should be at a high level, non-opening and fitted with obscured glass.

First floor balconies can have a significant impact on the privacy of adjoining neighbours and should be avoided if neighbours are likely to be affected.



✗ First floor balconies can have a significant impact on the amenity of the adjoining neighbours and should be avoided where this is likely.



✗ Extensions should not overlook neighbouring houses or gardens. In this example the first floor window on the extension has a direct view of the neighbour's garden and has a negative impact on the neighbour's amenity.



# General design principles



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

## 4. Choose matching or complementary materials, finishes and details

External finishes, materials and architectural features will affect how your extension looks.

If the original house has a clearly defined traditional style façade, a good approach would be to match the materials on the extension with those of the existing house in terms of colour, type and size, etc. A different approach may be taken where a high quality minimalistic and contemporary addition looks equally good against an existing house, but this will need to be very well designed in order to achieve a high quality appearance.

- With the traditional approach involving matching styles:
- The brick bond and mortar joints should be similar to the original house.
  - The design, proportions and position of joinery details, windows and doors should reflect those of the original building to ensure the details of the new extension are sympathetically in keeping and do not detract from the general character of the area.
  - Windows on extensions should normally match those on the existing house, in terms of their design, material and proportions. Where necessary, they should also be recessed to match the original windows. Those on upper floors will often need to be slightly smaller than those on the floors below where an obvious hierarchy exists (i.e. they reduce in size the higher up the house is).
  - Original bay windows are important features which should not be enlarged or altered significantly, to avoid having an adverse effect on the appearance of the house. Also, any new windows on front façades should not compete with the original bay window features.
  - Where a flat roof is appropriate on a single storey extension (and in many cases pitched roofs are a better design), the roof should relate to any existing horizontal elements such as string courses or to the line of change between materials e.g. brick to render or tile hanging. Brick on edge coping is usually more satisfactory than a timber fascia board.



The above images are examples of two different approaches to designing an extension, both of which could look very pleasing if designed well and dependent on the context. The image to the left shows an extension that matches in style and materials to the original house.

The image to the right shows an extension that is designed to sit in contrast with the existing house. The white render and large glazing offer an interesting contrast to the traditional detail and textures on the original house.





# Internal space standards



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

In 2015, the government published the [‘technical housing standards – nationally described space standard’](#) which ‘deals with internal space within new dwellings and is suitable for application across all tenures. It sets out requirements for the Gross Internal (floor) Area (GIA) of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height.

Although these standards are not included within the Local Plan, they are a material consideration when determining planning applications for new dwellings. For full detail, consult the Nationally Described Space Standards.

**The Internal Design Standard requires that:**

- a) every dwelling provides at least the gross internal floor area and built-in storage area set out in Table 1.
- b) every dwelling with two or more bedspaces provides at least one double (or twin) bedroom .
- c) in order to provide one bedspace, every single bedroom has a floor area of at least 7.5m² and is at least 2.15m wide.
- d) in order to provide two bedspaces, every double (or twin bedroom) has a floor area of at least 11.5m².
- e) one double (or twin bedroom) is at least 2.75m wide and every other double (or twin) bedroom is at least 2.55m wide.
- f) any area with a headroom of less than 1.5m is not counted within the GIA unless used solely for storage (if the area under the stairs is to be used for storage, assume a general floor area of 1m² within the GIA).
- g) any other area that is used solely for storage and has a headroom of 900-1500mm (such as under eaves) is counted at 50% of its floor area, and any area lower than 900mm is not counted at all.
- h) the minimum floor to ceiling height of the main living space is 2.5m for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area.

Table 1: Minimum gross internal floor area and storage (m²)					
Number of bedrooms	Number of bedspaces	1 storey dwelling	2 storey dwelling	3 storey dwelling	Built-in storage
studio	1 person	39 (37)*			1.0
1 bedroom	2 people	50	58		1.5
2 bedrooms	3 people	61	70		2.0
	4 people	70	79		
3 bedrooms	4 people	74	84	90	2.5
	5 people	86	99	99	
	6 people	95	108	108	
4 bedrooms	5 people	90	97	103	3.0
	6 people	99	106	112	
	7 people	108	115	121	
	8 people	117	124	130	
5 bedrooms	6 people	103	110	116	3.5
	7 people	112	119	125	
	8 people	121	128	134	
6 bedrooms	7 people	116	123	129	4.0
	8 people	125	132	138	

Source: [nationally described space standard](#)



# Private amenity space



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

The Council is keen to ensure that all new residential developments provide outside amenity space, appropriate to the dwelling type being provided. This section covers amenity space for houses, apartments (communal amenity space, balconies and terraces) as well as garages.

Where the redevelopment of private garden space for new residential dwelling(s) is considered appropriate, the standards set out in Table 2 below will apply to both the new dwelling and the remaining dwelling.

The Council accepts that there will be exceptional circumstances where the below standards cannot be met, such as residential conversions in town centres. However, the aim will always be to meet, or ideally exceed, these standards.

## Houses

In the case of houses, it is expected that an attached garden is required out of view of the general public in the street. This will normally be to the rear of the property and in a form that provides a good level of light and privacy for occupants. Such private amenity space should preferably be with direct access to the street to obviate the need to go through the house at all times. This could be for example via a rear gate, side access point or through a garage. Each garden must be usable and of practical shape and sufficiently large to have space available for composting and storage for recyclable material for collection or removal. As the size of a household increases, so the demand for garden space can also be expected to increase. Furthermore, with lower density housing, garden size in relation to house size is an important factor in establishing a balance between openness and the built form. The following guidance on garden size will be applied.

Table 2: Private amenity space - houses	Garden Size
2 bedrooms	60m²
3 bedrooms	70m²
4 bedrooms	80m²
5+ bedrooms	100m²
Minimum depth of private rear gardens	10 m

The Council expects private amenity space to be provided for each new house. However occasions may arise when it may be appropriate to provide such space on a communal basis. Should this be the case, the aggregate areas should equate to the guidance on garden size for individual houses.

## Flats and apartments

The provision of private amenity space for apartment buildings is considered less important than the provision of general landscaped amenity areas (both hard and soft) to create a pleasant living environment. It will be expected that the overlooking distances (see page 10) will serve to ensure the provision of space for general amenity purposes and landscaping.

Flats will normally be provided with communal amenity space and where this is the case, a minimum of 20m² of amenity space is required for each flat. Communal amenity areas must have a well designed area for children’s play adequate to meet the needs of the development;

be overlooked by surrounding development, (in accordance with policy DSC6); accessible to wheelchair users and other disabled people; be designed to take advantage of direct sunlight; and have suitable long term management arrangements in place to ensure open space is well managed over the life of the development.

Balconies are also encouraged for flatted developments in order to provide an external space for private enjoyment, but do not form part of the 20m² requirement. Where balconies and/or terraces are provided, they must be designed to respect the amenity of neighbours and be designed so as not to detract from the character of the surroundings. Balconies provided to meet amenity space requirements should have a minimum depth and width of 1.5m.

## Garages

The standards set out in Table 3 apply to the internal dimensions of attached and detached garages, communal garages and car ports. These will be able to accommodate a family car and storage to the rear with the room to manoeuvre both people and equipment, such as wheelie bins, along one side. An alternative layout may be appropriate, although the internal garage dimension should still measure at least 18m².

Table 3: Garage sizes (m)	
Minimum width	3
Minimum depth	6





Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

## Rear Extensions

Any extensions to the rear of properties including conservatories, and other single/two storey structures will fall under this category. While a rear extension is rarely visible from the street, it can have a significant impact on the appearance of the rear façade of the house and the neighbours' properties. Due care should therefore be taken to ensure that this is of a suitable scale and design. Acceptability of the design will be assessed by the Council on a case by case basis based on the individual characteristics of the existing house and neighbourhood. Certain rear extensions fall under Permitted Development. Applicants are encouraged to look at the [Planning Portal](#) and/or discuss with [Development Management Officers](#) to check if their proposals fall under Permitted Development.

The following design criteria provide useful guidance and will be used by the Council to assess proposals if Planning Permission is required:

**All rear extensions should meet the General Design Principles set out in this document. In addition, they should also meet the following design criteria.**

**R1. The extension should not cause a significant sense of enclosure, or loss of outlook from, or loss of light to, principal windows of neighbour's habitable rooms and garden.**

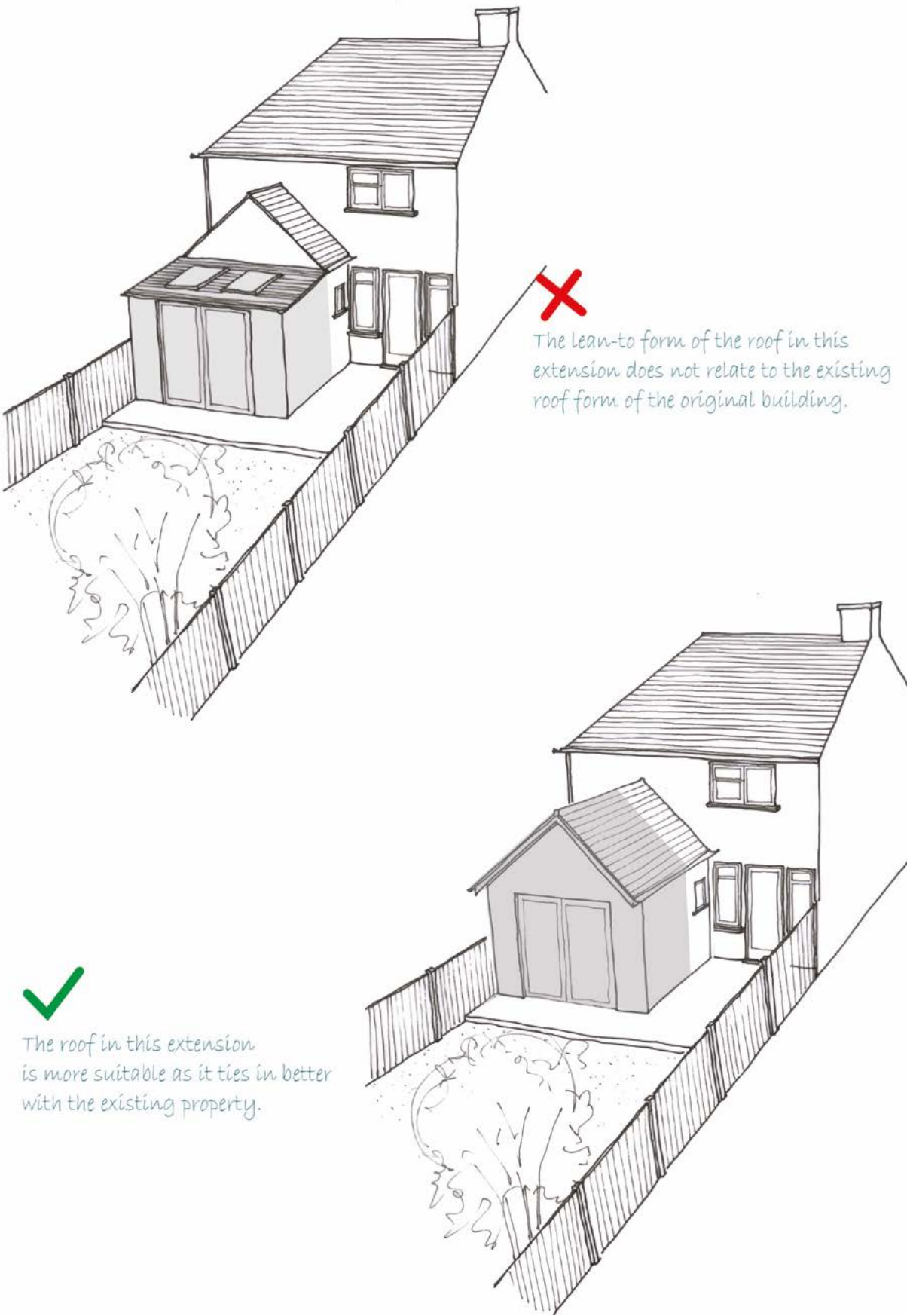
**R2. They should not look too bulky and prominent compared to the size of the main building and garden to which they relate.**

**R3. If the neighbouring house is set back from the rear building line, the depth of the proposed extension may need to be reduced in order to protect the amenity of the neighbour.**

**R4. If a neighbour's house is on a lower level, it may mean that they may suffer from loss of privacy/light because of the proposed extension. In such situations it may be required that the depth of the proposed extension is reduced to ensure that the neighbour's amenity is protected.**

**R5. The design should create functional spaces internally and externally. Materials and window sizes should appear proportionate to the façade of the original house. Also, the design should allow for a sufficient amount of daylight into the original and extended part of the property.**

**R6. The roof of the extension should have a complementary design to the original house. Eaves should match or be lower than existing. In most cases higher eaves will not be acceptable.**







Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

## Side Extensions

A side extension can have a significant impact on the appearance of the house frontage, and subsequently the character of the street. It should be carefully designed in order to ensure these are subservient to the original house and do not affect the symmetry of the original house. There are several factors to be considered in determining the acceptability of a design as follows:

**S1. Often in streets with blocks of terraced houses, semi-detached houses and detached houses, the gaps between properties form a crucial element of the street’s character. Large side extensions that fill these gaps can cause a terracing effect. Side extensions should therefore be reasonably sized to maintain this gap. For this reason, side extensions should be set at least 1m off the side boundary of the property.**

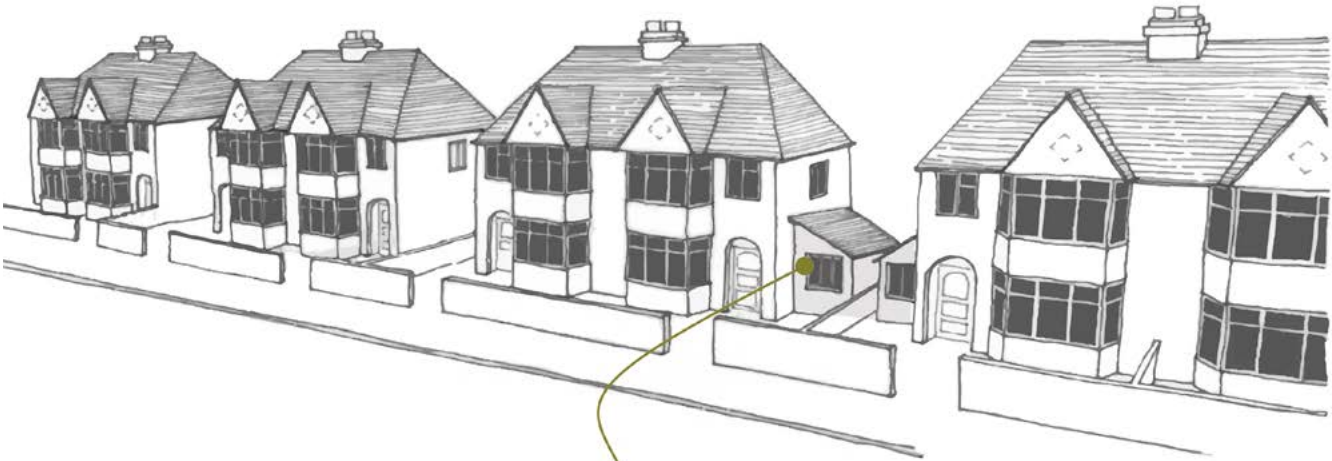
**S2. A side extension could cause an otherwise symmetrical building to look disproportionate. The scale, footprint and architectural style should be carefully designed to respect the original building, especially the front façade. Side extensions should therefore be set back by at least 1m off the front of the building to retain the prominence of the original front façade. Additionally, the roof ridge of the extension should be set down from the ridge of the main property for the same reason (See diagrams in section 2 of this guidance).**

**S3. Side extensions should not impact on the privacy or natural light enjoyed by the neighbours. Windows should not be positioned on side walls where they look down into private gardens of the neighbouring property. Where unavoidable these should be high level, obscured glazed and have restricted opening to prevent overlooking. In addition, the size and bulk of the side extension should not cause overshadowing to the neighbouring property or appear overbearing or dominant in relation to the neighbour.**

**S4. Roof form of a two storey extension should respect the style of the original house.**



Large side extensions that close the gap between houses and cause a terracing effect are likely to be rejected especially on a street where the gap between houses forms a prominent element of the street’s character .



Smaller ground floor only side extensions that are set back from the front façade may be more acceptable in such situations as this helps retain the gap between the houses.





Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

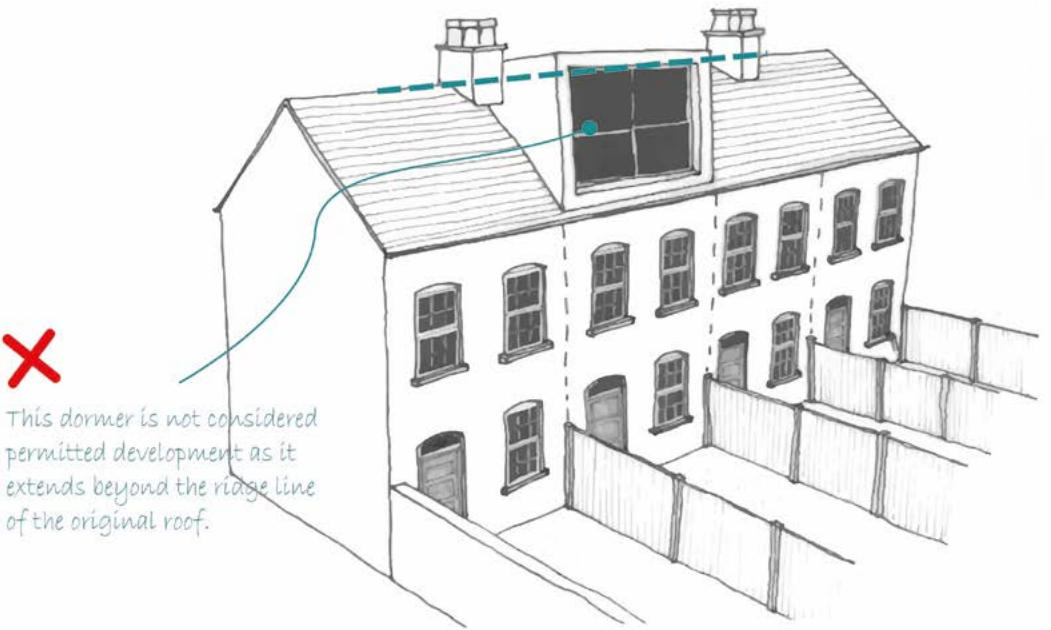
Contacts for further advice

## Roof Alterations (Loft Conversions)

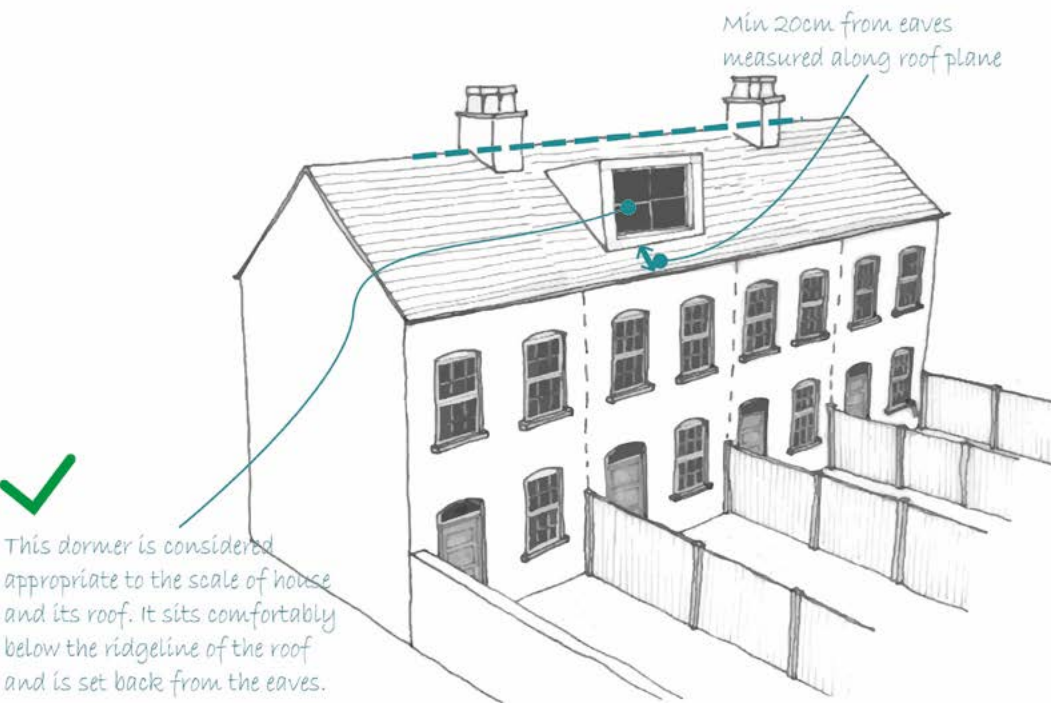
Creating living accommodation in roof-space can be an effective way to extend a house. However, some roofs may be too shallow to allow creation of a functional living space within. Also in other cases, the size of dormer windows required may not be appropriate to the character of the area.

Certain types of alterations to roofs may be classified as Permitted Development and may not require the submission of a planning application. Please look up [Planning Portal](#) for further details on these criteria. For others, the following points should be considered when designing out roof extensions:

- L1. Dormers on the front of semi-detached or terraced houses will not normally be acceptable, due to the negative impact these have on the adjoining houses and street scene. In special cases where these may be considered on the front elevation, dormers will need to be smaller and preferably have a roof that complements the original roof form.**
- L2. Side dormer extensions on hipped roofs may be considered but these should still be set away from the ridge and clear of the hips.**
- L3. Design of dormers should reflect the style and proportion of windows on the existing house. Flat, gabled, hipped or curved roofs may be used depending on the house style. Position and width of dormers should normally be designed to align with windows below.**
- L4. The size and position of dormers should be determined to minimize overlooking of adjoining properties and gardens.**
- L5. Dormers should be subservient to the main roof structure. There should be adequate roof slope above and below the dormer. Dormers should not sit taller than the original roof, nor should they overlap or wrap around the hips. In conservation areas, or listed buildings or in specific cases where Permitted Development rights for loft extensions have been removed and where large dormers do not already impact on the character of the area, the Council will not permit dormers that are taller than half the height of the roof (measured from the eaves to the ridge) and/or are wider than half the width of the roof on which it is constructed. In other cases these criteria may be relaxed provided the dormer is seen as subservient to the roof on which it is built.**
- L6. Too many dormers on the roof of a house can have an unbalancing effect, will detract from the original form of the roof and should be avoided.**
- L7. The dormer window design should be in harmony with the rest of the house. Materials overall should be complementary to those on the existing house.**
- L8. Changing a pitched roof to a gable can only be successfully achieved in certain house styles and locations where such changes to roof designs are deemed appropriate to the existing character.**



This dormer is not considered permitted development as it extends beyond the ridge line of the original roof.



This dormer is considered appropriate to the scale of house and its roof. It sits comfortably below the ridgeline of the roof and is set back from the eaves.

Min 20cm from eaves measured along roof plane



# Front extensions and/or porches



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

## Front Extensions

The front elevation of a house is the most valuable in terms of its presence on the streetscape and therefore any extension that negatively impacts on this front façade will be discouraged. Only small additions which will not harm the quality or character of the building are generally permissible. Porches are usually acceptable provided that they are not over-dominant and that they relate to the character of the original building. Separate guidance on [porches](#) is provided in the following page.

In general, 2-storey or first floor front extensions can have a dramatic impact upon the street scene and should be avoided. Such extensions can have an adverse impact on the design of the parent building and can adversely affect the open aspect and other amenities of adjoining properties. However, exceptions may be allowed where a street has a varied building line or where properties are set in extensive grounds and there is no strong visual relationship between the property to be extended and its immediate neighbours. Single-storey front extensions will be considered using the same criteria but occasions where such extensions may be permitted will probably be greater than for 2-storey extensions.

**Large, front extensions will normally be discouraged because of their negative impact on the streetscene and character of the area in general. Where it is considered that a building may reasonably be extended forward (for example, on detached houses in low density areas or in roads with irregular building lines), the following principles should be observed:**

- F1. The new roof should normally reflect the roof form of the existing house (e.g. pitched with tiles to match if the original house has a pitched roof).**
- F2. Front extensions should fit in with the architectural style of the house.**
- F3. Care should be taken to ensure that front extensions have regard to, and do not conflict with, or are not too close to, existing architectural features such as bay windows and first floor windows.**
- F4. Windows should be positioned where they do not have a harmful effect on the amenities of neighbouring properties.**
- F5. The Council will not normally grant permission for a front extension (either single or two storey) which protrudes beyond a 45 degree line (drawn in the horizontal plane) from the nearest part of the nearest window in a neighbouring house or flat.**
- F6. The proposal should not result in a reduction of parking provision below the car parking guidelines in Appendix B of the Local Plan.**



**X** This double storeyed front extension sits well forward of the other gable features in this row and significantly changes the symmetry of the semi-detached units. This has a negative impact on the streetscene.



**X** This single storeyed front extension sits well forward of the building line, alters the balance of the front façade and reduces the driveway space in the front of the house. Such applications would generally be discouraged.



# Front extensions and/or porches



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

## Porches

A porch is built around an external door, giving access to the house. It does not contain living accommodation - any structure which does contain accommodation is classed as an extension. Most front porches are permitted development if the footprint is less than 3m<sup>2</sup>, height no more than 3m, and distance to any of the boundaries is not less than 2m. If this is not the case or for properties where Permitted Development rights for front porches have been removed, a planning application will be required to build a porch. The Council will consider proposals against the following design criteria:

- P1. The character of the street and the houses along the row should be considered carefully when designing a new porch. If there is a common style or design detail, this should be followed sensitively. Any special features which define the character of the area should be retained.**
- P2. The style of the existing house should be carefully considered. A porch should blend in with the original house in terms of size, proportion and features.**
- P3. In order to ensure that the porch fits well with the existing house, all external finishes and materials should match or complement the existing building.**

Sketch of row of houses with their original entrance features



Sketch of proposed porch on house 2



This front porch stands out as an odd one in a row of houses where simpler canopies are a distinct feature. Besides, it breaks the symmetry on combined façade for units 2-3, and subsequently the block of terrace 1-4 and will therefore be discouraged.



# Garage conversions



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

## Garage Conversions

Converting your garage into living accommodation can be a cheaper and quick alternative to extending your property.

The important factors to consider are:

### Design Criteria

**G1.** After the conversion has taken place, there must still be adequate space to park cars in accordance with the car parking guidelines in Appendix B of the Local Plan.

**G2.** Replacement parking which results in the loss of a front garden and the front boundary will be rejected in locations where this causes a harmful effect on the character of the street scene.

**G3.** The new appearance of the front of the property must also be carefully considered. The positioning and size of new windows and doors should respect the existing arrangement on the elevation and the materials used should match with the rest of the property.

**G4.** The new garage conversion should remain subservient to the original building and should not compete or cause imbalance to the original façade.



Sketch of garage conversion



This garage conversion into living accommodation ties in well with the façade style of the house, and would be considered acceptable provided it meets the other design criteria stated in this design guide.

Continued on page 21



# Garage conversions



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

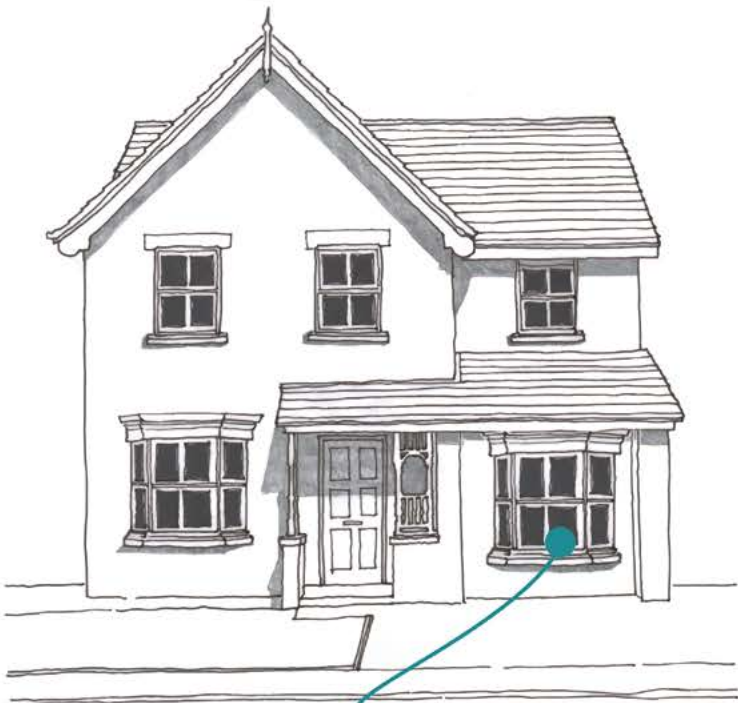
Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice



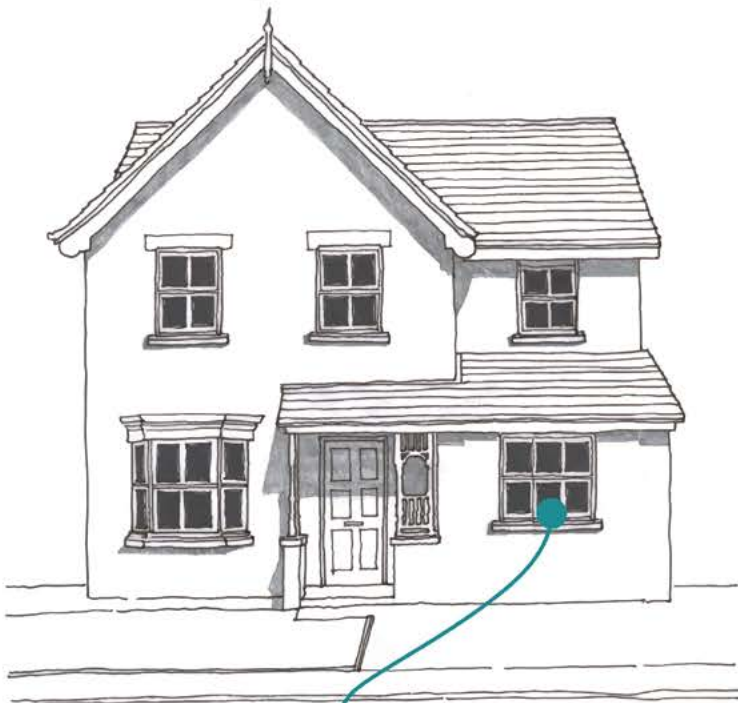
The front façade of this house has a clearly defined gable feature with enhanced porch and bay window at ground floor, thus pulling attention to the entrance of the house.

Original house with garage



**X** The bay window in this garage conversion is not preferred as it competes with the main feature of the house.

Possible garage conversion - Scenario 1



**✓** This garage conversion with the simpler window ensures that it sits well as subservient to the main feature.

Possible garage conversion - Scenario 2





Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

## Outbuildings in Front Gardens

Detached buildings in front gardens of terraces and semi-detached houses can have a very detrimental impact on the streetscene and are not normally acceptable.

On detached houses, they will only be considered acceptable where detached buildings in front gardens form part of the existing character of the street. For instance, where detached buildings were built as part of the original form and layout of an estate.

## Outbuildings to the Side or Rear of House

It is common for people to accommodate an office space or other ancillary living space or a room for dependant relatives within an annexe structure. In general, the same principles apply to the design of an outbuilding as to rear extensions. The new building should complement the appearance of the main house and sit well in its surroundings by using appropriate materials and design features such as roof shape or window details. In many cases, such a structure will be Permitted Development but the advice below is relevant to all such developments.

- O1. It should not unduly over-shadow neighbouring properties. It should not be too large or significantly reduce the size of a garden to become out of character with the area.
- O2. It should not unduly affect outlook from an adjoining property’s habitable rooms or principal garden areas.
- O3. Its design and materials should be in harmony with the surrounding area.
- O4. It must remain subservient to the existing property and be of a suitable scale for its purpose; over large buildings will not be considered acceptable.
- O5. Creating an independent dwelling within the boundaries of an existing house is rarely viewed favourably and if permission is granted for an annexe, conditions will be imposed to ensure that the structure is not used as an independent home. The annexe must form part of the same planning unit and share facilities such as parking and garden areas. It must be accessible by going through the main house and cannot have a separate access to the street. It should not include a separate kitchen.





# Driveways on front gardens



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

- Index
- Introduction
- Do I need consent?
- General design principles
- New residential development
  - Internal space standards
  - Private amenity space
- Existing residential alterations
  - Rear extensions
  - Side extensions
  - Roof alterations/loft conversions
  - Front extensions and/or porches
  - Garage conversions
  - Annexes and outbuildings
  - Driveways on front gardens
- Contacts for further advice

## Driveways in Front Gardens

Creating parking space in a front garden could meet the functional requirements of a household, but if not sensitively designed, this could cause significant impact on the street’s appearance and openness. Also, it has been widely accepted that extensive paving of front gardens has increased flooding issues.

Applicants should meet the following criteria to ensure the above mentioned issues are addressed appropriately.

**D1: Balance of hard standing and soft landscaping.**  
Front gardens provide a green and landscaped edge to the road and any proposals for paving these over completely will be discouraged. To retain the soft edge to the street, parking spaces should be well integrated into a soft landscape led approach. A reasonable balance must be maintained between the planting and hard paving in the front garden.

The Royal Horticultural Society has produced very useful advice on designing front gardens with well integrated planting and paving.

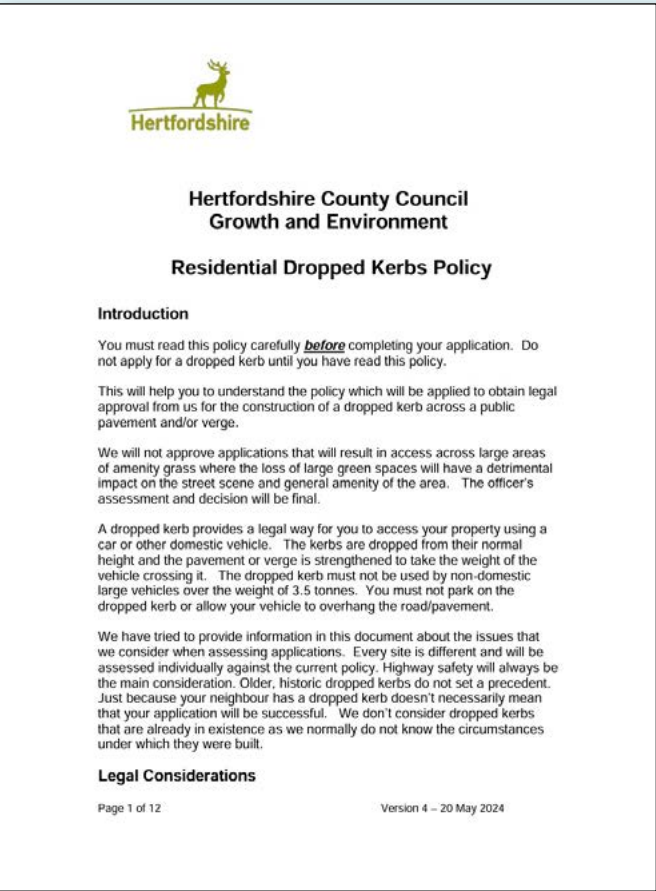
Please click on the adjoining image to access this guidance.



## Residential Dropped Kerbs Policy

Under the Highways Act 1980 permission is required to drive over a public footway or verge unless a dropped kerb has been approved and installed by the Highways Authority.

Before installing a driveway to access a front garden where there is no existing authorised crossing, please contact Broxbourne Council’s Highways team to make an application. In determining such applications the Highways team will apply the Hertfordshire Residential Dropped Kerbs Policy. A copy of this can be downloaded by clicking on the image below:





# Driveways on front gardens



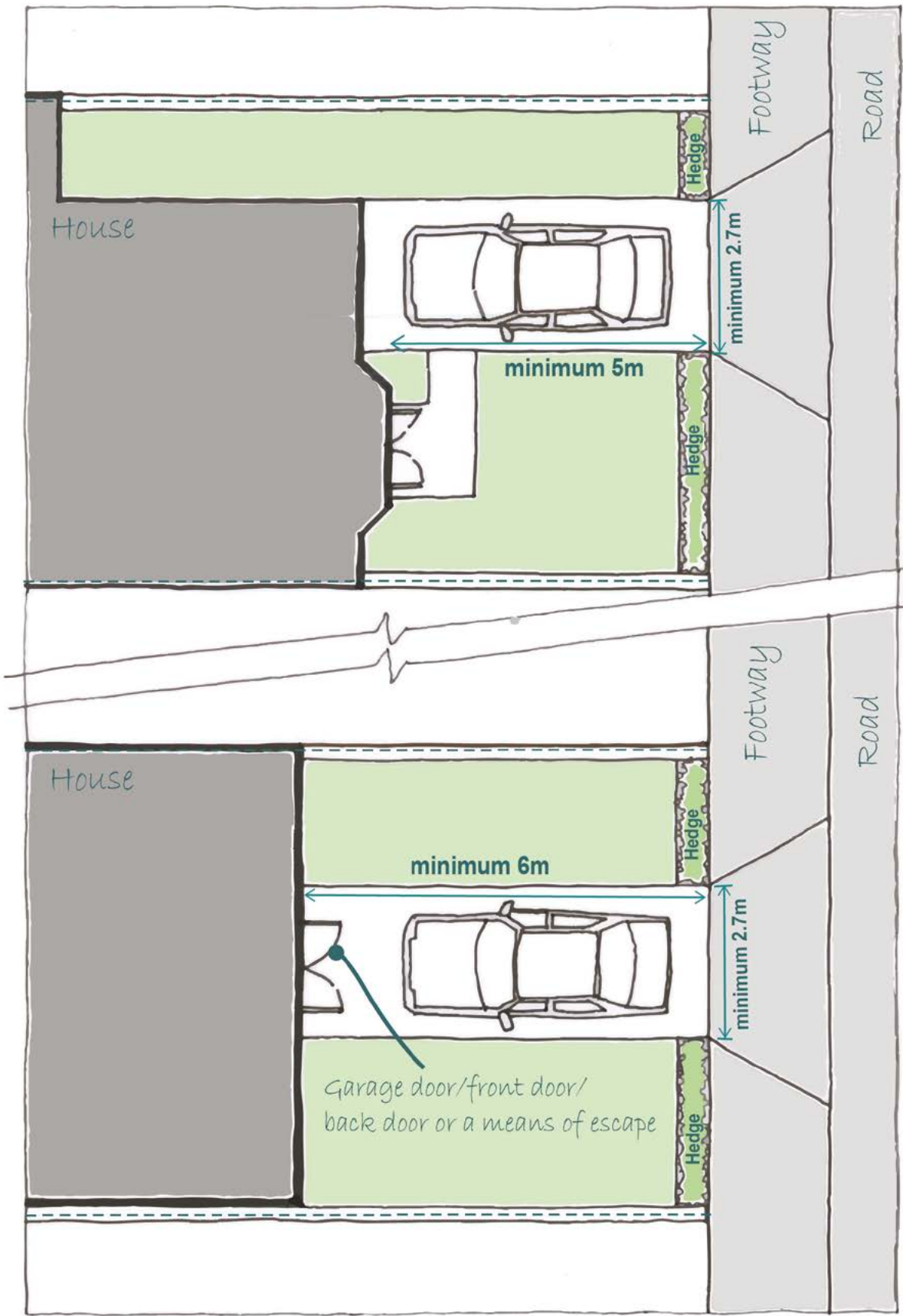
Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

- Index
- Introduction
- Do I need consent?
- General design principles
- New residential development
  - Internal space standards
  - Private amenity space
- Existing residential alterations
  - Rear extensions
  - Side extensions
  - Roof alterations/loft conversions
  - Front extensions and/or porches
  - Garage conversions
  - Annexes and outbuildings
  - Driveways on front gardens
- Contacts for further advice

## D2: Standard Sizes

- 1) No part of a vehicle parked within a property may project onto or over the highway. The vehicle access crossing should not be used as a parking area. Parked cars should be well screened with planting when the property is viewed from the road. To comply, the parking space must be:
- Minimum 2.7m wide and at least 5m long to allow for a parked car and for hedge planting, in the space between the back of the pavement or property boundary (the face of any wall, fence or hedge for example) and the front of the building.
  - Or minimum 2.7m wide and at least 6m long where the parking area is in front of a garage or door where adequate means of escape needs to be provided, like a front/back door, or an exit from a fire escape, etc. (See adjoining figure illustrating the above two options).
- 2) In most cases, parking spaces will be at a right angle to the highway. If there is a pavement and verge in front of the property it is likely that parallel parking will be refused for safety reasons. In exceptional cases, diagonal parking may be considered but this will be at the discretion of Broxbourne Council. Please consult the [Residential Dropped Kerbs Policy](#) or contact Broxbourne Highways team for further details.

## Parking space dimensions





# Driveways on front gardens



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

### D3: Boundaries

To maintain the openness of the streetscape, these should be low height walls, timber picket fences and /or trimmed hedges. The height of the boundary treatments should be between 0.5m and 1m. The adjoining pictures show a palette of some acceptable boundary treatments.

Possibilities for front boundary types  
Colours and types should be chosen to complement relevant house and street character.



Low height brick wall (between 0.5m to 1m high)



Low height hedge or topiary planting



Low height fence combined with planting

### D4: Guidance on paving materials within the property curtilage

In order to ensure that the front gardens do not appear dominated by hard standing, the paving materials should blend well and appear subservient to the surrounding landscaping. Paving the full front garden with hardstanding will usually be discouraged, and a reasonable balance of hard and soft landscaping should be sought. Paving material should be of muted colour palette and complement the landscaping.

Possibilities for surface treatments in front gardens  
Colours and types should be chosen to complement the house and street character



Permeable block paving



Conventional block paving



Paving with spacers for grass or other ground cover planting



Gravel

Continued on page 26



# Driveways on front gardens



Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

**D5: Surface water drainage of paving**

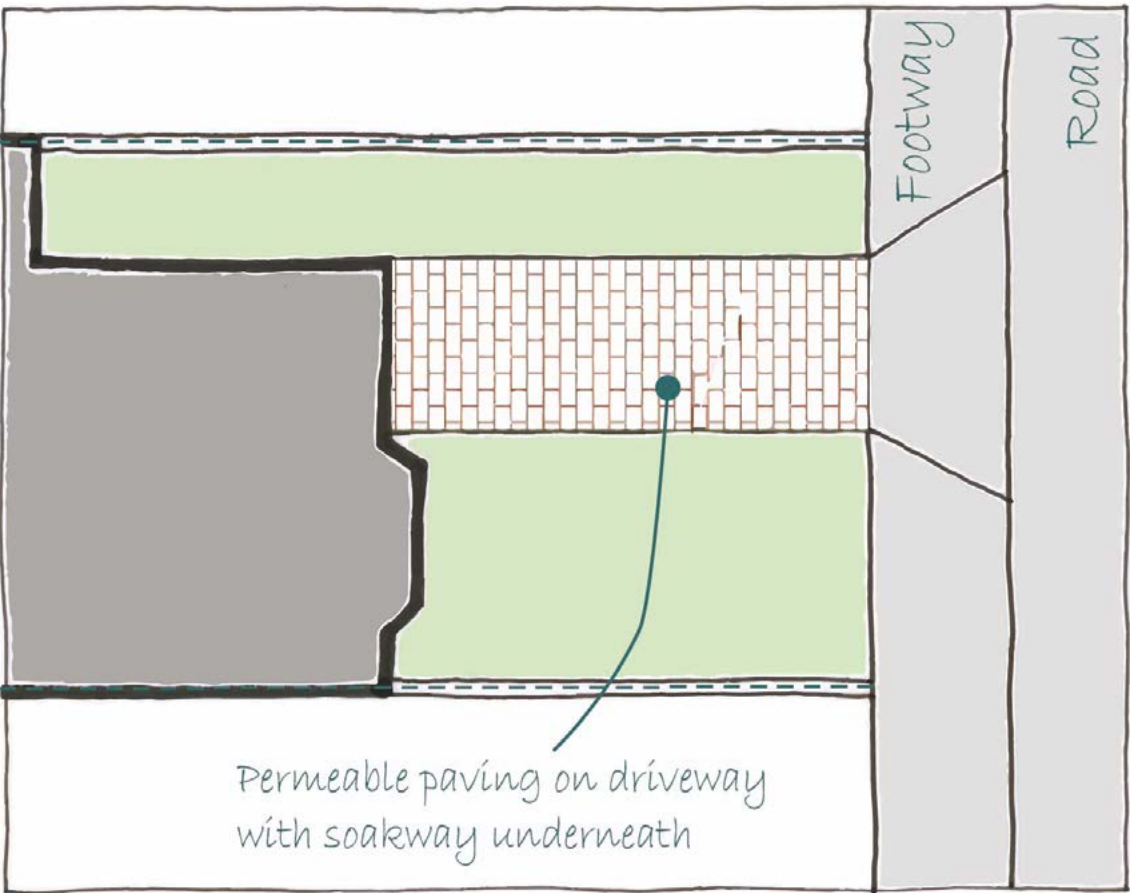
Rainwater falling on the hard standing should not drain on to the public highway.

The Council will require owners to adopt one of the following options to ensure that rainwater is contained and soaked into the ground within the property boundary.



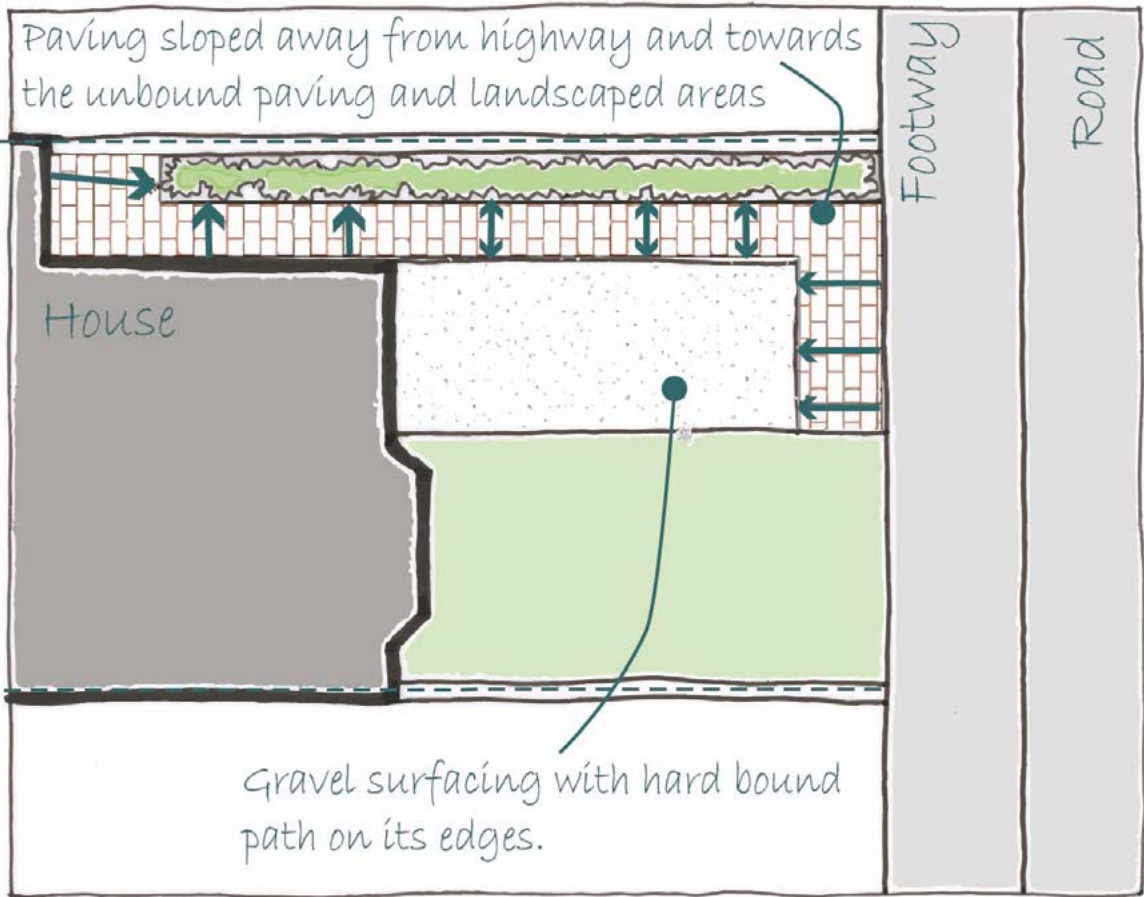
Permeable block paving with gaps in edges to allow water to soak through

Example 1



Example 1: Permeable paving – Hard surfacing which allows water to soak into it can be constructed using porous concrete blocks or clay block permeable paving. The material has open voids across the surface of the material or around the edges of blocks that allow water to soak in. The surface is constructed over a permeable sub-base layer.

Example 2



Example 2: Gravel or shingle – A driveway can be surfaced in gravel or shingle laid on a permeable sub-base if the drive is fairly flat. Gravel, however, can get spilled or dragged out onto the highway and is not suitable for wheelchairs. The first section of driveway and one edge to form a separate pedestrian path should therefore be constructed in a different, bound material such as slab or block paving.

Continued on page 27



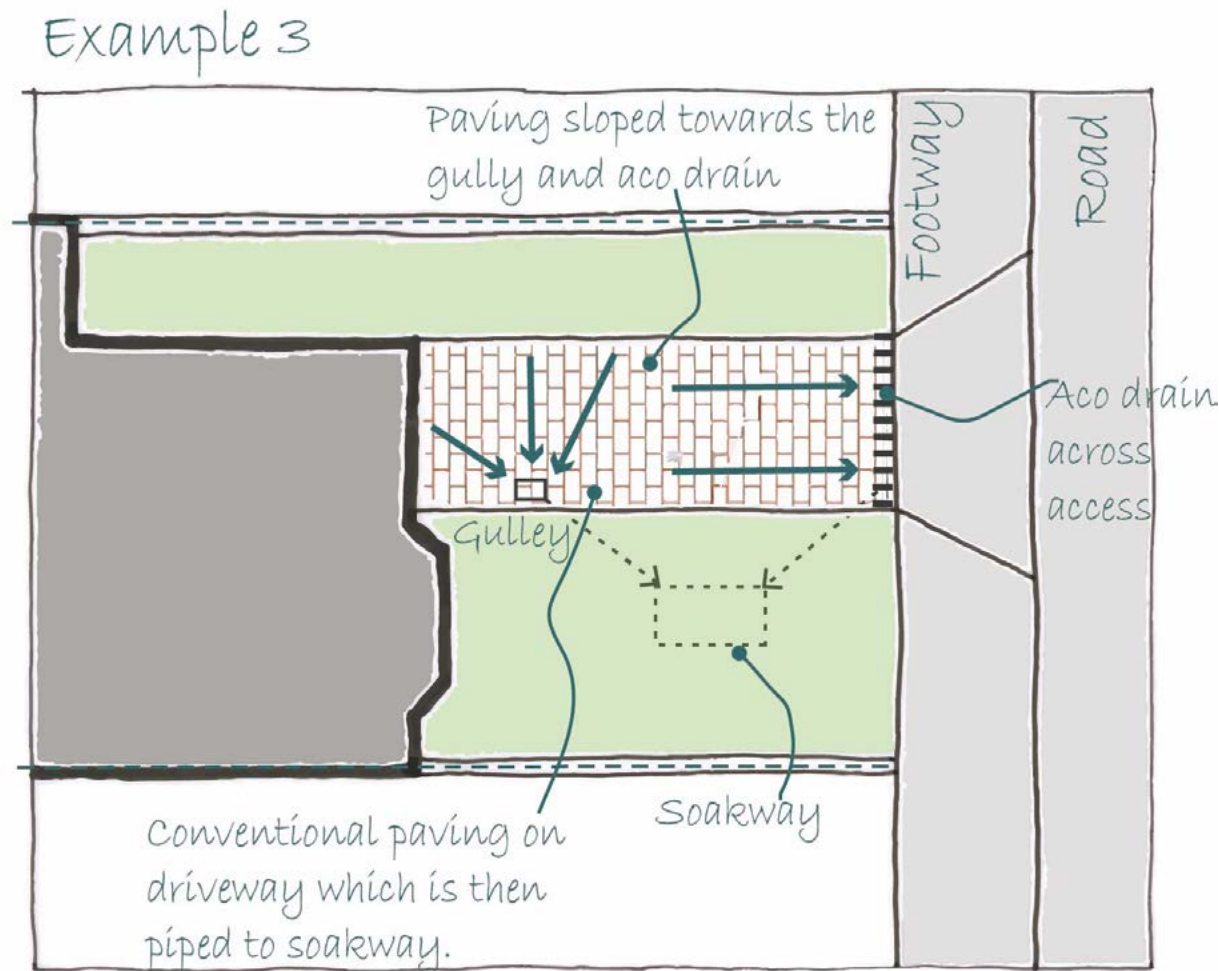
# Driveways on front gardens



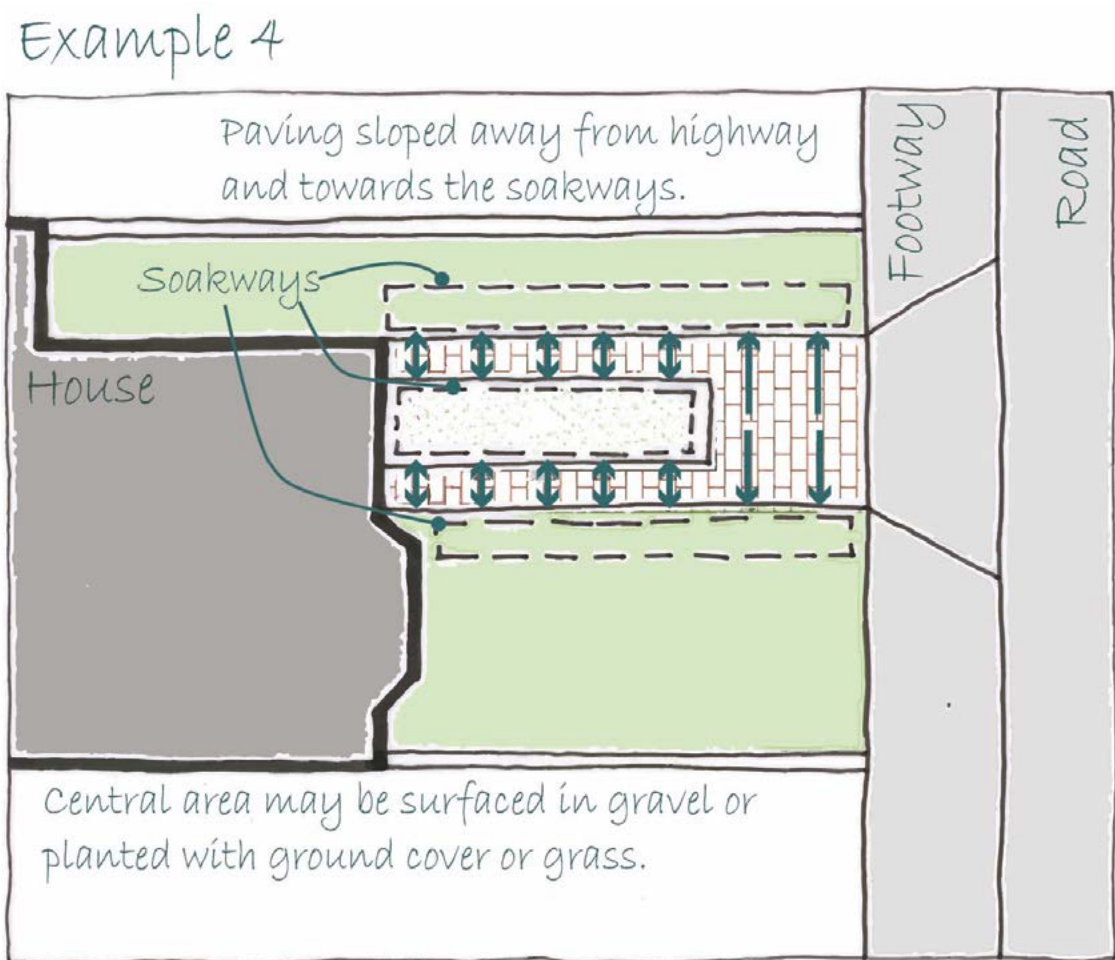
Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

- Index
- Introduction
- Do I need consent?
- General design principles
- New residential development
  - Internal space standards
  - Private amenity space
- Existing residential alterations
  - Rear extensions
  - Side extensions
  - Roof alterations/loft conversions
  - Front extensions and/or porches
  - Garage conversions
  - Annexes and outbuildings
  - Driveways on front gardens
- Contacts for further advice

**Example 3: Conventionally surfaced and piped to a soakaway** – A driveway can be surfaced in conventional materials which water cannot soak through, such as block paving if the water is collected using gullies or grated trench drains and is then piped to a soakaway, where water will then soak into the ground.



**Example 4: Driveway sloped to garden soakaways** – A driveway surfaced in conventional non permeable materials, such as standard block paving, can be sloped to each side of the driveway (and possibly the middle) to direct surface water to soakaways as shown in the figure below. The soakaways can be planted with suitable plants or filled with gravel or cobbles. For straight driveways, not all the driveway needs to be hard surfaced. Instead the central area could be surfaced in gravel, planted with ground cover plants or grass.





Click on sub-topics below to go to the relevant page

Index

Introduction

Do I need consent?

General design principles

New residential development

Internal space standards

Private amenity space

Existing residential alterations

Rear extensions

Side extensions

Roof alterations/loft conversions

Front extensions and/or porches

Garage conversions

Annexes and outbuildings

Driveways on front gardens

Contacts for further advice

Planning (Development Management Team)

For informal advice from the Duty Planner, please [book an appointment online](#).  
For more information, including information about how to apply for planning permission, visit [www.broxbourne.gov.uk/planning](http://www.broxbourne.gov.uk/planning)  
[planning@broxbourne.gov.uk](mailto:planning@broxbourne.gov.uk).

Dropped kerb applications

Please apply on Broxbourne Council’s website [here](#)  
[highways@broxbourne.gov.uk](mailto:highways@broxbourne.gov.uk).

For telephone enquires: please call the Council’s switchboard on 01992 785555 and ask to be put through to either Planning or Highways.

For written applications:

Bishops’ College  
Churchgate  
Cheshunt  
Hertfordshire  
EN8 9XQ

Highway Authority

If the proposed dropped kerb presents additional engineering challenges, you may need to apply for a Section 278 Agreement, directly with Hertfordshire County Council as the Highway Authority.

Information regarding costs and application process is available on the [Hertfordshire County Council’s website](#)





Borough of Broxbourne  
Bishops' College  
Churchgate  
EN8 9XQ  
01992 785577



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