



# SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

## **DRAFT** **House Extensions and Alterations**

**Approved December 2012**

City of York Council

House Extensions and Alterations  
Draft Supplementary Planning Document  
Approved by Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2012

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**এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)**

**Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)**

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**یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)**

** (01904) 551550**

## Contents

	<i>Page</i>
<b>Overview</b>	4
<b>General Advice</b>	
i. Privacy	5
ii. Overshadowing and loss of light	7
iii. Dominance and outlook	9
iv. Habitable rooms and side windows	10
v. Character and streetscene	10
vi. Provision for storage and parking	13
vii. Private amenity space	13
viii. Drainage	15
<b>Advice for Specific Extensions and Alterations</b>	
ix. Porches and front extensions	16
x. Side extensions	17
xi. Rear Extensions	19
xii. Dormer windows and roof extensions	21
xiii. Detached garages and other outbuildings	23
xiv. Granny annexes	24
xv. Boundaries	24
xvi. Extensions in the Green Belt	25
<b>Annex - Contacts and Additional Information</b>	
3.1. Key Council Contacts	27
3.2. Further Information	28
3.3. Submitting a Planning Application	29
3.4. Sustainability	29
3.5. Conservation areas	30
3.6. Drainage	30
3.7. Policy Background	30

## 1. Overview

- 1.1 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 2012, York Local Development Framework 2011 and the City of York Draft Local Plan 4<sup>th</sup> Set of Changes (April 2005). The main relevant policies and paragraphs of these documents are contained in the annex 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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, normally within 10 working days, 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.
- 1.4 This document does not cover any other legislation, including Building Regulations. Building Regulations normally relates 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 - further advice on this matter is contained in the annex.
- 1.5 The guidance is in three 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. The annex includes useful contacts and procedural information.

## 2. General Advice

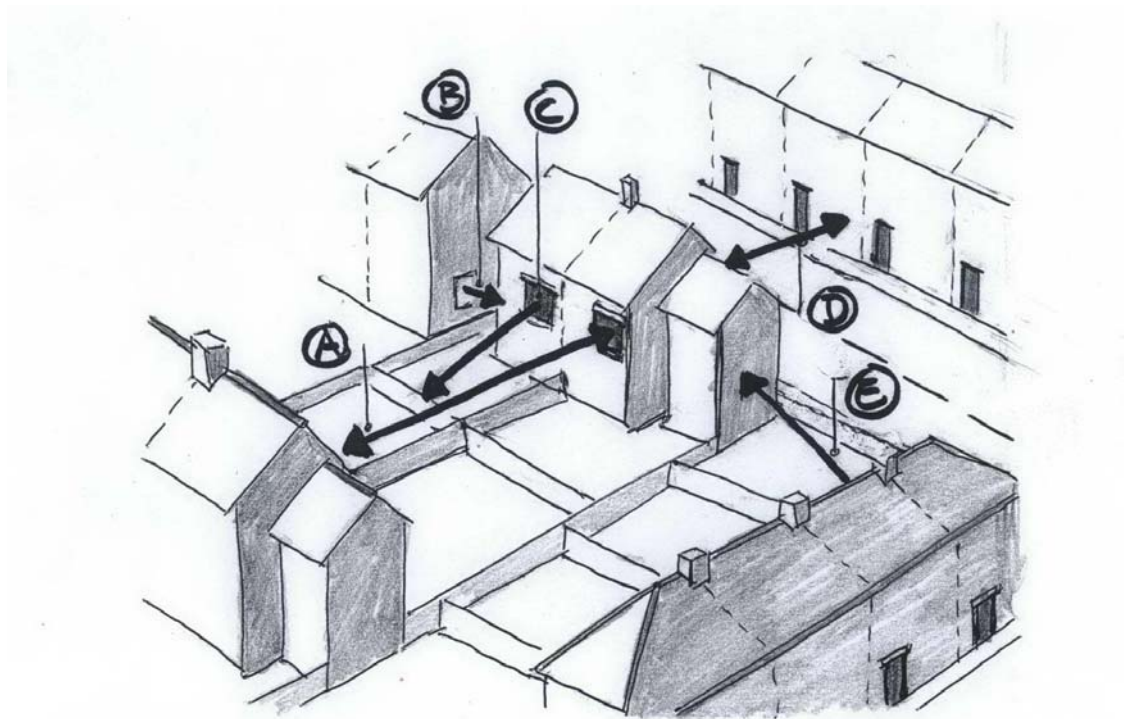
- 2.1 Central government planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires planning authorities to plan positively for high quality design. It states that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- 2.2 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 affect 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.
- 2.3 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. Policies 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.
- 2.4 The main considerations for assessing planning applications submitted to the council are set out below:

### *i) Privacy*

- 3.1 Proposals should not result in direct overlooking of rooms in neighbouring dwellings or excessive overlooking of adjacent garden areas. The diagram overleaf illustrates separation distances that will normally be required to preserve reasonable privacy levels (as well as ensuring adequate light and outlook).
- 3.2 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.

- 3.3 In some circumstances harmful overlooking can be avoided by using obscure glazing and fixing shut 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.
- 

Diagram 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 existing character).  
E – Rear ground floor window to proposed two-storey side extension (12 metres). This is required to protect light and outlook from existing rear windows.
- 

- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.

*ii) Overshadowing and Loss of Light*

- 4.1 Most residents gain much 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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*

- 4.4 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.

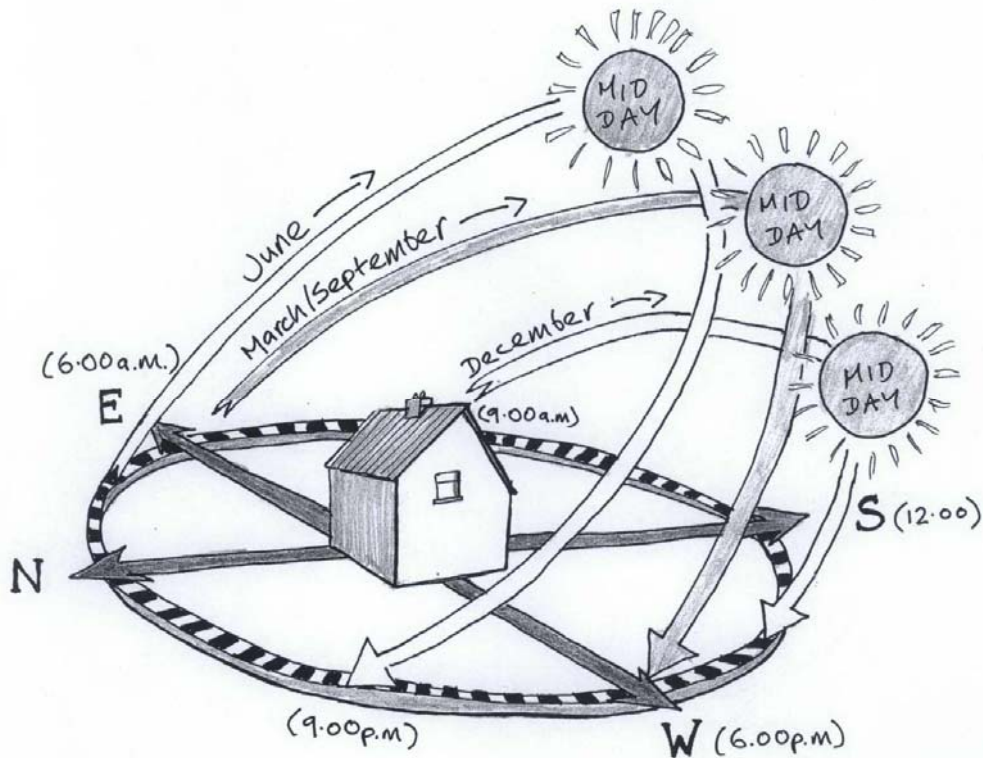
*Southerly*

- 4.5 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 months

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.

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Diagram 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.*

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#### *Easterly and Westerly*

4.6 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

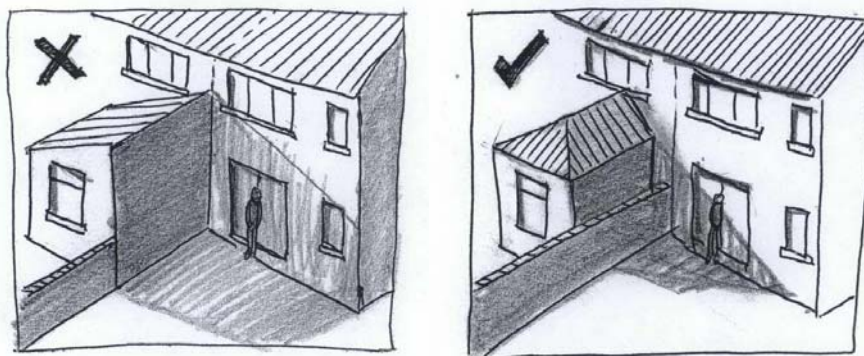


garden will impact on afternoon and evening sunlight. In the winter months the sun is relatively low in the sky when to the east and west.

- 4.7 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.

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Diagram 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.

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*iii) Dominance and Outlook*

- 5.1 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 in itself is not normally protected when assessing the impact of development on the living conditions of a home.

5.2 When assessing the impact that a proposal will have on an outlook, regard will be had 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.

*iv) Habitable rooms and side windows*

6.1 It is the case that light and outlook can be of greater importance for some rooms than others. Limited protection will be given to protecting 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.

6.2 Some properties in York, though 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.

6.3 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.

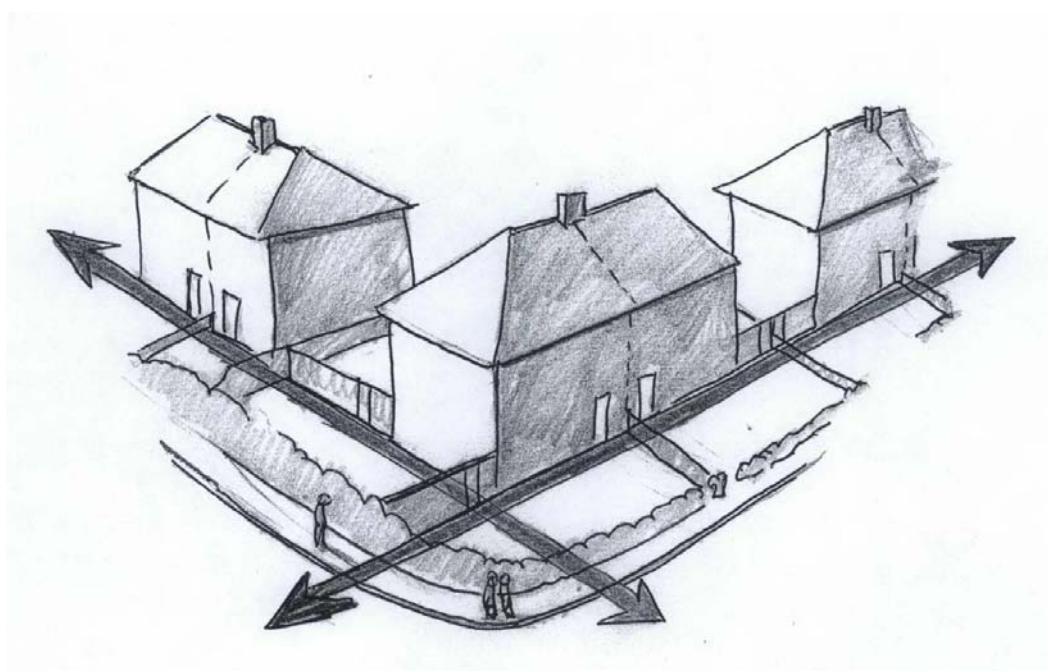
*v) Character and streetscene*

7.1 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.

7.2 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.

- 7.3 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. A list of the villages that have produced such statements at the time of preparing this guidance are contained in the annex. More statements are likely to be produced in the future and applicants should check at the time of preparing schemes whether others are applicable.

Diagram 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.

- 7.4 Adherence to the following principles should help to ensure that character and streetscene criteria are met:
- 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 is contained in paragraph 11.
- 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 in order 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.
- 7.5 In many cases proposals that do not respect the character of a house or location are a result of the owners 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 very helpful in this respect.

*VI) Provision for Storage and Parking*

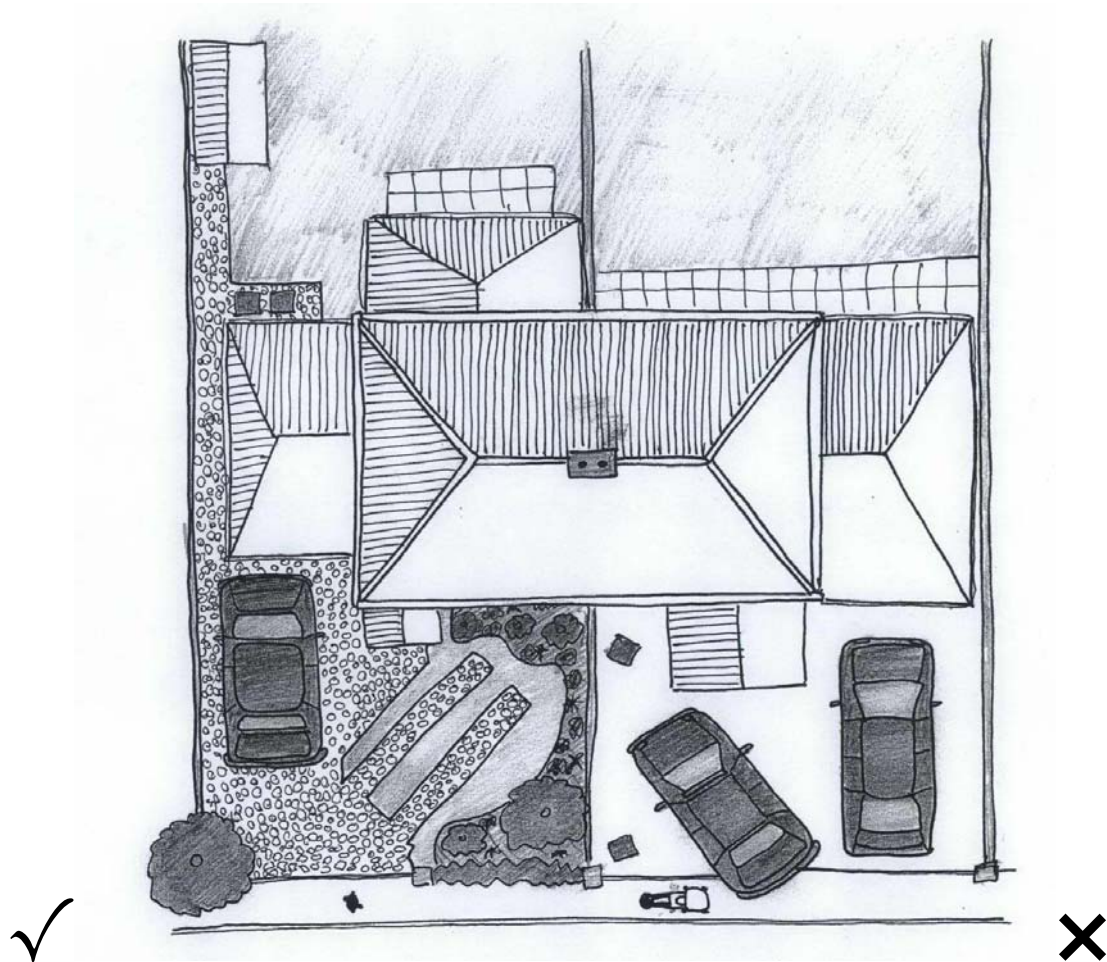
- 8.1 A site should retain adequate access, parking and turning facilities for vehicles, including secure storage for cycles. The number of parking spaces required will depend on the council's parking standards for the area, on-street parking availability and any pertinent highway safety considerations. 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. Further advice relating to drainage is contained in paragraph 10.1.
- 8.2 Where a first floor or two-storey side extension is proposed and there is no pedestrian access to the rear garden, a garage or cycle store should be incorporated within the front of the house.
- 8.3 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.
- 8.4 Where a property is reliant on access to the rear garden for the storage of cycles a minimum gap of 0.9m will normally be required between the extension and side boundary.

*VII) Private Amenity Space*

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 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.
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9.3 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 value and limit the range of people who might want to occupy it in the future.

Diagram 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.

viii) *Drainage*

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 A surface water drainage method should be used that is most appropriate to the local ground conditions. Water butts and other rain water harvesting systems should be considered to help make more efficient use of water.
- Details of York's flood zones can be found on the following website:  
<http://localview.york.gov.uk/Sites/lv/>
- 10.3 The hard surfacing of front gardens can need planning permission. 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.
- 10.4 Website links that contain much useful information and advice on the best ways to deal with drainage and flood risk are contained in the annex.

## Advice for Specific Extensions and Alterations

### *ix) Porches and other Front Extensions*

11.1 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:

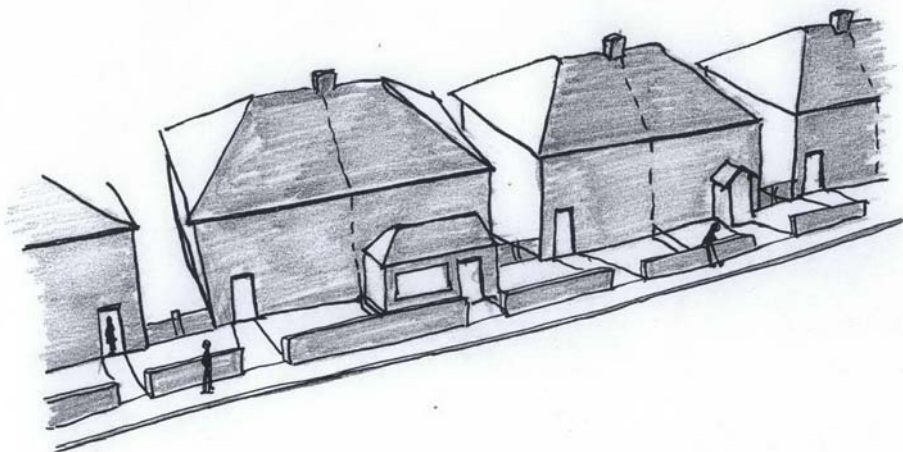
- the house is set well back from the pavement, or is well screened,
- the extension is small, well-designed and it would not harm the character of the house/area; and
- the extension would not unduly affect neighbours.

11.2 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.

11.3 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. 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.

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Diagram 6 – Front Extensions



Normally only small porches are suitable as front extensions.

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x) *Side Extensions*

- 12.1 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 also have the benefit that they do not lead to the loss of valuable rear garden space.
- 12.2 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.
- 12.3 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 and the front elevation should be set behind the front building line.
- 12.4 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.
- 12.5 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.
- 12.6 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.

- 12.7 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.
- 12.8 It is often good practice to try and retain a 0.9m 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.
- 12.9 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.
- 12.10 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.

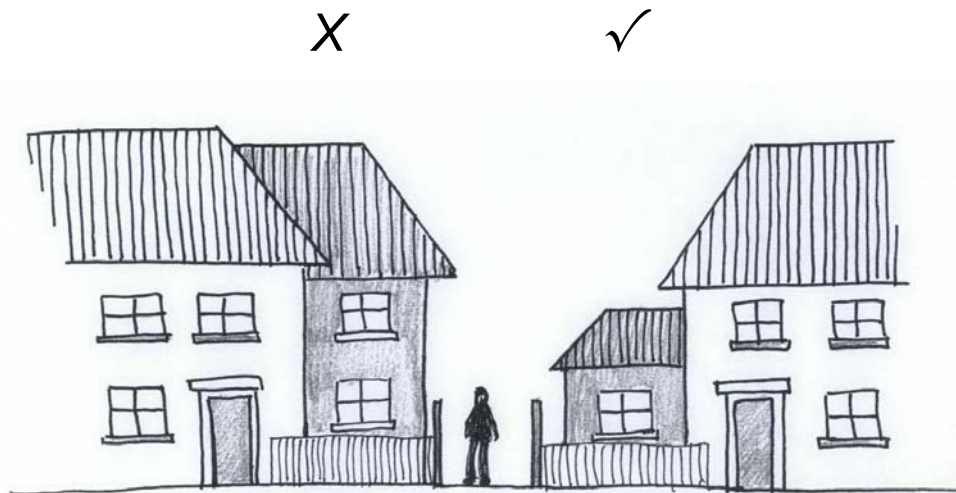
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Diagram 8 - Two-storey side extensions.



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

Diagram 7 - Side extensions near footpaths.



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

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xi) *Rear Extensions*

*Single-Storey*

- 13.1 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.
- 13.2 In assessing proposed extensions beyond 3 and 4 metres the council will have regard to a number of 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

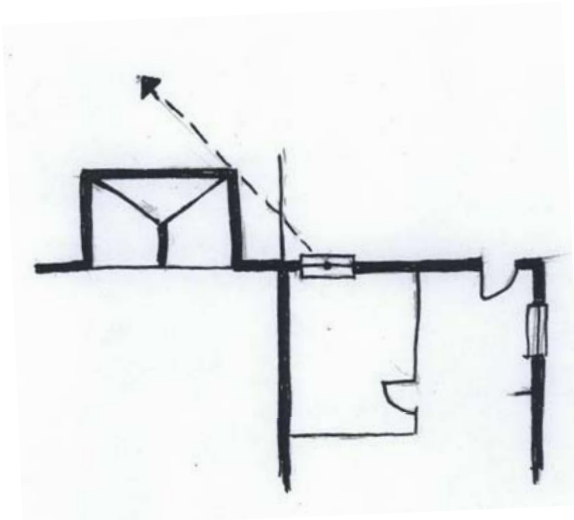
the room. Care will need to be taken to ensure that neighbouring gardens retain adequate levels of sunlight and openness. In most cases it is good practice to try and keep the eaves height of extensions as low as possible.

- 13.3 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*

- 13.4 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 affect on adjoining occupiers.
- 13.5 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.
- 13.6 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 rule'. As shown in diagram 9 this involves drawing a line on a floor plan from the centre point of the nearest 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 rule does not take account of the extension's impact on direct sunlight. Advice in respect to this is contained in paragraph 4.

Diagram 9 - The 45 degrees 'rule'.



The dashed line is at an angle of 45 degrees drawn from the centre of the nearest 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 neighbouring window.

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*xii) Dormer windows and Roof Extensions*

- 14.1 The roof of a building is an important and prominent element of its design. Unsympathetic roof extensions can have a dramatic affect 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.
- 14.2 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.
- 14.3 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.
- 14.4 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.

14.5 Dormers 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 'General Advice' section should be adhered to.

Diagram 10 – Front dormers on bungalows

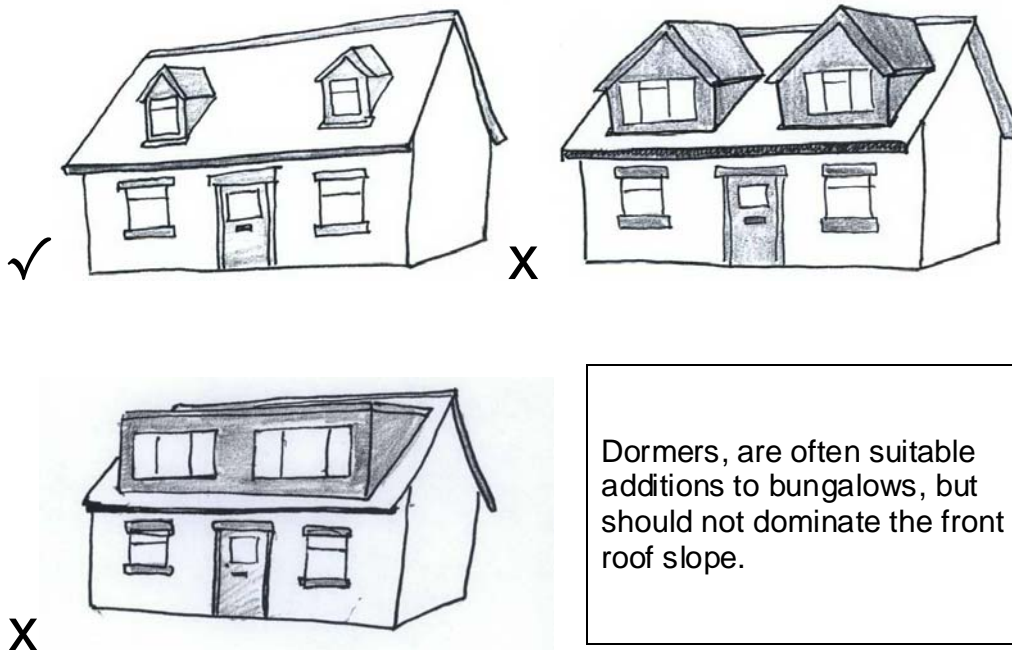


Diagram 11 - Front dormers on houses

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.



*xiii) Detached Garages and other Outbuildings*

- 15.1 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.
- 15.2 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. There must be enough space on the driveway in front of a proposed garage for a car to be parked without any part of it overhanging

- the footpath or road. It will also be necessary to ensure that the garage door can be opened when a car is parked in front of it. Typically a minimum drive length of 5.5m will be sought in front of garages.
- 15.3 Garages and other outbuildings must not have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of neighbours.
- xiv) Granny Annexes*
- 16.1 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.
- 16.2 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.
- xv) Boundaries*
- 17.1 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).
- 17.2 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.



- 17.3 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.
- 17.4 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.

*xvi) Extensions in the Green Belt*

- 18.1 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 policies on development in such areas.
- 18.2 If a home is located in the Green Belt outside a settlement any planning application to extend the original footprint by more than 25% has traditionally been considered to be a disproportionate addition and resisted accordingly. . It is the case, however, that changes to national permitted development legislation in 2008 meant that in some instances homes in the Green Belt could be extended by more than 25% without requiring planning permission. If planning permission is needed for an extension in the Green Belt and the extension would increase the footprint of the dwelling by more than 25%, the council will when making a decision, have regard to what alternative extensions or outbuildings could be undertaken without the need to apply for planning permission. In some instances it might be more beneficial to approve an extension above 25% of the footprint of the home if a refusal may result in the house owner undertaking a less favourable development using permitted development rights. Where a large extension is approved in the Green Belt a condition may be included to ensure that no further extensions (or outbuildings) are erected using permitted development rights.
- 18.3 Some areas of the Green Belt ‘wash-over’ defined settlements. In these situations limited infilling will typically be allowed. Limited infilling is considered to be development that takes place within built up areas and preserves the general character of the locality.

- 18.4 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.

## **Annex: Contacts and Additional Information**

### **3.1 Key Council Contacts**

#### *A) Development Management*

The Council's Development Management section make recommendations on planning applications and can offer advice on whether planning permission is required for a proposal and whether a proposal is likely to receive consent.

There is a charge for most services that are provided and requests for advice must be submitted on forms that can be obtained from the Council or downloaded from our website.

The following site can be useful for assessing whether your works will require planning permission. (<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/house>). If you think that your works will not require permission it is recommended that you double check in writing with the Council before progressing.

The contact details for the Development Management Service are:

Plans Processing Unit

City of York Council, West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA

tel: (01904) 551553

email: [\*\*planning.enquiries@york.gov.uk\*\*](mailto:planning.enquiries@york.gov.uk)

website: <http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/Planning/>

#### *A) Building Control*

You will probably need Building Regulations approval for most works or changes of use that you carry out to a building.

It is useful to have written confirmation that your proposal doesn't need planning permission or building regulations consents, especially when it comes to selling your property. This confirmation shows any prospective purchaser that you haven't carried out any unauthorised work.

The contact details for the City of York Council Building Control Service are:

Building Control, City of York Council,  
West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA

Site inspection tel: (01904) 551354 or 551333

email: [building.control@york.gov.uk](mailto:building.control@york.gov.uk)

Website: [http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/Building\\_control/](http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/Building_control/)

### 3.2 Further Information

#### *A) Map Based Information*

It is important that you check whether your property is in a conservation area or flood zone 2 or 3. Information can be found at the following map based site.

<http://localview.york.gov.uk/Sites/lv/>

Information showing York's **Greenbelt** can be seen at:

[http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/Planning/Local\\_Plan/View\\_the\\_local\\_plan/](http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/Planning/Local_Plan/View_the_local_plan/)

Please see under 'Local Plan Proposals Map' heading.

#### *B) Village Design Statements (VDS) and Neighbourhood Plans*

The following villages currently have Village Design Statements:

Askham Bryan; Askham Richard; Copmanthorpe; Dunnington; Heslington; Holtby; Knapton; Murton; Poppleton; Rufforth; Skelton; Wheldrake.

These documents have been produced by the local community. They set out advice and guidelines that seek to ensure that new development harmonises with its surroundings and makes a positive contribution to the local environment. If you live in a location with a Village Design statement it is important that you consider advice contained within the document when preparing a planning application. The documents can be viewed at:

[http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/Planning/guidance/Village\\_design\\_statements/](http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/Planning/guidance/Village_design_statements/)

c) *The Party Wall Act 1996*

The City Council does not adjudicate in disputes over property ownership/boundaries. Where an applicant or neighbour requires information in respect to issues such as building on property boundaries or seeking access to a neighbour's land it is recommended that they initially view the Party Wall Act for advice.

An explanatory booklet about the Act is available from City Strategy at West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA, or at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/partywall>

### **3.3 Submitting a Planning Application**

Planning applications for house extensions usually take around 7 weeks to be decided. The Council will normally contact neighbours to give them the opportunity to comment on the proposals. The vast majority of decisions are taken by planning officers under 'delegated' authority, however, those that are contentious or unusual will sometimes be decided by elected Members at regular planning sub-committee meetings.

The current fee for submitting a planning application for a house extension or alteration is £150. Applications must be submitted on appropriate forms and be supported by plans and drawings of an acceptable standard. Further advice on how to submit a planning application is available at the following link:

[http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/Planning/Planning\\_applications/309159/](http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/Planning/Planning_applications/309159/)

### **3.4 Sustainability**

A number of elements of this guidance note on house extensions support proposals to make better use of resources and discourage harm to the natural environment. For example, it sets out the importance of ensuring that proposals leave space to store cycles and rubbish/recycling, do not increase flood risk and retain appropriate levels of garden space and landscaping.

The council has also produced a specific guidance note purely on sustainability for various forms of development. The note contains much useful advice and can be seen at the following website link:

[http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/Planning/guidance/Design\\_and\\_construct\\_draft\\_SPG/](http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/Planning/guidance/Design_and_construct_draft_SPG/)

### **3.5 Conservation Areas**

Information in respect to the location of conservation areas in the City of York area can be found at the following link. Information is also available in respect to the specific characteristics of each of the conservation areas.

[http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/conservation/Conservation\\_areas/](http://www.york.gov.uk/environment/conservation/Conservation_areas/)

### **3.6 Drainage**

The following drainage advice could prove useful when planning to undertake works:

Environment Agency advice on planning applications:

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/82584.aspx>

Advice on improving the flood performance of new buildings:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/improvingflood>

Advice on the permeable paving of front gardens:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pavingfrontgardens>

### **3.7 Policy Background**

*National Planning Policy Framework:*

In March 2012, the Government produced the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – this sets out the Government’s approach and policies to development, and replace PPG’s and PPS’s. In terms of guidance in relation to house extensions and alterations, the following sections of the NPPF are particularly relevant:

- Section 7 – Requiring good design;  
This section considers the importance of high quality design, which contributes to making places better for people. It goes beyond purely aesthetic considerations and considers the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

- Section 10 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;  
This section aims to make developments more sustainable, helping to mitigate climate change, by maximising renewable and low carbon energy development. It also aims to reduce flood risk.
- Section 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment;  
This section aims to reduce the impact of developments on the historic environment by taking full account of heritage assets. It considers that great weight should be placed on the asset's conservation. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
- Plan-Making  
This section considers the plan making process – of particular relevance to the Draft SPD is paragraph 153, which states that SPD's should be used where they can help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery, and should not be used to add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.

At a local level, the draft SPD encompasses the general approaches and visions set out in the City of York Local Plan (4<sup>th</sup> Set of Changes, April 2005). The Local Plan 4<sup>th</sup> Set of Changes were approved for Development Management purposes in April 2005 and the policies most relevant are copied in the section below.

The draft SPD is also in conformity with the LDF Core Strategy Submission (Publication) document (September 2011), particularly policies CS5 (Urban Design and the Historic Environment), CS7 (Balancing York's Housing Market), and CS21 (Sustainable Design and Construction). Although the document has been withdrawn, it indicates the Council's interpretation of a number of evidence base documents in policy terms, and has been subject to consultation. These evidence base documents include:

- 2011 Strategic Housing Market Assessment,;
- 2011 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment,;
- Waste Management Strategy;
- Climate Change Framework and Action Plan;

- Other SPD's, such as the 'Controlling the Concentration of Houses in Multiple Occupation' and 'The subdivision of dwellings'.

These national and local policies seek to ensure that new extensions, whilst meeting the needs of occupiers, do not detract from the appearance of the local area, or conflict with issues of importance including flood risk, energy use and the protection of the natural environment.

### **Draft Local Plan 4<sup>th</sup> Set of Changes (2005)**

The City of York Draft Local Plan (fourth set of changes) was approved in April 2005. The content of the policies that are likely to be most relevant for your proposals are copied below:

#### *H7: Residential Extensions*

Planning permission will be granted for residential extensions where:

- a) the design and materials are sympathetic to the main dwelling and the locality of the development; and
- b) the design and scale are appropriate in relation the main building; and
- d) there is no adverse effect on the amenity which neighbouring residents could reasonably expect to enjoy; and
- e) proposals respect the spaces between dwellings; and
- g) the proposed extension does not result in an unacceptable reduction in private amenity space within the curtilage of the dwelling.

#### *GP1: Design*

Development proposals will be expected to:

- a) respect or enhance the local environment;
- b) be of a density, layout, scale, mass and design that is compatible with neighbouring buildings, spaces and the character of the area, using appropriate building materials;
- c) avoid the loss of open spaces, important gaps within development, vegetation, water features and other features that contribute to the quality of the local environment;
- d) where appropriate incorporate informative landscapes design proposals, where these would clearly have an influence on the quality and amenity and/or ecological value of the development;



- e) retain, enhance and/or create urban spaces, public views, skyline, landmarks, the rural character and setting of villages and other townscape features which make a significant contribution to the character of the area, and take opportunities to reveal such features to public view;
- f) design outdoor lighting schemes, which are energy efficient and provide the minimum lighting level required for security and working purposes, taking into account any adverse impact on residential amenity, the character of the area and night sky illumination and ecological systems;
- g) provide and protect private, individual or communal amenity space for residential and commercial developments;
- h) provide individual or communal storage space for waste recycling and litter collection;
- i) ensure that residents living nearby are not unduly affected by noise, disturbance, overlooking, overshadowing or dominated by overbearing structures;
- j) accord with sustainable design principles (GP4a) and incorporate the principles of the Building for Life Standard as a fundamental part of the design;
- k) provide disabled toilets/parent baby changing facilities in public, non-residential buildings;
- l) Where opportunities exist, new open space/landscape treatment should be incorporated to close gaps between green corridors and take account of ecological principles through habitat restoration/creation.

*GB4: Extensions to Existing Dwellings in the Green Belt*

The extension and alteration of dwellings in the Green Belt and open countryside will be permitted providing the proposal:

- a) would not cause undue visual intrusion; and
- b) is appropriate in terms of design and materials; and
- c) is small scale

*GB2: Development in Settlements "Washed Over" by the Green Belt*

Within the defined settlement limits of villages in the Green Belt, planning permission for the erection of new buildings or the change of use, redevelopment or extension of existing buildings will be permitted provided:

- a) the proposed development would be located within the built-up area of the settlement; and
- b) the location, scale and design of the proposed development would be appropriate to the form and character of the settlement and neighbouring property; and
- c) the proposed development would constitute limited infilling and would not prejudice the openness or the purposes of the Green Belt.