

## Introduction

This advice leaflet has been produced to help in the planning of your house extension, by identifying the main points to consider, in order to achieve an acceptable proposal.

This leaflet gives general advice only, so it is important to note, that the guidance provided is not site specific and may not be wholly applicable in all situations. Each planning application is dealt with on its own merits, taking into account the likely effect on the character of the building, street or area and the likely effect on neighbouring properties.

## Two storey & first floor rear extensions

Two storey and first floor rear extensions can cause problems of poor outlook and overshadowing and are not normally considered acceptable along the common boundary between adjoining semi-detached or terraced houses. Therefore such extensions should not project more than 3 metres in depth from the rear wall of your house and be at least 3 metres from the party boundary.

Where the rear building line is irregular the 3 metre limit will be taken from the main wall of the neighbouring house. Such extensions may also be considered acceptable if the distance they are positioned away from the nearest common boundary is equal to the projection of the extension itself.

Larger extensions will only be allowed if they would not have an adverse effect on your neighbours or the street scene. Regard will be given to situations where there is an existing single storey or two storey rear extension on an adjoining property, which by its size and orientation could help reduce the impact of your two storey or first floor rear extension, or where such extensions are a general characteristic of the street or terrace. However, account will be taken of the proximity of the adjoining dwellings first floor windows and the potential for your extension to create overshadowing or a poor outlook for your neighbour.



# General Advice

## Planning Permission and Building Regulations

Not all house extensions require planning permission and some are known as permitted development. The legislation governing permitted development rights is complex and subject to change, and Gateshead Council should always be contacted to confirm whether planning permission is required before any work is undertaken. Similarly most house extensions require Building Regulation Approval. Information on Building Regulations can be obtained from the Gateshead Council's Building Control Officers Tel: 0191 433 3146

If you do need planning permission, Gateshead Council offers a pre-application advice service to all members of the public. If you are thinking about submitting a planning or building regulations application in the near future, you may find it helpful to write to Development Control with your proposals to see whether they are likely to be acceptable.

Whilst we welcome the opportunity to provide pre-application advice due to the high numbers of people wishing to extend their property it does take us some time to respond. It may be that the information in this leaflet is sufficient for you to decide what you are able to do but if you need any further guidance then please let us know and we will reply to you as soon as we are able.

## Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Green Belt

If you live in a conservation area or your property is a listed building, you may also need conservation area or listed building consent. Extensions to Listed Buildings and properties within the Conservation Areas and the Green Belt will require particularly careful consideration. In these cases, you should seek early advice from Development Control, before having any plans drawn up.

## Neighbours

It is recommended that you discuss your plans with your neighbours before you apply for planning permission. The Council will notify neighbouring properties inviting comments on your extension once your planning application is submitted.

It is important to note that you cannot attach an extension to your neighbours house, wall or outbuildings without their permission. Also no part of an extension (including foundations, guttering, roof structure or opening windows) may encroach into a neighbours property without their permission. Even if you get planning permission for such an extension it does not affect your neighbours rights under civil law to prevent the works from being carried out.

# Design Guidance for all Extensions

When considering applications for house extensions Gateshead Council will look at four main issues:

- The design in relation to the existing house
- The effect on the street scene and character of the area
- The effect on the neighbouring properties
- The effect on parking facilities and highway safety

## Design in relation to the existing house

You need to look closely at the character and design of your existing house. Whatever type it is, the materials used, the window and door sizes and the roof style should all be taken into account in the design of your extension. It is important that your extension adds to and reflects the style and design of your property.

The size and design of your extension should fit in with the existing property. They should look like smaller additions rather than being overwhelming or obvious enlargements which dominate the property.

The materials of the extension (such as bricks, tiles, rendering, timber etc) should whenever possible match those of the existing property and be of the same colour, texture and size. If matching materials are not available, the materials should be as close a match as possible.

Windows and doors should be of the same proportions, design and materials of the existing house and should be in line with the existing openings.

The general pitch and shape of the roof should match those of the existing house. The Council will normally ask for pitched roofs as they look better than flat roofs, unless this conflicts with the design of the existing property and street scene.

## The effect on the street scene and character of the area

The character of your street and the area/open space around it, also need to be considered. Try to imagine how an extension would fit into the existing street and the established line of houses. It is important that your extension adds to and reflects the character of the area and the open space around it by not being a prominent feature in the street scene and using materials to match those used in the existing house.

## The effect on neighbouring properties

Consider the position of your house in relation to your neighbours. How will the proposal affect their outlook and privacy, and will it overshadow their property? The position of the windows and the size of the extension are very important.

The use of the following separation distances should help to prevent your extension creating a poor outlook or having an unreasonable degree of overlooking and overshadowing to your neighbour's property.

### Separation Distances

As a general rule blank walls of two-storey extensions should be 13 metres from the habitable room windows of nearby homes. As a general guide the walls of two-storey extensions with habitable room windows should be 21 metres from the habitable room windows of nearby homes.

There may be exceptions to this for example where there is significant differences in land levels greater separation distances may be required or if the facing windows are set at a sufficient angle so there is no direct overlooking, or your extension is only single-storey and there is adequate screening a smaller distance may be acceptable.

### Outlook

The planning system cannot protect open views. The Council will however assess if your extension would have an overbearing or oppressive effect over nearby properties.

### Privacy

Windows in extensions should not be placed where they may cause overlooking and unreasonable loss of privacy to adjoining properties. Privacy is normally achieved by keeping a suitable distance from overlooking habitable room windows (main windows of rooms, which people are in for a long period of time, such as living rooms, dining rooms and bedrooms). If you cannot meet these standards, when deciding whether to grant planning permission the character of the area and the present levels of privacy will be assessed.

Measures to resolve overlooking problems could include:

- Moving a window to another side of the extension where overlooking would not be a problem
- Using obscure glazing if the window concerned is to a non-habitable room (a landing, bathroom, hall or second, smaller window in a room with another main window)

- Using high-level windows or rooflights (except on prominent elevations where they may appear out of character)
- Ground floor windows may be screened by fences or walls of not more than 2 metres in height around the rear boundary of the property.

### **Overshadowing**

Your extension should not overshadow neighbouring habitable room windows or private gardens to an unreasonable degree. If your extension is likely to significantly reduce the amount of daylight or sunlight entering a habitable room window or result in significant overshadowing of a major part of a neighbour's garden, this may be a reason not to grant planning permission. To assess this the Council will take account of the position of the neighbour's windows and the way they face in relation to your extension.

### **The effect on parking facilities and highway safety**

Being able to park a car within the boundary of a home can improve the highway congestion of an area. If car parking is currently available on your site, your extension should not normally prevent you from parking at least one car within the boundary of the home. A minimum drive length of 5.5 metres, enough to allow a car to be parked off the road, should be retained. Gates should open inwards so as not to obstruct the footpath.

Detached garages or extensions should not be built where they obstruct views for motorists or pedestrians. Extensions which include a garage, should be at least 5.5 metres back from the pavement to allow a car to pull clear of the road while the garage door is opened. If this 5.5 metre distance cannot be provided, planning permission will only be granted if the Council is satisfied that conditions on the relevant road mean that your garage or extension would cause no serious harm to road safety.

### **Extra Accommodation for Relatives**

An extension for dependant relatives to live with you should normally be linked to your existing property rather than being a separate building within the grounds. If you cannot link the extra accommodation to you property you may consider converting an existing outbuilding (such as a garage).

In all cases the Council is likely to set a condition that the extra accommodation should not be used as a separate unit of accommodation and should only be occupied by relatives of the people living in the main property.

## Balconies & Terraces

The introduction of a balcony or terrace can often be problematic. They can cause a loss of privacy to your neighbours through overlooking into their gardens and sometimes appear out of character. The Council will not normally grant planning permission for balconies or terraces unless the privacy of your neighbour is maintained and the design of the balcony or terrace compliments the design of your existing house and street scene.

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**This guidance is based on the policies that relate to house extensions set out in the Gateshead Unitary Development Plan and the Deposit Draft Plan and should help you to avoid unnecessary delays when you are applying for planning permission.**

To make a valid planning application you will need to submit:

- Four copies of a site location plan
- Four copies of the householder planning application form. This should be an extract from the up-to-date Ordnance Survey plan at a scale of 1:1250.

You should mark the application site boundary with a red line, this is usually the boundary of the site that you own or control.

- Four copies of the existing floor plans and elevations
- Four copies of the proposed floor plans and elevations

These will be at a scale of no less than 1:100. The boundaries of the property should be shown. These plans must also show adjoining properties so that we can make an assessment of the impact of the proposal on its neighbours. The north point should also be shown.

The scale of the existing and proposed drawings should be the same to enable comparisons to be made. The proposed work should be clearly marked. All measurements should be in metric units. Please use metres and millimetres, and square metres or hectares.

If there is a significant change in the level across the site appropriate details (e.g. a site section drawing) should be provided. This is often an important issue where it is proposed to build an extension on a boundary.

For applications which include the provision of a new boundary fence/wall or detached garage you will need four copies of detailed plans and elevation drawings of the proposal. These will be at a scale that is appropriate to what is proposed. Sufficient detail must be given to show where the proposed work is located within the site.

# Contacting Development Control

When contacting Development Control it would be appreciated if you would do so in writing or by making a prior appointment with a member of staff by contacting David Harrison on:

Tel: 0191 4333426

Fax: 0191 4793491

E-mail: [EnquiriesDevcon@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:EnquiriesDevcon@gateshead.gov.uk)

All correspondence should be sent to:

Development Control  
Regulatory Services  
Development & Enterprise  
Gateshead Council  
Regent Street  
Gateshead NE8 1HH