

Planning Guidance Note 1

House Extensions

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction*
 - 2.0 The need for planning permission*
 - 3.0 Guidance on the design of house extensions*
 - 3.1 Physical impact on neighbours
 - 3.2 Visual impact
 - 3.3 Considerations specific to the position of the extension
 - 4.0 Summary*
-
- 5.0 Additional information sheets*
 - 5.1 City Council planning policies relating to house extensions
 - 5.2 Procedure involved in applying for planning permission
 - 5.3 Sustainability issues
 - 5.4 Further information and useful contacts
 - 5.5 The status of guidance notes within the planning system
 - 5.6 The planning guidance note series
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1.0 Introduction

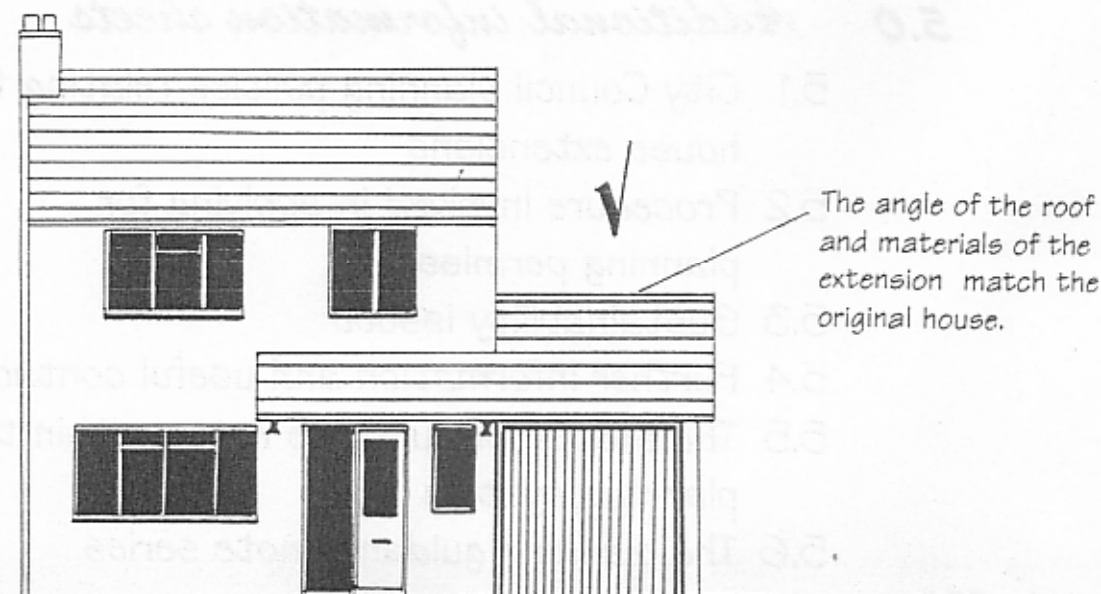
The enlargement of dwellings by building extensions is now common-place resulting from a householder's need for additional accommodation. Extensions generally benefit the community as they increase the amount of accommodation in the City and make efficient use of space and building materials. However, their construction if not thoughtfully carried out can lead to problems for adjoining householders and can contribute to a decline in environmental standards. As most dwellings were not originally designed to be extended careful consideration must be given to the impact any additions could have on adjoining properties, and the visual appearance of an area. Oversized and badly placed extensions can result in the loss of privacy, light and outlook for neighbours, whilst visually poor additions may detract from the appearance of the original house and the general streetscene.

Consideration should also be given to the impact any development has on less visual aspects of the environment such as air and water quality. Buildings which are 'sensitive' to the environment need not be more expensive to construct and can give additional benefits to their occupants by leading to long term reductions in energy use. This guidance has been written in such a way as to take account of environmental concerns. Specific guidance is found in the sustainability issues chapter on pages 14 & 15.

If the advice in this note is adhered to it should help to ensure that applicants comply with the council's planning policies and procedures and encourage a high quality environment across the city.

In respect of extensions to houses which are listed or located within a Conservation Area particular care will be needed to protect the property's and area's historic character. Special considerations may thus apply to proposals and in some instances the guidance contained in this note will be inappropriate. Specific advice concerning these matters can be received from the Council's Planning Officers.

A garage incorporated into the front/side of a house.



2.0 The need for planning permission

Some proposed house extensions will be 'permitted development' and as such will not require planning permission. Permitted development rights are laid down in the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 1995. The need for planning permission for a proposed extension is largely (though by no means exclusively) related to its dimensions and relationship to any footpath or roadway - factors such as its likely design, materials (glass conservatories are subject to planning permission), or prominence are not considerations at this stage.

If an extension is small in area, single storey and located at the rear of the house it might be exempt from planning controls, however, each property has a unique history and location which makes any general guidelines potentially misleading. If you intend to extend your home it is always advisable to check with the Planning and Transportation Service whether planning permission is needed.

The construction of an extension which requires but does not have planning permission can have frustrating and costly implications for the owners. The Council can take legal action against any unauthorised extension and problems may be experienced when the house is put on the market.

Irrespective of the need for planning permission, most extensions require building regulations approval. These regulations exist to ensure that all development meets set standards in areas such as health, safety and energy conservation. No single consent from the City Council is all embracing. A number of other consents could also be required and each should be applied for separately.

Of particular significance for a number of properties is the consent of the City Council as landlord / landowner, or original landlord / landowner. City Council contacts are given on page 16.

All extensions to flats, whether purpose built or resulting from a conversion require planning permission. Consent can sometimes be required to demolish part of a building or structure.

If you propose to extend a listed building or a property within a Conservation Area it is important to ensure that you acquire the appropriate consents.

3.0 Factors to consider when extending a house

3.1 Physical impact on neighbours

The Council appreciates individual households needs for increased accommodation. However, when planning to extend their homes, applicants should be aware of the Council's responsibility to protect the existing amenities of all people. This section sets out the requirements which should be adhered to to avoid extensions having an unsatisfactory effect on the standard of living offered to occupants of homes that are to be extended and their neighbouring properties.

Daylight and sunlight

Extensions should not result in a significant loss of daylight or sunlight to habitable rooms, such as kitchens or bedrooms in nearby properties. A number of factors can constrain the acceptable size of an extension, these include a change in ground levels between the site and adjacent properties, the extensions orientation in relationship to the sun and its distance from the property's boundary and neighbour's principal windows.

In addition to considering the extension's impact on neighbouring properties, it should be ensured that it does not lead to an unsatisfactory loss in daylight or sunlight to the property being extended.

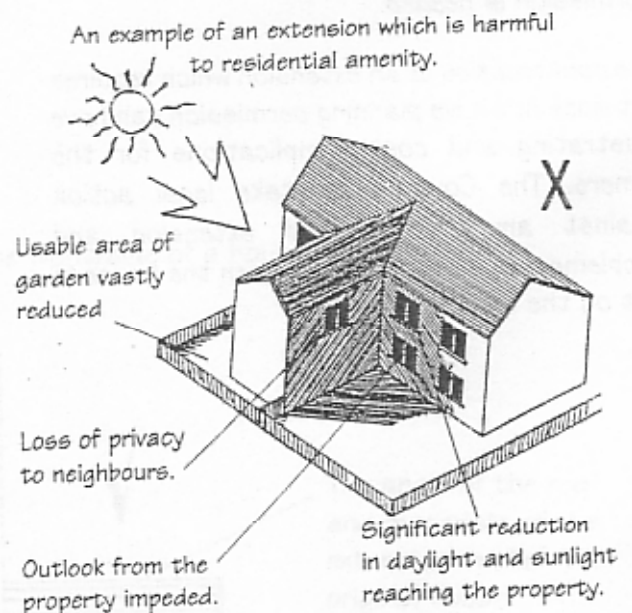
Privacy

Windows (or balconies) in proposed extensions should not be sited so that they impinge on the privacy of neighbours either in their garden or habitable rooms. Habitable room windows directly opposite one another should be a minimum of 21 metres (70 ft.) apart for two storey development. Consideration should also

be given to windows near stairways or hallways which often impinge on residents privacy. Problems concerning privacy can sometimes be overcome by relocating windows, or by the installation of roof lights. Obscure glass can be an appropriate solution if the window serves a non habitable room such as a bathroom.

Outlook

An extension should not be constructed in close proximity to either a main window of a neighbouring property, or its private garden where it would have an unacceptable overbearing effect on a household's outlook. The distance between gable ends and principal windows of adjoining properties should normally be a minimum of 12 metres (39ft). Significant local views from public areas can be protected, however, views from a private house or a private garden are not safeguarded by planning legislation.



Amenity space

Extensions to a property should not be of such a size to restrict use of a garden for such normal requirements as drying clothes, storing refuse and outdoor relaxation.

Parking and highway issues

Many residential areas experience parking problems, these problems are likely to increase if car ownership continues to rise at predicted levels. As a result, where a proposed extension would lead to an off-street parking space being lost it is unlikely to receive consent unless the amount of parking on site still meets the City Council standards. In addition, extensions can have implications on highway safety, they should not be located where they obscure visibility such as near a junction, or on a bend in a road. Where an extension incorporates a garage, a number of highway regulations must be adhered to. These are outlined in the guidance note entitled "House and Roof Alterations".

3.2 Visual impact

Introduction

There are an abundance of house types and street layouts in the city. Most are constructed in a finished form with no consideration for future extensions. Because of this, any subsequent development must be well thought through if it is not to harm the appearance of the respective home and surroundings. In respect to design, the materials and characteristics of the original home and surrounding area should generally be the starting point.

Occasionally extensions which differ or even contrast with the original property can be acceptable. It is not the aim of the Council to stifle imaginative schemes. However, even where materials or designs contrast there should still be a harmonious relationship with the main body of the property being extended. Contrasting schemes should not merely result from a lax attitude towards the appearance of a property.

The importance of respecting the character of a house



Note the importance of choosing the most appropriate windows, materials and style of roof when designing an extension..

Streetscene

The character of an area is created by the scale, design and positioning of individual buildings and the spaces around them. It is individual homes which make up the whole and additions and alterations to properties should respect this. Cumulatively, inappropriate alterations can destroy the whole appearance and feel of an area.

Materials

The materials of extensions should generally match those of the existing house and always relate to the surrounding area. It is important to consider the impact of weathering on the colour and texture of materials and ensure that small but important details such as mortar colour and bonding style are correct.

Using good quality materials makes good sense, not only will they look better immediately, but will retain their appearance and condition. This will lead to lower maintenance costs and enhance the value of the property.

Roofs

The shape and pitch of roofs on house extensions should mirror those of the original home. Eaves lines should generally follow through and clumsy junctions between existing and new roofing be avoided.

Flat roofs will be discouraged where they are not a feature of the original house, though they can sometimes be acceptable at the rear of properties, particularly where they are not prominent and help reduce the height of an extension.

The colour and shape of slates and tiles should reflect those of the original home. Where the roof of the original home is extended and it is not possible to find matching materials for a particularly sensitive elevation, it is possible to use weathered slates or tiles from a 'hidden' part of the roof and replace these with new ones.

Windows

The positioning and design of windows is crucial to achieving a unified exterior. The windows in an extension should reflect the proportions and main lines of the existing house's openings, inappropriate windows can ruin a property, or even a whole terrace's symmetry, rhythm or balance. The size, shape and materials of windows should correspond with those that exist and it is vital that the horizontal and/or vertical divisions of individual windows match.

When deciding the positions of habitable room windows attention should be given to the potential for maximising available daylight and sunlight. An extensions relationship to the sun at different times of the day / year should be considered along with the possible impact of any barriers. Proposals which require the removal of important trees will be resisted.

Decorative features and details

Individual features play an important role in ensuring that an extension is of a high quality and fully sympathetic to the original house. Brickwork should mirror that of the existing house and any separate styles or bands followed through to the extension.

Important and attractive components of an original house such as ridge tiles, or distinctive rainwater goods should be features of an extension.

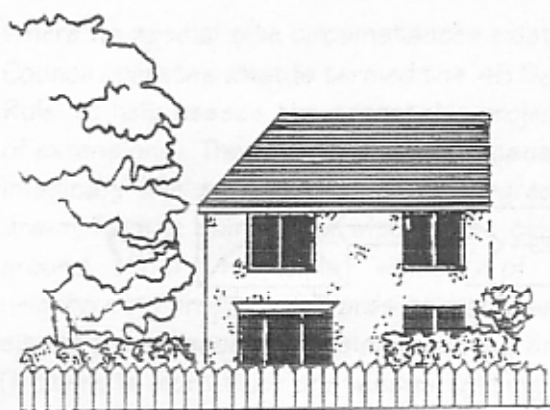
Trees

Trees are of great importance, they help create an attractive streetscene, provide a wildlife resource and also absorb 'greenhouse gases'. If an application site or surroundings contain any trees the site layout plans should show their number, location, species and spread of branches.

Alterations to a property must take into account existing trees, especially those protected by a Tree Preservation Order or growing within a conservation area. Development will not be allowed which would harm (or be harmed by) existing trees which are worthy of retention in the interests of public amenity. Generally, excavation should not

be undertaken within a distance equivalent to 1.25 times the height of any such tree, or beneath any of the trees branches, unless such works can be undertaken without risk to the tree.

During construction care must be taken to protect trees, applicants should follow the guidance contained in B55837 1991, "Guide for Trees in Relation to Construction".



Trees and bushes can help to make an environment more attractive

3.3 Considerations specific to the position of extensions

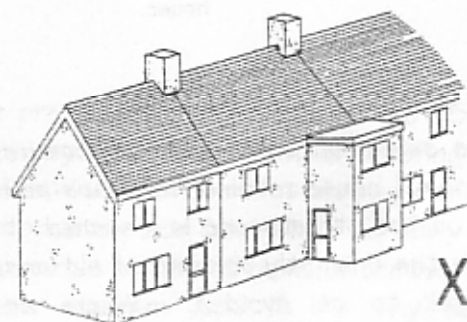
General

Design and neighbour amenity factors are relevant to all development, however, the particular opportunities and impacts can vary according to the part of the house to be extended

All the physical and design issues outlined in this guidance should be considered when proposing an extension, however, some factors can be of heightened importance depending whether the extension is proposed at the front, side or rear of the home.

Front extensions

Extensions that project forward of the existing house are generally unacceptable, particularly where they are prominent, or in an area with an established building line. Where a street has a straight, uniform layout and appearance, the only development that might be agreeable at the front is likely to be a small, sympathetically designed porch.



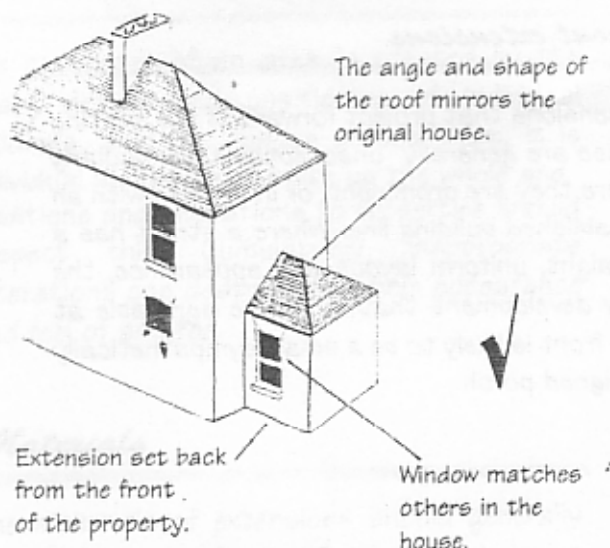
A front extension which is harmful to the character of the terrace and neighbours amenity.

The circumstances where front extensions could sometimes be acceptable are where homes are screened, and set back or down a considerable way from a road, or where there is an irregular street layout.

Side extensions

In many areas of Plymouth the layout and density of housing is not such to enable large side extensions. In these circumstances extensions should be clearly subordinate to the existing house rather than trying to match the scale of the existing property. In most cases side extensions should be set back from the front of the house, the individual characteristics of the site and proposal will determine the exact distance required, however, a figure less than one metre will rarely be satisfactory.

An extension subordinate to the original house.

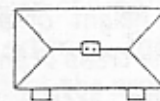
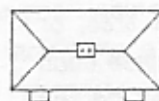


Setting the extension back helps to ensure that the original house retains its shape and its impact on the streetscene is lessened. It also enables the unsightly bonding of old and new brickwork to be avoided. Where an extension is set back, the roof of the extension should be lower than that of the main house. This ensures that the extension is subordinate and stops the pitch of the roof being inappropriately steep.

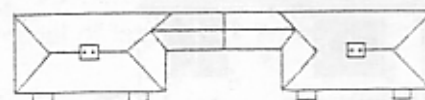
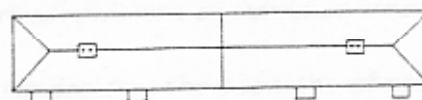
In some circumstances it is possible to integrate a two storey side extension into an existing home and make the resulting dwelling appear as one singularly designed structure. This is most often possible with detached properties, although the feasibility is dependant on there being sufficient room to expand, both in respect to the amenities of neighbours and the appearance of the streetscene.

In some situations the erection of a two-storey side extension could create an effect known as terracing. This is likely to occur in a street comprising detached or semi-detached homes which are closely spaced. If adjoining properties both erect side extensions the full width of their garden, it is likely to lead to the appearance of a terraced street. In design terms there is no objection to a terrace when it is a structure designed as a whole, however, where terracing results from linked extensions, the appearance is usually unsatisfactory. The piecemeal design and joining of individual properties is likely to be shoddy and the loss of space harmful to the whole character and amenity of an area.

Overcoming the problems of terracing.



Unextended houses.



Where there is a danger of terracing occurring a gap should be left between the extension and the boundary with the neighbouring property. The distance required will be dependent on the individual building, and site requirements, however, in very few circumstances will a gap less than 1.5 metres be acceptable. Alternatively, this problem can often be overcome by setting back the extension from the front of the house. The required distance to avoid the appearance of terracing will vary, however a figure in excess of two metres will usually be required.

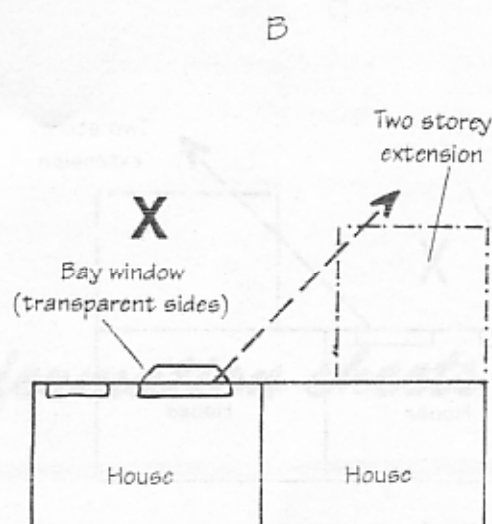
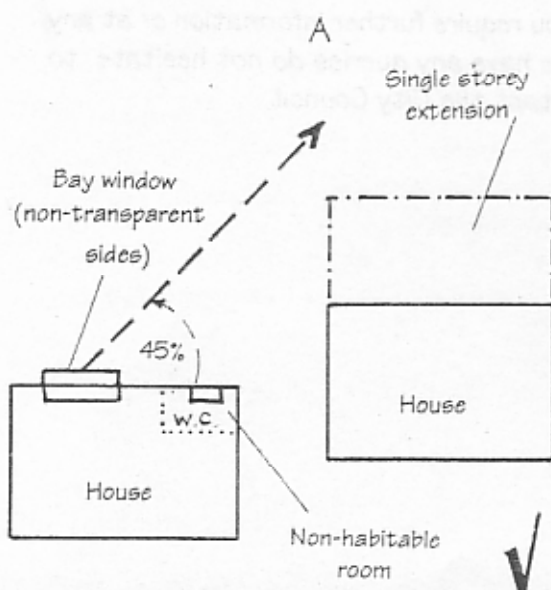
Side extensions located on corner plots, or close to road junctions can also generate concern. Corner plots are often left undeveloped to ensure highway safety or to create a spacious feel in an area. The size and position of extensions should respect this. Corner plots also tend to be prominent locations, it is particularly important therefore that any extension is of a high standard. Where it is

possible to extend the side of a house beside a road some open land should remain. Generally, extensions within 3 metres of a pavement will be unacceptable.

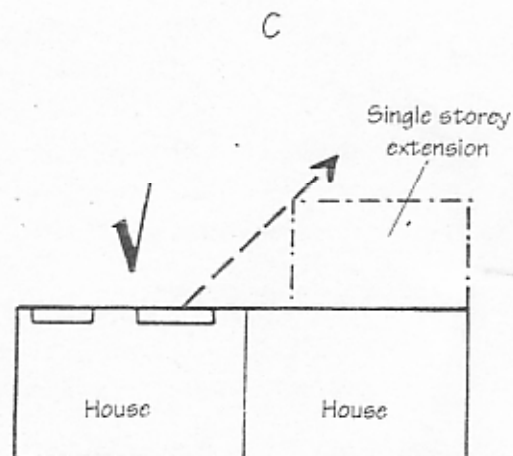
Rear extensions.

Most house extensions whether built of brick or glass are located at the rear of a property. In this position the impact on neighbours is often crucial. The main concerns are privacy, outlook and light. The principal factor influencing this is the extent to which the extension is proposed, to project.

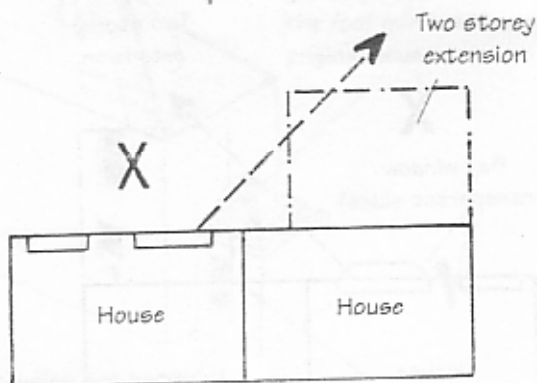
Where no special site circumstances exist the Council operates what is termed the '45 Degree Rule' to help assess the acceptable projection of extensions. The rule is so called because an imaginary line at an angle of 45 degrees is drawn from a point from within the closest ground floor habitable window of the neighbouring property towards and across the site of the proposed extension (see diagram A) (if there is more than one window lighting this room the line is taken from the window which is the main source of light). Extensions are normally only considered acceptable when they are designed not to cross the 45 degrees line. As can be seen from the diagrams the further an extension is located from the neighbouring property and its habitable windows, the larger its acceptable size is likely to be.



The precise characteristics of the 45 degree rule vary to take account of differing window styles. When rear openings are bay windows the appropriate place from which to apply the 45 degree rule is the mid point of the bay opening - see diagram A. If the bay has non transparent sides extending the full height of the opening the rule is applied from the mid point of the actual window (see diagram B). (The 'rule' is not appropriate for windows located on the side of the property - in such cases applications will be considered on their individual merits)



The 45 degree rule is relevant to both single and two-storey extensions. For single storey extensions the line is drawn from the mid point of the window (see diagrams A and C). For two-storey extensions the line is taken from the quarter point closest to the boundary (see diagrams B and D).



The 45 degree rule offers guidance in most situations but there are often other factors which affect its use. Of particular significance is a change in ground levels between adjacent sites and the existence of a high boundary wall. Where such factors exist they will always be a major consideration.

4.0 Summary

This guidance provides a framework which people intending to extend their properties should work within. It is important to take account of the general advice as well as that relating to specific extensions. The central aim is to encourage the development of extensions which are of a high quality and in harmony with their surroundings. The overall goal is to promote a residential environment which is practical, attractive and pleasant to live in. The key points raised are as follows :

- (i) Always check with the City Council if Planning Permission, Building Regulations and any other consents are required.
- (ii) Ensure that extensions do not harm neighbours' quality of life or the environment generally.
- (iii) Pay close attention to detail when proposing to extend a home.
- (iv) Always examine fully how a proposed extension relates to the existing home, surrounding properties and the environment as a whole.
- (v) Have a regard to the contents of this guidance note and appropriate policies in the Plymouth Local Plan (see information sheets).
- (vi) If you require further information or at any time have any queries do not hesitate to contact the City Council.

Planning Guidance Note 2

House and roof alterations

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction*
- 2.0 The need for planning permission*
- 3.0 Factors to consider when proposing to alter a home or it's surroundings :*
 - 3.1 Impact on neighbours
 - 3.2 Impact on the appearance of the home
- 4.0 Guidance for specific alterations :*
 - 4.1 Roof alterations and extensions
 - 4.2 Garages / car ports / vehicle hardstandings
 - 4.3 Extensions and outbuildings for dependent relatives
 - 4.4 Balconies / roof gardens / raised patios
 - 4.5 Outbuildings
 - 4.6 External staircases
 - 4.7 Cladding
 - 4.8 Satellite dishes and radio aerials
 - 4.9 Oil and gas storage tanks
 - 4.10 Curtilage extensions
 - 4.11 Boundary walls and fences
- 5.0 Summary*
- 6.0 Additional information sheets*
 - 6.1 City Council Planning Policies related to house and roof alterations
 - 6.2 Procedure involved in applying for planning permission
 - 6.3 Sustainability Issues
 - 6.4 Further information and useful contacts
 - 6.5 The status of guidance notes within the planning system
 - 6.6 The planning guidance note series

1.0 Introduction

This guidance note looks at house and roof alterations. This covers a wide variety of development which takes place in and around the house and garden. It does not, however, include house extensions - guidance for this area is included in Guidance Note 1 - House Extensions.

The accommodation requirements of the City are always changing as a result of fluctuations and shifts in for example, household size, leisure interests and travel behaviour. The City Council appreciate individual household's wishes to adapt and alter their accommodation to meet these needs. However, householders should be aware of the authority's responsibility to protect the existing amenities of all people and the character, appearance and environmental qualities of all areas

The City Council is particularly anxious to promote development which is sensitive to environmental concerns such as conservation of the natural environment and the reduction of energy consumption, pollution and waste. House and roof alterations can be designed and constructed in a way which meets such goals. Development which is sensitive to the environment need not be more expensive to construct and can lead to significant long term savings in energy. This guidance has been written in such a way as to take account of environmental concerns. Specific guidance is contained in the sustainability issues chapter on page 17.

These notes clarify and expand upon policies contained in the City of Plymouth Local Plan. Policies in the local plan relate to a number of areas including house and roof alterations (see page 14). If these policies and the advice contained in this note is complied with it should help avoid frustrations for both applicants and their neighbours and encourage a high quality environment across the city

In respect to alterations to houses which are Listed or located within a Conservation Area, particular care will be needed to protect the property's and area's historic character. Special considerations may thus apply to proposals and in some instances the guidance contained in this note will not be appropriate. Specific advice concerning these matters can be received from the Council's Planning Officers.

2.0 The need for planning permission

Some of the household alterations discussed in this guidance note will be 'permitted development' and as such will not require planning permission. Permitted development rights are laid down in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order 1995).

It is not the intention of this note to try and outline when planning permission will be required to undertake specific alterations. The regulations are quite complex and not always easy to interpret. Moreover, permitted development rights can differ according to a property's history and location. These variables make any general guidelines potentially misleading.

If you intend to alter your home, or its surroundings, it is always advisable to check with the City Council's Planning Officers if it is permitted development. Even some works that are usually quite minor, such as alterations to a fence, or the erection of a shed and some demolitions can sometimes require planning permission.

If an alteration is permitted development it is very worthwhile acquiring written confirmation - this is particularly useful if queries arise when selling a property. An alteration to a home which requires, but does not have planning permission, can have frustrating and costly implications for the owners.

Irrespective of the need for planning permission, some household alterations will require Building Regulations approval. These regulations exist to ensure that all development meets set standards in areas such as health, safety and energy conservation. A list of useful contact numbers can be found on page 19.

No single consent from the City Council is all embracing. A number of separate consents could be required from the Council and each should be applied for separately. Of particular significance for a number of properties is the consent of the City Council as landlord / landowner, or original landlord / landowner. City Council contacts are given on page 19.

Flats, whether purpose built, or resulting from a conversion do not have any permitted development rights for most forms of development discussed in this guidance.

If you propose to alter a Listed Building or its surroundings, or alter structures within a Conservation Area, it is important to ensure that you acquire the appropriate consents.

3.0 Factors to consider when proposing to alter a home or its surroundings

Introduction

This note offers guidance on a very wide variety of household alterations. There are, however, a number of design and residential amenity issues which are relevant to most proposals. These will be outlined at the start of this section. It is important that each proposal to alter a home has regard to this advice.

3.1 The impact proposed alterations would have on a neighbour's quality of life

Daylight and sunlight

Alterations to a property should not result in a significant loss of daylight or sunlight to habitable rooms, such as kitchens or bedrooms in nearby households, or the property being altered. Consideration will be given to relevant influencing factors such as the levels of the site and surroundings and its relationship to the sun.

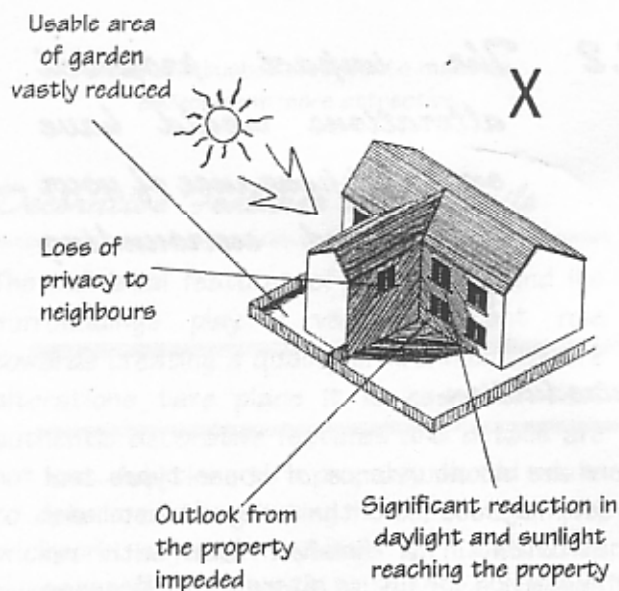
Privacy

The provision of windows or balconies, or a change in a garden's ground levels, should not have a negative effect on the privacy of neighbours, either in their gardens or habitable rooms. Habitable room windows directly opposite one another should be a minimum of 21 metres (70 feet) apart for two storey development. Problems concerning privacy can sometimes be overcome by relocating windows, or by the installation of roof lights. Obscure glass can be an appropriate solution if the window serves a non-habitable room such as a bathroom.

Outlook

A structure should not be erected in close proximity to either a main window of a neighbouring property, or its private garden, where it would have an unacceptable overbearing effect on a household's outlook. The distance between gable ends and principal windows of adjoining properties should normally be a minimum of 12 metres (39 feet). Significant local views from public areas can be protected, however, views from a private house or a private garden are not safeguarded by Planning legislation.

An example of an extension which is harmful to residential amenity.



Amenity space

Alterations to a property should not restrict the use of a garden for such normal requirements as drying clothes, storing refuse or outdoor relaxation.

Parking and highway issues

Many residential areas experience parking problems, these problems are likely to increase if car ownership continues to rise at predicted levels. As a result, where a proposed alteration would lead to an off-street parking space being lost it is unlikely to receive consent unless the amount of parking on site still meets City Council standards. In addition, some alterations can have implications on highway safety, it is important to ensure that visibility of and from vehicles is not impaired, or other problems created.

Development/alterations which are unacceptable in residential areas

Planning permission could be required if a home or garden is used for not purely domestic purposes. The need for permission is largely dependent on the nature and scale of work and can be required even when a property is not physically altered. The City Council recognises the benefits of being able to work from home, however, activities which cause disturbance because of, for example, noise, vibration, electrical interference or fumes will be unacceptable in residential areas.

3.2 The impact proposed alterations would have on the appearance of your home and surrounding area

Introduction

There are an abundance of house types and street layouts in the city. Most are constructed in a finished form with no consideration for future alterations. Because

of this, any subsequent development must be well thought through if it is not to harm the appearance of the respective home and surroundings. In respect to design, the materials and characteristics of the original home and surrounding area should generally be the starting point.

Alterations which differ in style from the original property can occasionally be acceptable if the materials and design are harmonious and remain pleasing. Contrasting schemes should not, however, merely result from a lax attitude towards the appearance of a property.

Streetscene

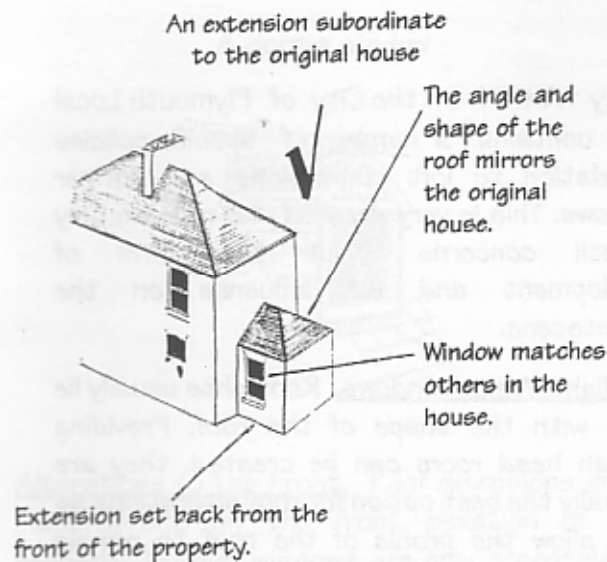
The character of an area is created by the scale, design and positioning of individual buildings and the spaces around them. It is individual homes that make up the whole, and additions and alteration to properties should respect this. Cumulatively, inappropriate alterations can destroy the whole appearance and feel of an area.

Materials

When altering a property or its surroundings careful consideration should be given to materials. All additions should generally conform with the materials of existing structures and relate to features of the surrounding area. It is important to consider the impact of weathering on the colour and texture of materials and to ensure that small but important details such as mortar colour and bonding style are correct.

In respect to roofs, the colour and shape of slates or tiles should reflect those of the original home. Where the roof of the original home is extended and it is not possible to find matching materials for a particularly sensitive elevation, it is possible to use weathered slates or tiles from a 'hidden' part of the roof and replace these with new ones.

Using good quality materials makes good sense, not only will they look better immediately, but will retain their appearance and condition. This will lead to lower maintenance costs and enhance the value of the property.



Windows

The positioning and design of windows is crucial to achieving a unified exterior. Any new windows should reflect the proportions and main lines of the existing home's openings - inappropriate windows can ruin a property, or even a whole terrace's symmetry, rhythm or balance. The size shape and materials of windows should be in sympathy with those that exist and it is important that the horizontal and/or vertical sub-divisions of individual windows match.

When deciding the position of habitable room windows attention should be given to the potential for maximising available daylight and sunlight. A development's relationship to the sun at different times of the day/year should be considered along with the possible impact of any barriers. Proposals which require the removal of important trees will be resisted.



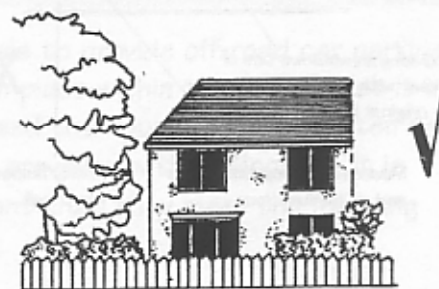
It is important to give careful consideration to the style of windows inserted into a home.

Trees

Trees are of great importance, they help create an attractive streetscene and also absorb 'greenhouse gases' and provide a wildlife resource. If an application site or surroundings contain any trees the site layout plans should show their number, location, species and spread of branches.

Alterations to a property must take into account existing trees, especially those protected by a Tree Preservation Order. Development will not be allowed which would harm, (or be harmed by) existing trees which are worthy of retention in the interest of public amenity. Generally, excavation should not be undertaken within a distance equivalent to 1.25 times the height of any such tree, or beneath any of the trees branches, unless such works can be undertaken without risk to the tree.

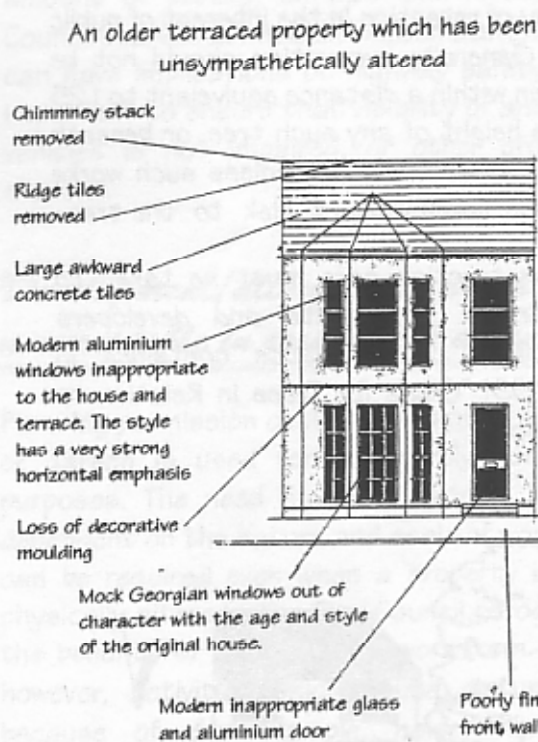
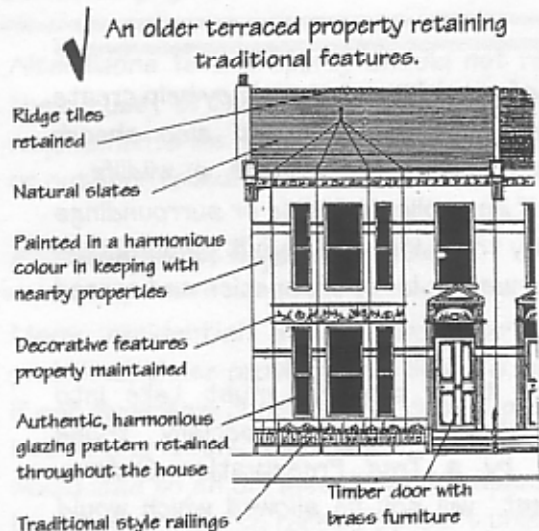
During construction care must be taken to protect trees, applicants and developers should follow the guidance contained in BS5837 1991 "Guide for Trees in Relation to Construction".



Trees and bushes can help to make an environment more attractive.

Decorative Features and Details

The individual features of a property and its surroundings play a very important role towards creating a quality environment. Where alterations take place it is essential that authentic decorative features and details are not lost. Additions to a property should relate to details of the existing home, for example, brickwork styles, mouldings or distinctive rainwater goods should be followed through where ever possible.



4.0 Guidance for specific alterations

4.1 Roof alterations and extensions

Because of their high position, any alterations to a roof are likely to be prominent over a wide area. It is particularly important therefore to ensure that all alterations are of a high quality and harmonise fully with the original home.

Policy AHR14 of the City of Plymouth Local Plan contains a number of specific policies in relation to loft conversions and dormer windows. This is very detailed and reflects City Council concerns about this form of development and its influence on the streetscene.

Rooflights/Velux Windows. Rooflights usually lie flush with the shape of the roof. Providing enough head room can be created, they are normally the best option for roof alterations as they allow the profile of the roof to remain intact and rarely effect the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Dormer Windows/Roof Extensions. Dormers differ from roof extensions in that they are smaller in scale, often upright in appearance and set back from the front of the house. Roof extensions normally appear cumbersome and are usually only appropriate at the rear of some properties.

The prime reason many dormer windows are refused is their size. Proposals to provide a large amount of internal roof space are often visually unacceptable.

Dormer windows should not dominate a building and should sit comfortably within the roof space. If it is necessary to create a large area in the roofspace it is generally preferable to construct a number of small dormers rather than a single large roof extension.

Dormer windows should relate to and harmonise with the building in respect to materials, shape and angle of roof. The front and sides of the dormer should be covered in a material that matches, or is in harmony with that of the existing roof. The style and sub-division of windows should relate to those that exist elsewhere on the building. In respect to positioning, dormer windows should not appear squashed towards any of the roof edges and should harmonise comfortably with existing windows below. Care should also be taken to ensure that roof alterations do not harm neighbours' quality of life. The main concerns are their impact on sunlight, daylight and privacy.

A dorma window

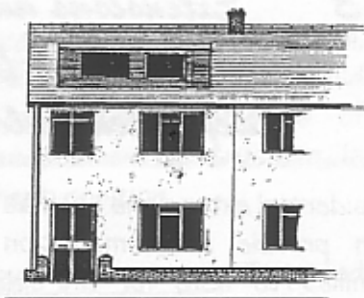


Alterations to the Front. Roof extensions are inappropriate on the front elevation of a property. Dormer windows are only acceptable when they are a contemporary feature of nearby properties, or designed and located so that they do not harm in any way a building's appearance.

A front roof extension

The roof extension is very prominent & inappropriate on the front of properties.

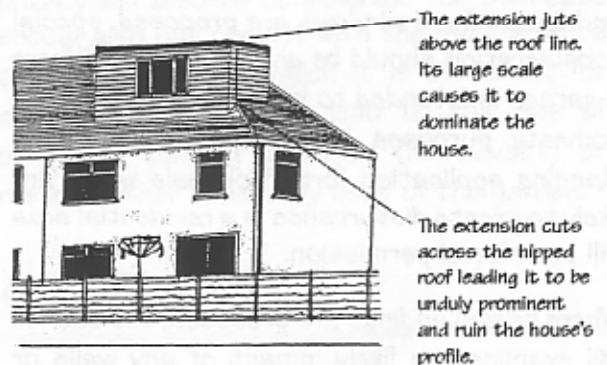
The roof extension could be appropriate on the rear of some properties, providing it is constructed of materials that match the main home, is not unduly prominent and does not harm neighbours amenity.



Alterations to the Rear. In respect to appearance, dormer windows and roof extensions are normally appropriate at the rear of a property providing they are located below ridge height and sympathetically designed. Where the rear of the building is very prominent, such as at the end of some terraces, design criteria will be more strict. Their impact on the amenities of neighbours will be closely examined. It is particularly important to ensure harm is not caused to peoples privacy.

Alterations to the Side. Dormers and extensions on hipped roofs are particularly sensitive because of their prominence and impact on the symmetry of a building. Each proposal will be treated on its merits, however, only small, appropriately deigned and positioned dormers which relate fully to an existing property are likely to be acceptable.

An inappropriate rear roof extension



X

4.2 Garages, car ports, vehicle hardstandings

Proposals to provide off-road car parking are common place within the City. Whilst it is recognised that such proposals often benefit parking provision within a locality, it is important that they meet the following criteria:

Highway Safety. When determining planning applications the protection of both pedestrian and vehicle safety is paramount.

It is important that obstruction is not caused to the highway, for example, garage doors must not project over a pavement or road either during opening or when open. In addition, the design of an access should not lead to a situation where a vehicle overhangs the highway, this can occur, for example, when a car is parked prior to a garage being opened. To overcome this, when a driveway is in front of a garage, its minimum length should be 6.1 metres. Where a driveway is used by pedestrians to gain access to a property its width should be at least 3 metres.

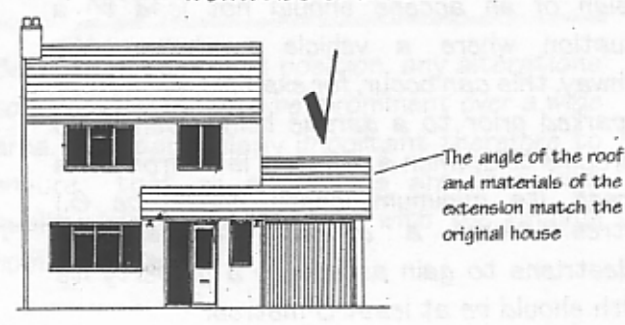
To enable easy manoeuvring in and out of a garage or car parking area, entrances should be designed so that a vehicle can enter or exit in a single turning movement. To achieve this and provide satisfactory sight lines it is usually necessary to incorporate a visibility splay.

Impact on neighbours. The construction of an off-street parking area should not negatively effect occupants of neighbouring properties. In respect to garages, particular attention needs to be paid to the impact on neighbours outlook and light. Where windows are proposed, special consideration should be given to privacy. Where a garage is intended to be used not purely for domestic purposes it should be noted on the planning application form. Proposals which are likely to create disturbance in a residential area will be refused permission.

Where hardstandings are proposed, the Council will examine the likely impact of any walls or changes in ground levels. The overall impact of the hardstanding will be assessed using the assumption that a vehicle will be parked on it. With all driveways or hardstandings, provision must be made for drainage to ensure that water does not flow across public footpaths.

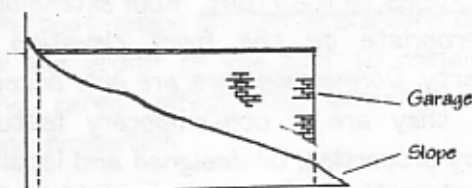
Visual amenity/Streetscene. Consent will not normally be granted for a garage located in a prominent position at the front of a property unless it is of a high quality and garages are an existing feature of the streetscene. The design of a garage whether attached or free standing should harmonise with the original property and its surroundings. Attention should be paid to the design of all parts of a structure including doors, walls and roofs. Where a garage is attached to a house it is usually preferable to set it back from the front of the property unless it can be linked into the front of the house in a pleasing manner.

A garage incorporated into the front/side of a house



Because of Plymouth's hilly terrain consideration is sometimes given to the possibilities of digging garages into the slope at the front of a property. Because of the potential harm this can cause to the street-scene such proposals are only likely to be considered acceptable in principal when at least 80% of the structure is below the existing ground level.

Garage dug into slope



Less than 80%
of the structure is
below the existing
ground level

In respect to access, proposals should not lead to the destruction of trees and walls that are important to the streetscene, or cut across wide grass verges.

4.3 Extensions and outbuildings for dependent relatives

Residential extensions such as 'granny annexes' can provide accommodation which enables families to care for an elderly or disabled relative. Problems can arise, however, where this type of development constitutes a self-contained unit either severed from the main house or which could, with little or no adaption, potentially be severed from the main dwelling to form a separate unit. This can result in the creation of sub-standard accommodation with inadequate privacy, access provision, parking and amenity space. In addition, it is likely the dwelling created would be out of scale and character with the surrounding area and detrimental to residential amenity. When considering whether an extension is capable of being occupied independently of the main house the Council will have regard to the general arrangement, in particular the extent to which

facilities such as bathrooms, kitchens and toilets are shared. In order to avoid such problems, extensions should be designed to form an integral part of the main dwelling with access to the accommodation via the main dwelling and not by means of an independent access. Permission for such a development will be subject to a condition restricting occupancy to members of the main dwelling's household and possibly a legal agreement to prevent severance.

4.4 Balconies, roof gardens & raised patios

Balconies, roof gardens and raised patios can often be unacceptable in urban areas because of the implications they can have on people's privacy, both in their home and gardens. Consideration will also be given to the attractiveness of any structure and its effect on neighbours' light and outlook.

4.5 Outbuildings, including sheds, swimming pools and aviaries

Physical Appearance. As far as is practical, the style and materials of outbuildings should relate to their surroundings. This is of particular importance when a structure is located in a prominent position.

Amenity of neighbouring properties. Proposed buildings should not for any reason have a negative effect on the quality of life for neighbours.

Highway safety. Outbuildings should not be located in a position which could impede visibility for road users.

4.6 External staircases

Staircases should be accommodated internally, this is particularly important in sensitive locations. Where this is not possible external staircases will sometimes be acceptable

providing they are designed and located as sympathetically as possible. They should be positioned in an unobtrusive position - usually the rear of a property and not project far from the building.

Staircases can cause problems for neighbours amenity, it is important to ensure that their design does not have a negative effect on the outlook from a property or the light it receives. The impact of its use in respect to noise and privacy will also be considered. The staircase should also not conflict with the requirements of the property to which it is attached, for example, it should not lead to the loss of off-street parking provision (if relevant) or restrict other necessary uses of the garden.

4.7 Cladding

Cladding a property with, for example, stone, artificial stone, timber or plastic can have a drastic effect on its appearance. Cladding can help rejuvenate a building, however, there is often the danger that it can be out of character, soon date, and have a harmful effect on the overall streetscene. This is of most concern in an area which derives much of its attractiveness from the use of particular materials.

4.8 Satellite dishes and radio aerials

Satellite dishes

The need for consent to erect a satellite dish will depend upon a number of factors. These include the dish size, the characteristics of the building /structure upon which it is located and the dish position. It is important to check with the Planning and Transportation Service whether you require any consents before erecting a satellite dish.

If you do not require consent you must still ensure that any satellite dish which is erected is located in a position which minimises its effect on the external appearance of a building. If this is not the case legislation exists which enables the City Council to take action to have it re-located.

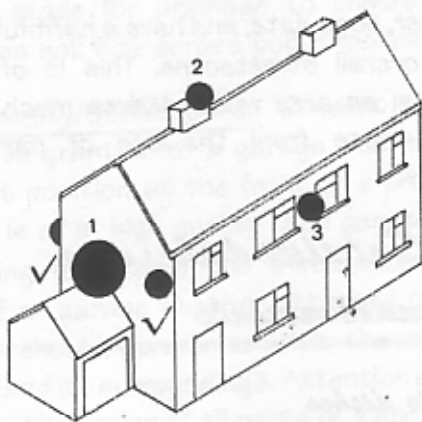
Factors to consider when proposing to erect any satellite dish include:-

Design of the dish. You should use a satellite dish which is no larger than the minimum required for good reception. The dish and mount should be a colour which blends in with the background against which it will be viewed.

Location of the dish. The dish should be located in an inconspicuous place, preferably where your neighbours and the public cannot see it. Wherever possible try to avoid siting the dish on the front of the home or above the skyline. If there is an existing dish located nearby assess whether it is possible to develop a shared system.

Neighbours outlook. Avoid installing a dish in close proximity to windows and doors of neighbouring properties.

Satelite dishes



1. Dish too large for a residential property
2. Dish in prominent location above the roof line
3. Dish too close to neighbours window

Amateur radio aerials / masts

Radio aerials and masts particularly when tall can be very prominent within a locality. The considerations taken into account when determining planning applications are as follows:

Appearance of aerial. Aerials and masts should not because of their size or position significantly harm the appearance of a residential area. The background against which an aerial or mast is viewed is important, a background which is already cluttered by lines and poles, or is of a similar colour to the aerial is preferable. Where the Council is unwilling to grant permission for a fixed structure, a retractable mast may sometimes be acceptable.

Interference. The use of aerials or masts must not materially impair the normal use, effectiveness or employment of electrical apparatus in other premises on a regular or continuing basis. Such interference is controlled largely by the terms of wireless telegraphy legislation, but where appropriate it can also be a valid consideration in the determination of a planning application.

Public safety. The perceived stability of an aerial can be a relevant consideration in determining an application.

4.9 Oil and gas storage tanks

Storage tanks, because of their industrial appearance can look out of place within a residential environment. The primary factors which will be addressed when determining an application of this nature are:

Appearance. Storage tanks should be located as unobtrusively as possible. Where appropriate, the use of greenery should be considered for screening purposes.

Impact on neighbours. The size or position of storage tanks should not have a negative impact on neighbours.

Public Safety. Safety can be a concern. This is addressed by the Health and Safety Executive or a Fire officer.

4.10 Curtilage extensions.

Curtilage extensions (proposals to extend the area of a private garden) are most commonly considered in residential areas with open space. The main planning considerations when determining such applications are as follows :-

Appearance. Within many residential areas land is left undeveloped and unenclosed to give an environment an open, spacious feel. Proposals to extend gardens should not conflict with this.

Recreation uses. Many public open spaces serve a recreational purpose such as a play area for children, or a location to walk dogs. If an area serves an important local function, planning permission will not be granted for a change of use to private garden.

Neighbours Amenity. The incorporation of land into a private garden must not harm the privacy of adjacent occupiers. In addition, the means used to enclose an extended garden should not restrict a neighbour's light or outlook.

Highway Safety. Many areas, particularly near junctions, are left open to allow visibility for highway users. The actual enclosure of this land could be contrary to highway regulations.

4.11 Boundary walls and fences

Walls and fences can have a significant impact on a locality. In determining planning applications for their erection or alteration the City Council will normally pay regard to three main factors:

Design. The height and appearance of walls or fences should be appropriate to their setting. Materials should relate to their surroundings in respect to colour and texture. It is important that they are of good quality and durable enough to withstand the elements and where appropriate vandalism and graffiti.

In respect to height, it is important also to ensure that fences and walls are sympathetic to their surroundings. Clearly a wall positioned at the front of a property is usually quite sensitive and should not normally be of a height that would appear bleak, intimidating and out of character with its surroundings. In residential areas which are open plan in nature the erection of any front wall over a very small height will normally be unacceptable.

Highway safety. The height and positioning of fences or walls should not conflict with highway safety. Walls or fences which restrict visibility for road users will be unacceptable. Particular care should be taken at junctions and bends in the highway.

Effect on neighbours. Fences and walls should be designed and located so that they do not restrict light entering a property. It should also be ensured that they do not have an unacceptable effect on the outlook from a household.

5.0 Summary

This guidance provides a framework which people intending to alter their properties should work within. It is important to take account of the general advice as well as that relating to specific alterations. The central aim is to encourage the development of alterations which are of a high quality and in harmony with their surroundings. The overall goal is to promote a residential environment which is practical, attractive and pleasant to live in. The key points raised are as follows:

- (i) Always check with the City Council if Planning Permission or Building Regulations consent is required.
- (ii) Ensure that alterations do not harm neighbours' quality of life, or the environment generally.
- (iii) Pay close attention to detail when proposing alterations.
- (iv) Always examine fully how a proposed alteration relates to a home, surrounding properties and the environment as a whole.
- (v) Have regard to the contents of this guidance note and appropriate policies in the Plymouth Local Plan (see information sheets).
- (vi) If you require further information or at any time have any queries do not hesitate to contact the City Council.