

HOUSE EXTENSION DESIGN GUIDE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 These guidelines offer advice for householders and their professional agents on the main principles of extending a house, without unduly affecting neighbours, and respecting the character of the area. The advice outlines the main considerations taken into account by the Council when assessing applications for extensions. Because of the diversity in house styles throughout the Borough, it is neither possible nor desirable to cover every eventuality. However general principles can be applied in the majority of cases.

Some extensions and additions are permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 without having to submit a planning application. Certain principles should apply to all extensions regardless of whether or not planning permission is required. However you are still advised to check with a Planning Officer in writing before starting work.

Irrespective of whether planning permission is required you are likely to need approval under the Building Regulations. It should be stressed that Building Regulations and Development Control are separate Divisions within the same Department.

The Building Control Division is responsible for carrying out Inspections of extensions to ensure they are structurally sound and comply with the Building Acts legislation.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR ALL EXTENSIONS

2.1 The Council seeks to ensure that house extensions and alterations:-

- (i) Relate to the character of the original house in terms of scale, materials and design details.

(ii) Do not harm the occupiers of adjacent properties, i.e. daylight, outlook, privacy.

(iii) Are of a high standard of design and layout and are compatible with the character of the surrounding area.

These guidelines explain in more detail how these aims can be complied with. There may be examples of extensions in the area which do not comply with these guidelines. Any such examples should not be seen as a precedent and will not be accepted as a reason to allow a similar proposal.

SCALE AND APPEARANCE

2.2 When considering extending any house, it is important that the extension should relate to the design of the original building. Extensions should match roof shape and pitch (hipped or gabled). New and existing windows should line through with each other horizontally and vertically and general proportions should be respected.



Extension is in scale with existing house



Extension is not integrated

Every effort should be made to integrate the extension into the original design of the house so that it does not appear to be an obvious addition. This will usually require matching the design and materials of the original house in all respects.

DAYLIGHTING

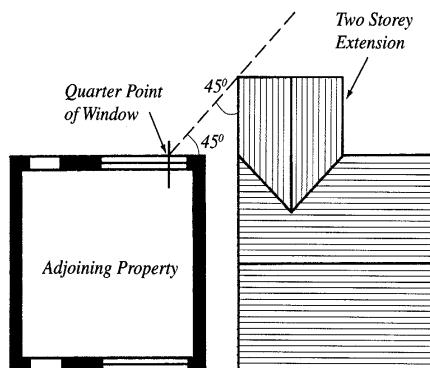
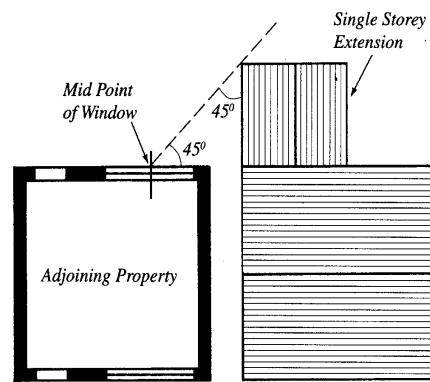
2.3 Loss of daylighting to a neighbouring property is normally due to the position of extensions in relation to habitable room windows usually at the rear of the house, i.e. where extensions project too far and/or are too high. The impact of any change in levels will also be taken into consideration.

Extensions to houses which mask a single window to a habitable room, i.e. the only light source, in side elevations of adjoining properties are unlikely to be acceptable. (Habitable rooms are defined by this authority as lounges, sitting rooms, dining rooms, bedrooms and studies and kitchens).

To maintain a reasonable relationship between a rear extension and any adjoining property, the Council will assess all extensions against the 45° Code outlined in the next column.

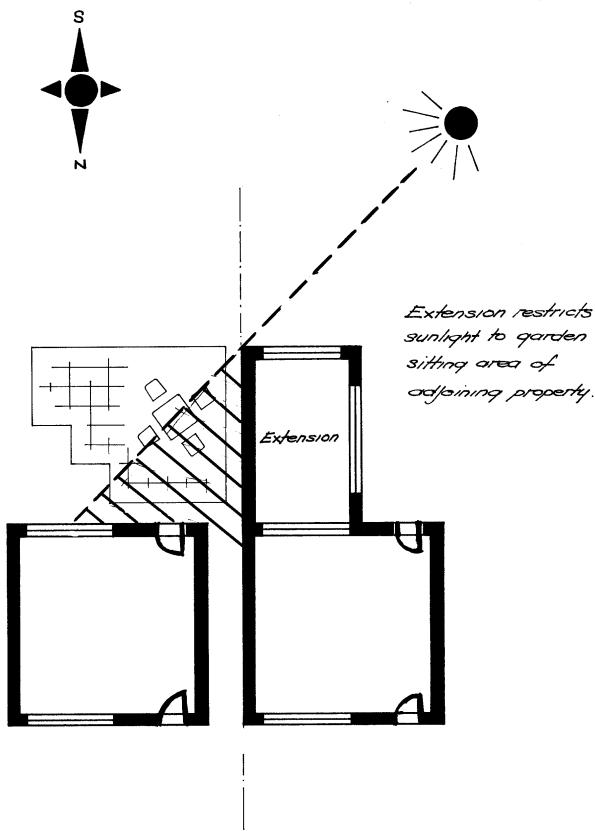
THE 45° CODE

- 2.4 The code aims to guide the size and designs of extensions in order to ensure that they do not seriously affect a neighbour's outlook or daylighting. To comply with the 45° Code, extensions should be designed so as not to cross the appropriate line drawn at an angle of 45° from an adjoining neighbour's nearest window which is also the main light source to a habitable room. For single storey extensions, the 45° line is taken from the mid point of the opening and for two storey extensions, the quarter point is used. (See also planning guidance note no.12 for further details).



SUNLIGHTING

- 2.5 Some large extensions may restrict sunlight to that part of a neighbouring garden close to the rear of the house which is used for sitting out in. This situation is likely to occur where the rear of properties have a southern orientation, and needs to be taken into consideration when planning extensions.



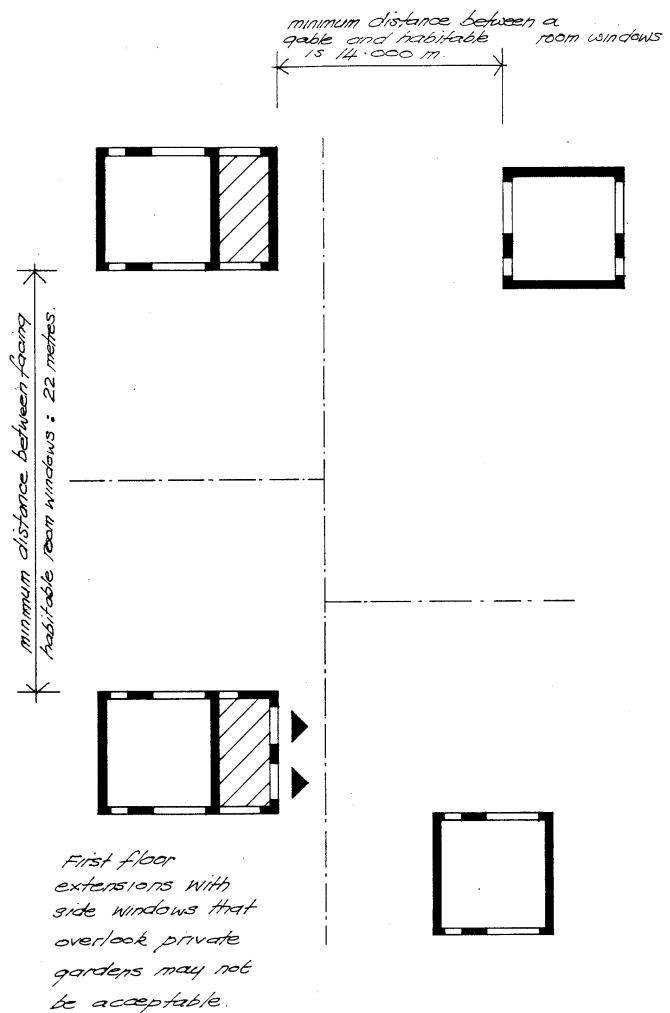
IMMEDIATE OUTLOOK

- 2.6 Outlook is the range of vision which is in close proximity to the boundaries of a house. A view extends much further - usually over many houses, buildings or countryside from a higher level and cannot be protected under planning regulations. The outlook from habitable rooms of a neighbouring property may be affected where extensions are unduly large or out of scale with the existing house, even though they may comply with the 45° code. Outlook can also be made worse by a difference in levels between properties and by the use of unsympathetic materials.

The minimum distance between front/rear facing windows of one property and two storey walls of another is 14 metres.

OVERLOOKING

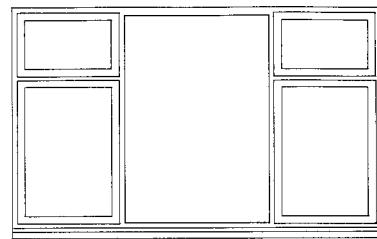
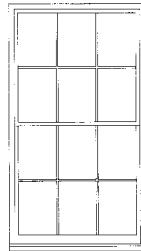
- 2.7 To maintain a reasonable degree of privacy for the occupants of adjacent dwellings, facing habitable room windows should be a minimum of 22 metres apart. Extensions with side facing windows that overlook private gardens may not be acceptable.



Windows in single storey extensions or conservatory extensions may be effectively screened by fences, walls or hedges. If it is not possible to screen windows they should be omitted or the application may be refused. Windows in extensions of two or more storeys generally have unrestricted views and may not be acceptable where excessive overlooking occurs. In certain circumstances, however the use of obscure glazing may also be acceptable as a way of eliminating overlooking. Balconies, roof gardens and first floor patios can also adversely affect the privacy of neighbours and will generally be unacceptable.

In the case of flats or properties where the main living room is at first floor level, or where a change in levels results in a similar situation, the minimum distance between front and rear facing windows to habitable rooms is 28 metres. This distance should be a minimum of 31 metres between 3 storey buildings.

These distances form part of detailed guidance given in the adopted Dudley Unitary Development Plan.



Vertical Sliding Sash

Casement Window

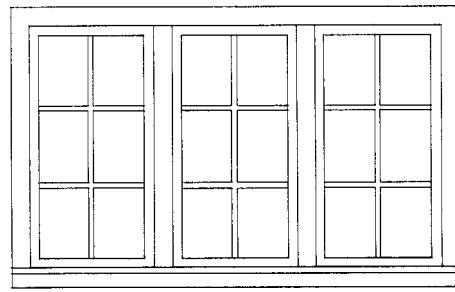
3. DETAILED DESIGN

MATERIALS

- 3.1 The materials used in an extension should match or be sympathetic with the existing dwelling in terms of type, colour and texture. **Conditions attached to the planning permissions will require the submission of details of materials to be approved by the Local Planning Authority before construction work has begun.** Material samples for extensions/alterations in conservation areas or for Listed Buildings may need to be submitted and approved before the application decision. **It should be stressed that materials must be approved to the satisfaction of the planning officer dealing with the application and not by a Building Control Officer.** Changes in appearance as a result of weathering should be taken into account when selecting bricks and tiles. It may be worth considering re-using tiles on the rear of properties for the front of extensions.

WINDOWS

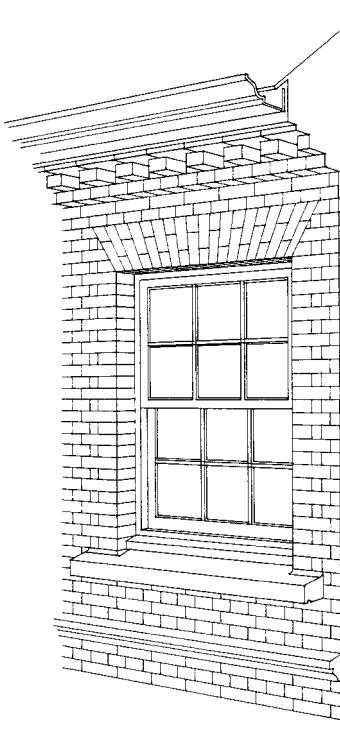
- 3.2 In addition to respecting general proportions (See diagram 2) the detailed design of the windows and surrounds is also an important consideration. The style of the windows, materials, glazing pattern, sill and lintol treatments, of the existing windows should be taken into account when designing a new extension. Such details must be indicated on application plans.



Mullioned Frame Window

DETAILING

- 3.3 Buildings often have distinctive architectural features which contribute to their special character and these can be used to good effect to help match the design of the extension with the original. It is worth considering whether the property to be extended has any decorative features (door architraves, decorated lintels, sills and eaves detail) which could be incorporated into the design of the extension. However, try to avoid unnecessary or ornamental decorations which can appear too fussy. Attention to details such as the correct siting of rainwater pipes and correct fascia depth and alignment is also very important. Whenever possible soil vent pipes should be concealed within walls.



Cast Iron Guttering

Dentiled Corbelling

Gauged Brick Arch

Painted Timber Sash Window

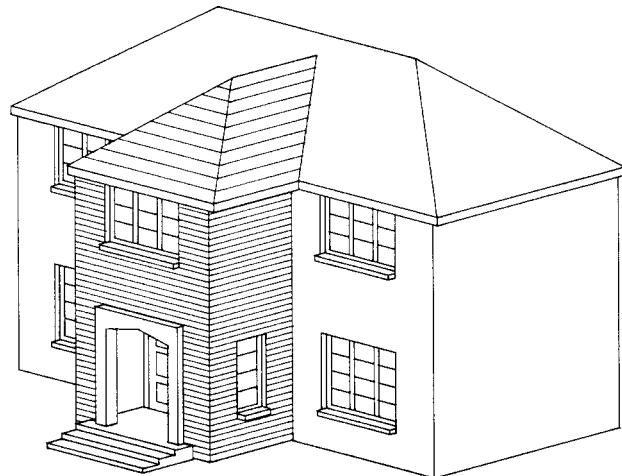
English Bond Brickwork

Cast Sill

String Moulding

Extensions at the front of individually designed houses which are set back from the highway or which are set on a staggered building line may, in certain circumstances, be acceptable. The extension must complement the original building and not adversely affect any adjacent properties.

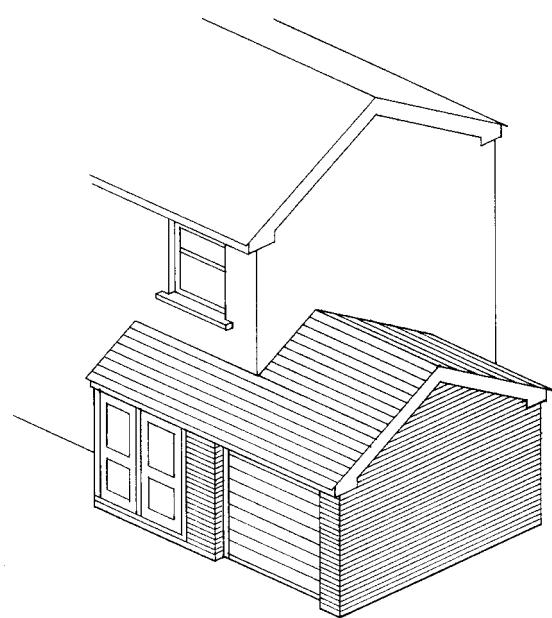
In the case of some detached properties, it may be possible to use the extension to completely change the form of the house.



4. GUIDANCE FOR TYPICAL EXTENSIONS

FRONT EXTENSIONS

- 4.1 The design and appearance of the fronts of houses and the distance between the buildings and the street are important aspects in defining the character of residential areas. Generally, only modest extensions which are in keeping with the character of the existing house will be allowed, e.g. garage and porch extensions.



PORCHES AND CANOPIES

- 4.2 Porches should reflect the character of the original house with the aim being to make the addition "belong" to the house in terms of scale, details and materials used in the construction. Care should be taken not to remove or conceal ornate or unusual architectural features or door surrounds.

Canopies will rarely be appropriate on properties of traditional character but are a popular way to personalize dwellings. They need to be designed carefully so they relate to existing features. Applicants should be aware that overhanging canopies may severely reduce daylight received through their own windows.

SINGLE STOREY EXTENSIONS

- 4.3 Single storey extensions added to the side or rear of a two storey house should be in scale and balance with the whole of the original building. All extensions must of course comply with the 45° Code guidelines. Setting back the extension from the front wall of the house will help the original building to maintain its dominance, particularly if it

extends as far as the boundary. It should be remembered that extensions up to the boundary line may restrict access to the rear garden which may be inconvenient and impractical. In addition, they may give rise to foundations or roof lines encroaching upon the adjoining property. If the situation cannot be avoided by amending the design, it will be necessary to serve an 'ownership certificate' (available from these offices) on the owner of the affected property. Alternatively, it may be possible to consider a joint scheme with a neighbour.

You are advised that the provisions of the Party Wall Act 1996 may also apply.

The use of a pitched roof is recommended. Not only do pitched roofs reflect the character of the property but they will usually last much longer than flat roofs.

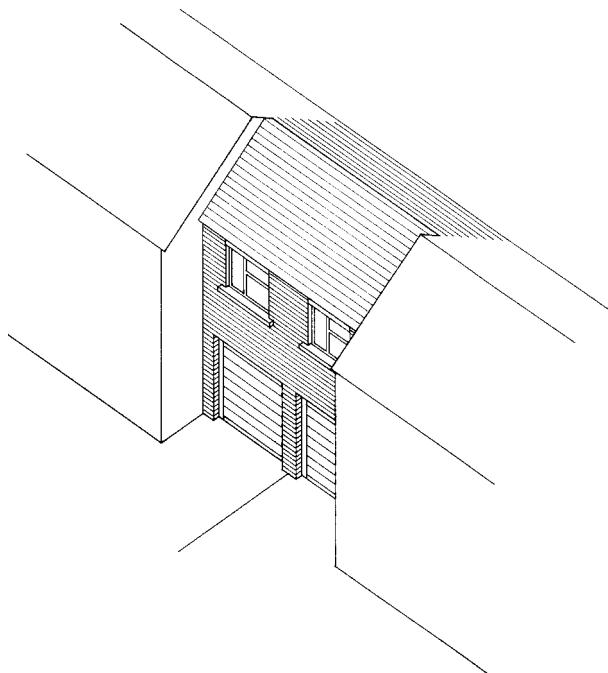
TWO STOREY SIDE AND REAR EXTENSIONS

- 4.4 Semi-detached houses are normally designed as a matching pair. In order not to upset the balance of the buildings, any side extension should be set back from the front of the building. Setting back an extension will provide a design break between old and new, enabling the original building to dominate. This will also disguise different brick course heights, prevent visible damage when bonding into brickwork and maintain the separation of eaves and guttering detail. The depth of any required set back will vary according to the design of the house and merits of each proposal.

Two storey extensions to end of terraced properties will also normally be required to be set back from the front of the building, unless they can match every detail of the existing building.

Where practicable, a minimum distance of 1 metre should be maintained between a common boundary and the wall of any two storey side extension in order to provide a visual break between properties and maintain access to rear gardens. This is especially relevant with extensions to hipped roof houses where the eaves and guttering are likely to overhang the neighbouring property. See diagram showing extension in scale with existing house in paragraph 2.2.

The construction of two storey side extensions between houses can alter the character of a street by creating the impression of a cramped, terraced development. In order to overcome this potential terracing effect and safeguard the character of an area, the first floor section of a side extension should be set back significantly.



Such a set back will be required unless:-

- (i) there is a stagger in the building line;
- (ii) there is a **marked** change in levels between properties.

Two storey extensions to corner properties will be required to take into account the visual impact upon the side road and not be unduly prominent nor out of character in the streetscene.

All types of two storey extensions will be required to conform with section 2.7 (Overlooking) 45° Code guidelines and general principles.

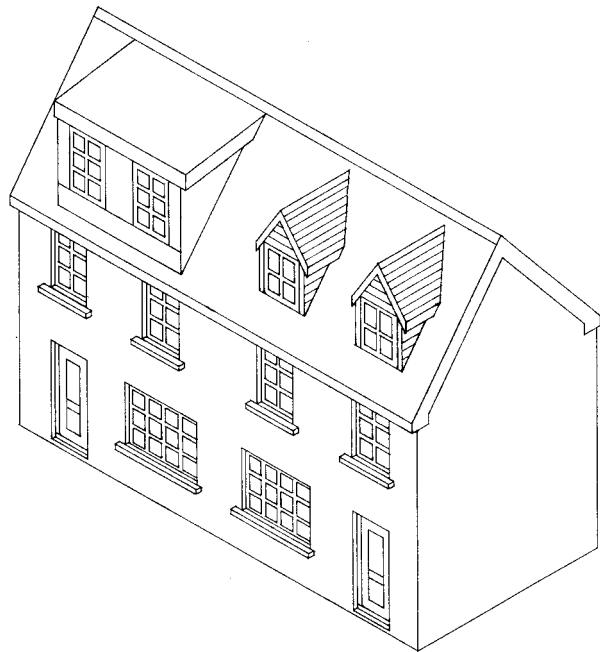
A flat roof construction will not be acceptable if visible in the streetscene and the original house has a pitched roof. A combination of pitched and flat roof may be acceptable if required to maintain neighbour's daylighting and the extension is not prominent. In terms of longevity and appearance, a pitched roof will always be preferable and will properly integrate an extension with the main building.

4.5 DORMER EXTENSIONS

Generally a steeply pitched roof can accommodate a modest sized dormer room without the form of the dwelling being too severely upset.

A dormer should not dominate the existing roof

Dormers should complement the existing features of the house in terms of proportion, size and position. Two small dormers may be preferable to a single larger one. A 1m setback from the fascia should be observed.

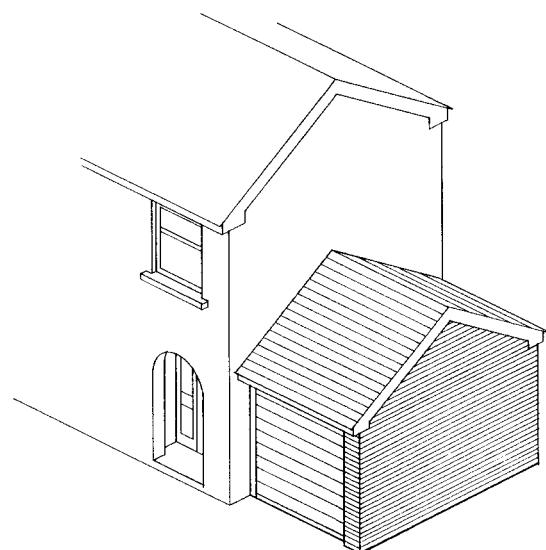


The problem mainly arises where the existing house is not designed to take such an extension and the dormer would project above the ridge or because it would overlook neighbours' private gardens and habitable rooms. In such cases, an alternative form of extension should be considered.

Dormer windows should also complement the existing features of the house in terms of its proportions, size and positioning.

4.6 GARAGES

As with any other extension, garages should be sympathetically related to the main dwelling, whether they are adjoined or freestanding. Pitched or lean to roofs are preferable to flat or jack roofs as they are more likely to complement the existing house and locality. In normal circumstances, garages should be in line with or behind the front of the house, unless associated with a porch extension and a sufficient driveway is available. See diagram in paragraph 4.1.



Concrete sectional garages can appear obtrusive because they are not usually related to the main dwelling. They may not be acceptable in prominent locations such as in corner positions or in front of the building line.

Where insufficient space is available at the side of a dwelling, the proposed siting of garages in front gardens is likely to be visually obtrusive. Unless appropriate screening can be achieved, such proposals may not be acceptable.

In order that vehicles can be parked in front of garages without overhanging the pavement, the following distances between the garage doors and the footpath should be observed:-

- (i) The normal distance to garage doors from the footpath should be 6 metres.
- (ii) Where it is impracticable to achieve 6 metres, this distance may be reduced to 5.25 m, provided doors are used which open within the confines of the garage (e.g. folding shutter or flush opening

doors). Solid roller shutters will rarely be acceptable.

- (iii) Where it is not possible to achieve the above standards, a distance of 4.8 m should be provided between the front of the garage and back of the footpath, provided a further space is available within the curtilage.

Where appropriate any extension should provide a driver emerging from a garage with sufficient visibility to see onto the adjacent highway without the vehicle causing an obstruction.

5. OBTAINING ADVICE AND APPLYING FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

- 5.1 It is strongly recommended that professional planning advice is obtained for any proposal to alter or extend a property. An informal meeting with planning officers of this Department can help settle many basic design problems and will save you time later on.

Planning application forms for extensions and alterations can be obtained from the Planning and Leisure Department. Completed forms should be returned together with the appropriate planning fee and 4 copies of drawings showing:-

- i) Location plan of the property and surrounding properties a 1:1250 scale O.S. extract will usually be appropriate.
- ii) Layout plans and elevations of the existing property and elevations of the adjacent property where appropriate.
- iii) Plans and elevations of the property as proposed and sections where appropriate. All new work and all demolition should be clearly marked.
- iv) The position of the boundary.
- v) Any differences in ground levels where appropriate.

All plans must be drawn to a metric scale (usually a scale of 1:50 or 1:100). Plans drawn to imperial measurement are not acceptable.

6.0 Raising the quality of design: the responsibilities of applicants

- 6.1 Applicants for large or particularly prominent extensions, as well as for all extensions in Conservation Areas, will normally be required to submit a short written statement with their planning applications. The statement should justify the design of the proposed extension and demonstrate that the applicant has taken into account the Council's design policies and this guidance note. The applicant may also be required to submit photographs and drawings showing how the extension relates to its surroundings.

This guidance note was approved by the Planning Committee on 8th January 1998 following a period of public consultation and is one of a series of Planning guidance Notes produced by the Local Authority. Copies of other Guidance Notes can be obtained from the Planning & Leisure Department, 3 St. James's Road, Dudley.