CITY OF YORK COUNCIL

House Extensions and Alterations

Non-statutory planning guidance

Approved 3 November 2026



This document updates and replaces the ‘House Extensions and Alterations’ draft Supplementary Planning Document (2012)

Approved as non-statutory planning guidance at Executive Member Decision Session on 3 November 2026.

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Overview

1 . This document sets out the planning principles that the council uses to assess proposals to extend a house or flat or undertake alterations within the garden. Information contained within the document will be relevant when planning applications are determined. The advice is consistent with and expands upon the content of the National Planning Policy Framework and the City of York Local Plan (adopted February 2025).

2. The guide covers the most widely encountered circumstances and is relevant whether your extension requires planning permission or not. It is the case however, that if your home is Listed, or located in a Conservation Area, design criteria additional to those listed in this note will typically apply. A well-designed extension is likely to enhance the overall appearance of your home with the minimum impact on the living conditions of your neighbours and the established street scene. The council will normally consult neighbours on any planning application, so it is usually a good idea to discuss your proposals with them before drawing up plans.

3. Under planning legislation some extensions to houses might not need planning permission (extensions to flats will always need permission). Such works are referred to as permitted development. Legislation that relates to this area can be quite complex and vary depending on the history of a particular property. If you are planning to extend or alter a property it is strongly advised that you check first whether planning permission is required. It is recommended you submit a householder enquiry form, with brief details of your proposed works. The council will advise you in writing, whether planning permission (and Building Regulations Consent) will be required. There is a charge for this service. The form can be downloaded from the council's website.

4. This document does not cover any other legislation, including Building Regulations. Building Regulations normally relate to issues such as the structural stability, energy efficiency, or fire safety of a building. The document also does not look at disputes' neighbours might have over land ownership or shared walls. Boundary issues are normally civil matters, advice contained in the Party Wall Act may be helpful in this respect.

5. The guidance is in two sections. Section 1 gives general guidance that will be relevant for all applications. Section 2 looks at specific proposals such as side extensions or dormer windows.

General Advice

6. Central government planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) acknowledges that building well-designed places helps to support sustainable development. Policies D1: 'Placemaking' and D11: 'Extensions and Alterations to Existing Buildings' in the Local Plan provide some locally relevant detail regarding design requirements; this guidance builds upon the detail in these policies and provides information on how planning applications for house extensions and alterations will be assessed.

7. In accordance with planning legislation the council must consider a wide number of issues when assessing a planning application. The most common factors that lead to a proposal being refused are the harmful effect it will have on neighbour amenity (such as overshadowing and overlooking) and/or the damage caused to the visual appearance of the area. Issues relating to car and cycle parking can also often be significant.

8. In some streets it is possible to point to extensions and alterations that have been approved in the past that do not follow the guidance on visual amenity contained in this document. Polices and guidance relating to development inevitably changes over time and isolated examples of extensions that are of a poor quality will not be used as a yardstick for assessing future extensions. Where there are a large number of developments in a street that conflict with the guidance in this document the council will only consider approving similar proposals where it can be argued that they have become so typical as to be considered characteristic of the area.

9. The main considerations for assessing planning applications submitted to the council are set out below:

Privacy

10. Proposals should not result in direct overlooking of rooms in neighbouring dwellings or excessive overlooking of adjacent garden areas. Figure 1 illustrates separation distances that will normally be required to preserve reasonable privacy levels (as well as ensuring adequate light and outlook).

11. It should be noted that the separation distances shown on the diagram are for general guidance and the council will have regard to the specific context of each development. Of particular relevance will be the relationship to the passage of the sun, the width and height of the proposed development and the function and number of rooms impacted. Regard will also be given to how the separation distances relate to the existing character of the area. In parts of the city where houses are located close together and existing privacy levels are lower, shorter separation distances could be appropriate providing the form of the proposed development respects the area's appearance.

12. In some circumstances harmful overlooking can be avoided by using obscure glazing and non-opening windows at a height up to 1.7m above the internal floor level. Roof lights can also sometimes be an appropriate solution. When modifying window designs to overcome privacy concerns regard should be given to the impact on the quality of the room as well as whether a suitable fire escape remains. Obscure glazing should only be used in rooms or areas of an extension that are non-habitable or are also served by a clear glazed opening. Clear glazed first floor side windows should be avoided where they overlook adjoining gardens.

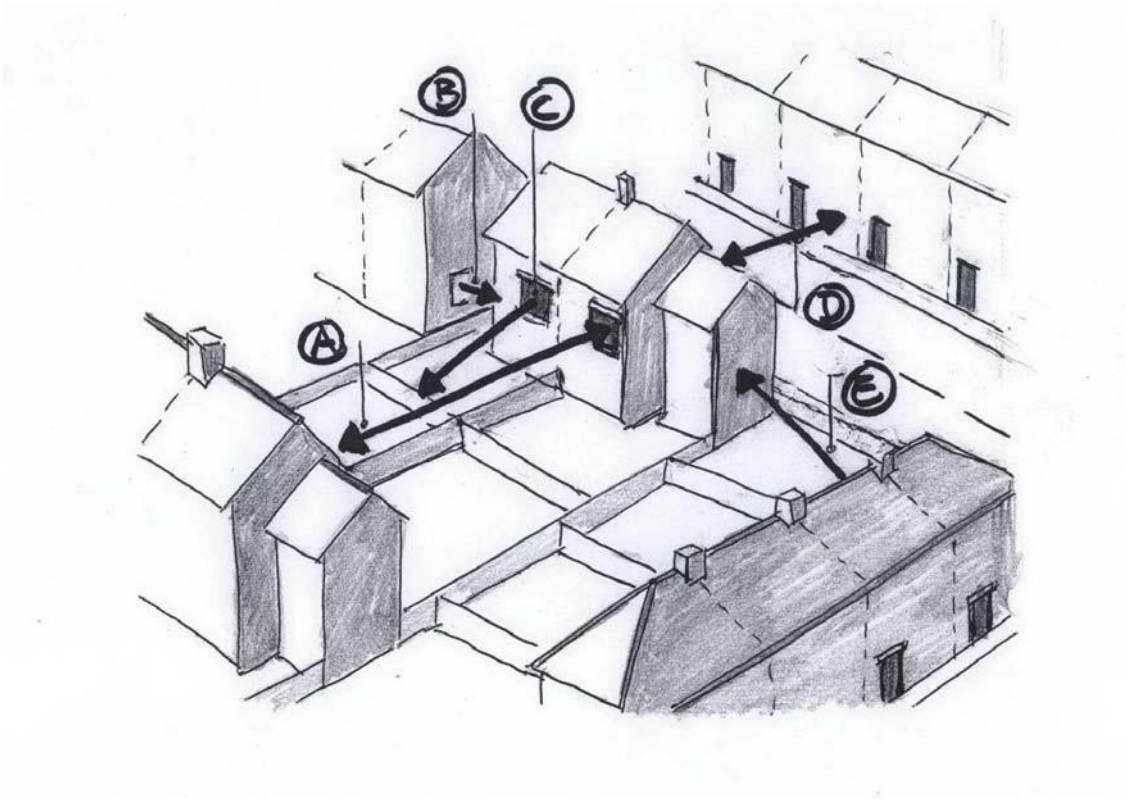


Figure 1 Separation distances

A	First floor rear window overlooking property to rear	**21 metres**
B	Side window to side elevation	See section 'Habitable rooms and side windows'
C	First floor rear window overlooking garden to rear	**7 metres**
D	Cross Street separation	Will have regard to local character
E	Rear ground floor widow to proposed two-storey side extension	**12 metres** This is required to protect light and outlook from existing rear windows

13. Balconies and roof gardens can cause particular concern as overlooking of neighbouring gardens or adjacent windows is normally much more direct. Issues relating to noise can also be significant. Balconies and roof gardens will only normally be acceptable where they overlook public or communal areas, or areas of neighbouring gardens that are not typically used for sitting out or already have a low level of

privacy. In some instances, sensitively designed balcony screens can help to retain adequate levels of privacy, however, care should be taken to ensure that any screening does not detract from the appearance of the area or unduly harm neighbours' light and outlook.

14. The separation distances shown on the diagram will be used as a 'minimum' figure. It should be noted, however, that they are only a general guide and regard will be had to any local circumstances including the existing character of the area, the specific design of the proposal, the relationship to the passage of the sun and the amount of a property affected.

Overshadowing and Loss of Light

15. Most residents gain significant pleasure from good levels of light and sunlight in their homes and gardens. Clearly light is important for people's health and happiness. Environmentally it is significant for reducing the need to use energy to heat and light rooms. Externally it creates attractive amenity areas and helps to dry clothes and encourage plant growth. Sunlight can also be important for domestic energy generation - regard should be given to the impact on existing solar panels on nearby homes.

16. When assessing proposals care will be taken to ensure that they do not cause undue harm to neighbours' light. Rear extensions tend to be most significant in this respect.

17. When considering erecting a building or extension regard should be given to how much sunlight will be lost to neighbouring properties and gardens and at what times of the day and year. The diagram overleaf may be of help in indicating in what direction the sun will be in at different times of the day and its approximate height in the sky at different times of the year.

Northerly

18. Extensions located to the north of a neighbouring house or garden can reduce indirect light levels; however, it will have little impact on direct sunlight. In some instances, extensions to the north of a garden can be welcomed as they provide increased shelter from the elements

and improve the feeling of privacy.

Southerly

19. During the summer when the sun is in a generally southerly direction (approximately between 12.00 – 14.00 hrs) it will be high enough in the sky so that any shadows cast will be relatively short. Loss of direct sunlight from a southerly direction to a garden in the late spring and summer from single storey buildings will normally be limited. The greatest concern in respect to proposed single-storey extensions will be the impact on sunlight entering nearby windows during the autumn or winter month when the sun is lower in the sky. Two-storey extensions because of their height can be of concern year round, particularly in respect to blocking sun from nearby habitable rooms and overshadowing small gardens and yards.

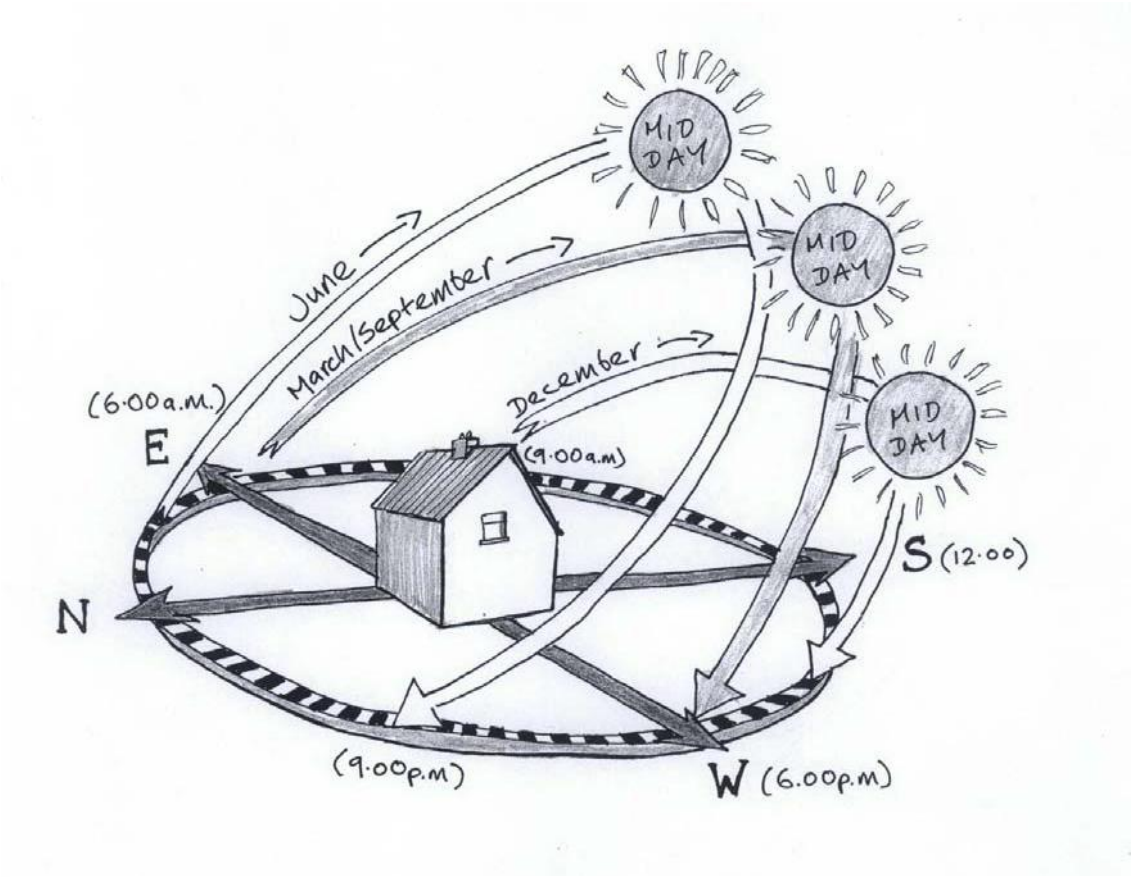


Figure 2 Sun path

The diagram is for illustrative purposes. It shows the approximate sun rise and sun set times and orientations at different times of the year. It also indicates that the sun is at a much higher angle in the sky during the summer months than the winter.

Easterly and Westerly

20. The sun rises in the east and as such the impact of development in this direction will be on morning sunlight. Proposals to the west of a house or garden will impact on afternoon and evening sunlight. In the winter months the sun is relatively low in the sky when to the east and west.

21. Proposals for a two-storey rear extension projecting from the rear elevation of a semi-detached or terraced house, the rear of which faces north-east or north-west, can be of particular concern. This is because the rear of an adjoining house facing either of these directions will only receive sunlight in the morning (north-east facing) or late afternoon and

evening (north-west facing). A large extension located to the side is capable of blocking almost all sunlight that the rear of the property currently receives. Applicants should have particular regard to this when considering the location of extensions.

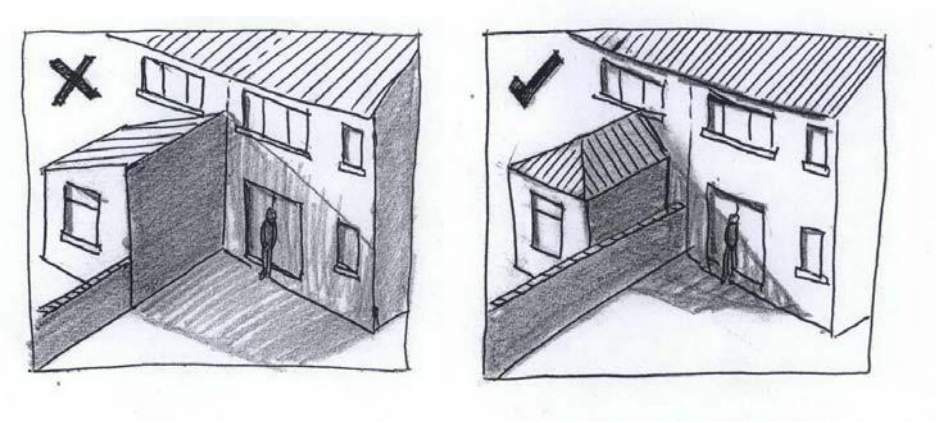


Figure 3 Single storey rear extensions

Keeping eaves heights low reduces overshadowing of neighbouring properties. The degree of overshadowing will depend on the time of the day and year and the orientation of the extension in relation to the sun.

Dominance and Outlook

22. In some instances, an extension may not cut out much direct sun light or significantly reduce light levels but could still be deemed unacceptable. Dominance and outlook relate to how an extension will change the character of the neighbouring house and garden and affect the outlook from nearby windows. Outlook differs from a view in that it relates to the openness enjoyed by occupants of a property, this includes, for example, having a reasonable sight of the sky through windows and being able to look an appropriate distance beyond a property. A view typically refers to a view of a particular thing such as an attractive building or open countryside. A view is not normally protected when assessing the impact of development on the living conditions of a home.

23. When assessing the impact that a proposal will have on an outlook, regard will be given to the established character of an area and the existing feeling of openness. It is important that neighbours' do not feel unduly hemmed in by proposals.

Habitable rooms and side windows

24. It is the case that light and outlook can be of greater importance for some rooms than others. Limited protection will be given to preserving light and outlook to non-habitable 'rooms' such as bathrooms, utility rooms, hallways and landings. The greatest protection will be given to living rooms given that most people typically spend much of the day in them. In respect to kitchens, greater weight will be given to protecting light levels and outlook where they include a dining area.

25. Some properties in York, whilst having the vast majority of openings on the front and rear of the home, have a main kitchen or bedroom window on the side of the house. In such circumstances development will normally be allowed closer to the affected windows than if development were impacting on a window to the front or rear, however, modifications to the height and/or depth will normally be required to allow the retention of an outlook past the proposed new development.

26. Side windows should not be installed in extensions where they would unacceptably overlook neighbouring gardens or potentially 'sterilise' what would otherwise be the reasonable development potential of adjoining land. Where a clear glazed side window is inserted in an existing house (or a room altered so that the existing side window becomes the main opening) less weight will be given to protecting the outlook through the new window than if the window were original to the house. Planning permission is needed to install any upper floor clear glazed window in the wall or roof of a side elevation of an existing house.

Character and streetscene

27. A basic principle is that any extension should normally be in keeping with the appearance, scale, design and character of both the existing dwelling and the street scene generally. In particular, care should be taken to ensure that the proposal does not dominate the house or clash with its appearance.

28. The character of an area will be a major factor in determining the appropriate form, size and relationship to the boundary of an extension. Key criteria include the degree of enclosure of the street, the character of the space between the buildings, the form and detail of the buildings, and the form and detail of the landscaping. In most instances, where a street has a relatively uniform housing type and building line this should be respected in submitted proposals.

29. In some villages, residents and the parish council have produced Village Design Statements. These documents contain important advice on how to ensure that developments harmonise with the particular characteristics of individual villages. It is important that you have regard to their content. More information on Village Design Statements can be found on the Council website.

30. Adherence to the following principles should help to ensure that character and streetscene criteria are met:



Figure 4 Building line

Prominent extensions to the front or side of a property should not extend beyond a clearly defined front or side building line by a significant degree.

a) The siting of an extension should not be detrimental to the pattern of buildings and the spacing between them. Where a street or group of buildings has a clearly defined building line it should be retained and extending forward of a streets' building line should be avoided. Only in exceptional circumstances will this be appropriate (e.g. where the building line is not well defined or the front gardens of properties in the vicinity or general area are well screened). Advice relating to porches and front extensions is contained in the **Porches and other Front Extensions** section of this guidance.

b) Extensions should normally appear subservient to, yet in keeping with, the original building.

c) Extensions should respect the architectural period, style and detailing of the existing dwelling and the area.

d) External materials, e.g. bricks and tiles, should match the colour, size, shape and texture of the materials of the existing dwelling. The use of contrasting materials will be considered case by case.

e) Windows and other openings should be in scale with the extension. They should be in line with and match the proportions, style and method of opening of existing windows.

f) Extensions to dwellings should generally have a roof pitch and/or style that reflects that of the existing house.

g) Where possible the opportunity should be taken to improve the appearance of an existing building, particularly by the removal/replacement of unsightly alterations or extensions that have been added in the past.

h) Existing trees should normally be retained where they make a significant contribution to the appearance and wildlife value of an area. Sufficient space should be left between an extension and existing trees to ensure that their root systems are not damaged and to ensure that the trees do not cause a nuisance, reduce daylight to windows or pose a risk from falling branches. In assessing the space to be left regard should be given to the size of the tree when it reaches maturity. Mature shrubs should also be retained where possible. In most residential areas a sensitive balance between built development and space for landscaping will be needed if a development is to respect an areas character.

31. In many cases proposals that do not respect the character of a house or location are a result of the owner's desire to create too much new living space (overdevelopment) and/or give insufficient attention to retaining or duplicating important local details and landscaping (poor design). The council does not, however, automatically oppose schemes because they do not conform with the style and layout of the existing home and area. When well thought through, imaginative or contemporary additions to existing housing can add interest to the streetscene and showcase modern architectural techniques. Where a householder wishes to alter their property in a way that does not relate to the existing form it is well advised to employ an architect with a successful record of bringing forward such schemes. To gain consent it will be necessary to fully explain and justify the approach taken and make it clear why the scheme would enhance the appearance of the locality rather than detracting from its most attractive characteristics. Diagrams and photo-montages can be helpful in this respect.

Provision for Storage and Parking

32. A site should retain adequate access, parking and turning facilities for vehicles, including secure covered storage for cycles. The number of parking spaces required will depend on the number of bedrooms at the property, on-street parking availability and any pertinent highway safety considerations. When altering car parking areas, care should be taken to retain as much of the garden boundary and existing vegetation as possible. Barren hard surfaced gardens which serve only as car parking areas erode the character of the street, detract from the security of the site and can increase flood risk through high levels of surface water run-off.

33. Where a first floor or two-storey side extension is proposed and there is insufficient pedestrian or cycle access to the rear garden, a garage or cycle store should be incorporated within the front of the house.

34. Regard should also be given to the storage of bins and recycling boxes. If an extension is taking place at a property that has a large well screened front garden, open un-enclosed storage will normally be acceptable. However, where a garden is small or open plan, or a house abuts the street, provision should be made for storage within the building or within a sensitively designed external area.

35. Where a property is reliant on access to the rear garden for the storage of cycles a minimum gap of 1.0m will normally be required between the extension and side boundary.

36. Extensions and alterations should take account of the need to provide easy access to suitable cycle storage, ensuring that any cycle storage space always remains easily accessible and useable. Cycle storage spaces shall be practical for all ages and abilities to use, and cycles should not be hung on walls. Government guidance in Cycle Infrastructure Design LTN 1/20 identifies that many people choose to keep their cycle inside their property for security, and that new development should therefore provide dedicated ground floor cycle storage. It also provides some information, which can be used as a starting point, to help determine the number, and size, of cycle spaces required for new development. As outlined in table 11-1 of Cycle Infrastructure Design LTN 1/20 it is good practice to provide 1no. secure and covered cycle space per bedroom.

37. Car parking spaces should be of a minimum standard parking bay size (5.0m x 2.5m) plus additional space to move around the vehicle. This additional circulation space should be usable for all, and therefore a minimum of an additional 1m is suggested to the front and side of the parking space to allow for easy access to doors, gates and storage space, although this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. There should be sufficient room on the property for a car to be parked without overhanging on to the public highway (pavement or road). Attention is drawn to the Council's adopted Vehicle Crossing Policy.

Private Amenity Space

38. Proposals should seek to retain adequate, useable private amenity space for the occupiers of the enlarged or altered dwelling. Front gardens are often not sufficiently private to be treated as amenity space.

39. In respect to the functionality of the property the council will only require that (in addition to parking and storage provision), all homes should as a minimum retain sufficient land for drying clothes and space that is suitable and welcoming to sit out in. Prospective applicants should note, however, that a 'visual appearance' assessment will also be made and in most cases proposals to erect buildings across a large area of

garden will cause concern, as it would be likely to conflict with policies that seek to protect neighbours living conditions and the open landscaped character of the area.

40. When considering a future extension or outbuilding it should be noted that developing too large a proportion of a garden may reduce the home's desirability and limit the range of people who might want to occupy it in the future.

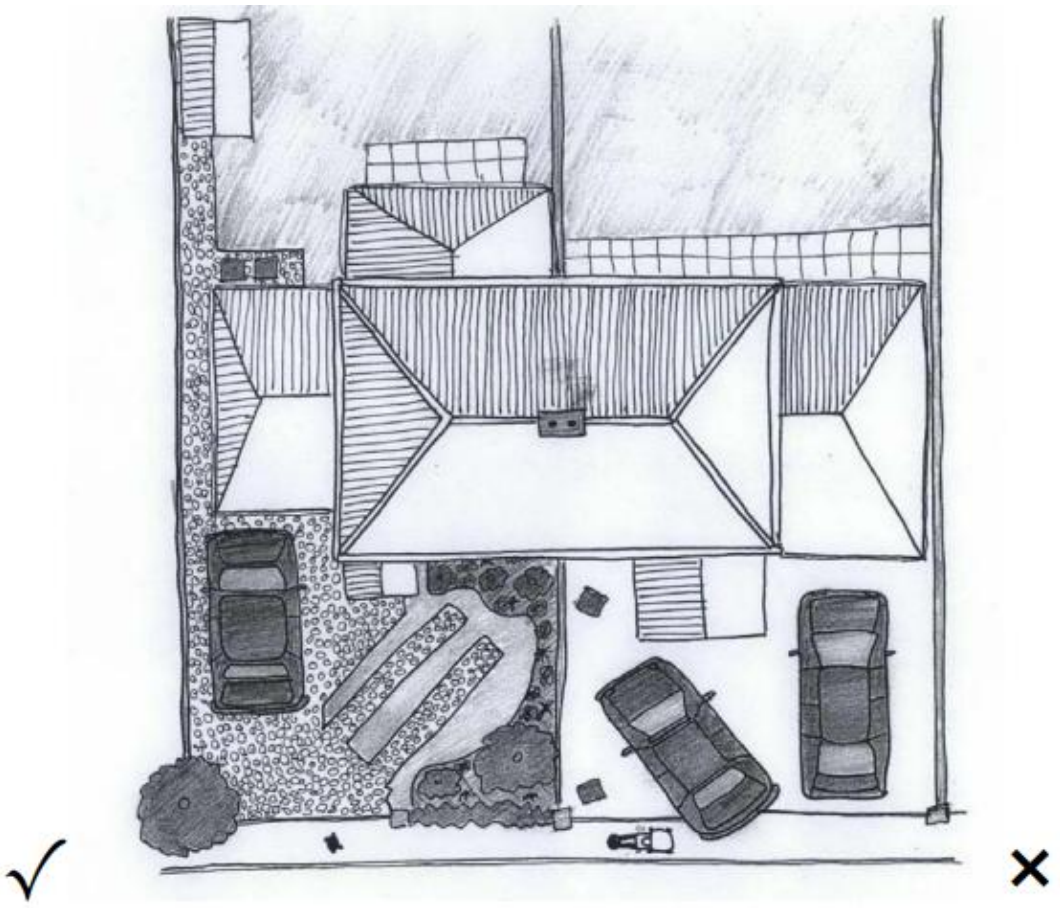


Figure 5 Hard surfacing front gardens

The plan above shows a 'good' and 'bad' example of the hard surfacing of the front garden of a property and provision for bins, cycles and car parking. It is always necessary to ensure that the surfacing is permeable or drains to the garden. Vegetation and boundary walls should also be retained where practical.

Drainage

41. Care should be taken to ensure that extensions are not at risk of flooding and do not significantly increase flood risk to adjoining land. In areas most at risk of flooding (Flood Zone 2 and 3) it must be ensured that internal floor heights of extensions are no lower than those of the main house. Electrical sockets should also be positioned at a height at least 45cm above the internal floor level.

42. A surface water drainage method should be used that is most appropriate to the local ground conditions. Water butts and other rainwater harvesting systems should be considered to help make more efficient use of water.

43. The hard surfacing of front gardens can need planning permission. For further information on this see guidance on the Planning Portal. Permission would be unlikely to be given for a non-permeable surface as the relatively minor works can cumulatively have a significant impact on flood risk. Householders should ensure that surfacing is permeable or only covers a small part of the front garden with water directed to drain into remaining undeveloped areas of land, and not on to the public highway. Where gravel is proposed as part of the permeable surfacing, then we recommend that there is a 1.0m buffer of bound material between the gravel and public highway, to prevent gravel overspilling on to the road or pavement.

Advice for Specific Extensions and Alterations

Porches and other Front Extensions

44. The fronts of houses and their distance from the pavement are generally important visual features of residential areas. Front extensions if poorly designed or located can have a significant adverse impact. An extension forward of the front wall of a house will not normally be permitted, unless:

- the house is set well back from the pavement, or is well screened,
- the extension is small, well-designed and it would not harm the character of the house/area; and
- the extension would not unduly affect neighbours.

45. Front extensions are normally most suitable for detached properties that are set back from the road, or where the street has no established building line.

46. Small porches sometimes do not require planning permission. Where they do require permission, they will only be acceptable if they are not detrimental to the character of the street or unduly affect neighbours and may not be appropriate where regularity of design and form is important to the character of the group, such as in a terrace of properties. Porches should not normally project excessively beyond the front of the house or be overly wide. The glazing style, door location, materials and roof pitch should respect the original building.

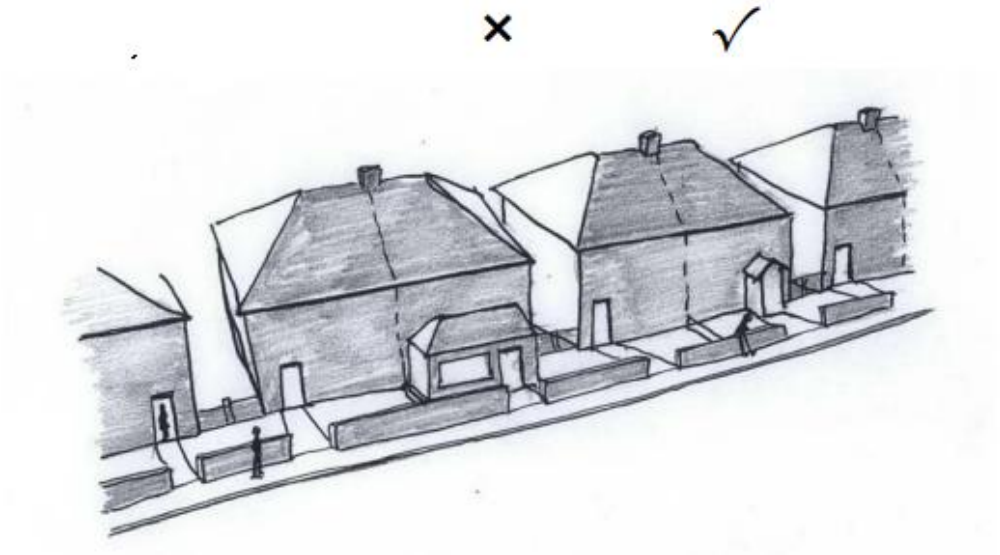


Figure 6 Front extensions

Normally only small porches are suitable as front extensions.

Side Extensions

47. Side extensions (particularly when two-storey) are often seen as an efficient way of creating new internal space. The council receives numerous applications each year for two-storey side extensions that incorporate a garage and kitchen space on the ground floor and additional bed space above accessed from the first-floor landing. Such extensions often have less impact on neighbours living conditions than extensions to the rear and have the benefit that they do not lead to the loss of valuable rear garden space.

48. Side extensions will not however be suitable for all detached and semi-detached properties and where they are proposed care should be taken to ensure that they are designed to harmonise with the property and avoid undue harm to neighbours living conditions. If not sensitively designed and located, side extensions can erode the open space within the street and create an environment that is incoherent and jumbled.

49. Side extensions should normally be subservient to the main house and should not unduly block sunlight reaching solar panels on existing properties. The ridge height of extensions should be lower than that of the house typically by a minimum of 300mm, and the front elevation should be set behind the front building line.

50. Unduly wide extensions should normally be avoided, typically a two-storey extension should not exceed around 50% of the width of the original house unless its width has been designed to successfully harmonise with architectural features contained in the original property.

51. Where a side extension is proposed to extend to the side garden boundary, the first floor (or all of the extension) should be set back a minimum of 0.5 metres from the front elevation (the exact distance will depend on how significant the spacing in the street is to the character of the area). Where there is not a straight building line along a frontage an additional set back may be required to avoid the adjacent property being 'dominated' by a side extension.

52. Where the spacing between houses (and often associated landscaping) is a very important intact characteristic of the street it may be the case that a clear gap will need to be retained between the side of the extension and the side boundary. This is likely to be the case in a street containing a mix of house types as in such circumstances proposals to build adjacent to another house can lead to an uncomfortable 'clash of styles'. Spacing is also often a particularly important characteristic between short groups of terraced properties and in such circumstances two-storey side extensions to end terraced houses will be resisted. It is important that the erection of two-storey side extensions does not, through overdevelopment, lead to the impression of the terracing of the front elevation of adjoining properties and the erosion of a street's spaciousness and character.

53. Side extensions along a boundary with a road (or footpath) raise additional issues. The extension should not have an overbearing impact on pedestrians using the footpath or affect highway sight lines. It should also not have a detrimental impact on the streetscene by significantly projecting beyond a clearly defined building line of the adjacent street or detract from the spaciousness of the area. Any rear projection of a side extension should accord with the requirements for rear extensions.

54. It is good practice to try and retain a 1.0m gap to the rear garden to ensure that access remains for cycle storage and so forth. Access to the side and rear of an exposed extension can also be important for allowing future external maintenance. Where a two-storey extension (or first floor extension) is proposed and no access is available to the rear garden it

will be necessary to show how cycles and bins will be sensitively accommodated within the house or front garden.

55. Extensions should stay within the boundaries of the site. For example, eaves and gutters should not overhang adjacent properties unless neighbours have given consent for this to occur.

56. Proposals for dormer windows on the side roof slope of two-storey extensions will rarely be acceptable as the resulting roof slope would normally not match that of the existing house and when combined with the extension the development would not appear subservient to the building.



Figure 7 Two storey side extensions

Normally it is important that the shape and detailing of the extension, including the size and position of windows relates to the original house.



Figure 8 Side extensions near footpaths

Tall and/or deep extensions located too close to footpaths can make routes much less open and attractive.

Rear Extensions

Single-Storey

57. In most cases single storey rear extensions up to 3 metres in length can be erected to semi-detached or terraced properties and up to 4m in length to detached properties without needing planning permission. If such works are proposed however, it is essential that you check first with the council to ensure that there are no further restrictions on the property concerned that might mean that the proposal does need planning permission. Information should also be sought in respect to restrictions that apply with regard to the acceptable height and materials.

58. In assessing proposed extensions beyond 3 and 4 metres the council will have regard to several factors including the impact on sunlight, the relationship to windows and the height of the structure. Where a planning officer is uncertain in respect to the acceptability of a proposal he or she will typically try and gain information in respect to the function and layout of the neighbours' affected room(s). Key issues to consider will include whether the affected room has windows on more than one elevation and whether the shape/size of the room and the location of windows is such that the proposed extension would be

particularly prominent from much of the room. Care will need to be taken to ensure that neighbouring gardens retain adequate levels of sunlight and openness. In most cases it is good practice to try and keep the eaves height of extensions as low as possible.

59. Conservatories are usually to the rear and therefore have similar requirements to single-storey rear extensions. Privacy (for users of the conservatory and for neighbours) is often of greater importance than for other rear extensions. Privacy can be protected by the use of, for example, blank side walls, obscure glazing (frosted glass), high level windows, or by screening along shared garden boundaries.

Two-Storey

60. Unless located on a corner, rear extensions are usually screened from the street by the existing house. However, the additional mass of an extension does have an impact on the space around buildings (including gardens) and can have a significant effect on adjoining occupiers.

61. Two-storey extensions on terraced properties with small rear gardens will generally not be acceptable due to the impact on the neighbouring property and sometimes almost complete loss of amenity space for the house to be extended.

62. On detached and semi-detached houses, a two-storey rear extension may be acceptable subject to the usual area character and amenity principles, referred to previously being satisfied. When deciding the acceptable projection of two-storey extensions a starting point will be the ’45 degrees guideline’. As shown in diagram 9 this involves drawing a line on a floor plan from the centre point of the nearest existing ground floor habitable room window towards the proposed extension. Extensions that project beyond a 45 degrees line will normally be unacceptable unless it can be clearly shown they will not unduly harm the living conditions of the affected property. The 45 degrees guideline does not take account of the extension’s impact on direct sunlight. Advice in respect of this is contained in the section on **Overshadowing and Loss of Light.**

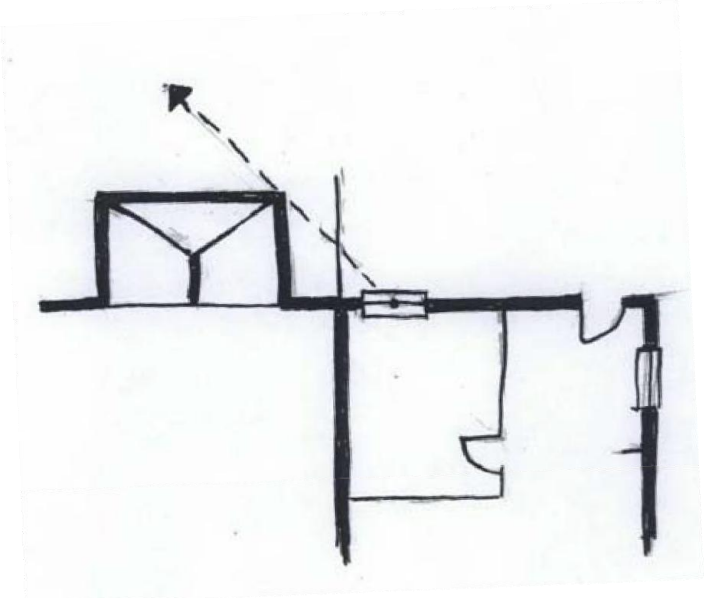


Figure 9 The 45 degrees guideline

The dashed line is at an angle of 45 degrees drawn from the centre of the nearest existing ground floor window towards the location of the neighbouring two-storey side extension. Extensions that project beyond this line will normally be unacceptable. To avoid cutting through this line the extension can be reduced in length and/or moved further from the existing neighbouring window.

Dormer windows and roof extensions

63. The roof of a building is an important and prominent element of its design. Unsympathetic roof extensions can have a dramatic effect on a building's visual appearance. When integral to a dwelling or located on a steep roof slope, dormers can add visual interest and rhythm to a street. However, if poorly located or designed, dormers can make a building appear 'top-heavy', cluttered and harm its balance, or symmetry.

64. Dormers can also detract from the living conditions of neighbours. The loss of privacy can be of concern - particularly where they overlook previously sheltered areas of nearby gardens. Regard should also be given to the impact that large dormers can have on neighbours' light or outlook.

65. In some instances, dormers proposed to the side or rear of a property might not require planning permission. It is strongly advised

that people check with the council in respect to the need for consent before pursuing such works.

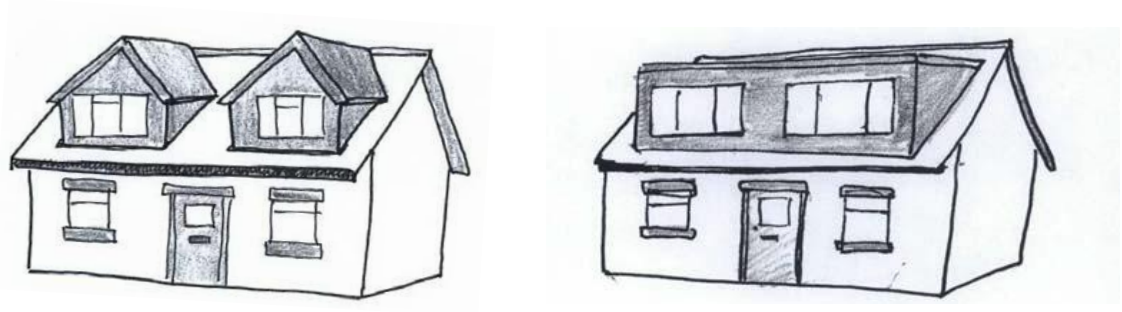
66. Proposals to raise the roof of a dwelling to create adequate internal roof space will normally be refused unless the building is detached and/or such works can be undertaken without creating a structure that is out of character with neighbouring properties. Care should also be taken to ensure that the works do not block undue sunlight from solar panels on roofs of nearby properties.

67. Dormers on any aspect should be designed so that they do not dominate the roof. The style, materials and shape of dormers should relate to the appearance of the house, including the position of existing windows. For bungalows, a single well-proportioned flat roofed front dormer might be acceptable on the front roof slope providing it is set in comfortably from the edges and ridge of the roof. For this to be the case the roof pitch of the existing house will have to be relatively steep. When located on bungalows with a shallow roof pitch, dormers are unacceptable on the front roof slope as to create adequate head height they will inevitably dominate the roof slope and make the building appear 'top heavy'. In streets where there are few or no front dormer windows it is unlikely that new dormers will be allowed on the front elevation unless it can be clearly shown that they will not detract from its character. In respect to privacy, separation distances set out in the **Privacy** section should be adhered to.

68. Dormers will appear out of place and unduly prominent on the front roof slope of most two-storey houses, unless the dormer is very modest in size and characteristic of the street, or characteristic of the type of house on which it is proposed.



Example of dormer windows which do not dominate the front roof slope.



These dormers are considered overly dominant on a front roof slope.

Figure 10 Front dormers on bungalows

Dormers are often suitable additions to bungalows but should not dominate the front roof slope.

Detached Garages and other Outbuildings

69. Garages and other outbuildings can have as much impact on the overall visual appearance of a property as any other addition. Wherever possible they should reflect the style, shape and architectural features of the original building and not be detrimental to the space around it. Care should be taken to avoid the loss of vegetation and retain space for planting that can often soften a building's impact. Outbuildings should clearly be smaller in scale to the house. Particular problems occur with large double garages, which can appear out of scale with adjacent dwellings and gardens. Special care must be taken to disguise or reduce their bulk. In most instances it will be better to use twin doors

with a central column instead of one large double door which can appear ‘industrial’ in appearance and overpower the rest of the building.

70. Outbuildings should normally not be in front of dwellings unless, within the development, there is an irregular arrangement of buildings. Doors should be in keeping with the character of the building and not obstruct the public highway. Further information on parking requirements is contained in the **Provision for Storage and Parking** section of this document.

71. Garages and other outbuildings must not have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of neighbours.

Granny Annexes

72. Any new building work related to the construction of ‘granny annexes’ should comply with guidance contained within this document. Granny annexes will normally only be approved when they are small in scale (1 bedroom) and occupied by direct relatives of family living in the original house. When considering creating or adapting accommodation for relatives, regard should be given to future alternative uses for the accommodation and whether if no longer needed it can be incorporated back into the main house. Proposals to use an annex for a separate dwelling not occupied by family members or for self-contained holiday accommodation will only be acceptable where such proposals comply with national and local policies that relate to new dwellings or flat conversions.

73. Concerns can exist in respect to flood risk to occupiers of ground floor granny annexes proposed in Flood Zones 2 and 3. Where there is no internal door linking a granny annex with the rest of an existing house a Flood Risk Assessment appropriate for a new dwelling will be needed to assess flood risk to occupiers of the annex.

Boundaries

74. Fences and walls though relatively minor alterations can have a very great impact on the appearance of a street. When considering

erecting a new boundary structure it is important to look at others in the road and consider what height, design and materials are characteristic of the area. Boundary types normally differ according to the age of the property and whether the street is in an urban, sub-urban or village location - a boundary that is appropriate around a Georgian townhouse close to the city centre will normally appear out of place in front of a suburban semi (and vice versa).

75. In most cases a boundary lower than 1m will not require planning permission. Boundaries between 1 and 2 metres that adjoin a highway (which includes a footpath adjacent to the road) will typically need permission. Some post-war areas of York have open plan restrictions and permission will be needed for all front boundaries. If in doubt about the need for planning permission you should always contact the council.

76. High front boundary walls and fences can make a street appear unwelcoming and block what is often the most attractive view of a garden and property. Where a higher screen is required around a front garden, a hedgerow would be the most appropriate solution. Boundaries formed from vegetation have the additional benefit that they can help support birds and other wildlife.

77. Where a side or rear garden boundary adjoins a highway (which includes a footpath adjacent to the road) a 1.8 – 2.0m brick wall will normally be acceptable if it is in keeping with the surroundings. Wooden fences will be appropriate where they are characteristic of the area and they are of a robust design. Care should be taken to ensure that a boundary does not obscure sight lines for vehicles entering or exiting a property or turning a corner.

Extensions in the Green Belt

78. Much of the open land in the City of York council area is classified as Green Belt. A key function of this land is to retain openness between built up areas and safeguard the historic setting of the city. If you are intending to extend a home that is located within the Green Belt it is important that you have regard to national and local polices on development in such areas.

79. Proposals for extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt will be

assessed in accordance with Green Belt policy in the NPPF. Policy GB7 of the NPPF considers the extension of dwellings is not inappropriate 'provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the original building'. The original building is defined as 'the building that existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally'.

80. If a home is located in the Green Belt any planning application to extend the original footprint by more than 25% has traditionally been considered a disproportionate addition and resisted accordingly. This still represents a useful guide for single storey extensions, however, where it involves two storey development, a volume assessment will also be required in terms of its proportionality compared to the size of the original house. As part of this assessment consideration will be given to geographical location, scale and position of the extension relative to the house. Consideration will also be given to the permitted development fallback position. National permitted development legislation is contained in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

81. Where extensions are considered disproportionate then they represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As identified in policy GB6 of the NPPF, inappropriate development is, 'by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Such circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm resulting from the proposed development, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.'

82. All proposals for extensions in Green Belts will also need to have regard to other guidance within this document. It is particularly important in the Green Belt that extensions do not cause homes to become significantly more prominent within the landscape. Proposals at first floor level or changes to the roof are particularly sensitive in this respect.

Further Information

The Council maintains up-to-date guidance and planning-related information at https://www.york.gov.uk/PlanningAndBuilding .

Specific information on pre-application advice is available at https://www.york.gov.uk/PlanningAdvicePreApp and advice on submitting planning applications at https://www.york.gov.uk/MakingAPlanningApplication .