



Exeter City Council



DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Householder's Guide to Extension Design

FEBRUARY 2008

Introduction

■ Status and Purpose

This guide is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that form part of the Local Development Framework of Exeter. It identifies Exeter City Council's requirements in relation to domestic extensions and alterations. The SPD amplifies local plan policies DG1 and DG4 (see below) and forms the basis for the City Council's determination of planning applications.

Extensions, individually and cumulatively, have a major impact upon townscape and amenity. No proposal is too small to have an impact and the City Council requires all applications to achieve high standards of design and amenity. Applicants are advised to appoint an architect or other appropriately qualified professional to carry out the design work.

■ Local Plan Policies

DG1: Development should:

- a) Be compatible with the urban structure of the city, connecting effectively with existing routes and spaces and putting people before traffic;
- b) Ensure that the pattern of street blocks, plots and their buildings (the grain of development) promotes the urban character of Exeter;
- c) Fully integrate landscape design into the proposal and ensure that schemes are integrated into the existing landscape of the city including its three-dimensional shape, natural features and ecology;
- d) Be at a density which promotes Exeter's urban character and which supports urban services;
- e) Contribute to the provision of a compatible mix of uses which work together to create vital and viable places;
- f) Be of a height which is appropriate to the surrounding townscape and ensure that the height of constituent part of buildings relate well to adjoining buildings, spaces and to human scale;
- g) Ensure that the volume and shape (the massing) of structures relates well to the character and appearance of the adjoining buildings and the surrounding townscape;
- h) Ensure that all designs promote local distinctiveness and contribute positively to the visual richness and amenity of the townscape;

i) Use materials which relate well to the palette of materials in the locality and which reinforce local distinctiveness.

DG4: Residential development should:

- a) Be at the maximum feasible density taking into account site constraints and impact on the local area;
- b) Ensure a quality of amenity which allows residents to feel at ease within their homes and gardens;
- c) Ensure that the boundaries of private rear gardens facing public places are designed to make a positive contribution to the townscape;
- d) Where front gardens are included provide enclosure to create defensible space.

Chapter 1

General Principles

■ **1.1 Introduction**

This guide aims to raise the standard of ‘everyday’ proposals. There is, therefore, a presumption that extensions should harmonise with the character of the original building.



Figure 1.1 Extensions need to harmonise with the character of the original building.

The general principles 1-12 apply to all kinds of extensions. Further principles dealing with specific kinds of extensions can be found in the following chapters. Planning applications which follow the principles outlined will normally be successful and minimise the time taken to achieve consent.

■ **1.2 Site Appraisal**

The guide is not exhaustive and every site is different. Therefore it is important to appraise the site thoroughly in order to produce an appropriate design solution. Some sites, such as corner plots or prominent ends of terraces, will need specific solutions to suit the site circumstances, which may not comply with certain principles (Figure 1.2). A full explanation of the design approach must be given in a design and access statement.

Each application will be considered on its own merits. Existing extensions should not be taken as precedents for new proposals.



Figure 1.2 The above side extension is successful although it is not set below the original ridge or set back from the front elevation.

■ **1.3 General Principles**

Principle 1 - Use

Extensions to the main house should not be used as separate residential units or businesses. Accommodation (except in the case of outbuildings) must be connected internally to the main house and must not have a separate kitchen or staircase.

Principle 2 - Street Scene

Extensions should be in keeping with the character and appearance of the local street scene and should neither project forward of the front main building line nor cause terracing*.

**Terracing refers to two-storey side extensions which result in an unacceptable reduction in width or total loss of the gap between properties to create the impression of a continuous building frontage (Figure 1.3).*



Figure 1.3 Terracing can have a detrimental effect on the local streetscene.

Principle 3 - Integrated Design

All elements of the proposal including landscape, bin and bicycle storage and security should be considered and designed as part of the overall scheme from the outset.

Principle 4 - Natural Light and Outlook

Extensions should not adversely affect the natural light and outlook enjoyed by neighbours.

Principle 5 - Privacy

Extensions should avoid overlooking neighbouring properties.

Principle 6 - Scale

Extensions should be subservient to the original house. Proposals to the full width, length and/or height of the original building are not normally acceptable. Extensions should be set below the original ridge. and be set back from the front

Principle 7 - Roofs

Roofs should match the main roof in terms of shape and pitch (Figure 1.4).

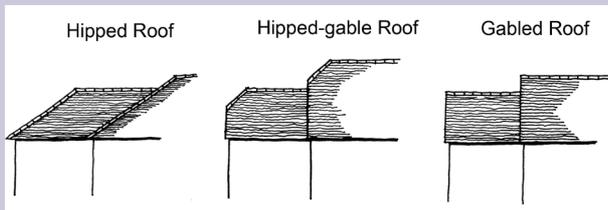


Figure 1.4 Roofs should match the main roof.

Principle 8 – Architectural Details

Architectural details of the main building should be protected and repeated in the extension design (Figure 1.5).



Figure 1.5 Extensions should reflect the character and appearance of the main house in terms of scale, roof form, materials and architectural details such as windows and doors.

Principle 9 - Materials

External materials, and the way they are used (i.e. coursing and pointing), should match the original house.

Principle 10 - Garden Space

Usable garden space* should not fall below 55 square metres after the construction of the extension.

** Usable garden space is land under the exclusive control of the occupier and within the curtilage of the dwelling house. It only includes land that has been adequately screened, usually to the rear and side of the property, and excludes driveways.*

Principle 11 – Landscape

Extensions should preserve both hard and soft landscape features including trees, shrubs, walls and railings.

Principle 12 - Security

The security of the extended and adjoining properties should not be prejudiced by the design of extensions. Security measures should preserve the character of the streetscene and the main house.

1.4 Contemporary Design

Where a contemporary design is proposed, an application should be accompanied by a design statement justifying the approach taken and how the design, notwithstanding its contemporary approach, complies with the principles of townscape and amenity (Figure 1.6). The quality of the design is paramount to the success of such extensions.



Figure 1.6 An example of an extension with a contemporary design

1.5 External Works

Works such as decking, patios, boundary walls or fences may require planning consent. Proposals will be assessed having regard to natural light, overlooking and visual impact.

Micro-renewables such as solar and photovoltaic panels, micro-wind turbines, heat pumps, biomass technology and other similar devices may require planning permission to install.

Consult the City Council before commencing any work to ascertain whether planning permission is needed.

1.6 Crime Prevention

It is important to consider at an early stage the impact the proposal may have on the security of the original house and the neighbouring properties. Security measures should be unobtrusive and designed as an integral part of the overall proposal. Opportunities to break in, such as drainpipes and flat roofs providing easy access to first floor windows should be avoided. Front doors should be clearly visible from the street to prevent potential intruders being hidden from view.

Security advice can be sought from Devon and Cornwall Constabulary on their website www.devon-cornwall.police.uk or telephone 08452 777444.

■ 1.7 Permitted Development

This guide deals with developments that require planning permission only. There are some minor developments that do not require planning permission. These are known as permitted development (PD). Householders should complete a Householder Enquiry Form to confirm whether a proposal is PD or not. The form is available from the City Council's Customer First Service Centre or from the Council's website - www.exeter.gov.uk/planning.

■ 1.8 Seeking Advice

The City Council offers pre-application advice to all householders considering extending or altering their properties. The aim is to allow planning officers to identify problems and suggest changes that will increase the likelihood of approval. The more information that is provided, the more specific the advice will be.

Our contact details are as follows:

Phone: 01392 ***** or 01392 *****

Fax: 01392 265165

Email: planning@exeter.gov.uk

Address: Development Control Team

Planning Services

Exeter City Council

EX1 1NN

Chapter 2

Rear Extensions and Conservatories

Note: This chapter should be read in conjunction with Chapter 1 General Principles.

■ **2.1 Depth**

The Council sets limits to the depth of extensions to ensure that they are in proportion with the original building and to avoid blocking natural lights and outlook to neighbouring properties.

Terraced and Semi-detached Houses - 3.0m maximum (Figure 2.1)

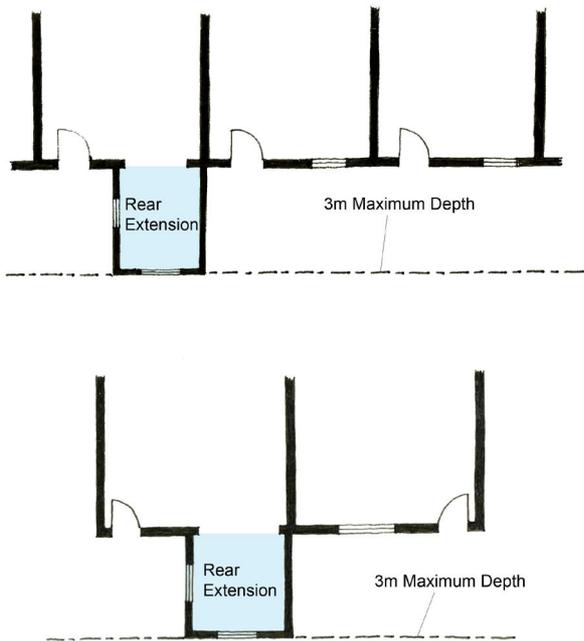


Figure 2.1 Single-storey rear extensions to terraced and semi-detached houses should not exceed 3m in depth.

Detached Houses – 3.5m maximum (Figure 2.2)

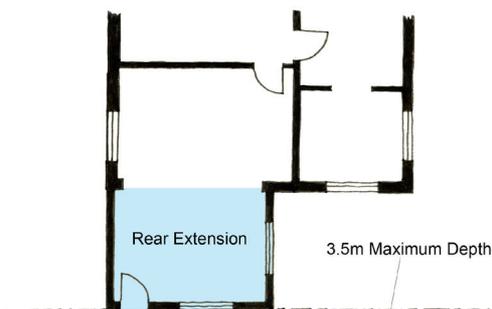


Figure 2.2 Single-storey rear extensions to detached houses should not exceed 3.5m in depth.

Measurements should be taken from the main rear wall of the original house. If in doubt about how to measure, contact the City Council for advice.

Two-storey and first floor rear extensions are more likely to have an impact on neighbours than single-storey ones in terms of natural light, outlook and amenity. Therefore in addition to the depth limits, the “45 Degrees Rule” is used to assess proposals of this kind as indicated in the diagrams below:

1. Draw lines at 45 degrees from the centre of the nearest ground floor habitable room* windows of adjoining properties on an accurate, scaled **plan** and ensure that the plan fits within the area between the lines and the house (Figure 2.3).
2. Draw lines at 45 degrees from the centre of the nearest ground floor habitable room* windows of adjoining properties on an accurate, scaled **elevation** and ensure that the elevation fits within the space made by the lines (Figure 2.3).

* Habitable rooms include all living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens, but exclude bathrooms, WCs or circulation space.

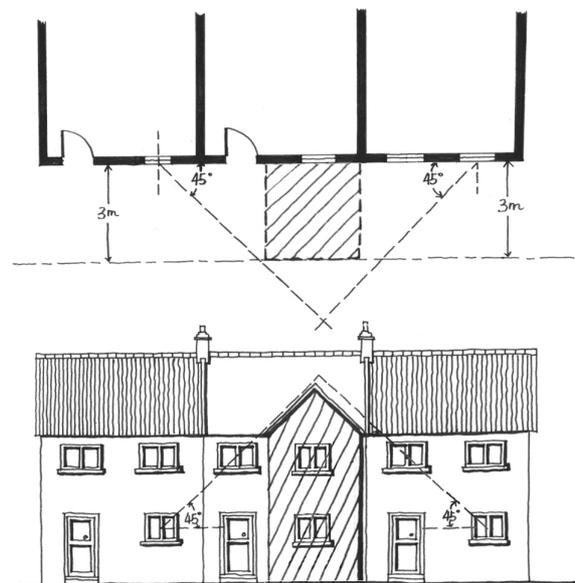


Figure 2.3 Two storey rear extensions should comply with the rear depth limits and 45 degree rules.

In case of two-storey extensions, neighbouring properties should be clearly shown on both plan and elevation drawings, showing the position and size of the nearest windows in relation to the proposed extension.

■ **2.2 Privacy**

Windows should not be placed on side walls overlooking neighbouring properties. High level, non-opening windows with obscure glass may be an acceptable solution in certain circumstances.

Where windows of the proposed rear extension overlook neighbouring properties, a minimum distance of 22m between rear facing habitable rooms should be maintained (Figure 2.4).

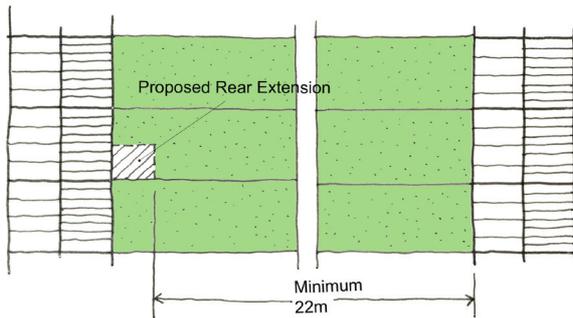


Figure 2.4 A minimum distance of 22m between rear facing habitable rooms should be maintained where overlooking occurs.

The use of a flat roof as a balcony or roof terrace over a single storey rear extension is likely to harm the privacy of neighbours and is not acceptable.

■ **2.3 Roofs**

For single-storey rear extensions there should be a gap of at least 200mm (about 2 brick course) between the highest part of the roof of the extension and the cills of first floor windows above (Figure 2.5).

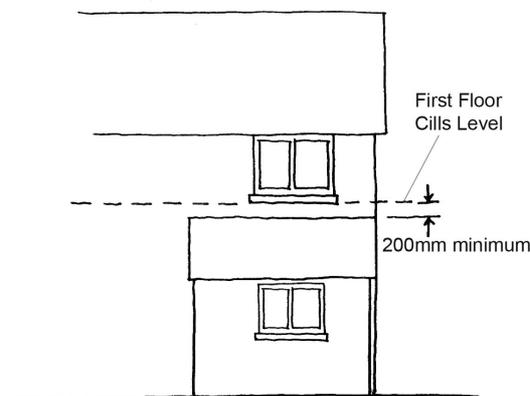


Figure 2.5 The highest part of single-storey rear extensions should be set below the first floor cills by at least 200mm.

■ **2.4 Conservatories**

The criteria for single-storey extensions apply to conservatories. The design may need to include solid walls or fixed obscure glazing to prevent overlooking.

image to follow

Figure 2.6 Conservatory with simple roof design harmonises with most properties.

■ **2.5 Checklist**

List of Material Considerations		
1.	Is the extension only to be used for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the main house?	Yes/No
2.	Does the extension comply with maximum depth limits?	Yes/No
3.	In the case of a two-storey extension, does it comply with the 45 degrees rule?	Yes/No
4.	Does the extension preserve the natural light and outlook of neighbours?	Yes/No
5.	Does the extension preserve the privacy of neighbours?	Yes/No
6.	In the case of a single-storey extension, does a gap of at least 200mm remain between the uppermost part of the roof and the first floor cill of any window?	Yes/No
7.	Does the extension match the original building in terms of roof design, doors, windows and building materials?	Yes/No
8.	Is there still 55 square metres of usable garden space after development?	Yes/No
9.	Does the extension preserve the security of the neighbours?	Yes/No

If yes is not the answer to all of above questions, contact the City Council before submitting an application.

Chapter 3

Side Extensions

Note: This chapter should be read in conjunction with Chapter 1 General Principles.

This chapter applies to both single and multi-storey side extensions and also to first floor side extensions over an existing structure such as a garage or carport.

3.1 Position

Extensions should be set back at least 1m from the front main wall of the house and be set in at least 1m from the side boundary (Figure 3.1).

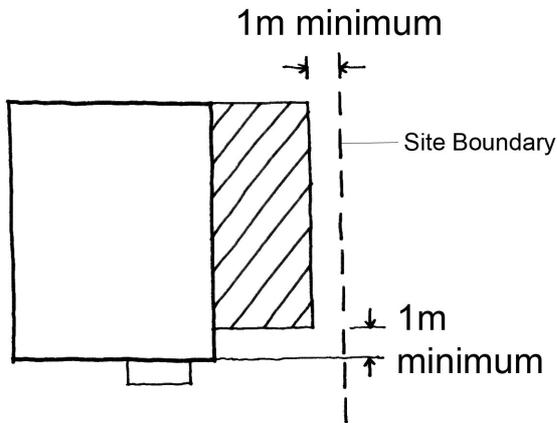


Figure 3.1 Side extensions should leave at least 1m from the side boundaries and the front main walls.

Extensions should not extend beyond the rear main wall (Figure 3.3).

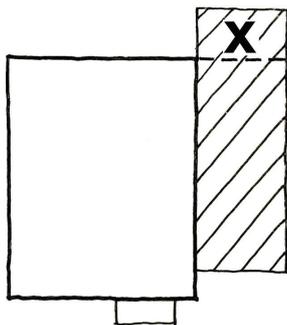


Figure 3.2 Side extension should not extend beyond the rear main wall.

3.2 Proportion

The extension should always allow the original structure to stand out as the main building. The width should not exceed half the width of the main house (Figure 3.3), the sidewalls should remain parallel to the main house (Figure 3.4).

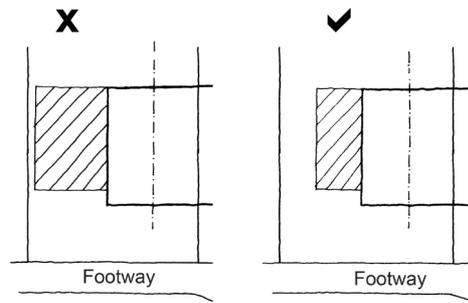


Figure 3.3 Side extensions should not exceed half the width of the main house.

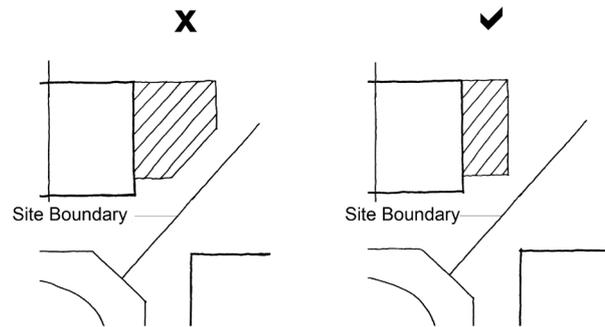


Figure 3.4 The side walls of the extensions need to be parallel to the main houses.

3.3 Roofs

Single-storey side extensions should leave a gap of at least 200mm (about 2 brick course) between the highest part of the roof of the extension and the cills of first floor windows above (Figure 3.5).

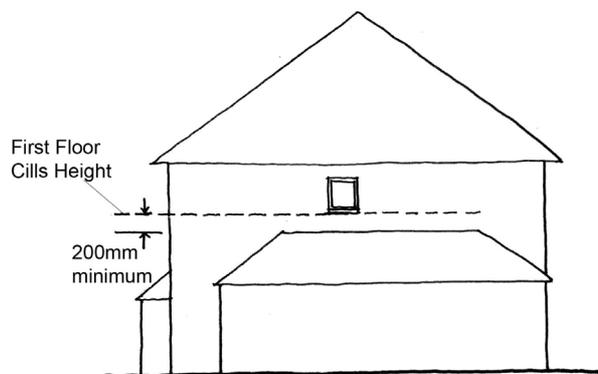


Figure 3.5 The highest part of single-storey rear extensions should be set below the first floor cills by at least 200mm.

■ 3.4 Garages and Carports

The criteria for side extensions apply to garages and carports. Traditional vertical timber boarding is appropriate for most garage doors (Figure 3.6).



Figure 3.6 Traditional vertical timber boarding is appropriate for most garage doors.

■ 3.5 Checklist

List of Material Considerations		
1.	Is the extension only to be used for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the main house?	Yes/No
2.	Does the extension preserve daylight and sunlight to the neighbours?	Yes/No
3.	Does the extension preserve the privacy of neighbours?	Yes/No
4.	Is the extension set back at least 1m from the front main wall and set in at least 1m from the side boundary?	Yes/No
5.	Does the extension preserve the streetscene and avoid terracing?	Yes/No
6.	Does the extension avoid projecting beyond the rear main wall?	Yes/No
7.	Is the extension no more than half the width of the main house?	Yes/No
8.	Is the side wall of the extension parallel to that of the main house?	Yes/No
9.	In the case of a single-storey extension, does a gap of at least 200mm remain between the uppermost part of the roof and the first floor cills above?	Yes/No
10.	Does the extension match the original building in terms of roof design, doors, windows and building materials?	Yes/No
11.	Is there still 55 square metres of usable garden space after development?	Yes/No
12.	Does the extension preserve the security of the neighbours?	Yes/No

If yes is not the answer to all of above questions, contact the City Council before submitting an application.

Chapter 4

Roof Extensions and Alterations

Note: This chapter should be read in conjunction with Chapter 1 General Principles.

This chapter deals with roof extensions and alterations, including dormer windows and changes to the shape of roofs.

■ **4.1 Position**

Dormers should be placed on the rear roof.

A single dormer should be located in the centre of the roof face. Where more than one dormer is proposed, they must be located symmetrically on the roof (Figure 4.1).



Figure 4.1 Dormers should be placed on the rear roof and appear symmetrical.

Dormers should be set a minimum of 1m (measured vertically) below the ridge level, 1m above eaves and 1m from the boundary. For gabled roofs, dormers should be set in a minimum 1m from the edge of the roof (Figure 4.2).

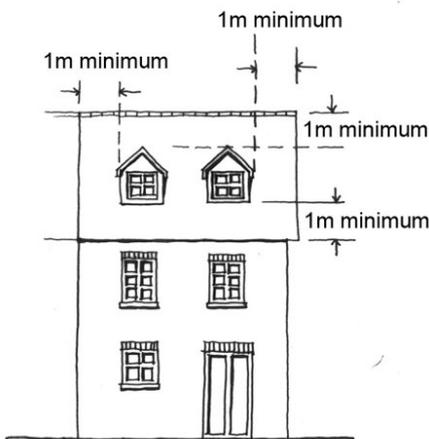


Figure 4.2 Dormers should be set below the ridges, set above the eaves and set in from the boundary and the edge of the roof.

For hipped roofs, extensions should not come within 0.5m of the hip tiles (Figure 4.3).

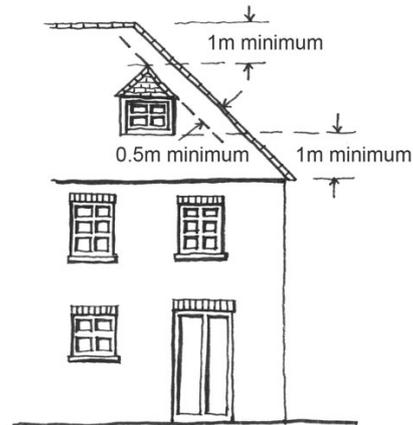


Figure 4.3 Dormer windows should be well away from the hipped part of the roof.

■ **4.2 Size and Scale**

The size of dormers should be kept to a minimum so that the main roof of the house remains the dominant feature. The windows should be clearly smaller than the windows on the main wall of the house so that scale and proportions are visually pleasing (Figure 4.4).

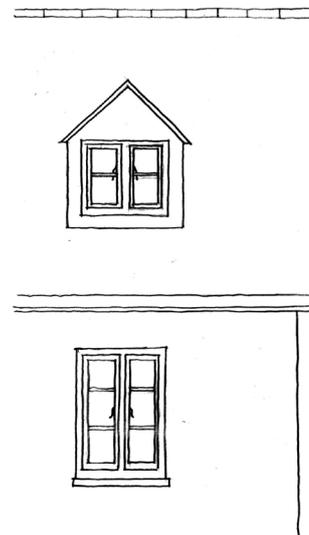


Figure 4.4 Dormer windows should be smaller than the windows on the main wall of the house.

■ **4.3 Design Details**

Flat roof dormers should be avoided. Dormer roofs may be pitched with a gable, or pitched with a hipped front. Low arched roofs may also be acceptable. Dormer cheeks should generally be clad in materials to match the roof (Figure 4.5).



Figure 4.5 A range of designs of dormer roofs may be appropriate to the character of the main house.

■ 4.4 Privacy

Where windows of the proposed roof extension overlook neighbouring properties, a minimum distance of 22m between rear facing habitable rooms should be maintained (Figure 4.6).

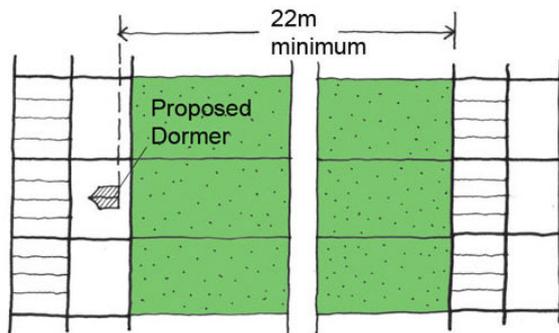


Figure 4.6 Proposed dormer windows should leave at least 22m distance away from the rear habitable rooms of the neighbouring properties.

Roof extensions or alterations to include a balcony or roof terrace will not be acceptable where they are likely to overlook neighbouring properties.

■ 4.5 Alteration to the Roof Shape

Proposals for altering the shape of roofs will not be acceptable (Figure 4.7).



Figure 4.7 The alteration to the shape of roofs is not acceptable (e.g. from hipped roof to gabled roof).

■ 4.6 Checklist

List of Material Considerations		
1.	Is the dormer extension on the rear roof?	Yes/No
2.	Is the dormer at the centre of the roof space? Or if two or more dormers are proposed, are they located symmetrically?	Yes/No
3.	Do the set-ins and set-backs of the dormers meet the City Council's requirements?	Yes/No
4.	Does the dormer relate well to the original house in terms of scale, design details, roof form and materials?	Yes/No
5.	Does the dormer window preserve the privacy of neighbours?	Yes/No

If yes is not the answer to all of above questions, contact the City Council before submitting an application.

Chapter 5

Detached Garages and Outbuildings

Note: This chapter should be read in conjunction with Chapter 1 General Principles.

■ **5.1 Location**

Detached garages and outbuildings should be set back at least 1m from the front main wall of the house and set in from the boundaries by at least 1m (Figure 5.1).

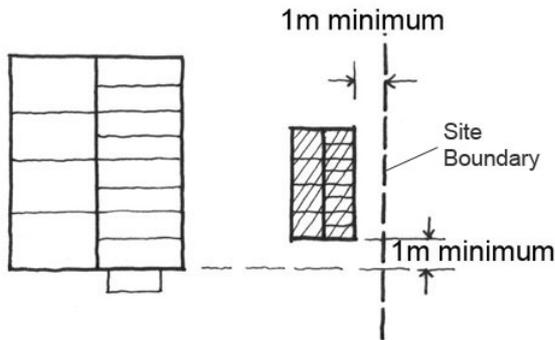


Figure 5.1 Detached outbuildings should be set back at least 1m from the front main building line of the main house and at least 1m from the site boundary.

■ **5.2 Design Details**

Detached garages and outbuildings should be confined to single-storey. Windows should be carefully placed to avoid overlooking. A garage or outbuilding may not be acceptable where changes in level result in walls significantly higher than normal domestic single storey height.

Particular care will need to be taken with the design of double garages which should be accessed by two separate doors divided by a pier (Figure 5.2). For garage doors, vertical timber boarding finished in dark paint or woodstain are appropriate across a range of design styles.

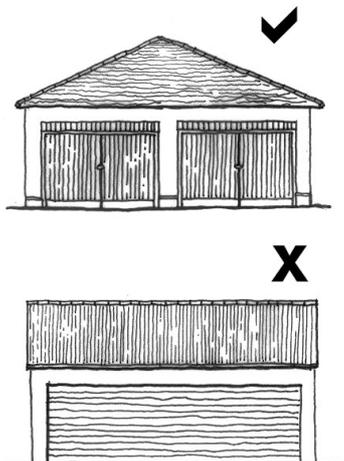


Figure 5.2 Double garages should be accessed by two separate doors divided by a pier.

The width of driveways should be kept to a minimum to reduce the impact on the streetscene and should be surfaced in an attractive material which complements the house and its garden. Enclosure to the street should be maintained by walls, railings, gates and planting (Figure 5.3).



Figure 5.3 The design of detached garages and drives should respect the local streetscene.

■ **5.3 Checklist**

List of Material Considerations		
1.	Is the detached building only to be used for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the main house	Yes/No
2.	Does the detached building preserve daylight and sunlight to neighbours?	Yes/No
3.	Does the detached building preserve the privacy of neighbouring properties?	Yes/No
4.	Does the detached building preserve the outlook of neighbours?	Yes/No
5.	Does the detached building relate well to the original house in terms of design details, roof form and materials?	Yes/No
6.	Is there still 55 square metres of garden after development?	Yes/No
7.	If a detached double garage is being proposed, would it be accessed by two separate doors?	Yes/No
8.	Is the proposed driveway kept minimum in width and is attractively surfaced?	Yes/No
9.	Does the detached building preserve the security of the neighbours?	Yes/No

If yes is not the answer to all of above questions, contact the City Council before submitting an application.

Appendix - Other Issues

■ Other Issues

• Planning Submission Requirements

Planning applications are made by submitting forms, specified scale plans and drawings, any other supporting information and documentation necessary to process the application, and a fee. Details of these requirements may be found at www.exeter.gov.uk/planning

• Consulting Neighbours

Applicants are advised to talk to neighbours before submitting a planning application. Consulting neighbours at an early stage can save time and expense later on by avoiding the need to have plans revised.

• Site Boundaries

No part of the extension including rainwater goods, foundations, canopies and overhangs should extend beyond site boundaries (Figure A1).

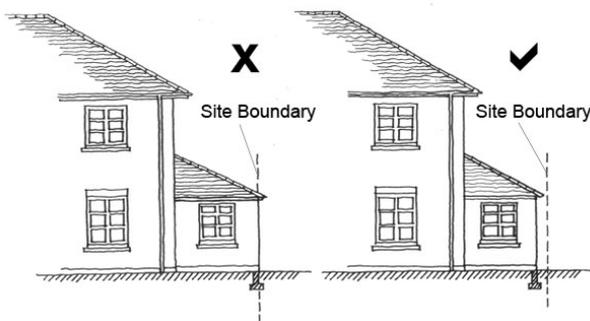


Figure A1 All parts of the extensions including rainwater goods, foundations, canopies and overhangs should be kept within the site boundaries.

• Changing Proposals

A new application is likely to be required for changes to an approved design in terms of dimensions, external appearance or materials. All possible steps should be taken to avoid changes to the design of an extension during construction. It is advisable to seek building regulations approval at the same time as applying for planning permission.

• Guidelines for building work

Ensure you have consent from Devon County Council to store materials and equipment on the highway. Please call for further information.

• Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

Contact the City Council's Conservation Officer or Conservation Planner (Tel: 01392 265227 or 01392 265232 or planning@exeter.gov.uk) to ascertain whether there are any particular conservation area requirements with regard to a proposal. All extensions to listed buildings require 'Listed Building Consent'.

• Archaeology

On very rare occasions development can affect scheduled monuments and their settings. A separate consent is required for this and for ground works within central Exeter. Ground works in other historic areas can also occasionally affect buried remains. Please see the City Council's guidance on Archaeology and Development which is available from Customer First Service Centre or from the website - www.exeter.gov.uk/planning.

• Trees

Important trees need to be protected during construction. The Council has produced the following documents to assist householders and developers to successfully retain trees: Trees and development (A Householders Guide) and Trees in Relation to Development (Supplementary Planning Document). These documents are available from the City Council's Customer First Service Centre or from the Council's website - www.exeter.gov.uk/planning.

Trees within conservation areas, and trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders cannot be felled or pruned without the consent of the Local Planning Authority. Prior to the design stage, contact the City Council's Landscape and Tree Officer (Tel 01392 265228 or planning@exeter.gov.uk) to ascertain if any trees within or adjacent to the site are protected.

• Sustainability

Extensions can provide the opportunity to improve a dwelling's environmental performance by applying energy conservation and water recycling technologies and by including green roofs and green walls where appropriate. Please consult the City Council for further information

Extensions within a zone of medium-high flood risk will require Flood Risk Assessments. For further information contact the Environment Agency on or visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk

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