Residential Extensions

A design guide for Householders wishing to carry out works to their home




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Contents

Introduction – what and why

These guidelines offer advice for householders and their professional advisors on the main principles of extending a house, without unduly affecting neighbours and whilst respecting the character of the area. The advice outlines the main considerations taken into account by the Council when assessing planning applications for extensions. Owing to the diversity in house styles throughout the District, it is not possible to cover every eventuality, however general principles can be applied in the majority of cases.

This guidance primarily relates to proposals submitted in the form of planning/listed building applications to this Council for formal consideration, assessment and determination. Although this guidance does not apply to works intended to be constructed as "permitted development" as currently allowed under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) or as proposed to be amended as advised in the recently published Government White Paper, the principles contained within it are matters that this Council would encourage in all development.

If you wish to seek further advice please do not hesitate to contact the Planning Department.

Owners of property are also reminded of the importance of obtaining planning permission for works that require it before commencement of development. Failure to do so could result in potential problems and the need for the Council to take enforcement action, or delays when it comes to selling a property when seeking to rectify the situation.

Key principles

When planning your extension, it is necessary to consider three important questions:

1) **What effect will it have on the character of the area?**

   Every area has its own particular character. Look at your house and the surrounding area. How much space is there between buildings? Is there a particular design of property? Are the properties of a certain size? Try to envisage what your extension would look like from the road and other properties. Is there a particular design of property? Are the properties of a certain size?

2) **What effect will it have on neighbouring properties?**

   The size and position of your extension may affect your neighbours. They will be consulted when you submit your application so it is important that your extension is designed in such a way that it will not adversely affect them. Discuss your proposals with your neighbours early in the process.

3) **How will the extension look in relation to the existing house?**

   What type is the existing house? Is it detached, semi-detached or terraced? How old is it? What materials have been used? What shape roof does it have? What sort of windows and doors does it have? Use the answers to these questions as a guide to designing the extension which should reflect the appearance and scale of the existing house. To provide a sympathetic addition, an extension must not dominate the existing house. It should look like a smaller addition rather than being overwhelming or an obvious enlargement.

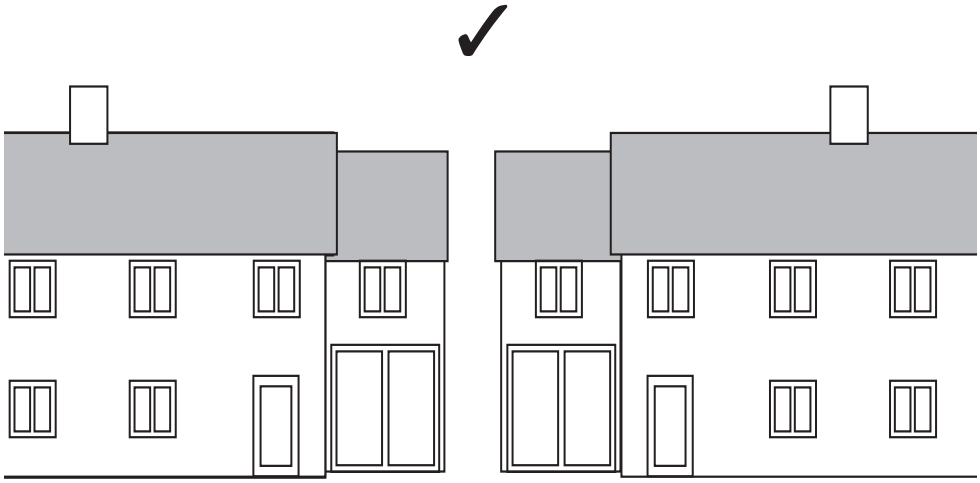
Types of extensions

Side Extensions

It often looks better to make a two-storey side extension appear as an obvious addition by keeping it behind the front wall and below the ridge of the existing house.

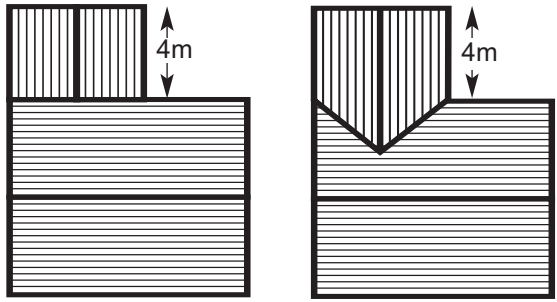
Side extensions should respect the scale of the existing dwelling. The width of a side extension should be less than the width of the front of the existing house. This is especially important for semi-detached properties so that the balance of the pair of dwellings is not affected.

The gaps between buildings are often an important element of the street scene. Two storey side extensions should normally be at least one metre from the side boundary of the property to ensure that gaps between buildings are retained and a terracing effect avoided (where it appears that one property is linked to the next).



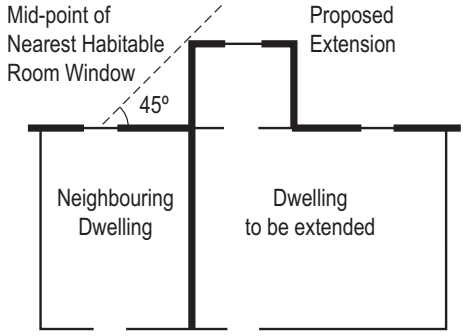
Rear Extensions (including conservatories)

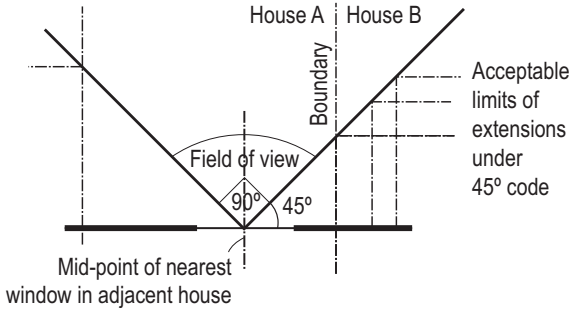
Two storey rear extensions and single storey rear extensions should not normally extend more than four metres from the rear of the house. Please note that conservatories are considered in the same way as other extensions.



45 Degree Code

To maintain a reasonable relationship between a rear extension and any adjoining property, the Council will assess all extensions against the 45 degree code. The code aims to guide the size and designs of extensions in order to ensure that they do not adversely affect a neighbour's outlook or daylight.





Front Extensions (including porches)

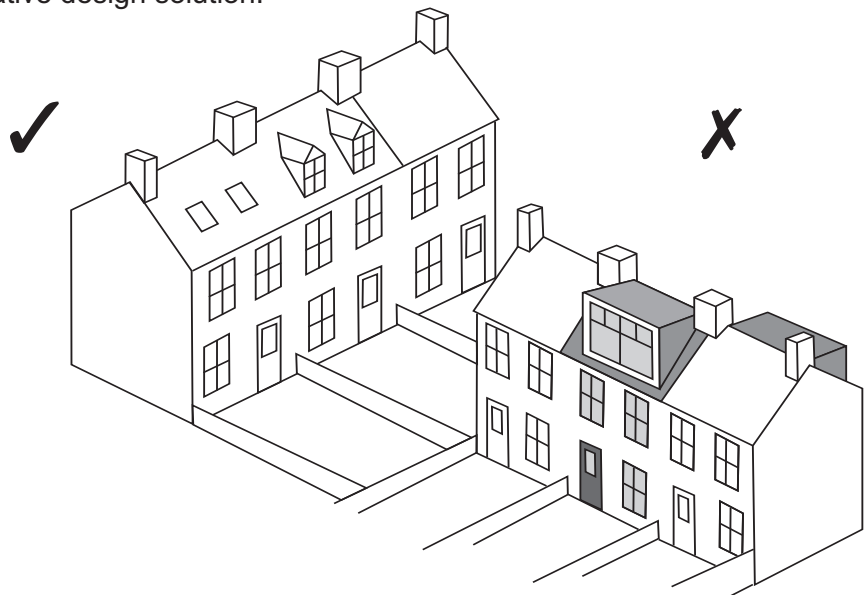
The design and appearance of the fronts of houses and the distance between the buildings and the road frontages are important aspects in defining the character of residential areas. Generally only modest extensions which are in keeping with the character of the existing house will be allowed eg porches. Front extensions should not significantly alter the appearance of the front of the house.

Dormer Windows

A dormer should not dominate the existing roof but should complement the existing features of the house in terms of proportion, size and position. Overbearing or top heavy dormers which destroy the existing roof slope should be avoided. Small hipped or gable ended style dormers should be used rather than large flat roofed dormers.

Generally dormer extensions should be located and designed so as to minimise their impact upon the appearance of the property and the street scene as well as protecting neighbouring properties from overlooking.

Velux windows often have a lesser impact and may therefore be an alternative design solution.



Garages

As with any other extension, garages should sympathetically relate to the main dwelling, whether they are adjoined or freestanding. The garage should not be in a position that detracts from the attractiveness of the street scene and should normally be behind the front line of the building. Your garage should not appear too high or bulky in relation to your property or neighbouring buildings. Any accommodation in the roof should not overlook neighbouring properties.

In order that vehicles can be parked in front of garages without overhanging the pavement, a distance of 6 metres from the garage door and the footpath should be provided.

Extensions To Dwellings In The Countryside

It is important that extensions to dwellings in the countryside are subordinate to the existing dwelling. Extensions should be designed to be in keeping with the character of the existing dwelling and must not be harmful to the rural character of the area.

'Granny Annexes'

Whilst many of the above principles will apply to 'granny annexes', these extensions to accommodate elderly, dependent or disabled relatives may have some additional requirements. Annexes should normally be physically connected to the main property and should usually share some facilities with the parent dwelling, eg: Kitchen. Separate annexes will usually only be considered where there is a suitable existing outbuilding which is capable of being converted without being substantially extended. Annexes should be designed to be accessible for people in wheelchairs or easily capable of adaptation. They must remain ancillary to the main house, in other words they should not be let or sold separately. It may be necessary to attach conditions to any planning permission to secure this.

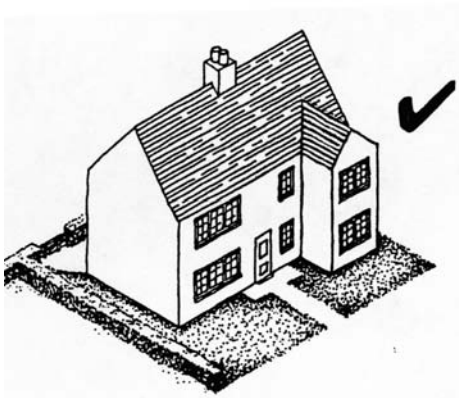
Other considerations

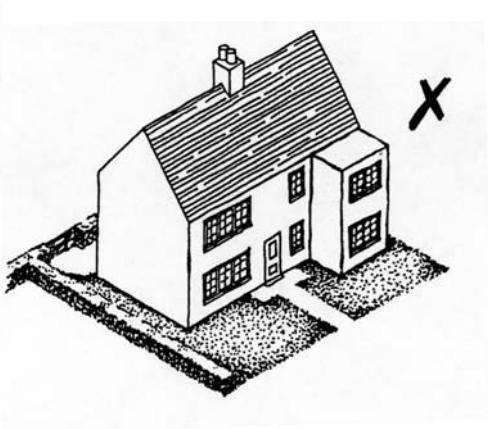
Materials

Building materials should match where possible. On a prominent wall, you should avoid old and new brickwork meeting on the same plane by setting the extension back from the main wall of the existing building by at least one course of bricks.

Roofs

The angle and shape of the proposed roof should match the angle and shape of the existing roof. The ridge on the extension should be lower than that of the main building. Flat roofs should generally be avoided but particularly on front and two storey extensions.





Windows and Doors
The type, shape and size of these should match the existing. Doors and windows should be positioned so as to respect the design of the existing house and windows should line up with each other horizontally and vertically. In addition glazing patterns, depth of insert and general proportions should be respected.

Sunlight
Some large extensions may restrict sunlight to the neighbouring property. This situation is likely to occur where the rear of properties have a southern orientation and needs to be taken into consideration when planning extensions.

Overlooking
Windows overlooking adjoining properties can result in a serious loss of privacy which would be detrimental to their amenity. To maintain a reasonable degree of privacy for the occupants of adjacent dwellings, the position of windows must be taken into account. Balconies, roof gardens and first floor patios can adversely affect the privacy of neighbours and will generally be unacceptable.

Trees and Hedges
Existing trees and hedgerows should be retained where possible. Some trees are protected such as those within a Conservation Area or those covered by a Tree Preservation Order. Extensions that would result in damage to a significant or protected tree may be refused planning permission. This includes building within an area known as the root protection area (RPA). In addition, trees on adjacent land may have root protection areas that could restrict development on your property. If your proposal affects a tree, you are advised to contact the Council's Tree Officers.

Neighbours

Householders are advised to discuss any proposals they are likely to make with their neighbours before submitting a planning application. If an extension is built close to the boundary, access to a neighbour's property may be needed to build and maintain it, and the neighbour's consent would be required. This permission would still be required even after obtaining planning permission from the Council. In addition you are advised that the provisions of the 'Party Wall Act' may apply therefore you may need to seek separate legal advice. Please note that boundary ownership and any covenants on the deeds of a property are legal matters separate from the planning system.

Boundary Fences and Walls

The character and appearance of the street scene can be greatly affected by boundary treatments. Some areas are open plan and therefore a fence or wall may not be appropriate. Whether or not a fence or wall requires planning permission, it is important that the height, materials and design is in keeping with the surrounding buildings and context of the area. Walls and fences should also be designed and positioned so as not to restrict highway visibility.

Safety and Security

Good design can improve the security of a building and its garden. For example, avoid creating areas that cannot be easily surveyed - high walls and fences might provide privacy but can also screen areas from public view. For more information, contact the Police Architectural Liaison Officer or visit www.securebydesign.com.

Protected Species

Works to buildings, particularly works to roofs and outbuildings may affect the habitat of protected species such as bats, owls and wild birds. Many wild species are protected by law so it is important to assess whether any species are present prior to works being undertaken. Where such species are detected, mitigation measures may be designed into a scheme. For more information, contact Natural England or the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

Development in Flood Zones

Some areas within the District are designated as flood zone areas. If you are planning to build within a flood zone, your application will need to be accompanied by a document known as a 'Flood Risk Assessment' (FRA) which sets out how the building will be designed to accommodate being within the flood zone. For example, issues such as the height of the extension's floor level and the position of power points need to be considered. To see if your property is within a flood zone, and if so what is required within the FRA, contact the Council's Planning Section or the Environment Agency.

Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

If you live within a Conservation Area or your property is a Listed Building, you may also need Conservation Area or Listed Building consent.

If you wish to alter or extend a Listed Building you will need Listed Building Consent and we will carefully examine your application to make sure the historic and architectural character of your property is maintained. You may need to hire an appropriate professional to make your application and we recommend you get advice from the Council at an early stage.

Extensions to properties in a Conservation Area must be carefully designed to maintain or improve the character of the area. In addition, applications for extensions within a Conservation Area need to be accompanied by a ‘Design and Access Statement’. This is a statement that explains the design thinking behind a proposal and how the local context has influenced the design.

Satellite Dishes and Antennae

Whether they need permission or are being installed as permitted development, satellite dishes and antennae should be installed in such a way to minimise the impact on the appearance of the building. To look at different options of where to install a dish or antenna, see the Planning Portal's 'Siting Your Antenna' at www.planningportal.gov.uk.

Solar Panels, Wind Turbines and Other Renewable Energy Systems

There are a range of technologies designed to utilise renewable energy in order to generate power for domestic properties. Examples of such technologies include solar panels, photovoltaic panels, flat plate water heating solar collectors, tube water heating solar collectors and wind turbines. Many of these systems are available in roof mounted or free-standing versions. When considering any of these systems, the following points should be taken into consideration:

1) Care needs to be given to the visual impact of the system. The systems should be located where they are least visually intrusive. With some technologies this may not always be possible as they have to be located so as to maximise wind or solar power. Where a system is considered to be overly prominent, planning permission may not be granted. This also includes systems which may appear bulky or may project too much from the roof, either horizontally of vertically.

2) Certain systems, in particular wind turbines, may generate noise. Where the amount of noise generated is too great, planning permission may not be issued. The system manufacturers or suppliers should be able to tell you what the potential noise generation of each system is, and the Council's Environmental Health Section can advise on the noise implications.

3) For roof mounted systems, it is crucial that the load capacity of the roof can support the system. For further advice, please contact the Council's Building Control Section.

4) In order to assess whether a system is energy efficient, you may wish to consider the amount of energy produced by the system versus the 'payback time'. In other words, the economic return may only be achieved over a period of several years, or the energy costs of manufacturing and installing the system may outweigh the energy they produce.

Energy efficiency can be designed into new buildings. One example is the use of passive solar gain which is where certain rooms are orientated to maximise the sun. Other examples include water conservation systems such as rainwater harvesting and grey water re-use. For more information on renewable energy systems and energy efficiency in buildings, see the contacts and references section below.

Permitted Development and Building Regulations

Planning permission is not needed for all house extensions. Some works come under the regulations for 'permitted development' which are complex and subject to change. 'Permitted development' rights vary from property to property and are dependent upon such factors as house type, location and the amount of extensions already undertaken. Please check with the Council before any work is undertaken. In addition there is a free booklet produced by the Government entitled 'Planning, A Guide for Householders' which is available from the Council or visit www.communities.gov.uk.

Most house extensions also require approval under the 'Building Regulations'. The Building Control Section is responsible for carrying out inspections of extensions to ensure they are structurally sound and comply with the Building Acts legislation, which is separate from planning permission. Please contact the Council's Building Control Section for further information.

Precedent

There may be examples of extensions in the area which do not comply with these guidelines. Any such examples should not be seen as a precedent and will not be accepted as a reason to allow a similar proposal.

Further Advice

This guidance is based on experience in providing advice on proposed extensions, but it is not a substitute for professional help from an architect, surveyor or building engineer.

Local Plan Policies

This guidance has been produced to identify the key points to consider in achieving a successful design for a house extension: one that protects the character of the property and the local area and does not adversely impact on the living conditions of neighbours. It supplements specific policies within the North Kesteven Local Plan and is consistent with national and regional planning policies. The Local Plan is available to view at the Council offices or on our website. In time, the North Kesteven Local Plan will be superseded by a series of policy documents known as the Local Development Framework (LDF). This guidance will in turn supplement the policies within the new LDF.

Useful Contacts and References

Anglian Water
PO Box 770
Lincoln LN5 7WX
www.anglianwater.co.uk

British Wind Energy Association
1 Aztec Row
Berners Road
London N1 0PW
www.bwea.com

Communities and Local Government Free Literature
PO Box 236
Wetherby LS23 NB
www.communities.gov.uk

English Heritage
PO Box 569
Swindon SN2 2YP
www.english-heritage.org.uk

Environment Agency
Waterside House
Waterside North
Lincoln LN2 5HA
Tel: 08708 506506
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Highways Authority Lincolnshire County Council
County Offices
Newland
Lincoln LN1 1YL
Tel: 01522 782070
www.lincolnshire.gov.uk

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
Banovallum House
Manor House Street
Horncastle
Lincolnshire LN9 5HF
www.lincstrust.org.uk

Natural England
Northminster House
Peterborough PE1 1UA
www.naturalengland.org.uk

Planning Portal
www.planningportal.gov.uk

Police Architectural Liaison Officer
Lincolnshire County Council
County Offices
Newland
Lincoln LN1 1YL
Tel: 01522 782070
www.lincolnshire.gov.uk

Renewable Energy Association
1 Waterloo Place
London SW1Y 4AK
www.r-p-a.org.uk

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
37 Spital Square
London E1 6DY

The Georgian Group
6 Fitzroy Square
London W1T 5DX

The Victorian Society
1 Priory Gardens
London W4 1TT

References and Documents

Planning: a Guide for Householders
(NKDC or www.communities.gov.uk)

Do You Need Planning Permission?
(Planning Portal, www.planningportal.gov.uk)

Siting Your Antenna, including satellite dishes
(Planning Portal, www.planningportal.gov.uk)

Party Wall Act 1996
(NKDC or www.communities.gov.uk)

Small Wind Energy Systems
(British Wind Energy Association, www.bwea.com)

The Green Guide to Housing Specification
(www.breeam.org.uk)

Advice for Owners of Listed Buildings
Georgian Group guides on topics including windows, brickwork, roofs and fireplaces
(English Heritage, www.english-heritage.org.uk)

Victorian Society guides
on topics including doors, brickwork and timber windows

SPAB guides
on topics including pointing stone and brick, repairing timber frames and building limes

Trees in Relation to Construction, British Standard 5837:2005
(NKDC or www.bsi-global.com)

Glossary of Terms

Accessibility
Designing buildings and spaces to provide access to all, including those with disabilities.

Agent
A specialist acting on your behalf in the design of the works to your house and the preparation of your application. The agent is usually an architect or building surveyor.

Character
The combination of features of a building or an area that give it its distinctive identity compared with other buildings or areas.

Conservation Area
An area designated by the Council as having a special historic character and appearance.

Context
The setting or surrounding of a building, usually the area from which the building can be seen.

Design and Access Statement
A document detailing how the design of proposed development has been considered in relation to its scale, impact on the surrounding area, and accessibility to all users, including disabled and transport access.

Dormer Window
A window set in a roof which projects from the roof.

Elevation
The external faces of a building.

Fenestration
The arrangement, size and proportions of windows.

Flood Risk Assessment
A document assessing how new development will impact on a flood zone and what measures can be designed to help mitigate this impact.

Footprint
The area and shape of the building on the ground.

45 Degree Code
The angle taken from the centre point of a neighbour's window in order to determine the size limits of an extension.

Gable
The triangular upper portion of a wall at the end of a pitched roof.

Habitable Room
Includes rooms such as living rooms, dining rooms, bedrooms and studies. Does not include hall ways or bathrooms.

Hipped Roof
A roof sloping (pitched) in two directions; side as well as front and back.

Listed Building
A building which has been given special protection for its architectural or historic interest. The protection covers the whole of the building (internally and externally) and its fixtures, as well as any other buildings and boundary walls within the property's garden. Most Listed Buildings are categorised as Grade II, whereas more special buildings are Grade II* or Grade I.

Permitted Development
Some domestic extensions, garages, sheds, installations and boundary treatments benefit from 'permitted development'. In other words an application for planning permission will not be required as they are already types of development which benefit from permission.

Pitched Roof
A sloping roof, usually at an angle between 30 and 50 degrees.

Plane
A level surface.

Protected Species
Creatures protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This includes owls, bats and all wild birds, their eggs and their active nests.

Ridge
The horizontal top edge of the roof.

Renewable Energy Systems
Systems which produce power from naturally and repeatedly occurring energy sources such as the sun, water and wind. Examples include solar panels, photovoltaic panels, solar thermal tubes and micro wind turbines.

Roof light
A window set within the slope of a roof (sometimes known as a 'Velux' window).

Root Protection Area
The calculated area surrounding a tree where the trees roots spread. This area should be protected from building works, storage of materials and accesses.

Secure by Design
Looking at designing buildings and spaces so as to reduce the potential for criminal activity and anti-social behaviour.

Streetscene
The character of the street or road in which the building in located.

Subservient / Subordinate
The effect of an extension on the original building ie the extension should not dominate the original.

Symmetrical
When the design of the building is identical either side of the centreline of a building.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO)
A tree protected for its quality, appearance and contribution to the area. Works to lop, top or fell a protected tree require prior consent.

How To Contact Us

In Person or By Letter North Kesteven District Council
District Council Offices, Kesteven Street Sleaford
Lincs NG34 7EF

By Phone: 01529 414155 or 01522 699699 from a Lincoln number

By Minicom: 01529 308088

By Fax: 01529 413956

Via Website: www.n-kesteven.gov.uk

By Email: customer_services@n-kesteven.gov.uk

Emergency out of hours telephone: 01529 308308 or 01522 699650

Alternative formats:

This document is available on request in a number of different formats and languages. These include large print, Braille, audio tape, and electronic formats such as disk/CD.

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