

# House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document

June 2021



**WARRINGTON**  
Borough Council

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# 1. Introduction

Guidelines for the way in which the Council will deal with planning applications for householder developments are essential. Such guidelines are of benefit to householders and their agents when planning extensions and alterations to their homes, and to local residents, Ward Councillors and Parish Councils who may be interested in developments in their area.

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides clear advice to enable applicants and their agents to submit proposals with more confidence; for officers it will give a firmer basis for making decisions to ensure a good quality, sustainable development, and ensure that all parties can have confidence that the right decisions continue to be made.

This new SPD updates and replaces the previous Supplementary Planning Guidance – House Extensions (2003).

The new SPD will support policies set out in the Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) in particular policies:

- QE4 - Flood Risk
- QE5 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- QE6 - Environment and Amenity Protection
- QE7 - Ensuring a High Quality Place
- QE8 - Historic Environment
- MP1 – General Transport Principles

These guidelines will be applied to planning applications and applications where prior approval is applicable and relate to all house types including bungalows but excluding flats though some of the same general principles will apply.

There is a wide range of domestic developments that require an application for planning permission and generally these all raise similar issues that have to be considered in determining whether planning permission can be granted. The general principles in considering an application for planning permission for householder extensions and alterations are to ensure the resulting development is a sustainable form of development that:

- Is of good quality design that complements the character and appearance of the original house
- Does not adversely affect the character of the street and surrounding area
- does not cause unacceptable harm to your neighbours amenities
- Does not harm heritage assets (such as listed buildings, locally listed buildings and conservation areas)
- Provides appropriate levels of car parking and avoids creation of highways problems including danger to pedestrians
- Has proper regard to trees, flood risk, protected species
- Does not result in inappropriate development in the Green Belt

All applications must be considered in accordance with adopted development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. In the case of Warrington, the adopted development plan is the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

Proposals that comply with the guidelines in this SPD will be considered to be in line with the Council's Core Strategy policies and the Government's planning policies set out in the National Planning Framework. Such applications are much more likely to be approved. The guidance contained within this document allows the assessment of applications against the principles in the Core Strategy.

## **1.1 Planning application process**

This SPD is intended to provide guidelines relating to applications for planning permission; details of how to submit such an application and the information required to be submitted with the application can be found through the Planning Portal and on the Council's website, in particular the Validation Checklist sets out what information and plans should accompany an application.

It is important to provide all the necessary plans and supporting information when submitting your application as this will help minimise delays and ensure that your application can be dealt with more efficiently.

Once a valid application has been received the Council will notify neighbours, ward councilors and Parish Councils together with any other necessary technical consultees in relation to, for example, highways, trees, heritage, flooding and biodiversity issues. The case officer will normally carry out a site visit. The proposals will be assessed against adopted local plan policies and any supporting supplementary planning guidance, such as this.

Other material considerations may be taken into account such as the impact on the character of the area, neighbour's amenities, site specific issues/context such as ground levels, previous planning permissions or refusals on the same or nearby properties for similar developments, relevant appeal decisions and permitted development rights. Personal circumstances of the applicant or neighbours will rarely be material consideration in determining the application. Decisions on householder applications are mostly delegated to officers but in some circumstances applications will be considered by the Development Management Committee; procedures relating to this are set out in the Council's constitution.

In considering the proposals the case officer may seek amendments to address any concerns about the proposal where minor amendments are needed to make sure the proposals comply with Local Plan Policies and the guidance set out in this SPD.

In the majority of cases, this will result in planning permission being granted either with or without any amendments to the originally submitted plans. Permissions are usually subject to conditions – some of these will require the submission of further details, others will have ongoing requirements. In both instances it is important that you comply with the requirements.

Where it does not prove possible to reach an agreement on the proposal, or more significant amendments are required to a scheme, planning permission may be refused. In such circumstances,

specific reasons will be set out for the refusal in the decision notice. These can be responded to and an application re-submitted. Alternatively there is the opportunity to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, which is an independent body separate from the Council. Details of how to appeal will be set out on the decision notice.

## **2. General guidance relevant to all proposals**

### **2.1 Design and Impact on the character of the area**

National planning policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that “Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.”

The Government’s National Design Guide sets out that good design will come about through consideration of layout, form and scale of buildings, their appearance, landscape, materials and detailing. All of these can be related to the scale of house extensions.

Local Plan Core Strategy policies also seek good design in new developments.

#### **2.1.1 Space Around Dwellings**

Space around dwellings can be an important element in establishing and retaining the character of an area.

This may be space to the front, sides or rear – the guidelines below reflect regular layouts but similar principles will apply where the layout of a house or street is less regular. Proposals for extensions, including outbuildings, should respect space around the house to be extended and the spaces in front of and between properties. Developments should not normally project beyond the main front/street facing elevation of the house. Some exceptions can be made for small porches and bay windows. Outbuildings, including detached garages will not normally be acceptable in front of the main street facing elevation of a house.

The Council will require a minimum of 1 metre retained to the side boundary for any extensions above single storey level – this is to avoid any potential terracing effect should the neighbouring property carry out a similar extension, importantly this will also ensure the retention of space between and around houses and ensure that an extension does not appear overbearing to neighbours.

Single storey extensions can project to the side boundary but regard should be given to the retention of access to the rear garden area where bins may be kept. Access around the house to the rear should normally be provided, where this is not possible an internal access may be permissible. In some areas and in the case of detached properties more than 1 metre between the extension and the side boundary may be required to ensure that the development retains the character of the area. For example, if the area is characterised by houses with significant space to the sides, it will not necessarily be acceptable to extend to within 1 metre of the boundary.

Garden areas, particularly where there is the opportunity for green landscaping, provide wider benefits. This can include a property’s appearance, resident’s well-being and environmental positives for wildlife and flora. In particular rear garden and yard areas can make a significant contribution to the character of an area both in terms of their size and layout.

Developments to the rear, whether extensions or outbuildings, should not be so extensive in relation to the size of the garden or yard, particularly when they add to other extensions, as to be overdevelopment that would be out of keeping with the character of the area.

Enough garden space should be retained after any extensions have been built to accommodate various domestic leisure pursuits and to ensure that enough space is retained between the application property and the neighbouring houses to avoid a cramped overcrowded feel and to prevent overlooking between windows.

## **2.1.2 Design**

Extensions should complement the existing house in terms of scale, design, roof pitch, materials, window placement and proportions. To ensure that extensions harmonise visually with existing dwelling and the wider area they should be subordinate in scale to the building which is to be extended. The problem of bonding old and new brickwork on prominent elevations should be avoided by setting the extension back at least one course of brick. Proposed windows and doors should be of a similar scale and proportion to those of the existing house and should align with the existing windows. Existing examples of poor design in the vicinity will not be sufficient reason to justify similar proposals now.

All extensions should be designed so as not to over dominate the original house or detract from its character. The effect of an extension on the appearance of a pair or group of houses is also an important consideration.

Side extensions should usually be no more than 50% greater in width than the original house unless the character of the property and the surrounding area can support such a large proposal. This helps to maintain the balance and symmetry of semi-detached properties in particular. Larger extensions can over dominate the original house and detract from its appearance.

Roof extensions and alterations can have a significant impact on the appearance of the property and the wider area. Roofs over any extensions should complement the roof of the existing house though there may be some exceptions such as conservatories and more contemporary flat roof single storey extensions, where these are positioned away from public view. For extensions tying into the main roof, these should have matching roof pitch, form and materials. The new roof should be no higher than the main ridge of the existing house though there can be exceptions, for example, for detached houses where there is some variation in ridge height for neighbouring properties.

Any detached garage or other outbuilding such as a garden room or home office, shed, workshop, gazebo will be treated in the same way as other extensions - proposals should reflect or harmonise with the design of the existing house and should not dominate the property or be intrusive in the street scene.

## **2.1.3 Contemporary designs**

Some extensions and outbuildings can be of a more contemporary design to the original house although these are more likely to be acceptable where they are not widely visible in the street scene. In such cases justification should be provided for the design particularly where form and materials differ significantly from the main house. Details of the proposal to demonstrate high quality in the application submission, e.g. quality of materials and sections through parapet walls, should be provided with the application.

## **2.1.4 Bin storage**

Where extensions result in the removal of external access to the rear of the house, it should be clearly indicated how the design of the extension would incorporate provision for bin storage in a discreet location that does not intrude on the street scene or neighbours. In front of principal building lines, or in prominent side locations, bins should be appropriately stored in suitable housing or effectively screened with suitable materials at an appropriate scale with consideration given to any crime and anti-social behavior issues.



## **2.2 Impact on Amenities of Neighbouring Residents**

Extensions and other domestic developments can impact significantly on neighbouring residents' homes and garden areas; this could include resulting in an overbearing appearance, loss of daylight and loss of privacy.

### **2.2.1 45 degree Code**

The Council will use a well-established 45 degree code in order to assess impact of extensions on neighbouring properties. See figures 1-3.

The 45 degree code must be used to help protect the amenity of neighbouring properties by preventing overshadowing or obstruction, caused by large extensions on or close to a boundary. The code is principally applied to extensions that project beyond windows within the front or rear elevations of the neighbour's house; it may also apply to side extensions where the building lines are staggered. The Code should be used when deciding on how much the property can extend without causing harm to neighbouring properties.

To comply with the 45 Degree Code, extensions should be designed so as not to cross the 45 degree line taken in a horizontal plane and measured from the centre point of the neighbour's nearest primary habitable room window (this will be the main window that serves that room). A habitable room is a living room, dining room, conservatory, kitchen/ diner or bedroom. A separate kitchen will not normally be classed as a habitable room, nor will landings, bathrooms, small studies, en-suites or dressing rooms. If the protected window is a bay, including a conservatory, the Code is applied to the centre of the outermost projection of the bay.

The line will show the maximum width and/or depth that a proposed extension can build up to avoiding obstruction from light or views. The zone of restriction thus created will be applied up to a distance of 12m along the 45 degree line. The code will be applied to ground floor and two storey extensions and the protected window may be at ground or first floor with the worst case being the determining factor. Even if the property has an existing single storey extension or original outrigger, the addition of a first floor extension at a later date may conflict with the Code.

It may be appropriate to splay or stagger the corners of the extension to comply with the 45 degree code. However this may cause an unusual shape and design and be visually unattractive.

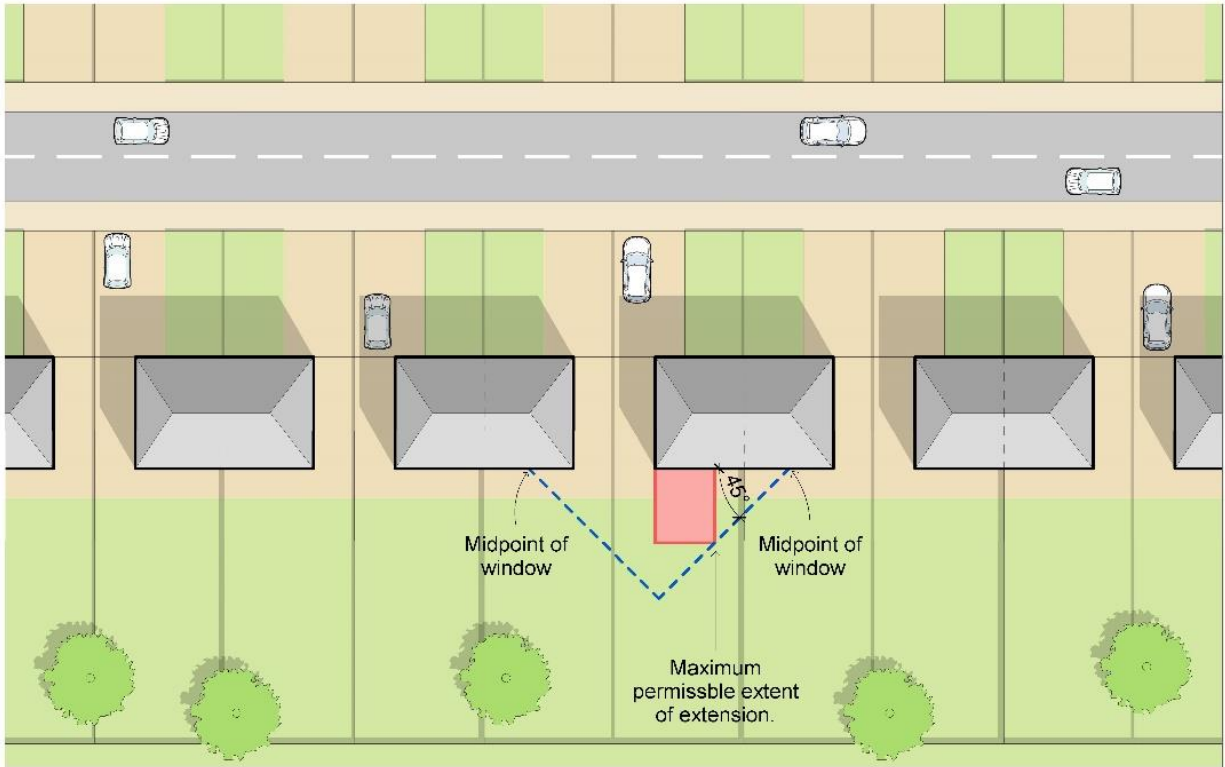


Figure 1- Standard application of 45 degree code

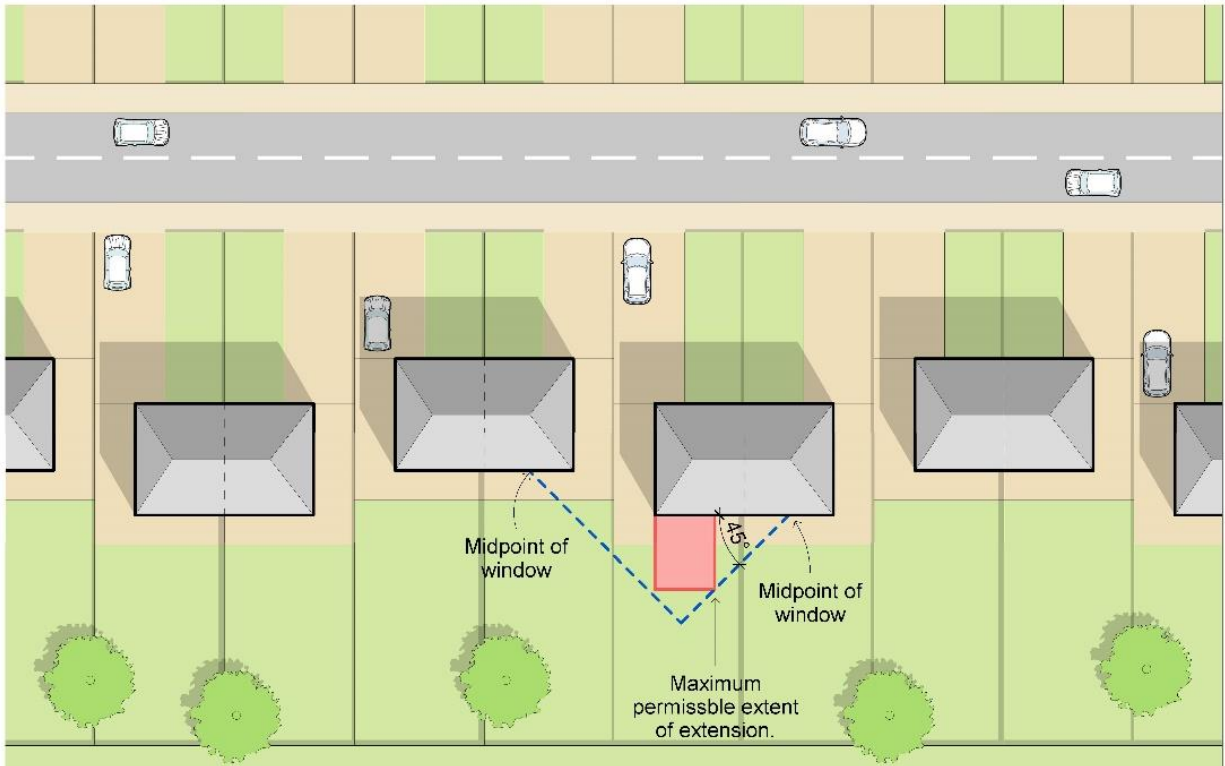


Figure 2 – 45 degree code – staggered building lines

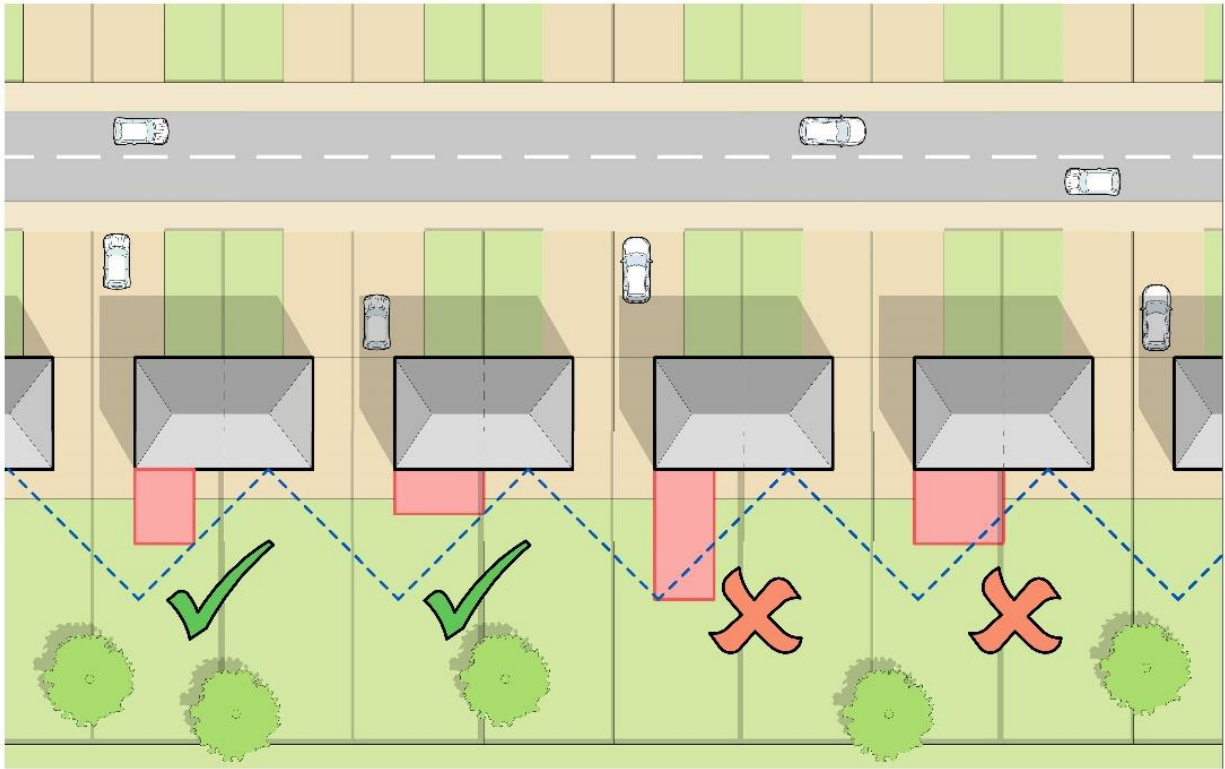


Figure 3 – 45 degree code – various scenarios

## 2.2.2 Exceptions to the code

Having regard to what are now well established permitted development rights, most properties can extend up to 3 metres from the original main rear elevation at ground floor level without causing an unacceptable impact on neighbouring property. Each case will be taken on its merits in relation to this and factors such as orientation, relative positions of the neighbouring properties and windows (including any extensions to these properties) and ground levels will be taken into account.

Permanent structures between properties, such as existing boundary walls over 2 metres in height, and brick built outhouses, may justify a relaxation of the Code if it affects the application. Planting is rarely a factor that would justify a breach of the code due to its temporary nature.

## 2.2.3 Direct outlook

An extension can also have an adverse impact on the direct outlook from a neighbour's ground floor habitable room or garden area. See Figure 4.

Where the main outlook from a neighbour's principal habitable room window faces directly on to a blank elevation of an extension or outbuilding of over single storey in height, a minimum distance of 13 metres should be retained when measured directly from the neighbour's nearest ground floor habitable room main windows to the development. Single storey extensions have less impact and will be considered on a case by case basis.

Other than in situations where the 45 degree code applies, extensions or outbuildings of greater than single storey should provide a minimum gap of 1metre to a neighbour's boundary to ensure the development is not overbearing to the neighbour's garden area. In all cases, including for single storey extensions, any difference in ground levels between the development and neighbouring properties will be taken into account and may affect what size of extension is acceptable.

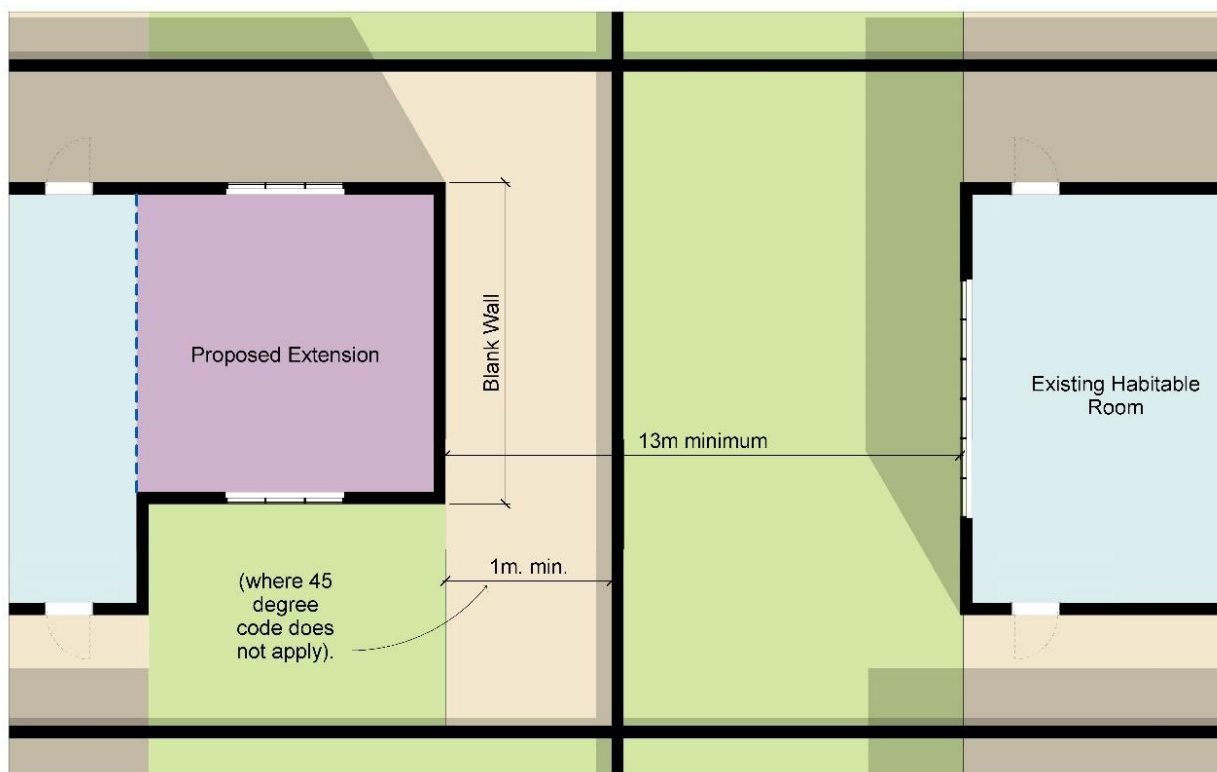


Figure 4 – Acceptable relationship between extension and neighbours garden and habitable room

## 2.2.4 Privacy

A major consideration is to ensure that acceptable levels of privacy are retained as a result of any extension. Privacy and overlooking concerns and guideline distances set out below would generally relate to the impact arising from new upper floor windows as in most cases boundary fences and other intervening structures would mitigate against any loss of privacy arising from single storey extensions. The availability of some permitted development rights would also be a factor in considering such issues.

Any extension should respect the privacy of adjoining dwellings, and windows should be sited so that they do not directly overlook adjoining properties or gardens. Main windows to habitable rooms on the side elevations should be avoided if possible although overlooking problems can be resolved in some instances through the use of obscure glass (for non-habitable room windows or to secondary windows), high level windows, screening and roof lights may be . Acceptable separation distances as detailed below will ensure privacy is maintained.

A distance of 10 metres to any boundary (usually but not exclusively a rear boundary) directly opposite these windows that is shared with a neighbour's private garden area should be retained.

Principal habitable room windows on an extended property should be not less than 21 metres from habitable room windows in neighbouring houses to ensure reasonable privacy between neighbours (measured directly).

These distances should be increased where there are significant differences in site levels or residential properties of 3 storeys or more adjoining conventional house types. The Council will normally apply a further 3 metres to the interface distance for each additional floor between properties. Changes in site levels will be assessed on a case by case basis taking in to account the characteristics of the site.

The distances would only be reduced where there are significant intervening structures or where the windows are significantly (more than 45 degrees) offset from each other.

Raised terrace or patio areas and roof-top balconies can have the potential for an unacceptable degree of overlooking to neighbouring properties. This could be to a main window of a principal room in an adjacent house or direct overlooking of neighbouring private garden or yard. The above privacy distances should be provided unless permanent measures of an acceptable design can be incorporated to prevent such overlooking.

## 2.2.5 Standard of accommodation

To ensure the Borough's housing stock remains at an acceptable standard, rooms within extensions should have an adequate level of light and outlook. For example it would not be acceptable for a proposed development to result in a habitable room with a poor outlook, such as directly onto a solid wall or have no windows.

## 2.3 Parking and access

Extensions can result in a requirement for additional or replacement car parking to be provided on the property. This should be carefully considered so as not to result in excessive hard-surfaced parking areas in a prominent position whereby parked cars will dominate the appearance of the house. New or extended parking areas should incorporate a proportionate level of soft landscaping.

Consideration of parking arrangements is important if the proposals would reduce the existing parking available within the plot or increase the number of bedrooms at the property. This section sets out the expectations in relation to the number of parking spaces to be provided, size of spaces and layout, access arrangements and visibility, layout and surfacing

Where development is for improvement or extension to an existing property, the resulting parking provision must meet the parking standards set out for the proposed dwelling type below:

- 1 bed houses - 1 allocated space per dwelling
- 2 bed houses - 2 allocated spaces per dwelling
- 3 bed houses - 2 allocated spaces per dwelling
- 4+ bed houses - 3 allocated spaces per dwelling

Where proposals would potentially affect the existing parking provision either by increasing potential demand or reducing existing provision, they should provide car parking in accordance with the minimum parking standards or where there will be no increase in the number of bedrooms, retain the existing level of on-plot parking provision in accordance with the above provisions.

Parking provision should be shown on the submitted plans. Compliance with these parking standards should not result in a dominance of cars in front garden areas; front garden should retain some level of soft landscaping as a visual and environmental benefit.

Provision of parking across the whole of a front garden area, for example, would be likely to have an unacceptable visual impact. Where a proposed extension requires the provision of increased parking provision this should incorporate suitable boundary treatment and some soft landscaping. Not only is this visually better it also provides sustainable drainage in the front garden area reducing the risk of surface water flooding.

### 2.3.1 Garages

Garages can only contribute towards parking provision when they are of a minimum size and additional unallocated parking can be accommodated. The minimum internal dimensions for a garage that would also provide cycle storage: space are:

- Single garage – 7m x 3m or 6m x 3.5m with a minimum door width of 2.5m
- Double garage – 5m x 6m with a minimum door width of 5m

### 2.3.2 Size of spaces and layout

When providing a standard single width parking space off-road the width of the hardstanding should be 2.5m, with a length of 5.0m; although consideration is also needed in respect of pedestrian access to the main door of the property and/or access to the rear of the property for refuse collection etc. See Figure 5 below for further details.

If the space is in front of a garage with a door opening outwards, the off road parking space will need to be increased to 5.5m long.

The minimum width of a private drive serving a single dwelling is 3.3m, which may be reduced to 2.5m where a separate means of access on foot to the property is available.

Provision of parking should ensure that cars parked within the plot do not project out over the footpath or highway.

Bin storage areas and access to rear garden areas should be accounted for when designing space for parking off street. Parking layouts should also incorporate suitable pedestrian access to and from the house.

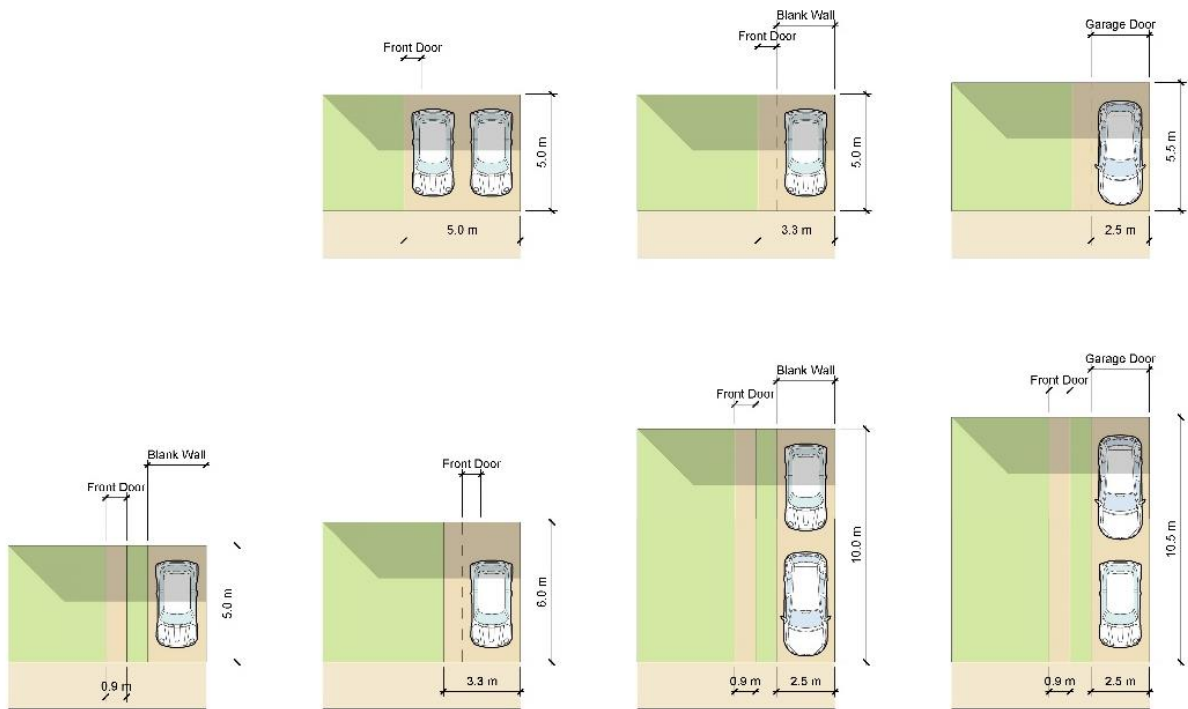


Figure 5 – Various configurations for driveway parking spaces

### 2.3.3 Visibility splays at the access

Any new development including new or amended access provisions should ensure adequate visibility splays at the access. See Figure 6. These will differ in different circumstances and reference should be made to the Councils Standards for Parking in New Development March 2015 and also the Design Guide Note 1 Parking and Servicing.

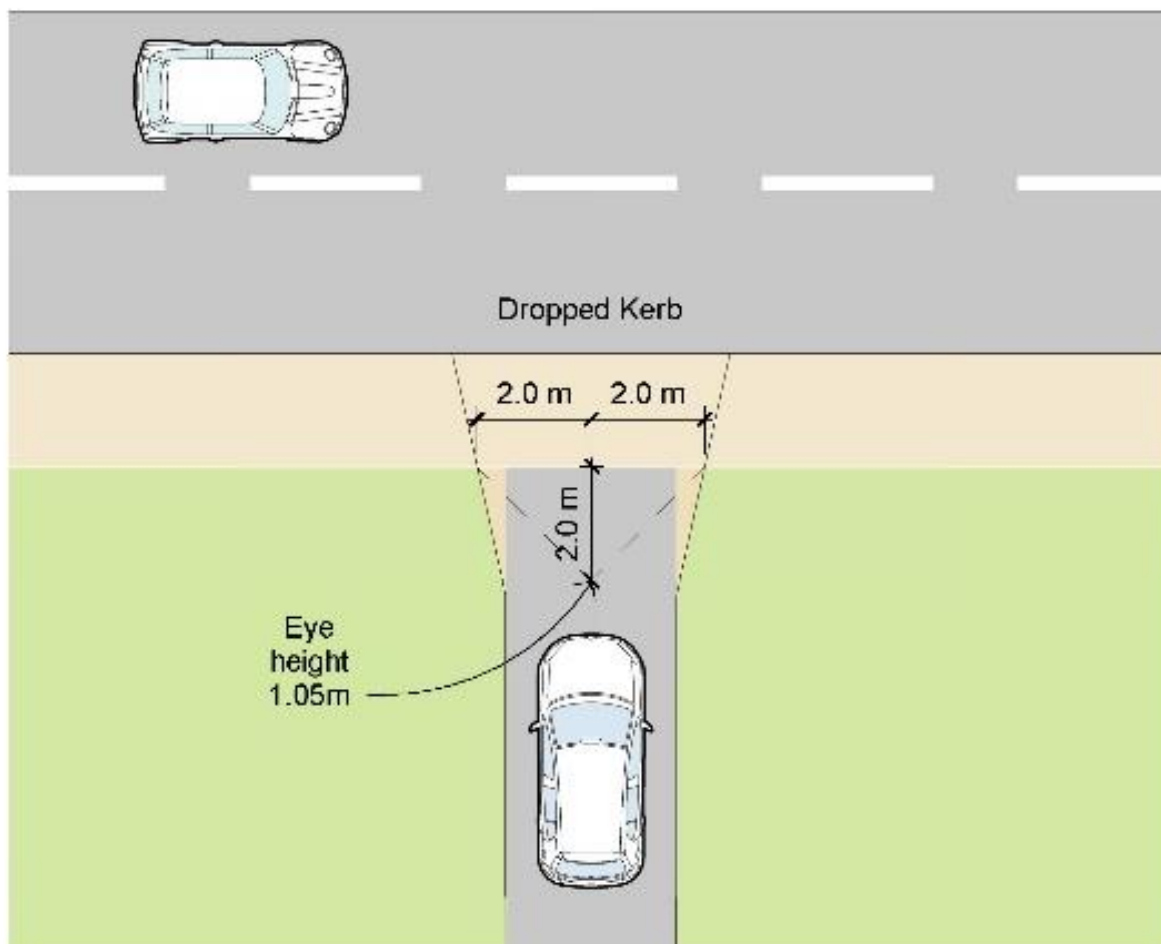


Figure 6 – Typical visibility splay at domestic access

### 2.3.4 Other requirements

Gradients of driveways shall not exceed 1 in 12.5 (or 8%) fall towards or away from the highway for a distance of at least 5m from the back edge of footway.

Any surface water run-off from within the curtilage of a private dwelling must not discharge onto the highway or into the highway drainage system.

Adequate drainage facilities or permeable surfacing on the area of hard standing will need to be provided to prevent the risk of standing water on the highway.

The first 5m of a shared private drive shall not be surfaced in granular or loose material to prevent it being transferred onto the highway which can cause highway safety problems, blockage of the highway drainage system, damage to the structural integrity of the highway and potentially risk injury to pedestrians or damage to vehicles.



### 2.3.5 Gates and walls/fences

Where gates or garage doors are to be provided at the edge of carriageway or footway they should only open inwards or slide parallel to the highway within the curtilage of the property. Outward opening gates should be set back from the highway to ensure that opened gates do not obstruct the footway or carriageway. Where gates open inwards, the driveway should be of a sufficient length and width to enable the opened gates to clear a vehicle parked on the driveway.

The Council will not normally support proposals that would result in vehicles stopping on the highway whilst gates are being opened. Where the location of access gates prevents a vehicle entering the property from pulling clear of the public highway, consideration needs to be given to the potential road safety impacts of a waiting vehicle. In certain cases, (for example on a high speed road, in an area of high pedestrian footfall, or on a blind bend), a suitable space for vehicles to pull off the public highway may be required to minimise road safety issues.

Walls and fences should allow adequate visibility for drivers leaving the property of both pedestrians and other vehicles.

## 2.4 Development in the green belt

National and local planning policy (currently set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and reflected in Warrington Core Strategy Policies) states that new buildings (this includes extensions and detached outbuildings) in green belt areas are inappropriate development which is harmful to the green belt and should be refused. Exceptions to this include:-

*“the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building”* (NPPF, 2105, paragraph 145 (c))

Any extensions and additions that result in an increase in size of over 33% of the original building will be considered to be disproportionate and therefore unacceptable. (Original in this context is defined as a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally).

This measurement will be based predominantly on floorspace and volume. Footprint and height will also be considered in terms of design and character of the area. Volume is to be measured externally and includes all elements above and below ground.

Floorspace is measured internally and includes all elements of floorspace – below ground, above ground and within the roofspace where served by a fixed staircase. Covered and enclosed curtilage structures such as pergolas, car ports and similar structures will all count towards floorspace and volume.

Any previous extensions and detached buildings that have been added to the original property will be counted towards the resulting size. Applications will be expected to include drawings showing the original building as well as existing and proposed; and be accompanied by calculations to demonstrate original, existing and proposed volume, floorspace, footprint and heights. A simple table similar to this will help in the assessment of the proposals:

	Original	Existing	As proposed	% change +/-
Floorspace in m2				
Volume in m3				
Ridge Height in m				
Eaves height in m				

Extensions that are disproportionate will be considered as inappropriate development and as such planning permission will be refused unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated to outweigh the harm to the green belt. The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate very special circumstances and in some cases may require legal agreements. For those proposals that are not disproportionate, they will be expected to be of a sympathetic design and scale to the original house and the wider area.

Further detailed advice on design of extensions to rural properties is set out in the SPD Design and Construction.

### **2.4.1 Development in conservation areas and to listed buildings (Heritage assets)**

The Council has a large number of conservation areas and listed buildings. All of these are heritage assets. There are also many locally listed buildings referred to as non-designated heritage assets. Details of these can be found on the Council website and Interactive map. Conservation area appraisals and guidance leaflets are also available [on the council website](#).

NPPF requires that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. This may mean that more detailed reports are required with an application affecting or having the potential to affect a heritage asset.

Different areas and properties have different characteristics that make them special and these should be reflected in any application. For most house extensions and other domestic developments this will mean that developments should be of sympathetic design using traditional materials in most cases, extensions should be subordinate to the original building so as not to detract from the character of the original building or the character of the conservation area within which it is located. Original features of architectural or historic interest should be retained. In particular some residential properties were originally in a different use such as commercial/agricultural/ecclesiastical and proposals to extend or alter such properties should have regard to their historic interest and detail.

For listed buildings, proposals should demonstrate a full understanding of the architectural, historic, archaeological, cultural and community significance of the building this will inform a Heritage Impact Assessment that should accompany the Listed Building Consent Application. Any proposed changes should respect the significance of the building, its contents and setting and minimise intervention in historic fabric – any major repair issues should be identified at the outset. Proposals should achieve high standards of design, craftsmanship and materials. Cleverly chosen contrasting materials in a modern design may work well for some buildings, where the extension can then be clearly ‘read’ as different to the old house.

However, the effect should not be so different that the extension is more prominent than the main building. A new extension should normally play a subordinate role and not dominate the listed building. In order to provide a complimentary extension it should seek to reference key elements such as the profile, massing, bay rhythm, scale, siting, materials and proportion of the original building. Where new materials are being introduced they should not be assertive and should form a visually sub-ordinate addition which, if well designed, can be used to better reveal the significance of the heritage asset e.g. glazed structures. Further detail on designing extensions in conservation areas and to listed buildings are set out in the SPD Design and Construction.

## **2.5 Trees, ecology, flood risk, solar/green energy**

### **2.5.1 Trees**

Protected trees, these are trees covered by Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and those within conservation areas, along with other significant trees on the application site and neighbouring properties should be shown accurately on plans relative to the development proposed. Such trees should be retained where possible and loss of any such trees will require strong justification and provision of adequate replacements.

Arboricultural Reports may be required to support your application. The Council's validation checklist should be consulted and in some cases details should be provided with your application to show how such trees will be retained and protected in accordance with British Standard BS 5837: 2012 (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction) along with details of any replacement planting if necessary. Extensions will not normally be allowed where the extension will be overshadowed by surrounding trees – particularly protected or other significant trees - as this could lead to pressure to remove them in the future.

Trees and hedgerows provide wide visual and environmental benefits and should be retained and enhanced where possible or replaced if loss is inevitable. Some hedgerows particularly for example along watercourses or open spaces are of ecological value and some ancient hedgerows are protected by law.

### **2.5.2 Ecology**

Whilst covered generally by other legislation, protected species such as bats and Great Crested Newts can be affected by domestic development proposals. In many cases ecological survey reports will be required to demonstrate that there would be no harm to protected species and that mitigation measures such as bat and bird nesting boxes will be identified where necessary and may be requirements if planning permission is granted. The Councils Planning Application Validation Checklist provides a guide as to when such a survey report is likely to be required.

### **2.5.3 Flood Risk**

Domestic proposals in flood risk areas and critical drainage areas will be required to demonstrate that the development can be carried out without risk to future occupiers from flooding and without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Further information for flood risk advice relating to minor extensions can be found on the Government's website, [gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessment-standing-advice#advice-for-minor-extensions](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessment-standing-advice#advice-for-minor-extensions)

Some parts of the Borough are at risk from flooding. When considering flood risk within the context of planning matters such as house extensions, reference should be made to the Environment Agency "flood risk for planning" maps. These can be found at [flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk](https://www.flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk).

Where properties are located in areas most at risk of flooding (Flood Zone 2 and 3), proposals should incorporate flood-proofing measures to the design and construction of any extension e.g. internal floor heights of extensions are no lower than those of the main house / electrical sockets positioned at a height at least 45cm above the internal floor level etc.

The Environment Agency / Lead Local Flood Authority advice will also be sought where proposed works are suspected to affect existing flood defense measures.

### **2.5.4 Solar/green energy**

The council will be supportive of and encourage measures such as solar panels, green roofs, and electric vehicle charging but this will not be at the expense of or override the issues set out above.

The aim in relation to these issues is to achieve small environmental and biodiversity gains where possible.

### **2.5.5 Ground Contamination**

In some cases conditions may be attached to a grant of planning permission to ensure that proper assessment has been carried out for potential ground contamination and risks associated with that and that where necessary appropriate measures are incorporated into the proposed extension.

## **2.6 Detailed policies for different extension types and other developments**

### **2.6.1 Front extensions, porches and outbuildings**

Any changes made to the front of your home will alter the character and appearance of the original property and therefore effect the street scene in which it is situated. This applies to detached outbuildings such as garages as well as extensions. If the property is a semi-detached or a terraced house, an extension to the front may harm the appearance of the balanced pair or group.

Front extensions should remain small so the features of the existing house are retained.

Any extension to the front elevation must be designed to tie in with the existing property and not appear as an excessive addition in terms of height, projection or width.

Any extension to the front should have a minimal projection and respect any building line with neighbouring properties.

Front extensions should respect the existing property and neighbouring properties, regarding design, size and siting.

Front extensions should not dominate neighbouring properties. The 45 Degree Code should therefore be applied in order to protect the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring houses.

The Council will also take the height of a proposed extension into consideration when making a judgement on an application. The ridge height of the proposed roof should be lower than the original roof to respect the character and design of the property and the height of a porch should not exceed the sill height of first floor windows.

Proposals should not result in the loss of existing parking provision if that would take it below the levels set out in the car parking section above.

### **2.6.2 Side extensions including corner plots**

To avoid a 'terracing effect' and retain space around a dwelling in the interests of the character of the area, a distance of 1 metre at first floor level and above should be retained between the extension and the boundary to the side of the property, this applies even if an existing single storey extension projects to the boundary and you propose to build above it. See Figure 7.

Detached properties should retain a minimum of 1 metre to each side boundary unless the prevailing character of the area supports an increase or reduction to this.

The roof on the proposed extension should match the original in terms of pitch (how steep it is) and shape (a 'gable' or sloping 'hip').

Side extensions should not be greater than 50% of the width of the original house.

Side extensions should have some degree of set back from the main front elevation, as this retains the original look of the property and clearly demarcates extensions. A lower ridge line than the original house can also provide this visual break.

Parking provision should be retained at a level to meet the guidelines set out in the car parking section.

Some provision for access to the rear of the house for bins and bikes should be retained or alternatively provided for in the proposed extension.

Extensions over single storey should not present a blank wall directly opposite a neighbour's main habitable room window where the distance would be less than 13 metres. (see diagram in section 2 above)

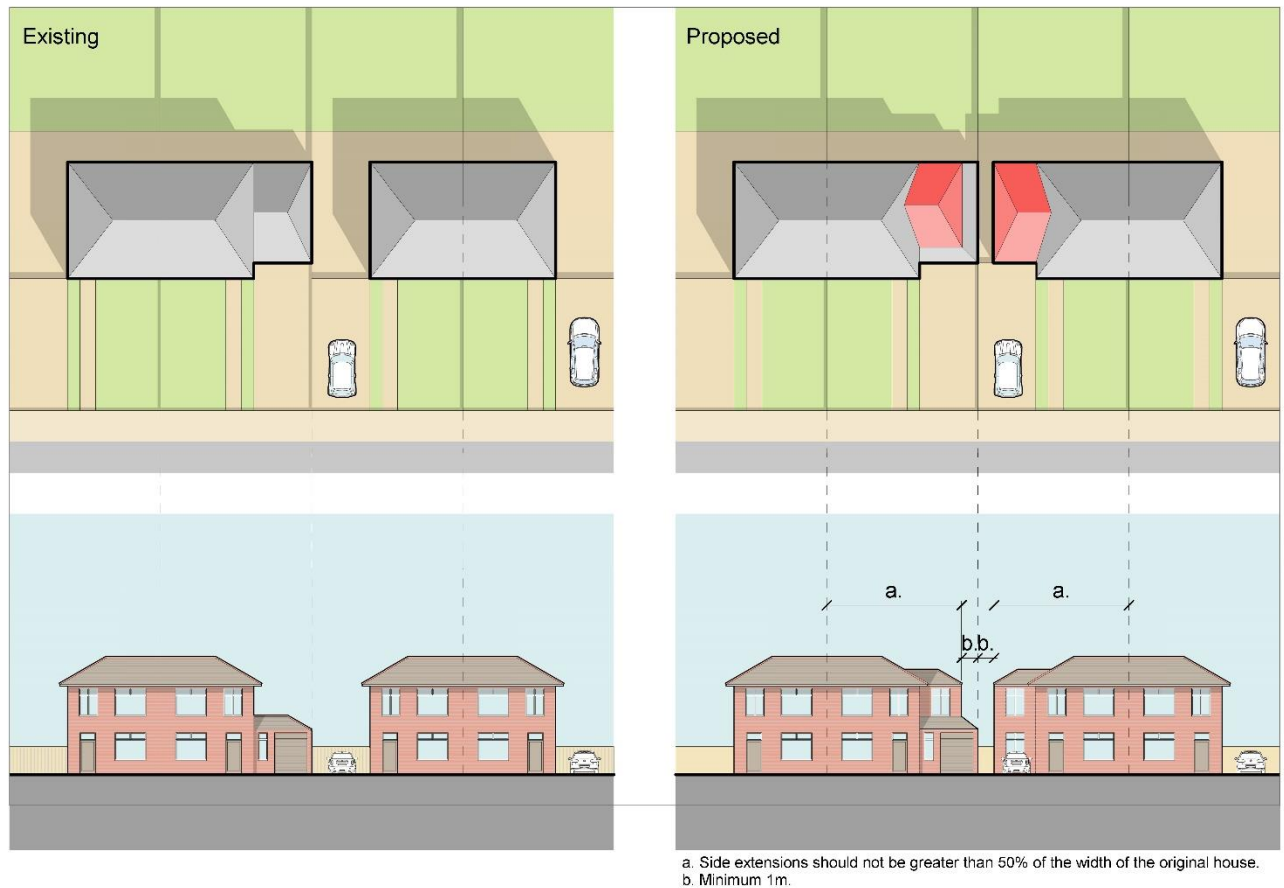


Figure 7 – Typical scenario for acceptable two-storey side extensions

### 2.6.3 Corner Plots

Usually where a house has a road around two or more of its boundaries, extensions should not project beyond the front elevations of properties on the adjacent roads where there is a consistent and prominent building line.

Extensions should not be more prominent in street scene than the existing property.

The width of the extension should not be more than half the width of the original frontage of the property.

Subject to the consideration of building lines, extensions should not take up more than half the width of the garden/plot between the property and adjacent highway. In such cases, extensions of greater than single storey should also be set back from the front of the house, have a lower ridge height and not extend beyond the rear of the house. See figures 8 and 9.

The garden space at the side in this context does not include landscaped strips outside the immediate boundary of the property. Enclosure of such areas may need an application for planning permission and may harm the character of the area.

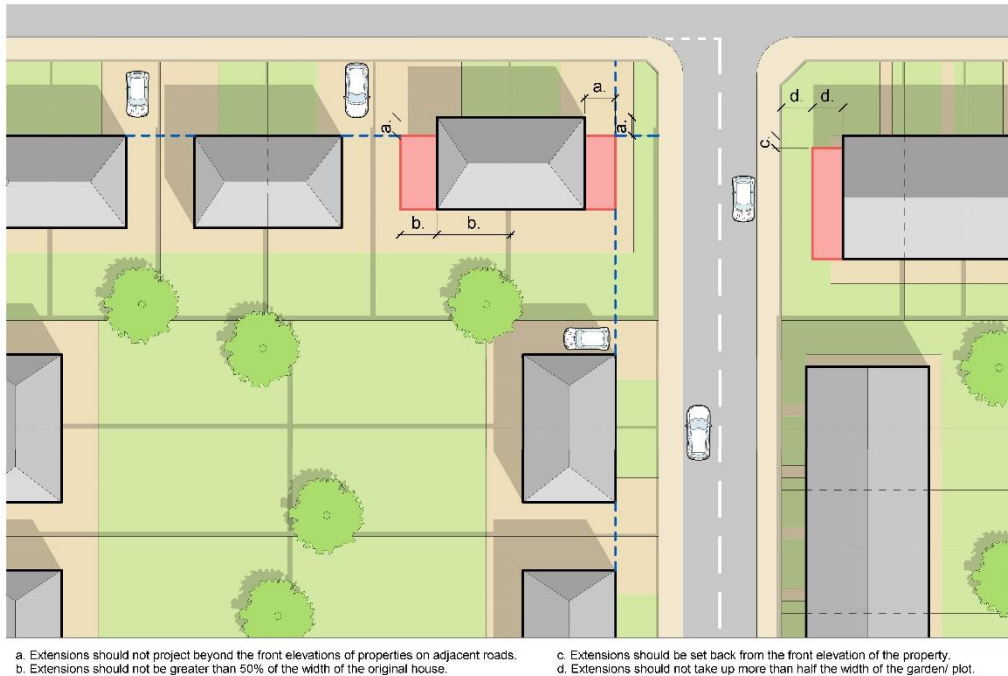


Figure 8 – Extensions to corner plots – house fronts road

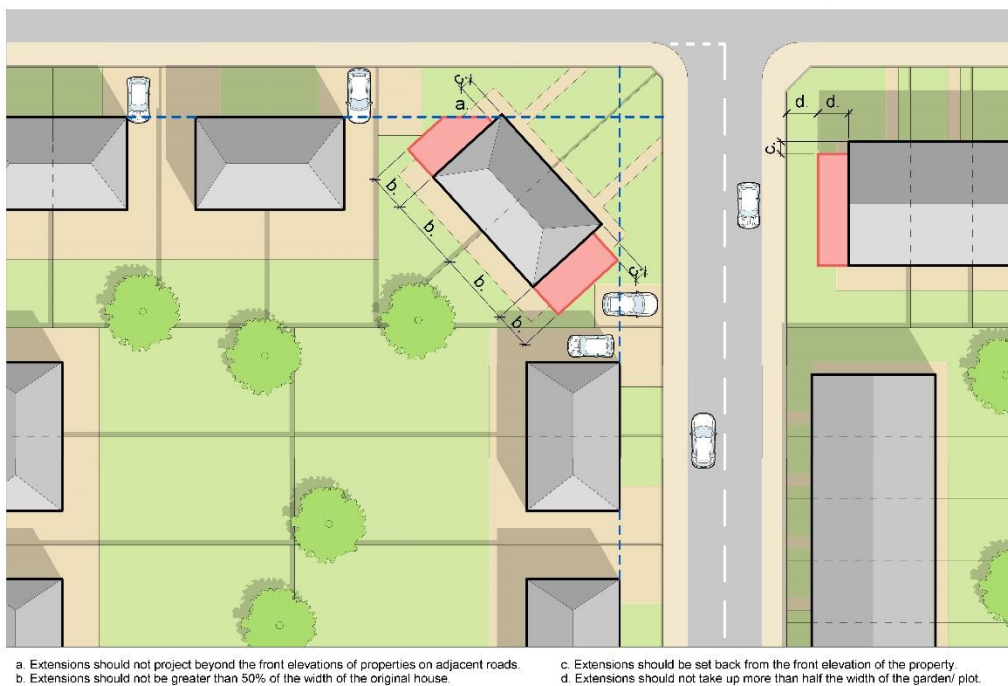


Figure 9 – Extensions to corner plots – house fronts the corner

## 2.6.4 Rear extensions

Any rear extensions whether single storey, two storey or higher should not over dominate the neighbouring properties. The extension should not materially alter the existing levels of sunlight, daylight and privacy. See Figure 10.

All the general criteria regarding design should be met.

The 45 degree code in relation to neighbouring properties will be applied and this is set out in more detail in the general principle section above.

For a single storey extension along the shared boundary with an adjoining house, an extension of 3 metres may be allowed where this is an extension to the original rear elevation. This may be increased if the immediately adjoining property also has an extension along the shared boundary.

Privacy distances should be retained as set out in the general section – 10 metres to garden boundary and 21 metres to a neighbour's main habitable room windows.

Terrace areas on top of flat roofs and balconies can result in serious overlooking and loss of privacy for neighbours unless the above privacy distances are provided. Any measures to address the overlooking should be permanent and of an acceptable design that does not raise other design or amenity issues.

The height of an extension, including its eaves height, will be factors in assessing the impact on neighbours' amenities. Extensions of over single storey will be more likely to be acceptable if set away from your neighbour's boundaries.

Extensions over single storey should not present a blank wall directly opposite a neighbour's window where the distance would be less than 13 metres. See Figure 4.

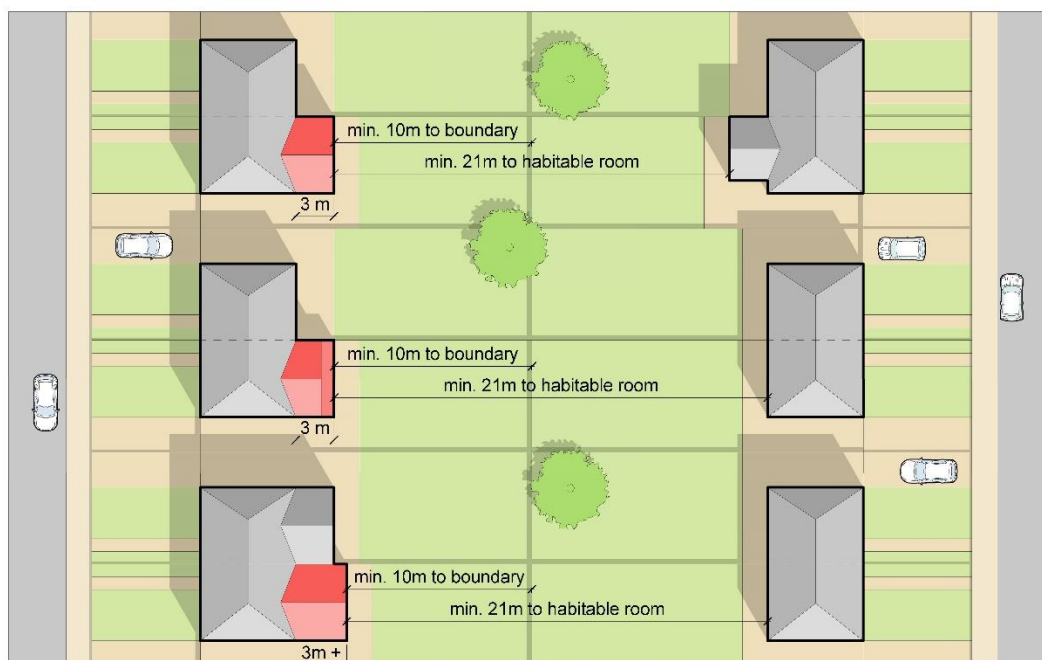


Figure 10 – Rear extensions including privacy distances



## 2.6.5 Roof extensions and alterations, dormer windows

Roof alterations and dormer windows facing the street can lead to a significant change in the character and appearance of an area and at the rear can lead to substantial loss of privacy and amenity to neighbours. Distances for privacy as set out in the general section should be met.

Generally dormer extensions should be located and designed so as to minimise their impact upon the appearance of the property and the street scene as well as protecting neighbouring properties from overlooking. Dormers should always appear as subordinate elements of the roof, and their height and length should be kept to a minimum.

Raising the ridge height will generally be unacceptable, particularly for semi-detached and terraced houses and bungalows, unless such extensions are an established characteristic of the area. Some increase in roof height may be possible for some detached houses where there is more space around them so long as it doesn't appear over dominant.

Roof extensions should reflect the existing roof pitch and materials. The same type of roof/roof design will normally be expected.

Large, flat roof dormer extensions to the front are unlikely to be acceptable unless they are a common feature on similar properties in the immediate surroundings.

Dormers and roof extensions to the front, should be well set in from the front and side of the existing roof slope and set down from the ridge – the amount will be proportionate to the size of roof and those similar examples nearby that justify the proposal. They will normally have a pitched or sloping roof. Dormers should line up with existing windows and match their style and proportions. See Figure 11.

Dormers to the rear can be flat roofed but again should be set in from the lower edge and sides of the roof and set down below the ridge. The availability of permitted development rights for rear dormer extensions will be taken into account.



Figure 11 – Examples of acceptable and unacceptable dormer roof extensions

## 2.6.6 Detached outbuildings

This includes those in any part of the property including the front garden area. These will be subject to the same considerations as other types of extensions as set out above. In particular outbuildings positioned between the main house and the highway are likely to appear intrusive in the street scene. Boundary fencing or planting is not likely to be accepted as a mitigating factor in these instances.

## 2.6.7 Walls and fences

Where these are along the edge of the property with a road or other public area the height and design including materials can have a significant effect on the street scene.

Solid fences and walls over 1 metre in height will not usually be acceptable in front of the house though 1.8m high fencing/walls may be acceptable where they are required to provide privacy to private rear garden areas on corner plots. See Figure 12. Front gates and gateposts of over 1.5m in height will in most cases appear intrusive and over dominant in the street unless the character of the area includes many similar examples. Most boundaries will benefit from hedging or other soft landscaping. Some housing estates are designed to be “open plan” and in such areas, any permanent boundary treatments are unlikely to be acceptable. Gates, gateposts and fencing in rural areas should reflect the character of the area and not attempt to introduce suburban characteristics into these areas.

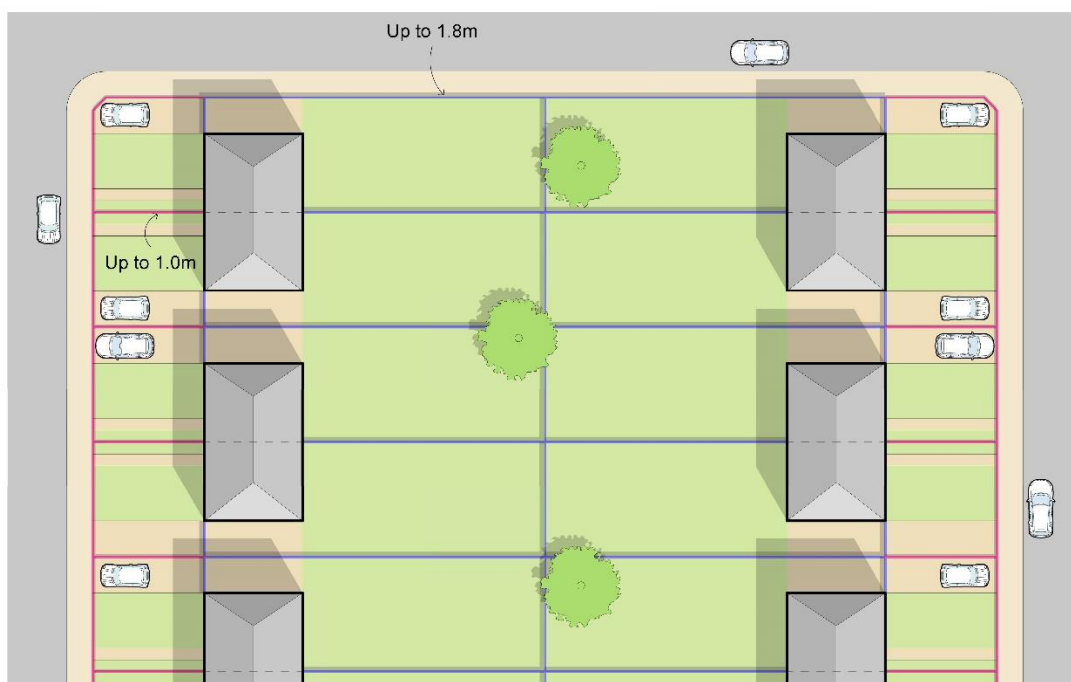


Figure 12 – Acceptable boundary fencing heights adjacent to the highway

## 2.7 Permitted development and other planning application

This guidance provides and advice for planning application applications however householders (houses, bungalows but not flats) can sometimes carry out many minor extensions, alterations and improvements without the need to apply to the Council for planning permission.

### 2.7.1 Permitted Development

Such developments are called “permitted development” and the criteria for what can be done as permitted development are set out in the Town And Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 – also known as the GPDO. Details can be found through the Planning Portal and the Governments “Permitted Development rights for householders – Technical Guidance” document gives useful information on how to apply and interpret permitted development rights.

There are exceptions to whether a property may be able to use permitted development rights including if these rights have been removed as a condition on a previous permission relating to the property, or properties in some conservation areas.

### 2.7.2 Other Types of Application

In addition to applications for planning permission, there are other related processes which it may be useful to be aware of:

**Prior Approval** - some “permitted development” requires the submission of an application for prior approval. Prior approval will be required where a neighbour submits an objection to the proposal. If such an objection is made the prior approval application will be assessed only in relation to impact on residential amenity and the guidelines set out in this document will apply.

**Lawful Development Certificates** – though not a requirement, many people prefer to obtain a lawful development certificate to establish that certain extensions or other works do not need planning permission or are otherwise lawful. This can relate to extensions proposed or already carried out. The main criteria you would need to establish are that the development meets the permitted development criteria or has been substantially complete for over 4 years.

**Discharge of condition applications** – these may be necessary to get approval for certain aspects of the development, sometimes before it commences.

**Non-material amendment** – sometimes after permission is granted it may be that minor changes to the scheme are required. If very minor these can be agreed through the submission of an application for a non-material amendment. The council has a list of criteria against which it will assess such applications.

**S73/variation of condition applications** – where changes are more significant but the description of development remains the same, an application can be made to vary one or more of the conditions attached to the original permission. Commonly this is the list of approved plans and such applications can be made to vary the approved plans (or any other condition).

### **2.7.3 Fees**

Most types of application require a fee and details can be found on the Council's website or the Planning Portal. There is some provision for a "free go" where an application for the same or similar development is submitted, normally within 12 months of the original decision, for a revised proposal. This is commonly used where a scheme is amended to address a previously refused application.

### **2.7.4 Other legislative controls - Building Regulations**

Most domestic extensions will also require permission under the Building Regulations. This is an entirely separate regulatory process from planning permission and information in relation to this can be found on the Council's website. Alternatively you can contact the Council's Building Control Team by phone on 01925 442554 or by email [building.control@warrington.gov.uk](mailto:building.control@warrington.gov.uk)

Proposals may be subject to other legislative controls and /or requirements of other bodies such as (but not exclusively) Environment Agency and United Utilities and these are the responsibility of the applicant to identify.