

8.0 DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO BUILDINGS

8.1 This section of the document provides design guidance for extending and altering existing buildings. It is expected that all relevant planning applications will have regard to the guidance presented. Again, while only guidance, the points raised are material considerations in the decision making process. In addressing the guidance presented below, an applicant's proposal should respond positively to the characteristics of the site and the surrounding area, as identified through the contextual appraisals highlighted in Section 5 of this SPD.

Permitted Development

In very specific circumstances, as defined by the General Permitted Development Order, some extensions and alterations to existing dwellings can be made without the need to obtain planning permission. This is known as "**Permitted Development**". More detail about Permitted Development rights for householders is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/permitted-development-rights-for-householders-technical-guidance>

If you are in any doubt as to whether planning permission is required or not, prospective applicants are encouraged to submit a formal query to the Council's planning department. Details of this are available at:

<https://www.scarborough.gov.uk/home/planning/planning-applications-enquiries-appeals/do-i-need-planning-permission>

Responding to the Original Building

Relevant Design Objectives: A, B

Relevant Local Plan policies: DEC1, DEC3, DEC4, DEC5

8.2 A fundamental guiding principle for extensions and alterations to existing buildings, as set out at paragraph 5.15 of the supporting text to Local Plan policy DEC1, is that they should respect the character and scale of the original building. They should draw reference from original materials and detailing – without stifling contemporary and innovative design solutions that enhance existing character – and ensure that the original building remains the principle feature of development.

Scale and Form

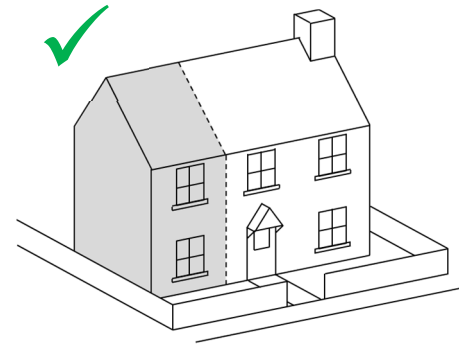
8.3 The design of an extension should respect the scale and form of the original building. Importantly, in terms of their scale, extensions should not dominate the original building but should normally be subservient to the main building. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that there will be exceptional cases when larger extensions will be acceptable, including where the host property is sited within a large plot.

8.4 To ensure that extensions are subordinate there will be a general expectation that they will be set back from the principal elevation of the original building and set below the ridgeline of the existing roof. From a visual perspective, the 'setting back' and 'stepping down' of extensions will aid their successful integration into the original building; disguising the join between old and new building materials.

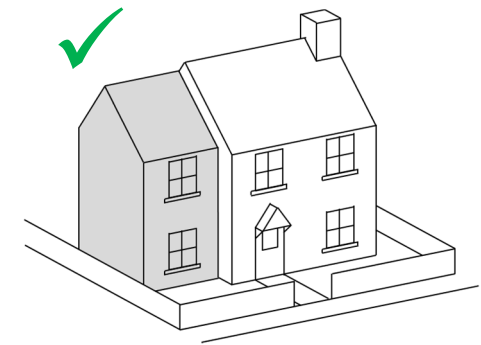
8.5 Extensions that form a continuation of existing development – i.e. where the frontages and roof lines sit flush – are usually only successful if they are carefully designed to closely match the proportions and rhythm of key architectural details (windows and surrounds, eaves details, etc.) and utilise materials that match precisely. Extensions may also not need to be set back and / or stepped down where they form part of a wholesale re-design of an existing property.

8.6 The scale of an extension should also not result in the ‘overdevelopment’ of the plot. Extensions that occupy a large percentage of the original curtilage of a property are unlikely to be acceptable; such development erodes the amenity of the host property (diminished garden space) and can often give rise to unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties (as a result of overlooking, overshadowing, etc.). Further guidance on amenity impact and the expectations of particular types of extensions is presented later in this section of the document.

8.7 Generally, successful extensions are those that reflect the form of the original building. For example, an extension to the side elevation of a building with a hipped roof should replicate the existing hipped roof form. This approach to development will help to maintain balance in the appearance of the property, reinforce the character of the surrounding area, and is particularly important for street-facing proposals where the existing street scene benefits from a regular rhythm in its building form. Proposals that depart from this approach must clearly demonstrate that the extension would enhance the character of the area, with particular importance placed on the use of high-quality detailing and materials (see below). With reference to flat roofed extensions specifically, these should typically be avoided on visually prominent elevations.

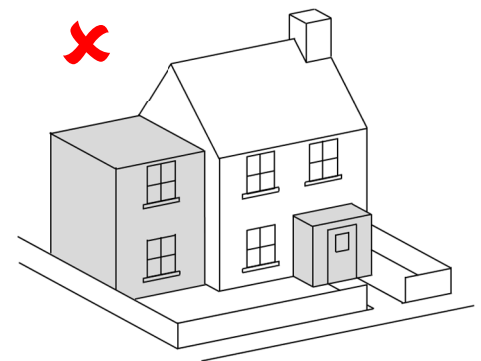
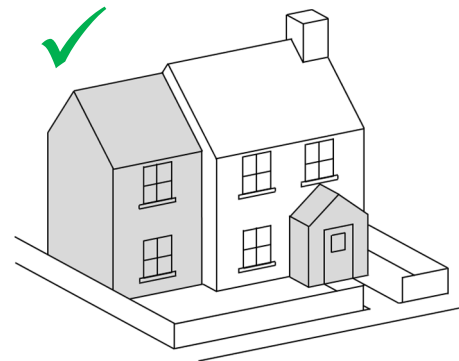


Above: Continuation

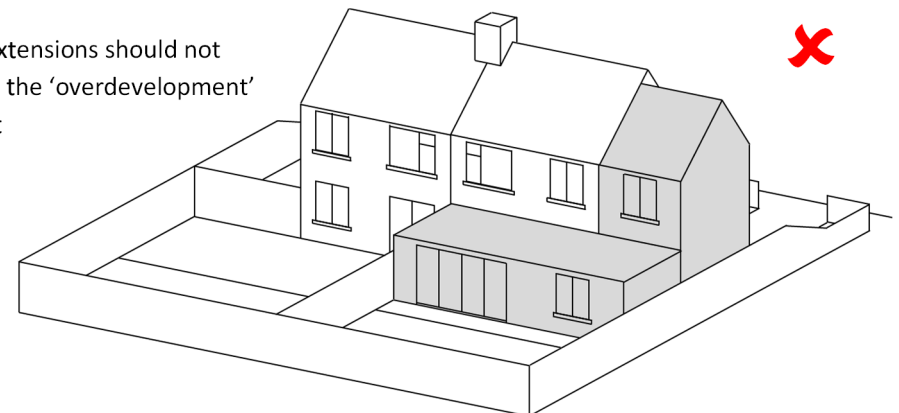


Above: Set back

Below Right: Flat roof extensions on prominent elevations are not normally acceptable



Right: Extensions should not result in the ‘overdevelopment’ of a plot

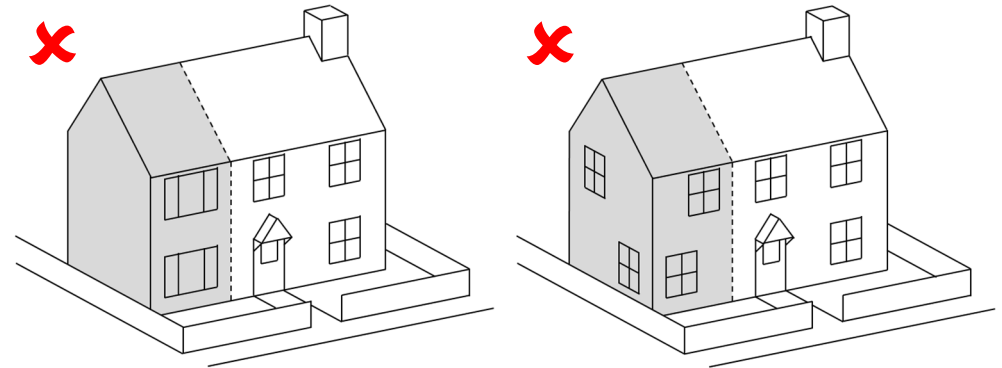


Style, Detailing and Materials

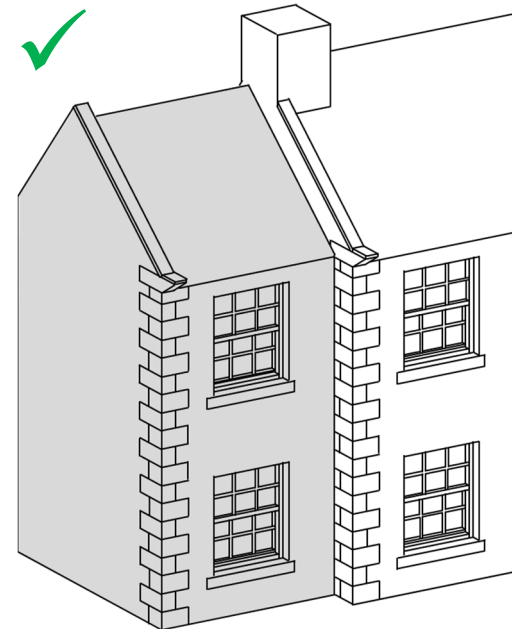
8.8 The Council actively encourages high-quality contemporary and innovative design solutions; however, it is recognised that successful extensions are often those that replicate the architectural style of the original property. As such, it is generally expected that fundamental aspects of design such as the proportions and rhythm of doors and windows, detailing and materials should either copy or be well-related to the existing building.

8.9 Elements of the original building that should be reflected in the design of extensions could include decorative brickwork, eaves details, fascia boards, doors and surrounds, window details, rainwater goods, etc. Proper utilisation of important details will help to avoid later additions appearing as a poor-quality pastiche of existing development. Particular details could also provide the inspiration for contemporary design solutions.

8.10 Where extensions have been purposefully designed to replicate the style of the host property, the materials of construction should match the original building as closely as possible. If matching materials cannot be reclaimed (particularly important for older buildings) or externally sourced, the use of contrasting materials may be appropriate providing that they complement the character and appearance of the original building. Indeed, the use of complementary materials is preferable to materials that would be a “poor match”. When searching for alternative materials, consideration should first be given to those utilised elsewhere in the surrounding area; thereby helping to reinforce local character through new development.



Above: Doors and windows should relate to the existing building, both in terms of style (appearance and materials) and alignment



Left: Side extension with stone kneelers, water tabling, quoins, cills and sliding sash windows set in reveal to match the existing (host) property

Respecting Neighbouring Amenity

Relevant Design Objectives: A, B, G

Relevant Local Plan policies: DEC1, DEC4

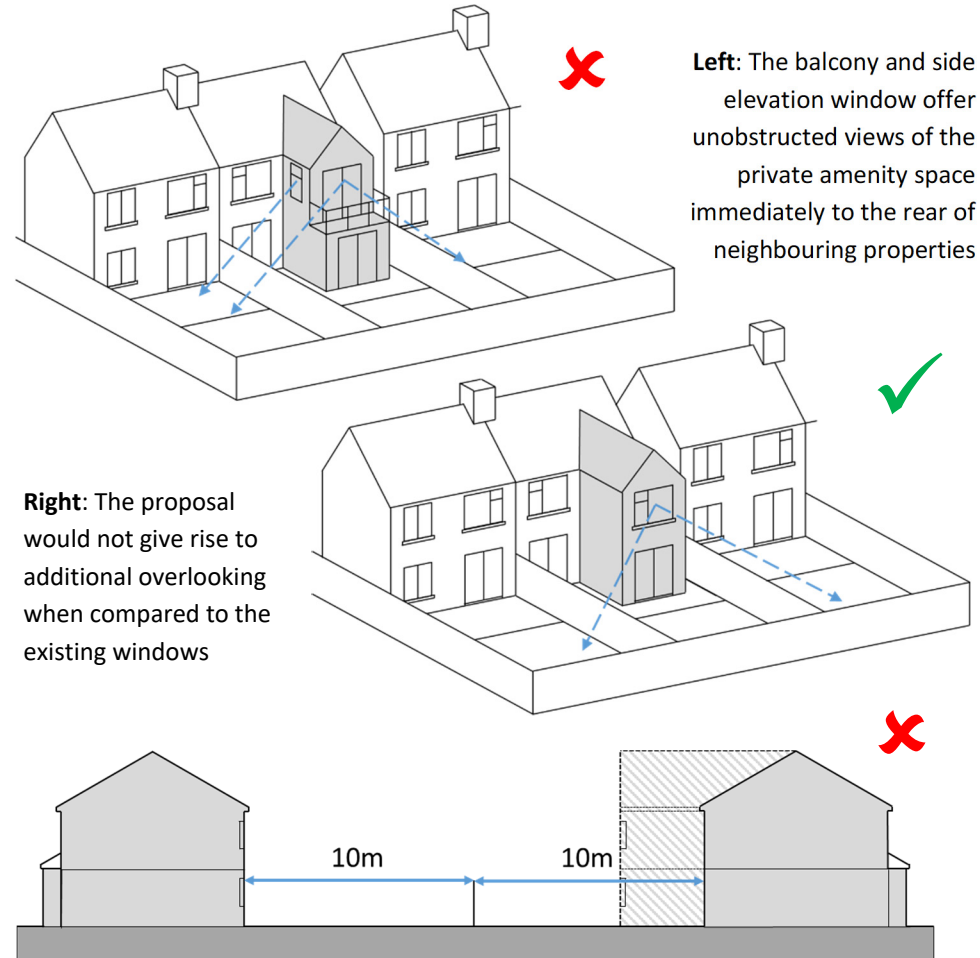
8.11 Local Plan policy DEC4 is clear that proposals which would cause significant harm to the amenity of existing and future occupants of land and buildings – *by means including overlooking, overshadowing or loss of natural light, or otherwise overbearing impact* – will not be permitted. The impact of development in this regard is influenced by its design – its form, scale, positioning of windows, etc. – and as such, it is essential that these matters are considered at the outset of the design process.

Overlooking

8.12 Extensions or alterations to a building that would result in unacceptable overlooking of a neighbouring property will not be permitted. Such issues are most likely to arise with proposals that are located on or close to a boundary shared with another property. In considering whether an unacceptable impact would occur as a result of the proposed development, due regard should be given to any mutual level of overlooking that presently occurs between neighbouring properties.

8.13 Generally, any new windows introduced to an existing dwelling should be positioned to avoid direct overlooking of neighbouring properties, particularly of private garden areas and of windows to main habitable rooms²². For single-storey extensions, issues of overlooking can often be overcome through the use of appropriate boundary treatments, which if required as an appropriate means of mitigation should be secured through the planning application process.

8.14 New windows created at second storey level (or above) should generally not be placed within side elevations unless there is a sufficient degree of separation between neighbouring properties. Similarly, elevated windows sited in close proximity to shared rear boundaries should be avoided, particularly where affected rear gardens are less than 10 metres deep.



Left: The balcony and side elevation window offer unobstructed views of the private amenity space immediately to the rear of neighbouring properties

Right: The proposal would not give rise to additional overlooking when compared to the existing windows

Above: Two-storey rear extensions should typically not be sited closer than 10 metres of a shared rear boundary in order to avoid unacceptable levels of overlooking owing to the increased proximity of elevated windows

²² Main habitable rooms include living rooms and bedrooms; does not include kitchens, bathrooms, hallways, landings, etc.

8.15 Where overlooking is unavoidable, windows should be obscure glazed. However, it should be noted that the installation of obscure glazing within windows serving main habitable rooms (living areas and bedrooms) is not considered to be an acceptable means of mitigating what would otherwise be unacceptable overlooking, particularly where that window would be the only source of natural light in a room.

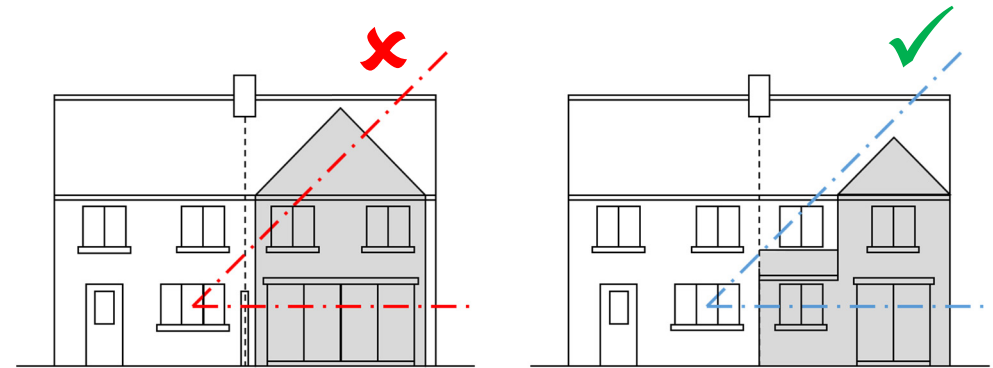
8.16 Balconies and raised platforms can also give rise to overlooking issues if they are not correctly positioned and carefully designed. Indeed, given the open and elevated nature of balcony structures, and the visual prominence of their users, the impact on neighbouring amenity will often be significant. Therefore, such proposals will likely only be acceptable if they are sited a sufficient distance away from shared boundaries to neighbouring properties so as not to offer direct views of garden areas or windows serving main habitable rooms. Nevertheless, it may be possible in some cases to adequately address issues of overlooking of adjacent properties by installing privacy screens to the sides of the balcony.

Overshadowing and Loss of Light

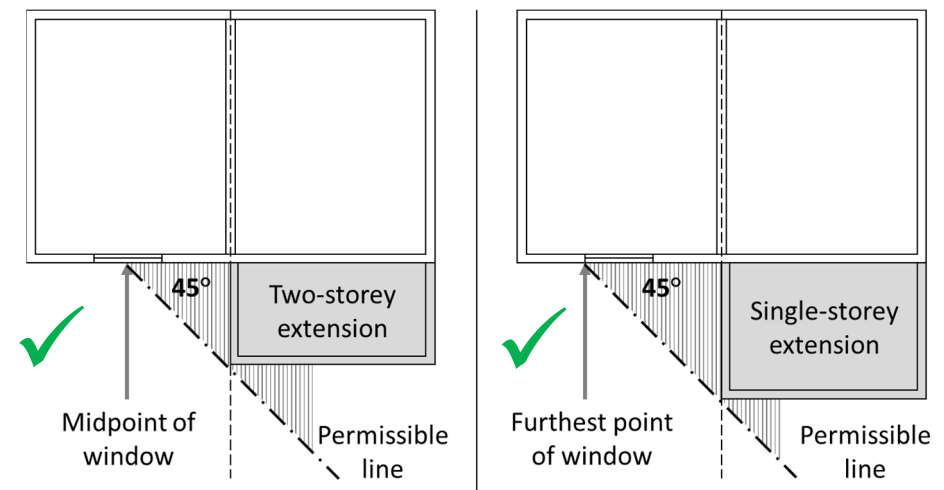
8.17 A useful informal guideline to measure the potential impact of an extension on neighbours (particularly where a semi-detached property is involved) is the "45 Degree Test". The purpose of this is to make sure that an extension does not take away too much daylight or outlook, or otherwise overshadow a neighbouring property.

8.18 To comply with the guideline, no part of a two-storey extension should cross the line drawn (outwards and upwards) at 45 degrees from the centre of the closest ground floor main habitable room (e.g. living room) window of neighbouring properties. This guide is more relaxed in relation to single storey extensions, where the 45 degree line is drawn from the furthest point of the closest ground floor habitable room window of neighbouring properties in relation to the proposed extension. In both of these cases,

where the length of the 45 degree line would exceed 12 metres before reaching any part of a proposed extension, the 45 degree guideline need not apply.



Above: Application of the '45 Degree Test' with a line drawn upwards from the midpoint of the nearest habitable room window of the neighbouring property. The extension shown above left exceeds the 45 degree line and would fail the test.



Above: Application of the '45 Degree Test' with a line drawn outwards from the nearest habitable room window of the neighbouring property. In this (outward) plane, the extensions shown above would both pass the test.

- 8.19 Another appropriate assessment tool is the “25 Degree Test”. The 25 degree test is used where a proposed development has potential to impact on a window opposite to the development, in terms of daylight and sunlight. If the proposed development would fall beneath a line drawn at 25 degrees from the horizontal, then there is unlikely to be a substantial effect on daylight and sunlight. The 25 degree line should be drawn from the centre point of the affected neighbouring window(s) (as shown below).

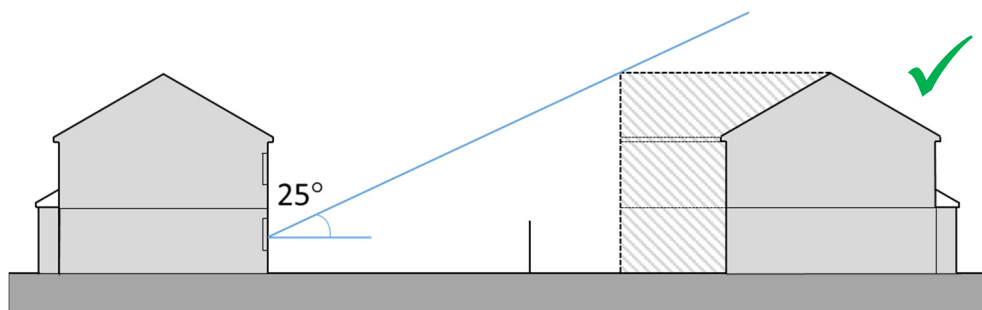


Illustration of the “25 Degree Test”

- 8.20 For the avoidance of doubt, these informal guidelines are not prescriptive but do provide a starting point for assessing the potential impact of a proposed extension on neighbouring amenity; each case will be assessed on its merits.

Overbearing Impact

- 8.21 Most commonly associated with rear extensions, overbearing impact can be considered as the enclosing effect of development and can be reasonably judged using the aforementioned “45 Degree Code” and “25 Degree Test” depending on the relationship between a proposed development and its neighbours. However, it should also be noted that the extent of the impact will also be influenced by the size of the plot; the greater the proportion of the back garden length which an extension takes up, the more significant the impact upon the neighbour(s) is likely to be.

Rear Extensions

Relevant Design Objectives: A, B

Relevant Local Plan policies: DEC1, DEC3, DEC4, DEC5

8.22 Rear extensions are a common way of providing additional accommodation and for those that are not visually prominent within the street scene, can provide opportunities for high-quality contemporary design solutions that do not strictly adhere to the established form and style of the existing building. While greater flexibility can be applied to their appearance, rear extensions to semi-detached and terraced dwellings need to be carefully designed to avoid adversely affecting the amenity of neighbours.

8.23 The acceptability of a rear extension positioned on or close to a shared boundary will depend upon a number of factors, including:

- **The orientation of the extension in relation to neighbouring property.** For example, an extension to the south of a neighbouring house will result in a greater loss of light to the rear windows and garden than one to the north by virtue of the movement of the sun.
- **The height of the extension.** Two-storey rear extensions to semi-detached and terraced properties are difficult to accommodate, as they invariably result in unacceptable loss of light and overshadowing to neighbours. Such extensions may be acceptable if the second storey element is stepped back significantly from the shared boundary.
- **The length of the extension.** The greater the proportion of the back garden length which an extension takes up the more significant the impact upon the neighbour(s) is likely to be. See paras 8.17 – 8.21.
- **The position of main habitable room windows in the neighbouring property.** The closer the extension to the windows of the neighbouring property, the greater the potential loss of light to those windows. See paras 8.12 – 8.16.
- **Any differences in site levels.**

Side Extensions

Relevant Design Objectives: A, B

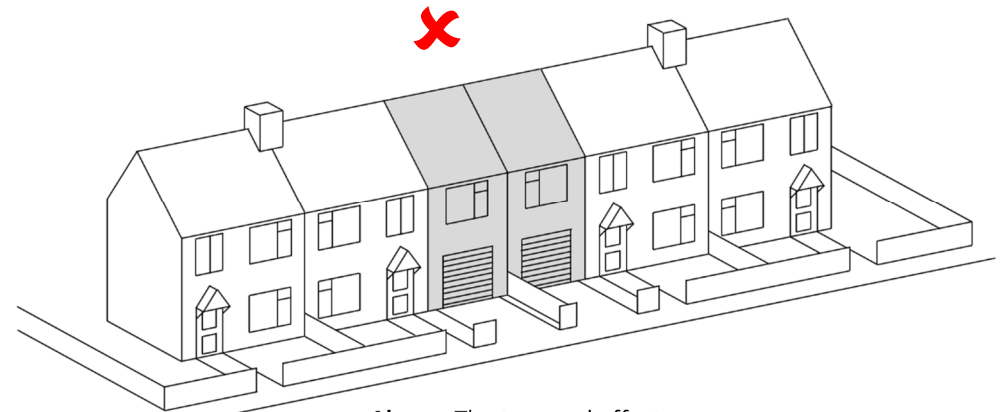
Relevant Local Plan policies: DEC1, DEC3, DEC4, DEC5

8.24 Most residential areas have been carefully designed to present an attractive, unified appearance and this character can be quickly eroded by unsympathetic extensions. In particular, the erection of side extensions which infill the gaps between buildings can change the character of the street and create a terraced effect.

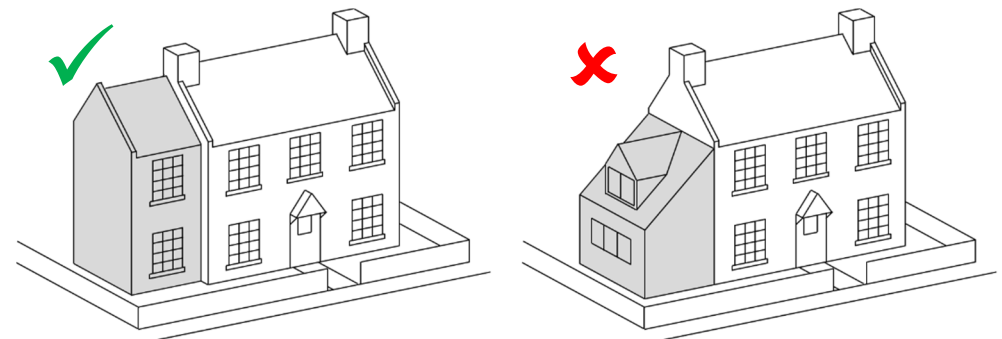
8.25 To help minimise any terraced effect, side extensions should typically be set back from the principal elevation of the original building and be set down below the existing ridgeline. In some cases, it may also be necessary to retain a meaningful gap between neighbouring properties. When assessing side extensions, consideration will be given to the extent to which any resultant terraced effect would adversely impact upon the character of the street scene. Similarly, consideration will be given as to whether the reduction in space around the dwelling – as a result of the proposed side extension – would have a negative impact upon the character of the area.

8.26 Side extensions should follow the design principles established earlier in this guidance, whereby they should: reflect the existing roof form and pitch; reproduce important detailing; and, utilise matching or complementary construction materials. While alternative design solutions can be acceptable, the general test applies; proposals should reinforce or enhance both the host property and the surrounding area.

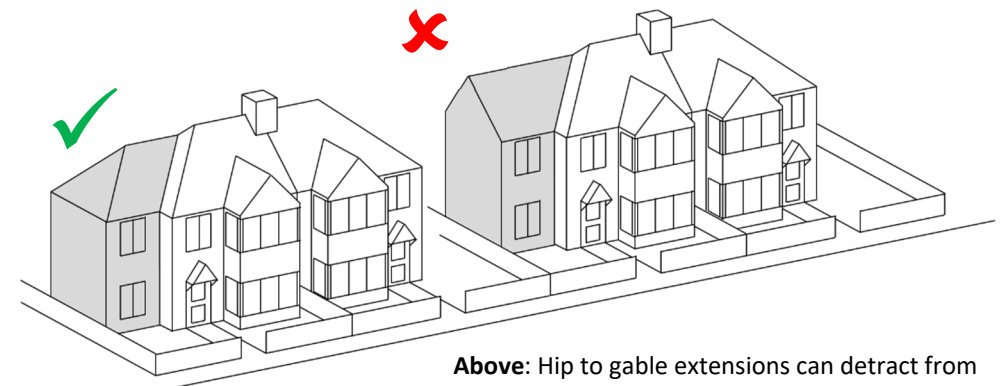
8.27 Side extensions should not reduce the number of off-street parking places within a plot to below that required by the standards adopted by the Local Highway Authority (North Yorkshire County Council).



Above: The terraced effect



Above: Side extensions should complement the main house



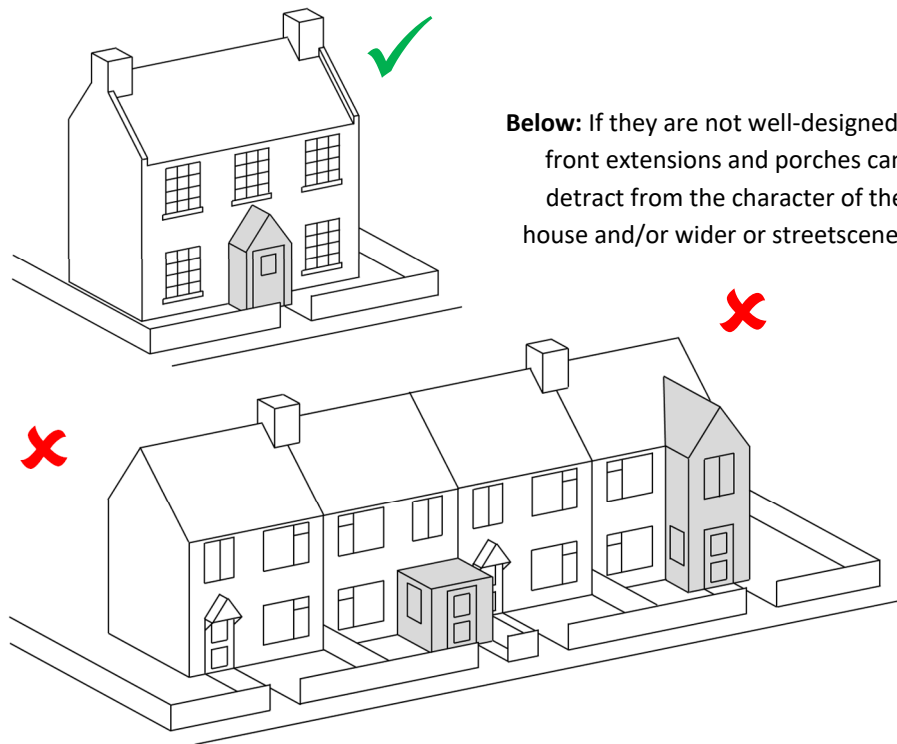
Above: Hip to gable extensions can detract from the established rhythm of some streetscenes

Front Extensions and Porches

Relevant Design Objectives: A, B

Relevant Local Plan policies: DEC1, DEC3, DEC4, DEC5

8.28 Front extensions can also significantly alter the character of an area as they disrupt the original appearance of a house and interrupt established building lines, particularly in areas that have been carefully designed to present attractive, uniform frontages. As such, front extensions will normally only be acceptable in exceptional cases, including where the host property is detached, is set well back from the street, and where the extension has been carefully designed to enhance the character of the original building and the surrounding area.



Below: If they are not well-designed, front extensions and porches can detract from the character of the house and/or wider or streetscene.

Garages and Car Ports

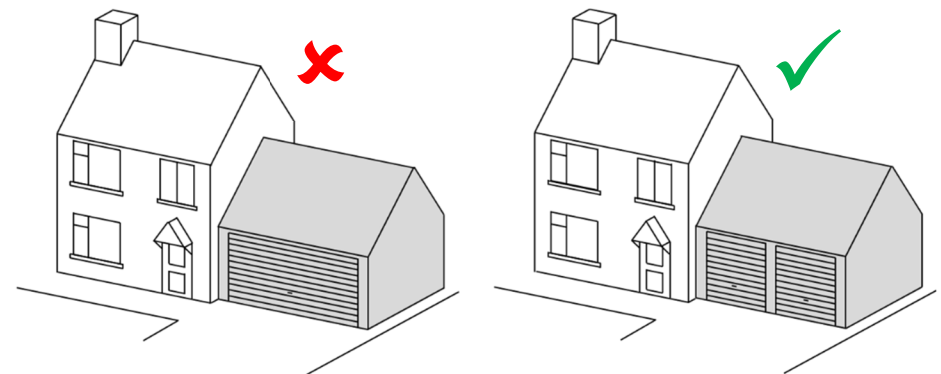
Relevant Design Objectives: A, B

Relevant Local Plan policies: DEC1, DEC4, DEC5

8.29 Garages should be designed to reflect the main house in terms of its form, materials and detailing. They should generally not be built in prominent locations, should normally be set back from the front elevation of the house, and should be of a scale that would not dominate the main building. Double garages should incorporate two smaller doors rather than one larger door.

8.30 In order for a garage to be accepted as a functional parking space its internal dimensions must exceed 4.8 metres by 2.4 metres, as established by the Local Highway Authority²³. A driveway with a minimum length of 6 metres must be provided to the front of the garage – i.e. between the garage door and the public highway – in order to allow for the continued provision of sufficient parking and garage door clearance.

8.31 Car Ports requiring planning consent should utilise a high-quality timber or brick frame and roofing materials that complement the main house; they should appear as permanent structures rather than temporary additions.



Above: Garages should reflect the form of the main house and have single doors

²³ "Interim Guidance on Transport Issues, including Parking Standards and Advice on Transport Assessments and Travel Plans", North Yorkshire County Council (2015)

Dormer Windows and Rooflights

Relevant Design Objectives: A, B

Relevant Local Plan policies: DEC1, DEC4, DEC5

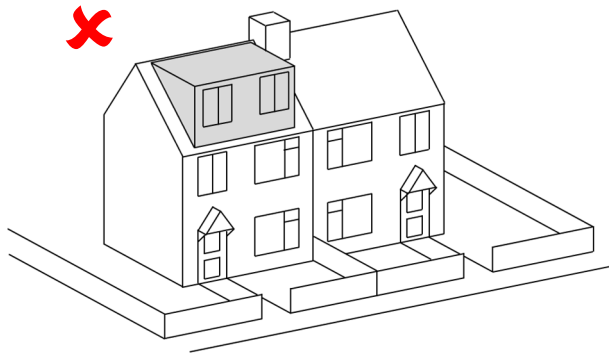
- 8.32 Planning permission is required for the installation of dormers within an existing roof slope that forms the principal elevation of a dwelling and fronts a highway. Planning permission is also required where the host property is sited within a Conservation Area.
- 8.33 The installation of dormer windows within visually prominent (street facing) roof slopes will generally be unacceptable, particularly where they are proposed on terraced or semi-detached properties within unbroken roof slopes; such development will often lead to an unbalanced appearance relative to adjoining properties, thereby detracting from the character of the area.
- 8.34 Front-facing dormers will typically only be acceptable where they form a positive part of the original or traditional architecture of the area and/or where the host property is detached, set back from the street and where the dormer would not detract from the appearance of the property or the surrounding area. The presence of poorly-designed, non-original dormer windows (i.e. later additions to buildings) in a street will not be used as a precedent for allowing further, similarly designed structures.
- 8.35 Where the principle of new dormer windows is acceptable, they should be designed so that they:
- **Reflect the character of the host property.** The form / shape of the dormer should reflect the character and appearance of the host property. Flat roofed dormers to front / street-facing elevations will generally not be acceptable. Traditional forms, such as gabled, hipped-roof or “catslide” dormers will often be required in Conservation Areas.

- **Are well proportioned and do not dominate the roof shape.** Dormers that would cover a large percentage of the roof space will generally not be acceptable; a greater number of smaller dormers may be an acceptable alternative.
- **Utilise materials that match or complement those of the main roof.** Existing materials should be re-used wherever possible. Special attention should be given to the detailing and materials of dormer windows in Conservation Areas.
- **Are well related to the size, design and positioning of the windows below.** New dormer windows should line up with existing windows and other notable features of the host property, while the size of windows should normally be smaller than existing.
- **Are set below the ridge level, back from the eaves and away from the sides of the roof.**

- 8.36 Where planning permission and /or listed building consent is required for rooflights, it will be expected that they should not detract from the host property as a result of their number, size or projection from the existing roof plane; again, their position within the roof should be well related to existing windows below. Any rooflights to be installed within listed buildings should be of the flush, "conservation-style" units.



Right: Small traditional dormers that line up with existing windows should normally be utilised on front elevations in Conservation



Left: Flat roof dormers to front / street-facing elevations will generally not be acceptable

Replacement Windows

Relevant Design Objectives: A, B

Relevant Local Plan policies: DEC1, DEC5

8.37 Planning permission is typically not required to replace existing windows to a dwellinghouse; unless the dwelling is sited within an area covered by an “Article 4 Direction”²⁴ that removes the relevant permitted development rights.

8.38 Where planning permission is required for the installation of replacement windows, the guiding principle for choosing replacement units should be to ensure that they reflect the character and appearance of both the host property and the surrounding area. Particular care and attention must be paid to selecting appropriate replacement window units in conservation areas, where original fenestration can contribute to the significance of the area (a designated heritage asset).

8.39 Listed building consent will be required for the installation of replacement window units in Listed Buildings. In accordance with the statutory test,

such consent should only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would preserve or enhance the special architectural and historic interest of the building. Given that the original / traditional windows to a listed building often contributes to its significance, the preference would always be to repair and / or upgrade existing units.

8.40 Complete replacement should be on a like-for-like basis in terms of materials, dimensions and appearance. Proposals to replace traditional timber windows with high-quality alternative materials would only be supported in limited and exceptional cases; it is for the applicant to advance the exceptional circumstances of the particular case through the submission of a Heritage Statement.

8.41 Historic England’s guidance²⁵ on the maintenance, repair, upgrading and restoration of traditional windows in listed buildings should be taken into account when homeowners are making decisions on how to address any issues / problems they are experiencing with the windows in their property.

²⁴ <https://www.scarborough.gov.uk/home/planning/article-4-directions>

²⁵ <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/traditional-windows-care-repair-upgrading/>

Boundary Treatments

Relevant Design Objectives: A, B, E

Relevant Local Plan policies: DEC1, DEC4, ENV5

- 8.42 Where planning permission is required for the construction of new and/or replacement boundary treatments, these should again reflect the character and appearance of the area, including existing boundary treatments in the area. Particular attention should be paid to frontage boundary treatments, where planning permission will be required for fences and walls that exceed 1m in height and are sited adjacent to the public highway. It should be noted that the erection of high-level, closed panel fencing is unlikely to be an acceptable frontage boundary treatment in most cases, particularly where they would impact upon the safety of highway users.
- 8.43 Boundary treatments that are proposed as a method of mitigating the impact of development – *e.g. to provide visual screening* – must be capable of being secured / maintained over the lifetime of development by way of planning condition. Where boundary planting is proposed as part of a development, the preference will be for the use of indigenous species; the planting of *leylandii* will generally not be supported.
- 8.44 Boundary walls and fences should incorporate design features that allow for local wildlife to move between gardens, e.g. “hedgehog holes” and / or the raising of fence panels above ground level (see examples, right).



Image Credits (Top and Bottom): Hedgehog Street,
<https://hedgehogstreet.org>

Energy Efficiency Improvements / Retrofitting

Relevant Design Objectives: E, F, G

Relevant Local Plan policies: DEC1, DEC4

- 8.45 As a place with rich and diverse built heritage, Scarborough Borough's property profile varies significantly in age, materials, construction methods and thus, also in energy efficiency. Each property type presents its own challenges when considering how to improve their efficiency; there is no 'one size fits all' approach. Some of the options for improving efficiency are outlined below alongside the key relevant planning considerations.
- 8.46 Importantly, some of the measures outlined below may be permissible under permitted development rules. If you are in any doubt as to whether planning permission is required, please contact Planning Services. Consent will always be required for alterations to the built fabric of listed buildings.

Internal and External Insulation

- 8.47 By adopting a 'fabric first' approach, significant improvements to the thermal efficiency of a building can be made through increasing levels of insulation. Works such as installing insulation within roof voids, between ceilings / floors and in cavity walls can generally be carried out without the need to obtain planning permission.
- 8.48 For older buildings without cavity walls, the internal application of solid wall insulation may be a viable option for improving efficiency; however, it should be noted that carrying out such works in listed buildings would require listed building consent, particularly where it would affect original period details such as skirting boards, wall mouldings, cornices, etc.²⁶

²⁶ For more details see <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/energy-efficiency-and-historic-buildings/>

Right: External solid wall insulation can detract from the character and appearance of an area, particularly where architectural details of the original building are lost

Image Credit:

www.architectsjournal.co.uk



- 8.49 The installation of external solid wall insulation will require planning permission if the materials used are not similar in appearance to those of the existing building. Consent will also be required if the building is located within a conservation area or if the building is listed.
- 8.50 Given that external insulation can dramatically alter the appearance of the host property, its installation will generally only be acceptable where the original detailing of the building can be retained and/or reproduced and where it would not detract from the character of the surrounding area.

Thermally Efficient Windows

- 8.51 Where planning permission is required, the installation of thermally efficient windows (in non-historic buildings – see below) will be supported where they reflect the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.
- 8.52 For historic properties in conservation areas and for listed buildings in particular, Historic England encourage homeowners to explore alternative ways of improving thermal efficiency, including through the installation of

secondary glazing, draft-proofing and sympathetic repair / refurbishment²⁷. As described at paragraph 8.40 of this SPD, proposals to replace historic timber windows with high-quality alternative materials (uPVC) will only be supported in limited and exceptional cases.

Renewable Energy Technologies

8.53 There are significant emission savings to be made by reducing the need to consume energy (by improving insulation, etc.) and by securing energy from renewable sources. A range of domestic-scale technologies are available to help homeowners meet their energy needs, some of which are outlined below.

8.54 **Solar photovoltaic** (electricity generation) and **solar thermal** (hot water) panels can often be installed on domestic properties without planning permission, providing that they do not project more than 200mm off the edge (face) of the roof and above the highest point of the roof. Properties in conservation areas are more constrained, where panels must not be visible from a highway in order to be classed as permitted development²⁸. Planning permission will always be required to install solar panels on / within the grounds of a listed building.

8.55 The introduction of the Future Homes Standard for building efficiency in 2025 will also see a ban on domestic gas boilers imposed on homeowners. **Air source heat pumps**, which extracts warmth from the air, are being promoted as an alternative sustainable method of domestic heating. Currently, a single air source heat pump can be installed to a property under permitted development rules providing that:



Right: Air Source Heat Pump
(Credit: www.thegreenage.co.uk)



Right: Solar PV and Solar Thermal Panels
(Credit: www.thegreenage.co.uk)

- The unit is no bigger than 0.6 cubic metres and is sited at least 1 metre away from the site boundary;
- If the unit is installed on a flat roof it is beyond 1m from the roof edge;
- The unit is not installed on a pitch roof;
- If the host property is within a conservation area, the heat pump is not installed on a wall or roof that fronts a highway.

8.56 Planning permission and/or listed building consent will be required for the installation of an air source heat pump on, or within the curtilage of, a listed building. Should planning permission and/or listed building consent be required, key considerations would include; the visual impact on the host property and the surrounding area; and, the potential impact on neighbouring amenity as a result of noise and vibration from the units.

²⁷ For more details see <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/statements/modifying-historic-windows-as-part-of-retrofitting-energy-saving-measures/>

²⁸ Please note that an Article 4 Direction restricts Permitted Development Rights for Solar PV and Solar Thermal panels in Whitby Conservation Area. For more details see: <https://www.scarborough.gov.uk/home/planning/article-4-directions>