

Design Guidance No.5  
Extensions to houses  
Revised (March 2010)



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## Introduction

This guidance note is one of a series providing design guidance for various types of development in the borough. It outlines and explains the criteria used by the Council to determine planning applications for extensions to houses. The guidance supplements the policies in the borough's Unitary Development Plan (UDP), which was adopted in May 2006, and will subsequently supplement the Barnet Local Development Framework (LDF) in 2011. These policies are designed to conserve and enhance the environmental quality of the borough, protect residential amenity and provide a context within which applications for minor extensions to houses can be assessed within a changing, growing and increasingly diverse borough. The guidance note relates to semi-detached, detached and terraced houses (and includes properties which have been converted into flats), although the overarching principles can be applied to all residential properties.

The guidance note outlines principles of good design, which should be borne in mind whether or not planning permission is required (see section at the end of this booklet). It is not intended to inhibit imaginative designs, but to offer general advice on the solutions that have been found to add to quality of built form and be acceptable in terms of good design practice. As the borough is considerably diverse and varied in character with many different types, styles and sizes of property, the guidance cannot reflect every situation, but it does indicate the most common planning and design considerations and issues which should be taken into account by applicants and householders.

When applications for planning permission are formally considered, the Council will look to see how proposals comply with the guidelines included in this note. The guidelines represent one of many important material considerations that will be taken into account when determining planning applications.



## Barnet's character – High quality Successful City Suburb

Whilst there is significant growth and development within the borough, large areas of the Barnet are characterised by relatively low density, suburban housing with an attractive mixture of semi-detached and detached houses. In many streets, a major part of the established character is derived from the well balanced and pleasant view of a group of houses, built by one house-builder at the same time, often of similar style, size and form. In addition, there are a number of localities which have their own special character deriving in part from the design, type and size of dwelling and the materials used. The Council is committed to protecting, and where possible enhancing, the character of the borough's residential areas and retaining attractive street scenes. This is why we have developed a balanced and innovative planning and development strategy called the “Barnet Three Strands Approach: Protection, Enhancement and Growth”. This revised Design Guidance falls within Strand 2: “Enhancement of Barnet's classic low density suburbs”

Extensions to houses, both individually and cumulatively can have a profound effect on the appearance of an area and on the amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of adjoining properties.

Managing change however must be set against the natural desire of owners to improve and extend their properties.

The council recognises that it must be responsive to the needs of its growing and increasingly diverse community.

Consideration of any householders exceptional circumstances put forward in support of an application will be assessed on a case by case basis.

## Conservation areas

There are many areas in the borough of special architectural or historic interest. These areas have been designated as conservation areas by the local authority because of their particular heritage value. To preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of these areas, the council may require a higher standard of design and materials than specified in this guidance note. Separate design guidance notes and conservation area character appraisal statements are available for many of the borough's conservation areas.

## Areas of Special and Co-ordinated Character

These are areas identified in the borough which the council considers to be of importance both locally and for London as a whole and may cross borough boundaries. They have been selected chiefly for the landscape value/character of their open spaces and architectural and historic interest of their townscapes. They include the Hampstead Garden Suburb/Golders Hill Park/West Heath areas and North Barnet/Arkley and Totteridge.

The council will refuse extensions to dwellings in these locations if they fail to safeguard and enhance the character of the area including when viewed from the local parks.

## Green Belt

Barnet contains extensive areas of high quality Green Belt comprising of predominantly open land but also covering existing settlements such as Totteridge, Mill Hill and Monken Hadley.

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and preserving the special character of existing townscapes. The council has consistently protected the Green Belt and adjoining land by resisting inappropriate development including poorly designed and large extensions to dwellings, in accordance with government guidance.

Your house may back onto Green Belt or open space and parkland designated as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and therefore be publicly visible. In these circumstances it is particularly important to ensure that any proposals for altering your property are well designed and do not detract from the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) is a designation which covers areas of major open spaces in Barnet and it is appropriate to apply the principles of development management in the Green Belt to MOL as well.

You can check to see if your property is located in or adjacent the Green Belt or MOL by looking at the boroughs Unitary Development Plan at Planning Reception or online. Further advice in relation to extending in the Green Belt is provided in Part 2 of this guidance.

## Avoiding disputes with your neighbours

You may have firm ideas of how you want to change your house but do you know what your neighbours think? Neighbours and adjoining occupiers concerns could be important considerations and the council takes consultation and neighbour concerns seriously. They will probably be consulted in writing on any planning application you make and this type of official consultation letter, which will not include the detailed plans of what you propose, may be very worrying for them. Such uncertainty can lead to objections and disagreements. To help avoid this, and as a common courtesy, it is always a good idea to discuss your ideas with your neighbours at an early stage. If you can, show them the plans, explain the size of your extension and discuss what it will look like and where. If you are building close to a boundary, discuss any effect on party walls, guttering or the extent of foundations. It may even be an idea to mark out the size and position of your extension to get an idea of how it will look and how it will impact on your neighbours daylight/sunlight, outlook and gardens.

It should be noted that issues that relate to boundary disputes and land ownership are not planning matters.

It is also important to consider how any building works might affect your neighbours. Some inconvenience may be inevitable, however keeping noise and disturbance to a minimum having regard to matters such as working hours and construction related parking will greatly assist relations. For

more information please look at our "Site Construction guidance for Householders and Developers" on the council's website [www.barnet.gov.uk](http://www.barnet.gov.uk).

## Part 1 – Principles of good design

In general, extensions should reflect the design of the original building, whilst having regard to the character of the area and the residential amenity enjoyed by your neighbours. This means making sure your extension does not significantly impact on your neighbours' enjoyment of their own home or garden.

It is important to note that not all houses can be extended. In some cases there will not be enough space, or their position or design will mean any extension would harm the street scene or local amenity.

In addition, there is a limit to how much most houses can be extended. The cumulative effect of extensions and their impact on the appearance of an area must also be taken into account. This means that proposed additions, which meet all the guidelines included in this note, may still be considered unacceptable to the council and be refused planning permission.

### 1. Amenity

1.1. Extensions to properties should not be overbearing or unduly obtrusive and care should be taken to ensure they do not result in harmful-

- loss of privacy by overlooking adjoining properties
- loss of light or overshadowing of adjoining properties, particularly loss of light to main windows serving principal rooms such as living or dining rooms
- loss of outlook from adjoining properties
- sense of enclosure or overbearing impact on adjoining properties

- loss of garden, landscaping or open space, which contributes to local amenity
- loss of parking space that is desirable to retain.

1.2. Whilst there is a judgement on what constitutes a harmful, overbearing or obtrusive extension (see figure 1) your council's planning service is experienced in such areas and can provide early advice.

1.3. Also bear in mind that an extension at the rear of your property may affect your own amenities by restricting natural light to your own existing rooms, so you will need to use artificial light for much of the day which will cost more in energy, be less sustainable and affect the enjoyment of your accommodation.



Figure 1: Overshadowing, overlooking and loss of outlook

## 2. Harmony

2.1. Proposed extensions should normally be consistent of the form, scale and architectural style of the original building, particularly where it is a period or classic suburban property.

**This can be achieved by:**

- respecting the proportions of the existing house
- using an appropriate roof form
- matching materials and details
- matching the window style, proportions and position
- reflecting the character of the original house.

2.2. Whichever type of design is proposed, the following rules should apply:

- the extension should normally be subordinate to the original house
- the extension should respect the original building and should not be overly-dominant

- the height of the extension should normally be lower than the height of the original building.

For example, this can usually be achieved for a two-storey side extension by stepping down the roofline and setting back the front building line (see figure 2).

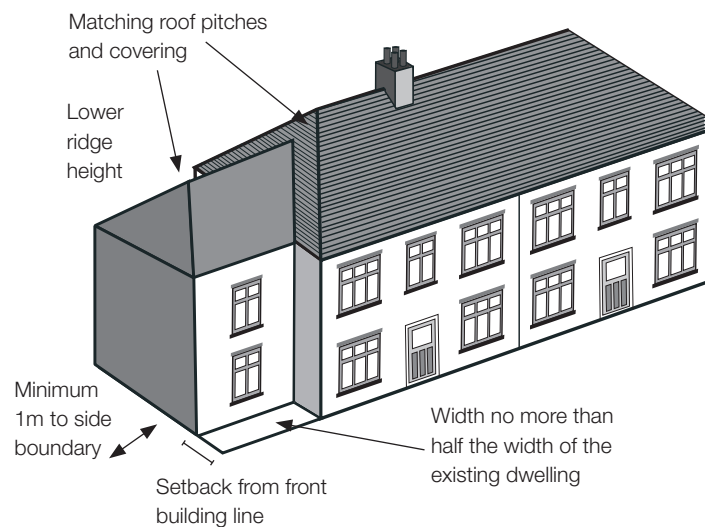


Figure 2: Subordinate approach

## 3. Materials and details

3.1. External finishes, materials and architectural features will affect how your extension looks. It is important to match the brickwork and roofing materials of the existing house in terms of colour, type and size. The brick bond and mortar joints should also be copied. The design, proportions and position of joinery details, windows and doors should reflect those of the original building to ensure the details of the new extension are sympathetically in-keeping and do not detract from the general character of the area.



- 3.2. Windows on extensions should normally match those on the existing house, in terms of their design, material and proportions. Where necessary, they should also be recessed to match the original windows. Those on upper floors will often need to be slightly smaller than those on the floors below where a hierarchy exists (ie. they reduce in size the higher up the house they are). Original bay windows are important features which should not be enlarged or altered significantly, to avoid having an adverse effect on the appearance of the house.
- 3.3. Where a flat roof is appropriate on a single storey extension (and in many cases pitched roofs are a better design), the roof should relate to any existing horizontal elements such as string courses or to the line of change between materials e.g. brick to render or tile hanging. Brick on edge coping is usually more satisfactory than a timber fascia board.

## 4. Fitting into the street

4.1. Your extension should sit comfortably with the main building and with neighbouring houses. Follow these pointers to help ensure your extension is acceptable:-

- take account of the group value, character and established form of development along your street
- use a design and facing materials which blend in with the character and appearance of the existing house
- take account of changes in levels between properties, gardens and the road
- take account of the angle and position of your house. this may increase the visual effect of the extension in the street scene
- roofs should be finished in a manner that complements the roof form of the original house and the surrounding area (see figure 3).
- leave enough space between houses to make sure they appear well separated

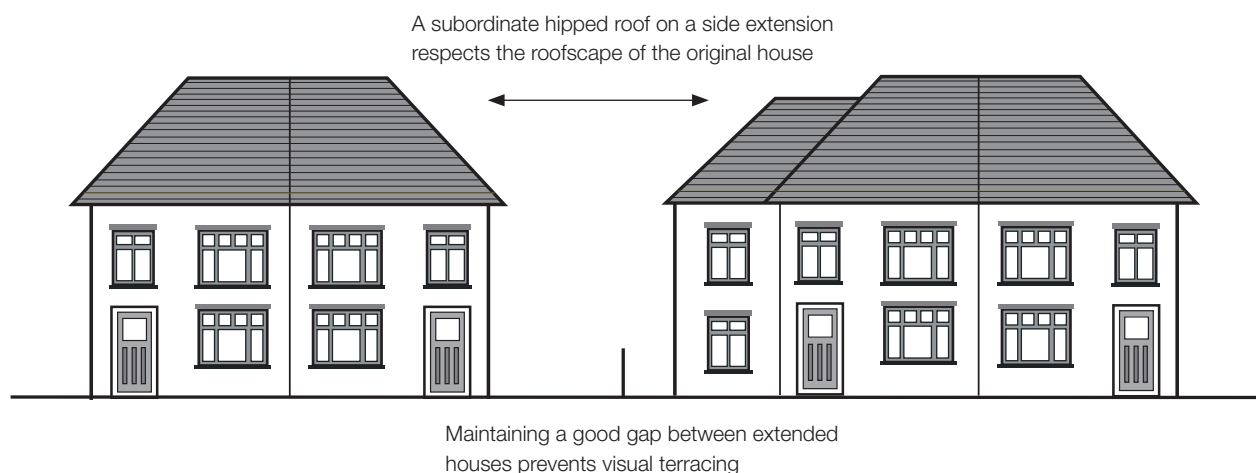


Figure 3: Maintain gaps between houses with subordinate extensions

- do not protrude beyond prominent building lines.
- protect important glimpsed views between buildings, which allow greenery and sky to be seen from the road
- take account of existing features along the boundary, for example, outbuildings, fences, walls and trees
- make sure the garden you end up with is not too small for your own enjoyment or for children to use as external playspace.

## Part 2 – Design guidelines

### 1. Side extensions

1.1. Side extensions to existing buildings can be unacceptably prominent features in the street scene. Where gaps between houses are a common feature of a street, then proposals which close such gaps or create a terracing effect by bringing buildings too close together are likely to be rejected.

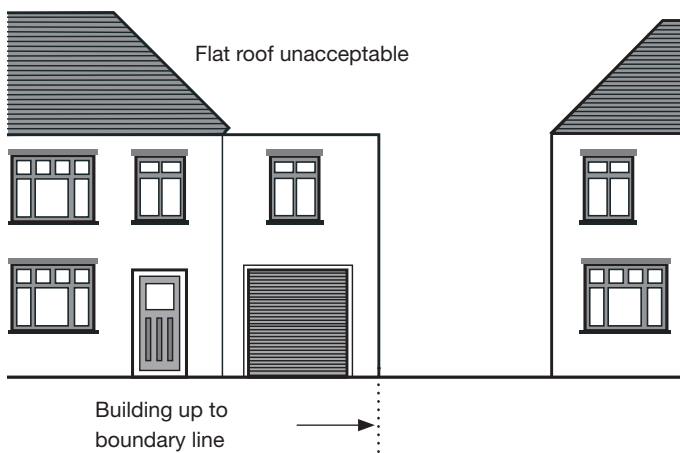


Figure 4: An inappropriate side extension on a semi-detached house

- 1.2. Side extensions should not be more than half the width of the original house. In addition, the setting back of the front wall of side extensions from the front building line, can help to reduce the visual impact on the street scene. First floor side extensions should normally be set back 1 metre from the front main wall of the existing house.
- 1.3. Pitched roofs help extensions fit in with the street and may be required for single storey extensions. Pitched

roofs, following the same pitch as the existing roof, will normally be needed for two storey extensions and be set down at least 0.5 metre from the ridge of the main roof. Side windows or other detailing can help improve the appearance of a flank wall.

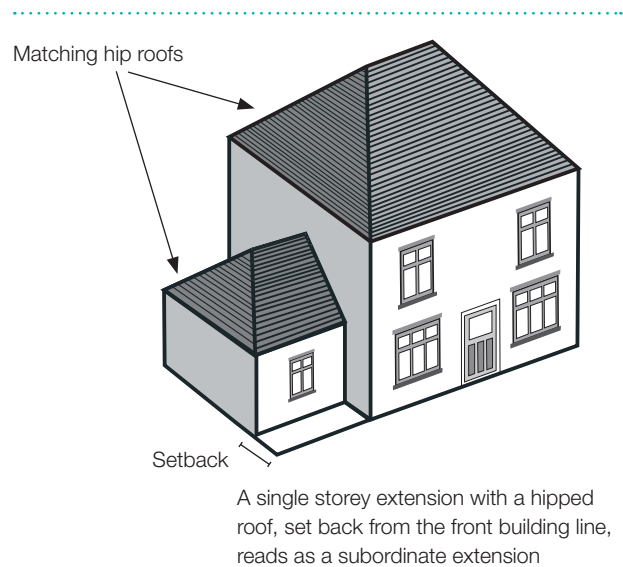


Figure 5: A subordinate single storey extension

- 1.4. In order to reduce the visual impact of two storey or first floor side extensions, there should normally be a minimum gap of 2 metres between the flank walls of properties at first floor level (i.e. a minimum gap of 1m between the boundary and the extension at first floor level for most two storey extensions.)
- 1.5. A larger gap may be required if the adjoining property would in any way be demonstrably harmed. Where possible, an existing direct access to a rear garden should be retained.

The flat roof is unacceptable, and the extension has not been set back from the front building line and is too dominant. The windows and garage door detract from the original property.

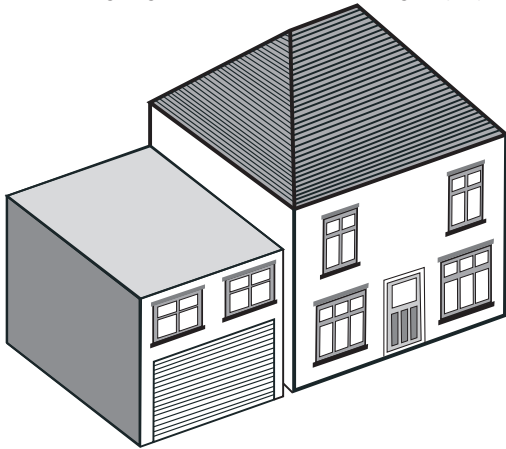


Figure 6: An inappropriate side extension on a detached house

1.6. Extensions on corner sites will be particularly open to public view. First floor extensions on corner sites should not project beyond the building line of the adjoining road (see figure 7).

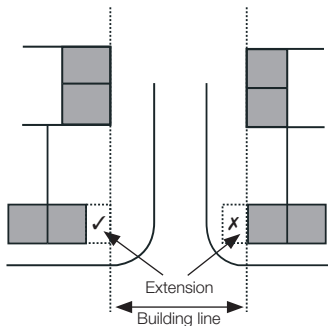


Figure 7: Do not protrude past prominent corners

1.7. Side extensions should ensure that the visual and residential amenities of neighbouring properties are not significantly affected.

## 2. Rear extensions

- 2.1. The depth of a single storey rear extension, normally considered acceptable for terraced properties is 3.0 metres.
- 2.2. The depth of a single storey rear extension, normally considered acceptable for semi-detached properties is 3.5 metres
- 2.3. The depth of a single storey rear extension, normally considered acceptable for a detached property is 4.0 metres.
- 2.4. Single storey rear extensions to the original house, need to ensure that:
  - The depth and/or height of the extension would not cause a significant sense of enclosure, or loss of outlook from, or light to, principal windows of habitable rooms of neighbouring properties
  - They would not look too bulky and prominent compared to the size of the main building and garden to which they relate
  - In addition, if your neighbour's house is at a lower level or has a rear building line set back from your rear building line, the depth of the proposed extension may need to be reduced in order to protect the amenity of your neighbour.
- 2.5. However, where there is significant harm to neighbours or residential amenities, deeper extensions would be inappropriate. In such cases each proposal will be considered on its own individual merits.

2.6. Two storey rear extensions which are closer than 2 metres to a neighbouring boundary and project more than 3 metres in depth are not normally considered acceptable. This is because they can be too bulky and dominant, and have a detrimental effect on the amenities of neighbours.

Two storey rear extensions need to ensure they don't lead to:

- loss of light to, and outlook from, windows and glazed doors positioned close to the extension
- unacceptable sense of enclosure to house and garden
- overbearing impact.
- harm to the character or appearance of the property and area.

Two storey rear extensions should not create an unacceptable sense of enclosure or have an overbearing impact on the adjoining house or garden

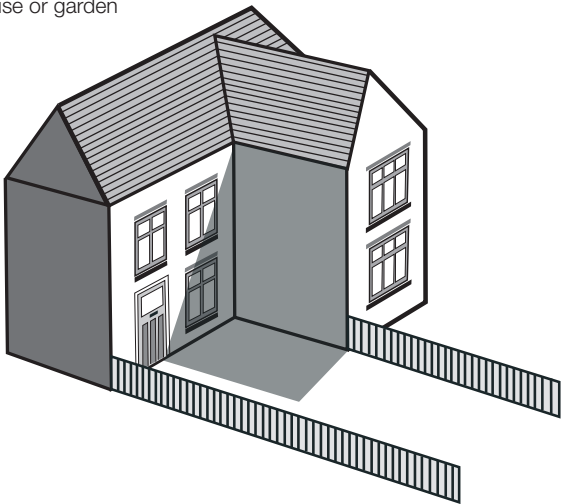


Figure 8: An over-sized two storey rear extension

2.7. On widely spaced semi-detached or detached houses, there may be more scope for larger rear extensions. However, the principles listed in Section 1 still apply.

2.8. Flat roofs should not normally be used as balconies as loss of privacy to immediate neighbours almost always results. This applies to side as well as rear extensions. Flat roofs on two storey rear extensions are not normally acceptable because they do not relate sympathetically to the house.

2.9. Proposed extensions on properties located within a designated conservation area would need to ensure that they preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

### 3. Front extensions (also see guidance note 11 on porches)

- 3.1. **Large, front extensions will not normally be permitted because of their effect on the street scene and character of the area in general.**
- 3.2. Where it is considered that a building may reasonably be extended forward (for example, on occasion detached houses in low density areas or in roads with irregular building lines), the following principles should be observed:
- The new roof should normally reflect the roof form of the existing house (e.g. pitched with tiles to match)
  - Front extensions should fit in with the architectural style of the house
  - Care should be taken to ensure that front extensions have regard to, and do not conflict with, existing architectural features such as bay windows
  - Windows should be positioned where they do not have a harmful affect on the amenities of neighbouring properties.

### 4. Roof extensions

- 4.1. Barnet Council recognises the useful role that roofspace and loft conversions can make to additional internal household space.
- 4.2. Additional, usable space can sometimes be created by converting roof space, providing this is carried out sympathetically. This often involves the formation of dormer windows or the

insertion of roof lights. Many houses in the borough have roofs that are too small for conversion, or in some cases, dormer windows or roof lights may be out of keeping with the character of the area.

#### 4.3. Dormer roof extensions

A dormer roof extension is a vertical window or opening in a sloping roof, having its own roof, either flat, pitched or curved.

- 4.4. Dormer roof extensions can have a significant effect on the appearance of a house and their design needs careful consideration.
- 4.5. Dormers on the front of semi-detached or terraced houses will not generally be acceptable, due to their unbalancing effect on adjoining houses and the general street scene. Any exceptions are extremely limited and usually only where original front dormer extensions exist.
- 4.6. On side dormer extensions, where there is a requirement to provide adequate headroom for stairs, the extension should still be set away from the ridge and clear of the hips (see figure 10).
- 4.7. Consideration will be given to whether or not dormer roof extensions are a characteristic feature of the street and wider area.
- 4.8. The following points should be considered for dormer roof extensions:

- Design** – The design of dormer roof extensions should reflect the style and proportion of windows on the existing house. They may have flat, gabled, hipped or curved roofs and subject to the criteria on position, should normally align with the windows below.
- Proportion** – To retain the balance of your house, the dormer roof extension should not normally be wider than the window below it and the dormer cheeks kept as narrow as possible (see figure 10). For smaller confined houses, such as terraces consideration and allowance will be given to internal workable space and Building Regulation requirements for wider roof extensions.
- Overlooking** – Care should be taken in the design and location of new dormers, including side dormers to minimize overlooking of adjoining properties and gardens.
- Position** – Dormer windows should not overlap or wrap around the hips (see figure 9) or rise above the ridge. There should be adequate roof slope above and below the dormer and on semi-detached and terraced properties, they should be set in at least **1 metre** from the party wall, flank wall or chimney stack. In smaller terraced houses dormers set in less than 1 metre due to internal physical constraints will be taken into account providing such constraints and any minimum building regulation or fire regulation requirements are clearly and robustly demonstrated.

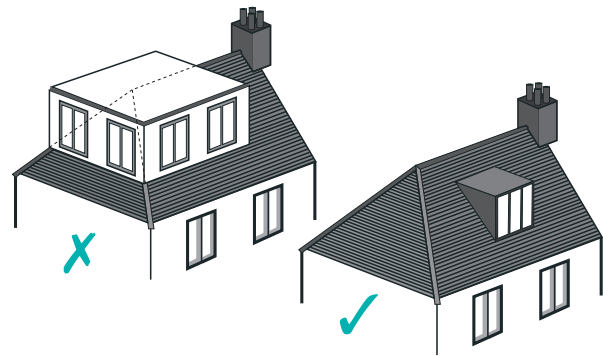


Figure 9: Size and scale of dormer windows. Dormers should be of an appropriate size and position

- Materials** – The window materials and design should be in keeping with those on the rest of the house. The dormer cheeks should be finished with lead, tiles, slates or other traditional materials, and the top of flat roofed dormers should be finished with lead or zinc. The use of roofing felt for the roof, cheeks or face of the dormer should be avoided.
- Scale** – Dormer roof extensions should normally be subordinate features on the roof and should not occupy more than half the width or half the depth of the roof slope. Dormers which wrap around the hips will not normally be considered acceptable (see figure 10).

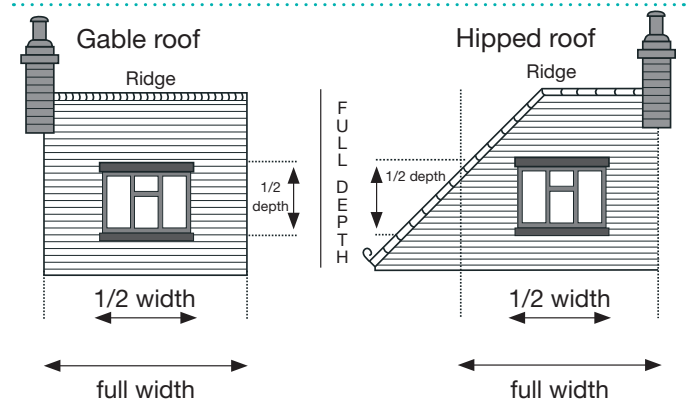


Figure 10: Rear dormer windows of an appropriate scale

- **Roofs** – Dormer roofs should be sympathetic to the main roof of the house. For example, pitched roofs to dormers should be hipped at the same angle as the main roof (see figure 11).

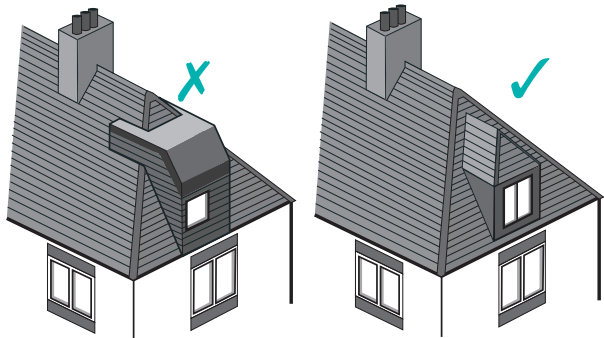


Figure 11: Relationship to existing roof design and bulk is important

#### 4.9. Large roof extensions

Proposed hip to gable roof extensions need to take into account the following criteria:

- the gable should not unbalance a pair of semi-detached houses or a short terrace
- the gable should not reduce the degree of visual separation between houses or glimpsed views from the street
- the gable should not form an overbearing wall facing a street, neighbouring garden or other public place
- the gable should not appear out of character within the streetscape.

4.10. Consideration will be given to whether or not gable end extensions are a characteristic feature of the street and wider area.

#### 4.11. Roof lights

Roof lights should be carefully positioned in order not to impact detrimentally or disfigure the appearance of a building, particularly where they are not a characteristic feature in the street. On front roof slopes they should be of the 'conservation type' ie. fitting flush with the roof slope and they should not dominate the roof in terms of their number. It is preferable to position them on rear roof slopes (see figure 12)

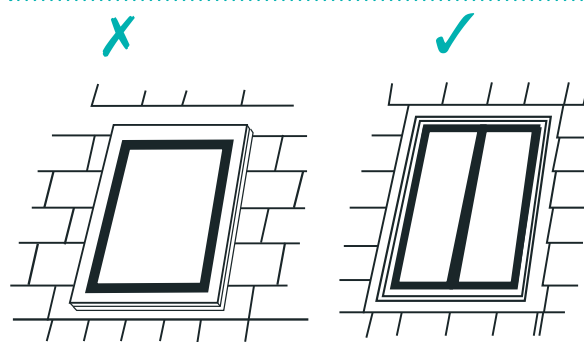


Figure 12: Flush fitting 'conservation' style rooflights sit more comfortably within roof slopes

### 5. Detached ancillary buildings in front and back gardens

Barnet has high quality suburbs which the character is often enhanced by green spacious front and rear gardens, which are important to protect.

Detached buildings can have a significant impact on local character and amenity, in terms of garden development.



### 5.1. Front garden buildings

Detached buildings are not normally acceptable at the front of terraced or semi-detached houses because of their dominant impact on the street scene.

On detached houses, they will only be considered acceptable where detached buildings in front gardens form part of the existing character of the street. For instance, where detached buildings were built as part of the original form and layout of an estate.

### 5.2. Back garden buildings

In general, the same principles apply to their design as to rear extensions, but the following guidance should be adhered to:

- they should not unduly over-shadow neighbouring properties
- they should not be too large or significantly reduce the size of a garden to become out of character with the area
- they should not unduly affect outlook from an adjoining property's habitable rooms or principal garden areas
- their design and materials should be in harmony with the surrounding area.

## 6. Basement extensions

6.1. **The council recognises the benefits of providing basement accommodation but is concerned to ensure that such development does not harm the established architectural character of buildings and surrounding areas,**

**including gardens and nearby trees, and that no adverse impact is caused to the amenity of neighbouring properties.**

- 6.2. Often with basement development, the only visual manifestations are light wells and skylights, with the bulk of the development concealed wholly underground and away from any public view.
- 6.3. The council will normally allow single floor basement extensions which do not project further than **3 metres** from the rear wall of a house or more than half its width beyond each side elevation.
- 6.4. The following points should be considered for basement extensions-
- Nearby trees roots on or adjoining the site should not be damaged.
  - Not more than 50% of the amenity space (garden or front court yard) should be removed.
  - Neighbouring ground water conditions should not be adversely affected.
  - Any exposed area of basement should be subordinate to the property being extended and respect its original design and proportions. The length of any visible basement wall should not dominate a property nor extend its full width. In number, form, scale and panel size, basement windows should relate to the façade above. They should be aligned to any openings at the higher level and be of a size that is clearly subordinate to these so as to respect the character of the original building.

- Light-wells at the front need to appear as discreet interventions that do not harm the character or appearance of the building and its frontage. In situations where light-wells are not part of the established street scene, the nature of the front garden will help to determine their suitability. Where the depth of a front garden is sufficient, basement light-wells are more easily concealed by landscaping and boundary treatments providing a visual buffer from the street. In such circumstances light-wells that are sensitively designed may be acceptable, subject to other design requirements.
- Railings, grilles and other light-well treatments must avoid creating visual clutter and detracting from an existing front boundary wall, or obscuring front windows. This is particularly important in shallow gardens where front light-wells should be secured by a grille which sits flush with the natural ground level, rather than with the use of railings. Railings will be considered acceptable where they form part of the established street scene, or would not cause harm to the appearance of the property and neighbouring area.
- All rooms within a basement should be able to function properly for the purpose intended. They should be of an adequate size and shape and receive natural lighting and ventilation. All habitable rooms within basement accommodation should have minimum headroom of 2.3 metres.

- Forecourt parking arrangements should be considered carefully as light to basement windows can be severely restricted.

## 7. Annexes to dwellings

- 7.1. These are often referred to as “granny” annexes although their use varies, whether the accommodation is for elderly dependants, teenagers or games room/study, the issues on design remain the same.
- 7.2. Proposals to build an annex will be considered on the individual merits of the scheme but as with any other extension they must comply with the relevant design parameters outlined in this document.
- 7.3. An annex must not have a separate entrance or staircase and should be internally connected to the rest of the house and should not include a separate kitchen. It must remain ancillary to the main house at all times and this may be conditioned. The development of self-contained or similar accommodation will not be permitted.

## 8. Extensions in the Green Belt

- 8.1. **Whilst proposed extensions and alterations to properties within the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) may conform to the guidance set out above they may not be acceptable in the Green Belt terms.**

- 8.2. Government policy in the form of Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 - Green Belt and local planning policy as set in the Unitary Development Plan states that extensions should not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original house. An "original dwelling" as referred to in the policy is that as existed on the 1st July 1948, or as originally built if constructed after that date.
- 8.3. As well as external appearance and design of extensions in or adjacent the Green Belt, the concern of the council is that extensions should not be adversely affect the openness or visual amenity of the area.
- 8.4. As a guiding principle the volume of the original dwelling should not be added to by more than **25%** by external measurement in order to protect openness.
- 8.5. The cumulative effects of previous extensions will be taken into account. Proposed demolitions can be deducted in calculations if they are an integral part of the dwelling.
- 8.6. There may be cases where more than a **25%** increase is justified to produce a better design solution but there may also be cases where less than **25%** is appropriate, to avoid a disproportionate extension to a dwelling or where the site is especially prominent.
- 8.7. The calculations will include unused permitted development rights and any extant consents to build accordingly. The exception to this will be the applicant agrees to the extinguishment of unimplemented permissions or parts thereof.
- 8.8. In all cases the council will require a detailed survey which show all buildings within a curtilage of a site and details of its planning history.
- 8.9. Given the sensitivity of Green Belt related development, it is important to discuss your proposal with the Planning Service at the earliest opportunity.

## Part 3 – Sustainable design and renewable energy

### 1. Background

- 1.1. When designing extensions there are opportunities to improve the energy efficiency and performance of your house as well as providing additional floor-space. It is important to consider the environmental impact and long-term sustainability of your proposals. Diminishing natural resources and climate change require that energy consumption is reduced and buildings are designed to be adaptable to meet our changing needs
- 1.2. The council has produced a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) entitled 'Sustainable Design and Construction'. This is a comprehensive document that encourages home owners and developers to produce designs for residential schemes of the highest quality, that fit into the context in which they are situated by way of architectural style, scale and materials used and are energy efficient.
- 1.3. Householders applying for planning permission should have considered the checklist found in Appendix 2 of the document, to assess how their proposal contributes towards sustainable development. The checklist evaluates how the applicant has incorporated sustainable design and construction measures into their proposal. The

checklist should be submitted with all applications. A high standard of design will be expected from all projects regardless of scale or complexity.

- 1.4. This document also lists some of the renewable energy sources which might be used in small scale developments. Their use ensures that projects are more energy efficient, which will contribute towards homeowners reducing their energy needs and also making financial savings on their energy bills. Using sustainable energy also attempts to address the issue of climate change.
- 1.5. The following list comprises a variety of sources of renewable energy and sustainable features which should be used by householders:



Solar water heating panels

### 2. Solar water heating

- 2.1. Solar water panels are increasingly being used in domestic situations to produce hot water. They work by utilising energy from the sun to heat water, which is then stored for later use as required. Ideally solar water panels

should be placed on south-facing surfaces at angle of between 30-40 degrees (this is roughly equivalent to a standard pitched roof). One of the main benefits of solar heating is that it reduces the needs for conventionally heated hot water, thus reducing non-renewable energy demands. Solar water heating can provide a third of domestic hot water needs. Less direct energy is also required to heat the already warm water for the desired use.

### 3. Photovoltaic panels

3.1. Photovoltaics (otherwise known as PV's), are panels which convert solar energy into electricity. In order to maximise efficiency, PV's should ideally be placed on a south-facing surface, but they can also be positioned on flat or vertical surfaces. Although they are often fixed on roofs, they can also be positioned in gardens providing they are unobstructed by vegetation or other structures. Modern PV's are now being designed to be very unobtrusive and can even replace glass.



Photovoltaic panels

3.2. Photovoltaic tiles are now available that resemble slate roofs and traditional tiles. This is an advantage because PV's installed on roofs should ideally fit into the context in which they are situated and therefore, should not appear unduly out of place on the roof to which they are fixed. In order that fit into their context, PV's should take account of the colour, style and character of any existing roof onto which they will be installed.

### 4. Green roofs and walls

4.1. Green roofs, which are also referred to as "living roofs" consist of layer of organic matter such as plants that are placed on top of conventional roofs and can offer many benefits. They enhance the environment in which they are situated by providing natural habitats for birds and insects to live in. They also reduce the risk of flooding by absorbing rainfall and minimising surface water run off. Green roofs can provide high levels of heat insulation and can lengthen the lifetime of a roof by protecting it from adverse weather conditions.

4.2. Green walls ensure that the built form of a development contributes to the ecological environment. They can reduce water run-off from facades, and reduce the solar heating of a building by providing shade.

## 5. Installation of rainwater recycling systems

- 5.1. Using water butts to collect rainwater from drainpipes around the house can provide water that may be re-used for watering the garden or car washing rather than using tap water. Systems are also available for localised recycling of water, such as using shower water to flush toilets (known as grey water systems).

## 6. Dual flush or low flush toilets and water efficient appliances

- 6.1. These appliances can reduce the amount of mains water used. It has been estimated that 40% of water which is of drinking quality is flushed down toilets. Reducing water consumption can also be addressed by utilising more water-efficient taps, showers dishwashers and washing machines.

## 7. Use of porous materials

- 7.1. Porous surfacing materials can be used to utilise to mitigate flood risk. They are suitable for use on surfaces such as patios and driveways as they allow rainwater to infiltrate directly into the subsoil. Examples of porous surfacing materials include, permeable concrete blocks, crushed stone and asphalt.

## 8. Micro-wind turbines

- 8.1. They convert wind energy into electricity. The larger the turbine the more effective the turbine will be. Good wind conditions are required, preferably not turbulent from neighbouring properties. Average wind speed for a location has a huge impact on the output of the wind turbine. Visual intrusion is the key planning concern. The ideal position of a wind turbine is to be high and clear of obstructions, which tends to be entirely counter to visual planning considerations. Noise is often raised as a concern, but in modern wind turbines does not tend to be an issue



A Micro-wind turbine

## 9. Recycled and sustainable materials

- 9.1. Recycling of previously used materials is highly desirable. Materials such as stone, timber, slates and bricks can often be re-used from a demolished building or an extension. New timber should be sourced from well-managed and sustainable forests, certified by The Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC).

## Part 4 – Do I need consent from the council?

### 1. Planning permission

- 1.1. Planning permission is generally required for new buildings, but some house extensions may fall within a special exemption called ‘permitted development’. If so, they will not require planning permission but may require approval under the Building Regulations. Also check to see if listed building consent is required.
- 1.2. In some cases, depending on their size and siting, small extensions, dormer windows or detached buildings in gardens may not require planning permission (ie. constitute ‘permitted development’). It is always advisable that you check first before proceeding with works or submit an application for a Certificate of Lawful Development (see below). Householders should still take into the consideration the good practice and advice contained in this guidance note. Consent may also be required separately under the Building Regulations (0208-359-4500).
- 1.3. More information explaining the various categories of “permitted development” is readily accessible on the Government’s Planning Portal website at [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk).

### 2. Special rules in conservation areas

- 2.1. A Conservation Area is an area identified and designated by the local authority as being of special architectural or historic interest. Within conservation areas different ‘permitted development’ rules apply, and because of their particular character, the council will require a higher standard of design and materials than elsewhere.
- 2.2. Some conservation areas are subject to what is known as ‘Article 4 Directions’. These directions require that planning permission is obtained for extensions or alterations that would otherwise constitute ‘permitted development’. Further information and advice including Conservation Area Appraisals, where appropriate, are available from the Planning Service.
- 2.3. For residents of the Hampstead Garden Suburb, any external change to a property including restoration of original work is likely to require the formal consent of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust, as well as planning permission.

### 3. Enforcement

- 3.1. Take care before works are started!  
Failure to obtain planning permission can lead to enforcement action being taken and building works being returned to their original form.

3.2. It is also important to make sure that what is built has actually been permitted (ie. that it accurately represents what is shown on the approved planning drawings). If you build something bigger, or with different details or windows it is likely that enforcement action will be taken against you. This may mean you having to rebuild your extension in line with your consent.

## 4. Listed buildings

- 4.1. Internal and external alterations or extensions (including any demolition) which effects the character of a listed building will require listed building consent, in addition to any planning permission which may be necessary.
- 4.2. The fact that a proposed extension may itself be 'permitted development' does not negate the need to obtain listed building consent.
- 4.3. If you are considering works to alter or extend a listed building you are strongly advised to discuss your proposals with planning services at an early stage. Failure to obtain listed building consent is a criminal offence punishable by a fine or even imprisonment.

## 5. Conversion of garages to habitable accommodation

5.1. The conversion of a garage to habitable rooms (used for living/sleeping) may require planning permission. Depending on when the garage was originally

granted consent, a condition may have been attached to the permission that restricts its usage i.e. for car parking.

5.2. You will need planning permission to convert should this be the case and the council will take into account the amount of off-street parking available on your property and the appropriateness of any external alterations i.e. changing the appearance of the garage elevation to a wall and a window. You may also need planning permission if your proposal involves extending the garage wall to create a bay window for example or extending beyond the front most part of the house.

## Other legislation

**All applicants should also check whether:**

- a. They have included a Design and Access Statement with their proposal if the building they are seeking to alter or extend is in a conservation area or if it is a Listed Building. Design and Access Statements are reports that explain the design justification of a proposal and its implications for access. (see [www.barnet.gov.uk/design-access-guidance-oct07.pdf](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/design-access-guidance-oct07.pdf)).
- b. Any trees that might be affected by the proposal, are subject to a Tree Preservation Order. Consent will probably be required for any work affecting preserved trees, including the



cutting of roots. The council should also be notified of any proposed works to trees in conservation areas.

- c. The proposed building works require permission under the Building Regulations. It is almost certain that the types of extension described above will require Building Regulations approval.
- d. If you intend to carry out work to an existing wall or structure which is shared with another property; build a free-standing wall or a wall up to or astride the boundary with a neighbouring property, or excavate near a neighbouring building, you may have to notify your neighbours under the provisions of the Party Wall etc, Act 1996.

## How to apply for planning permission

Planning permission will be required for extensions to houses which fall outside the scope of 'permitted development'. You may obtain advice on pre-application proposals from the Planning Reception or on the council's website. In addition to the free verbal service available at the Planning Reception, a householder pre – application advice service is now available providing written advice for householders. A charge is made for this advice. This householder advice service does not apply to Listed Buildings. On more complex or medium-scale proposals, the Planning Service provides formalised pre-application advice, for which a charge is made.

Although the council strongly encourages you to take professional advice before applying for planning permission, we cannot recommend who you might use for reasons of fairness. The employment of a suitably qualified professional should minimise the time taken to register and process a planning application. Shop around and take time to choose an agent and ask them to provide references.

In order to apply for planning permission you will need to submit four copies of the completed application forms together with the appropriate fee and four copies of accurately scaled drawings.

### These should include:

- a) Elevations (front, side and rear as appropriate) normally at 1:50 or 1:100 scale
- b) A floor plan
- c) A location plan (at 1:1250 scale) with the site outlined in red. Location plans may be purchased from the Planning Reception.

You may also submit an application on-line via the Planning Portal [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

Remember that when an application has been registered we will consult your neighbours and may erect a site notice and advertise the proposal in the press. The planning application file held by the authority is a public document and any member of the public can view all the information placed on it.

## Certificates of lawful development

If you are in any doubt as to whether planning permission is required, you can apply to the council for a certificate of lawful development. The certificate confirms whether or not planning permission would be required for the proposal. The appropriate forms and an explanatory leaflet are available from the council and should be submitted with the appropriate fee.

## Making a decision

When the local planning authority comes to making a decision on your case there are two different ways this can happen. The council has given the Head of Planning the power to refuse or approve most householder related applications. Where this is the case we will try to make a decision within an 8 week period starting from the date your application is validated. However, where we have received several objections to your proposal but the officers consider that permission should be granted, we will present your case to the relevant Area Planning Committee, which are held every month

Whatever the outcome, as an applicant you have the right of appeal against your decision. You may wish to challenge a refusal, or appeal against one of the conditions we have imposed on your permission. The Planning Inspectorate in Bristol handles all appeals. Their contact details and guidance in relation to lodging an appeal will be enclosed with your decision notice.

## Other useful publications

### Are available from:

Planning Reception  
Barnet House, 2nd Floor  
1255 High Road, Whetstone N20 0EJ

tel: 020 8359 3000

fax: 0870 889 6818

- The Adopted Unitary Development Plan (May 2006) London Borough of Barnet  
[www.barnet.gov.uk](http://www.barnet.gov.uk)
- Sustainable Design and Construction (2007) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) London Borough of Barnet  
[www.barnet.gov.uk](http://www.barnet.gov.uk)

### Design Guidance Notes

- Advertising and Signs (Note 1)
- Selection and Siting of Satellite Antennae (dishes) (Note 2)
- Removal or Alteration of Chimney Stacks (Note 4)
- Replacement of Windows and Doors (Note 6)
- Residential Conversions (Note 7)
- Materials and Colour (Note 8)
- Walls Fences and Gates (Note 9)
- Shopfronts (Note 10)
- Porches (Note 11)
- Designing to Reduce Crime (Note 12)

### Conservation Area Character

#### Appraisal Statements

- Cricklewood, Railway Terraces

- Glenhill Close
- Golders Green Town Centre
- Hampstead Garden Suburb, The Bishop's Avenue
- Mill Hill
- Monken Hadley
- Totteridge
- Watling Estate
- Wood Street

### Conservation Area and Listed Building Guidance Notes

- Hampstead Garden Suburb Design Guidance (Joint publication with HGST)
- Listed Building Consent and Conservation Area Consent: Guidance Notes for applicants

### Other relevant documents and links

- Design and Access Statements: CABE (2006)  
[www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)
- The Party Wall etc. Act 1996: Explanatory Booklet DCLG (2002)  
[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)
- Site Construction Guidance for Householders and Developers  
[www.barnet.gov.uk](http://www.barnet.gov.uk)
- Protected Trees, A Guide to Tree Preservation Orders DCLG (2008)  
[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)
- The Planning Portal  
[www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

## Useful addresses

### **For further information please contact the Planning Service at:**

Planning Reception  
Barnet House, 2nd Floor  
1255 High Road, Whetstone N20 0EJ

tel: 020 8359 3000

fax: 0870 889 6818

email: [planning.enquiry@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:planning.enquiry@barnet.gov.uk)

### **For Listed Building and Conservation Area enquiries:**

Contact:

tel: 020 8359 3000

fax: 0870 889 6818

email: [planning.enquiry@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:planning.enquiry@barnet.gov.uk)

### **For Building Regulation enquiries contact:**

#### **Building Regulation Service**

tel: 020 8359 4500

fax: 0870 889 7462

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

For a comprehensive source of information concerning planning and building control matters please visit the council's planning pages online or the Government's Planning Portal website at [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

*This document supplements and expands upon the policies and guidance contained within the Adopted Unitary Development Plan (May 2006), the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2007) and The London Plan (2008). The advice it contains is consistent with those policies and therefore has the status of supplementary planning guidance.*