

HOUSE EXTENSIONS

ADVICE LEAFLET NO.1 - DRAFT: NOVEMBER 1999



This leaflet sets out the principles of design which the Council will wish to see reflected in planning applications for extensions to private dwelling houses.

The principals of good design apply whether or not planning permission is required and this leaflet illustrates the design options open to you if you are thinking of extending your home.

If you would like further advice on whether or not you need planning permission for your proposed extension you can obtain a useful guide : 'Planning - a guide for householders' from DETR Free Literature, PO Box 236, Wetherby, L23 7NB (telephone 0870 1226 236: Fax 0870 1226 237).

If you would like us to give informal advice on your proposal prior to making a planning application, please complete and return a pre-planning application enquiry form giving details of your proposal. These forms can be obtained from the Planning Services Group and there is no charge for this service.

Extending your house is a convenient way of increasing your accommodation without having to move home. If done well it can add to its value and it can improve its appearance. If done badly, it can detract from the character of your house; it may result in longer term maintenance problems; it can harm your neighbours' amenities; and it can damage the character of the locality.

This leaflet deals with the more straightforward elements which make for a well designed extension. It also explains why some types of extensions are wrong.

But there is no substitute for professional guidance and by employing a qualified architect or similar qualified and experienced designer, you will benefit from their design skills as well as having the peace of mind that your extension will meet your requirements.

THE FIRST STEP:

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

1 WHAT ARE YOU SEEKING TO ACHIEVE?

- ◆ What is the extra space for? (bedroom? bathroom? storage? play area?)
- ◆ What does this use require? (area? height? light? Services?)
- ◆ What is your budget?
- ◆ What links are needed to existing rooms?

CLEAR OBJECTIVES HELP

2 WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

- ◆ Extending to the rear, side or front?
- ◆ Single or 2 storey?
- ◆ Extending into the roofspace?
- ◆ Knock two rooms together?
- ◆ Split one room up?
- ◆ Move?

KEEP OPTIONS FLEXIBLE INITIALLY

3 WHAT ARE THE CONSTRAINTS?

- ◆ Size of plot?
- ◆ Effect on neighbouring property?
- ◆ Loss of parking/garage space?
- ◆ Reduction in garden area?
- ◆ Impact on privacy and amenity?
- ◆ Cost of works?
- ◆ Sloping site? Levels?
- ◆ Trees? Hedges?
- ◆ Local planning policies?
- ◆ Is there a covenant limiting?

Normally the constraints will limit what is possible and may require you to re-examine your objectives.

Good design can only do so much.

BE REALISTIC.

THE SECOND STEP:

IDENTIFYING THE LOCAL CHARACTER:

Your home does not exist in isolation. It forms part of the wider locality which has a character to it. By understanding this character you will be in a better position to make a decision on the form of your extension. Your extension can either reflect the character of the locality or, through the quality of its design, it may even improve it.

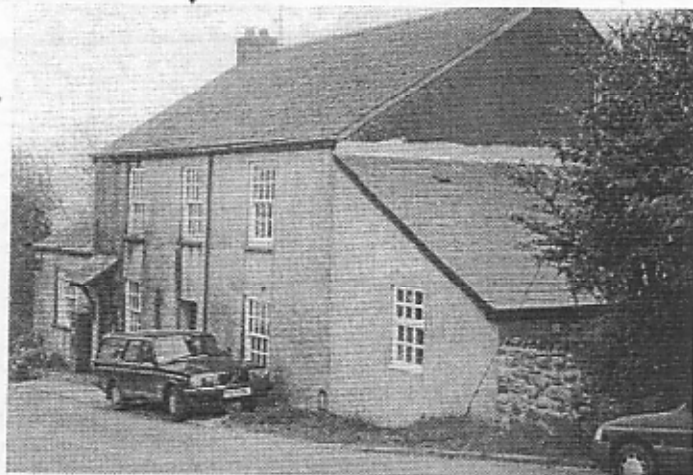
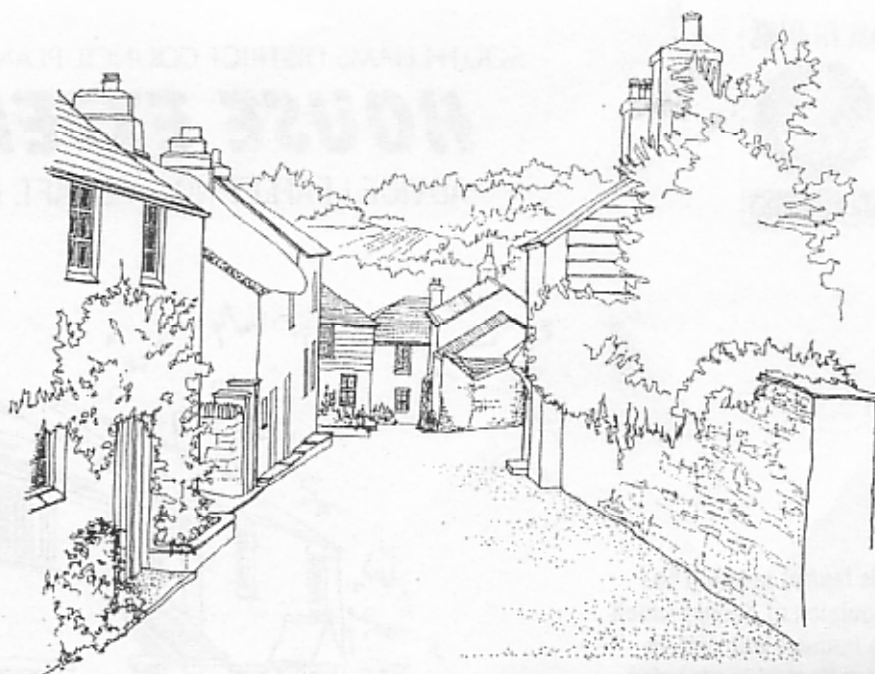
The things that make up local character include:

- ◆ Architecture of established buildings in the locality.
- ◆ Building patterns and the grain of development.
- ◆ Building materials which are traditionally used in the locality.
- ◆ Roof pitches and roof types – gables, hips, etc.
- ◆ Proportions of buildings: narrow and tall, or wide and low.
- ◆ Landscaping and site boundary treatment (walls, fencing, railings etc).
- ◆ Window and door design.
- ◆ Eaves and verges details.

These individual elements combine to give a locality its character.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES TO REFLECT LOCAL CHARACTER:

- ◆ Keep the building form very simple; no elaborate details.
- ◆ Keep the extension subservient to the main house.
- ◆ Avoid over complicated and fussy details which merely 'dress up' or try to create an 'Olde Worlde' feel.
- ◆ Avoid 'mock' materials. Use honest and authentic materials and finishes eg stone, render, natural slate and timber, rather than brick, artificial slate and PVCu.



Traditional buildings have narrow spans (6 metres) and steeply pitched roofs (35-45 degree pitch). Simple rectangular plan forms. Often with steeply pitched lean to. Eaves and verges are close boarded with no significant overhang.



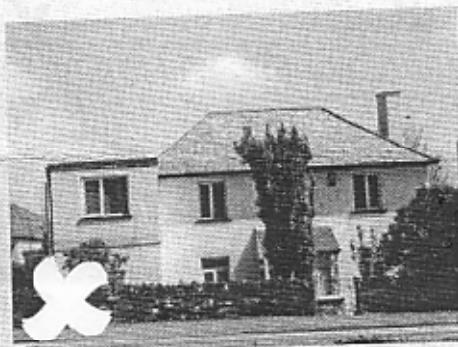
Traditional materials are stone walls which may be rendered or colourwashed. Porches are simple lean to projections. Windows are timber sash or casement windows recessed from the wall face with slate sills and timber or stone lintels.

THE THIRD STEP:

DESIGN SOLUTIONS:

APPEARANCE

- ◆ The extension should not dominate the existing house nor should it damage the proportions of the house. It should be subservient and should have a clear demarcation with the existing house.
- ◆ Unless you are confident that your design stems from the professional guidance of a qualified architect or similar qualified and experienced designer, it is safer to aim for an extension which complements the style, details and appearance of the original house.
- ◆ Flat roofs will not normally be acceptable. Roof pitches should match the existing roof. New roof heights should be lower than the original house.
- ◆ Traditionally, houses in the South Hams have roof pitches of 35° or greater and narrow proportions to them. A wide proportion and low roof pitch will give an extension the wrong appearance.



Unsympathetic flat roofed extensions look out of place and have poor long term weather performance.....



.....By comparison these extensions respect the form and proportions of the original houses and fit in perfectly.

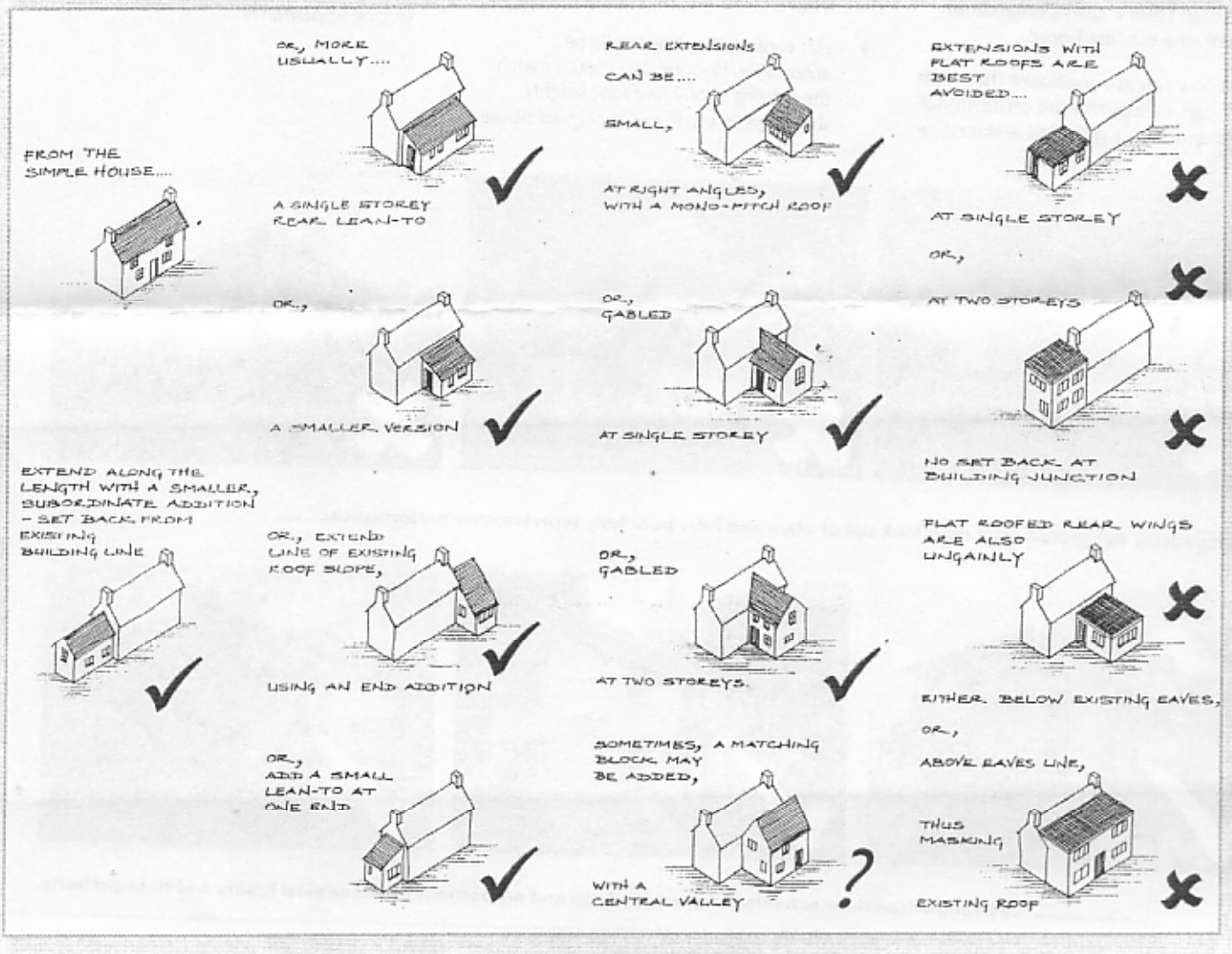
MATERIALS

- ◆ Normally the external materials to be used in your extension will be chosen to match those used in the house itself. Sometimes it will be difficult to match the materials. Traditional local stone is no longer being quarried in the South Hams. Some older brick types are no longer being made. In most cases similar or compatible materials can be sourced and if a matching natural stone cannot be found or is too expensive, a contrasting render or slate hanging may be an acceptable alternative. It is usually a simple matter to replicate the roof cladding materials and the joinery for the windows, doors and bargeboards.



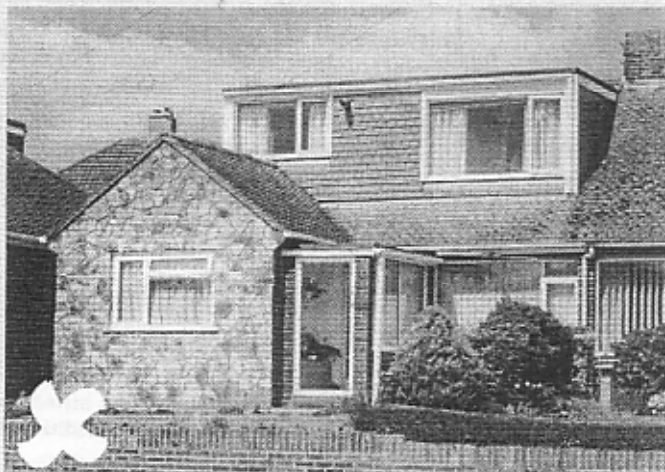
Applied stone facing; profiled tiles instead of slates; and PVCu windows and door have destroyed the appearance of this traditional cottage.

There are a number of ways to extend at the side or rear of your house. The most common extensions are illustrated in the diagrams which follow. Those which work are marked by a ✓ and those which don't by a ✗. Planning permission will not normally be granted for those marked by a ✗.



♦ Avoid:

- ♦ Too many different external wall materials.
- ♦ Panels or sections of stone used solely for effect.
- ♦ PVCu windows, doors and bargeboards.
- ♦ Artificial stone facings.



Dormer extension dominates the bungalow. Stone facing is the wrong material and is applied falsely rather than on its natural bed.

NEIGHBOURLINESS - THE 45 DEGREE RULE

- ♦ The extension should not damage the light or outlook from neighbours windows nor should it be overbearing in its relationship with the neighbouring house. As a guide to avoiding these problems you should apply the '45° rule' illustrated in this diagram:

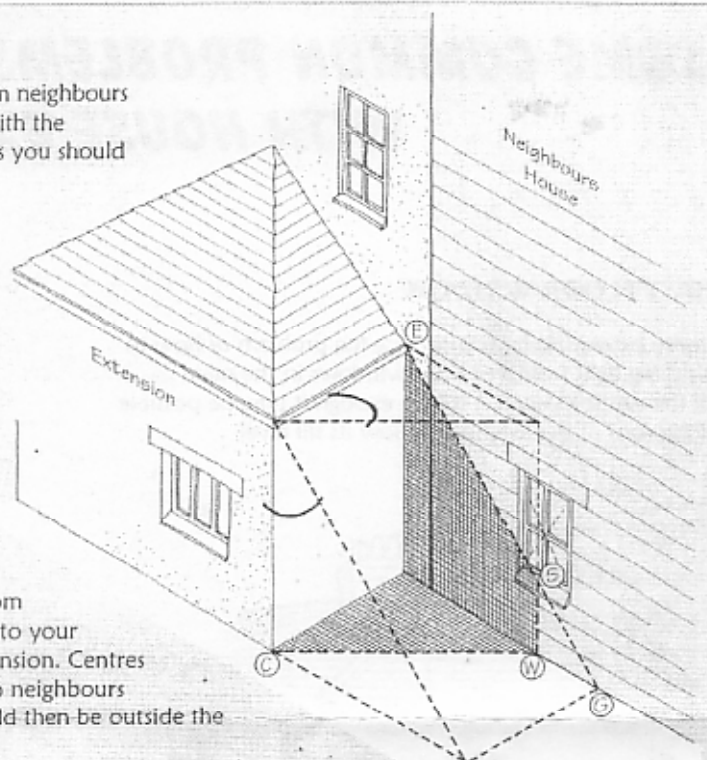
Check the effect of overshadowing using the 45° guideline illustrated here.

To mark the ground shadow, draw a 45° angle back from the outer corner of your proposed extension (C), until it hits the neighbouring property (W).

To determine shadowing across the wall, draw a 45° angle down from the proposed eaves line (E), until it reaches the ground (G).

Finally, draw a straight line up the wall from (W) to meet line E-G, at (S).

Shade back from lines C-W-S-E, to your proposed extension. Centres of windows to neighbours property should then be outside the shaded zone.



DETAILING

- ♦ Windows should be recessed from the face of the outerwall by 100mm.
- ♦ Symmetrical casement or sash windows with a vertical emphasis are more traditional than picture windows, horizontal windows or 'mock Georgian' windows.
- ♦ Avoid shutters, carriage lamps and similar fashionable additions which will soon be dated and do not give 'character' to a property.
- ♦ Solid timber doors are preferable to glazed doors.
- ♦ Roof eaves and verges should be close boarded and should not overhang or project.
- ♦ Verges should be bargeboarded, slated or cemented.
- ♦ Chimneys are traditional features which constitute significantly to the character of an extension.
- ♦ Where roofs are hipped a close mitred slate hip is preferable to a hip tile.
- ♦ Vertical cladding should be used with care, however, natural slate hanging is a traditional way of protecting walls exposed to the prevailing weather.



Here a cottage has been successfully extended by a subservient two storey extension incorporating a single storey outbuilding whilst using good quality natural materials.



In this photograph a single storey rear extension demonstrates correct proportions, steep roof pitch, cement verges and close boarded eaves.

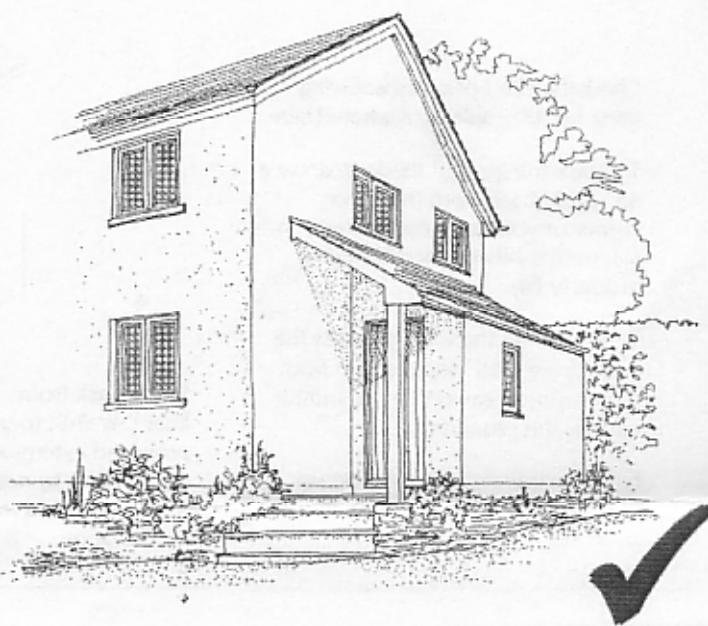


Instead of opting for a flat roof addition this owner has sacrificed first floor bedroom space for a lean to which respects the roof pitch of the original house. Materials match the main house but also natural slate hanging is skilfully incorporated. Note the attention to detail on the garage roof where a well detailed parapet hides the felt clad flat roof behind.

SOME COMMON PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES WITH HOUSE EXTENSIONS:

THE FIRST FLOOR WINDOW

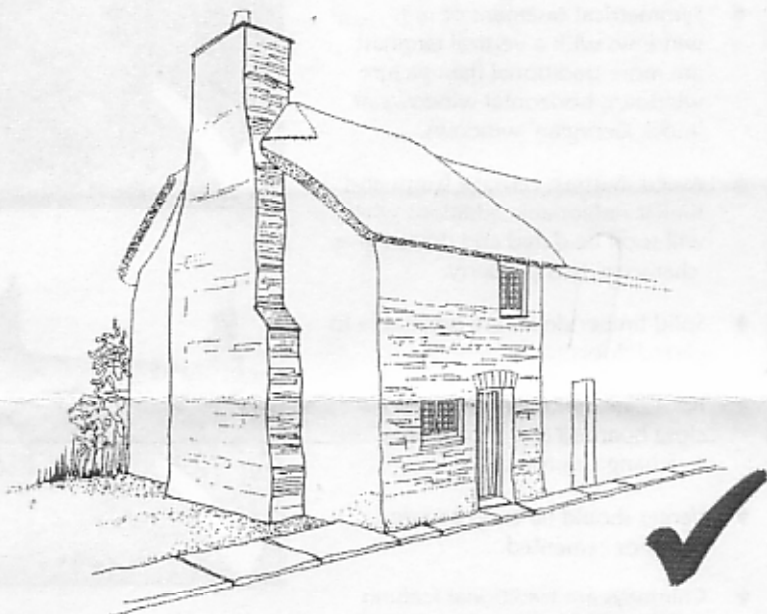
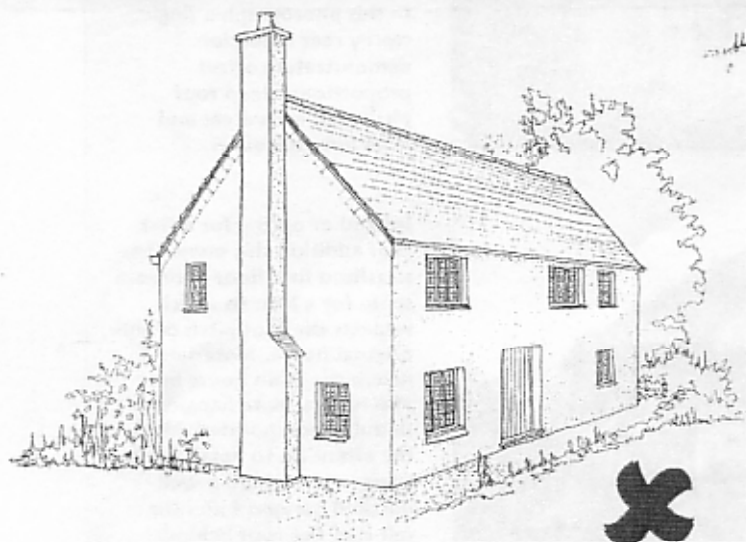
Single storey extensions frequently face the problem of how to avoid blocking light from first floor windows in the main house. If the existing window is high enough it may be possible to build the roof of the extension below its sill level.



Not to be recommended is this approach where the roof of the extension has been sliced into two halves to retain light to the landing window.

CHIMNEYS

Providing a chimney allows for a choice of heating; a means of ventilation, and adds to the appearance of the extension. Traditionally, chimneys are massive structures, because they were built of stone. They usually had drip ledges to shed water. It is safer to incorporate the chimney within the roof of the extension rather than on the outer wall where a narrow mean looking chimney is worse than having none at all.



This note is one of a series encouraging good practice in the design and layout of new development and has been produced by the Planning Service Group and Policy Service Group at South Hams District Council. For further information on this Guidance note, and the role of supplementary Planning Guidance, please contact:

The Planning Service Group,
South Hams District Council,
Follaton House, Plymouth Road,
Totnes. TQ9 5NE

Tel: 01803 861234

