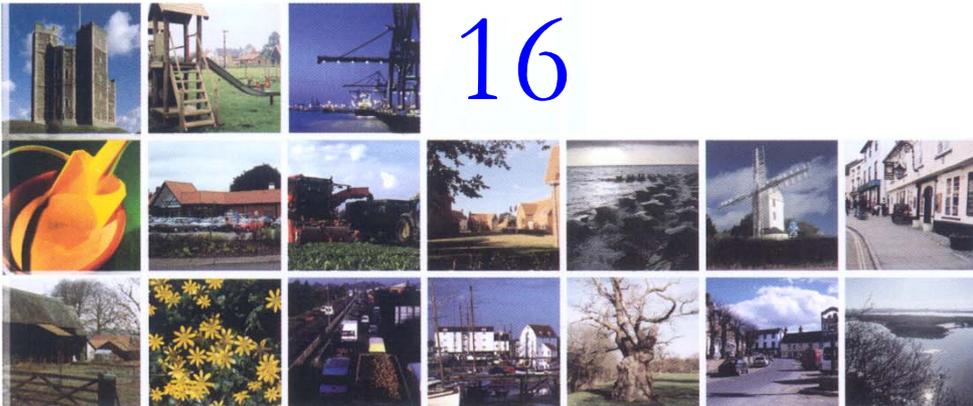


The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan

Supplementary Planning Guidance

16



House Alterations and Extensions

September 2003



On 1st April 2019, East Suffolk Council was created by parliamentary order, covering the former districts of Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council. The Local Government (Boundary Changes) Regulations 2018 (part 7) state that any plans, schemes, statements or strategies prepared by the predecessor council should be treated as if it had been prepared and, if so required, published by the successor council. Therefore this document applies to the part of the East Suffolk Council area formerly covered by the Suffolk Coastal District until such time that it is replaced.

Following the reforms to the Planning system through the enactment of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 all Supplementary Planning Guidance's can only be kept for a maximum of three years. It is the District Council's intention to review each Supplementary Planning Guidance in this time and reproduce these publications as Supplementary Planning Documents which will support the policies to be found in the Local Development Framework which is to replace the existing Suffolk Coastal Local Plan First Alteration, February 2001.

Some Supplementary Planning Guidance dates back to the early 1990's and may no longer be appropriate as the site or issue may have been resolved so these documents will be phased out of the production and will not support the Local Development Framework. Those to be kept will be reviewed and republished in accordance with new guidelines for public consultation. A list of those to be kept can be found in the Suffolk Coastal Local Development Scheme December 2004.

Please be aware when reading this guidance that some of the Government organisations referred to no longer exist or do so under a different name. For example MAFF (Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) is no longer in operation but all responsibilities and duties are now dealt with by DEFRA (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). Another example may be the DETR (Department of Environment, Transport and Regions) whose responsibilities are now dealt with in part by the DCLG (Department of Communities & Local Government).

If you have any questions or concerns about the status of this Supplementary Planning Guidance please contact a member of the Local Plan team who will be able to assist you in the first instance.

We thank you for your patience and understanding as we feel it inappropriate to reproduce each document with the up to date Government organisations name as they change.

FOREWORD

Over recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of people wanting to extend their homes. The rapid increase in house prices, and the scarcity of land for building new homes means that for more and more people, an extension is the best, sometimes the only, way in which their standard of accommodation can be improved.

The impacts of this trend on our communities, large and small, are becoming more and more significant, as is the workload on the Planning System to adequately deal with the issues that arise both for applicants and for their neighbours in the large volume of applications now arising.

Suffolk Coastal District Council has therefore, after widespread consultations, produced this Planning Guidance, which we hope will help all parties involved:

- For applicants and their professional advisers, to give consistent clear guidance about how to achieve the desired results in a way that will be acceptable to their neighbours and the community generally, and hence be likely to receive Planning Permission.
- For neighbours and local town and parish councils, to indicate the criteria that are likely to be relevant in considering whether to support or object to proposed extensions.
- For the Planners, to provide a clear and consistent reference base against which to judge whether planning permission should be granted and so to speed up their work without any loss of quality in the decisions which are made.

In summary, we hope that this guidance will mean that we can achieve swift decisions on house extensions that are consistent and as acceptable as possible to all parties. It fits into the formal Planning Structure as follows:

The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (incorporating the first alteration) was statutorily adopted in February 2001. This publication is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance documents which are being produced by the Council to explain in more detail the aims and objectives of the Local Plan policies and how they will be applied and implemented in practice. Their purpose is to assist those preparing planning applications and the Council in determining such applications.

In this case, this Supplementary Planning Guidance is published principally to:

- Explain the criteria the Council will have regard to in determining planning applications for householder development in accordance with policies AP19 (design) and AP34 (extensions in the countryside).
- Encourage house owners and occupiers to adopt designs and use materials sympathetic to their property and its surroundings.
- Minimise significant adverse impacts upon neighbours resulting from house extensions and alterations.

In preparing this Guidance the Council is aware of its obligation to act in compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998, particularly Article 1 of the First Protocol and Article 8 of the principal Human Rights.

Andy Smith
Cabinet Member for Planning

Jeremy Schofield
Director of Development and Community Services

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Sympathetic alterations or extensions to a house generally enhance its resale value. Conversely, poorly designed or executed work which detracts from the character of the house can depress its value, and/or be un-neighbourly.

For instance, if the proposals are:

- too bulky and dominant
- positioned inappropriately in relation to the original house
- inappropriate in design
- built up to the boundary
- constructed of materials which do not complement the building
- intrusive to the character of the street scene

- then they are likely to be unattractive and poor neighbours.

- 1.2 This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) aims to support Council policies on design, and on Extensions in the Countryside by setting out the criteria that will be used to judge planning applications for domestic alterations and extensions. The Guide includes recommended approaches to design which are likely to be appropriate to the building and its setting and which are therefore more likely to be granted planning permission. It is intended to complement existing guidance relating to:

- Historic buildings as set out in SPG13, 'Historic Buildings: Repairs/Alterations and Extensions';
- Small Residential Developments as set out in SPG7, 'The Location and Design of Small Residential Developments'.

- 1.3 Alterations/extensions to your home may require planning permission. The Council's Planning Officers will be pleased to advise whether permission is required. If your home is a Listed Building or in a Conservation Area, additional controls and stricter criteria apply and a special approval, known as Listed Building Consent, may be needed. If you are in doubt as to whether this applies to you, contact the Development Control service at the Council Offices (see Appendix 4).

- 1.4 You may also require Building Regulations Approval (see Appendix 4). Whereas Planning Permission deals with the appearance and location of the extension, Building Regulations Approval is concerned with safety and constructional standards.

- 1.5 The intention is that this SPG will help provide consistency to the decision making process by setting out the criteria that will be used to determine applications for householder development.

2. POLICY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (incorporating the First Alteration) is intended to guide and control development within the District for the period up to 2006. Several policies are of relevance when considering alterations and extensions to dwellings.
- 2.2 Policy AP19 of the Local Plan plus supporting text (see Appendix 3) seeks to prevent proposals which comprise poor design and to promote good design. The policy also makes it clear that in determining planning applications the District Council will have regard to Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).
- 2.3 Policy AP34 (see Appendix 3) refers to the criteria specifically for determining planning applications for extensions and replacement dwellings in the Countryside. In policy terms the "Countryside" is land lying outside defined settlement boundaries. The policy allows for a "modest" change to dwellings so as to maintain a supply of small dwellings in the countryside and to retain the character of dwellings in the rural landscape.
- 2.4 There are a number of policies relating to the special considerations/criteria that need to be considered when determining planning applications for listed buildings (Policy AP5) and Conservation Areas (Policy AP1) which are not set out here but which need to be taken into account if a property is a listed building or located in a Conservation Area.

3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 This SPG is not intended to limit imaginative and innovative design; the Council will continue to assess each application for planning permission on its own merits. It is, however, concerned to highlight good practice and to dissuade would-be home extenders from seeking consent for particularly large, unsuitable or overly cost-conscious additions which will destroy the composition of existing buildings. (*See Drawing opposite*).
- 3.2 Good design is not a matter of personal taste. There are well-established principles which should be understood and observed. These principles can be divided into two main categories:
 - *Appearance*:- This category is concerned with how the extension looks, and the contribution it makes to the house and surrounding area. The considerations include context, scale, form, height, architectural details and use of materials.
 - *Effect on neighbours*:- This relates to the impact extensions have on homes close by, particularly in relation to privacy and access to light.

Typical urban house with single story extension



Proposed extension which is overscaled in relation to the original house.



Two-storey extension which may relate better to the size and shape to the original house



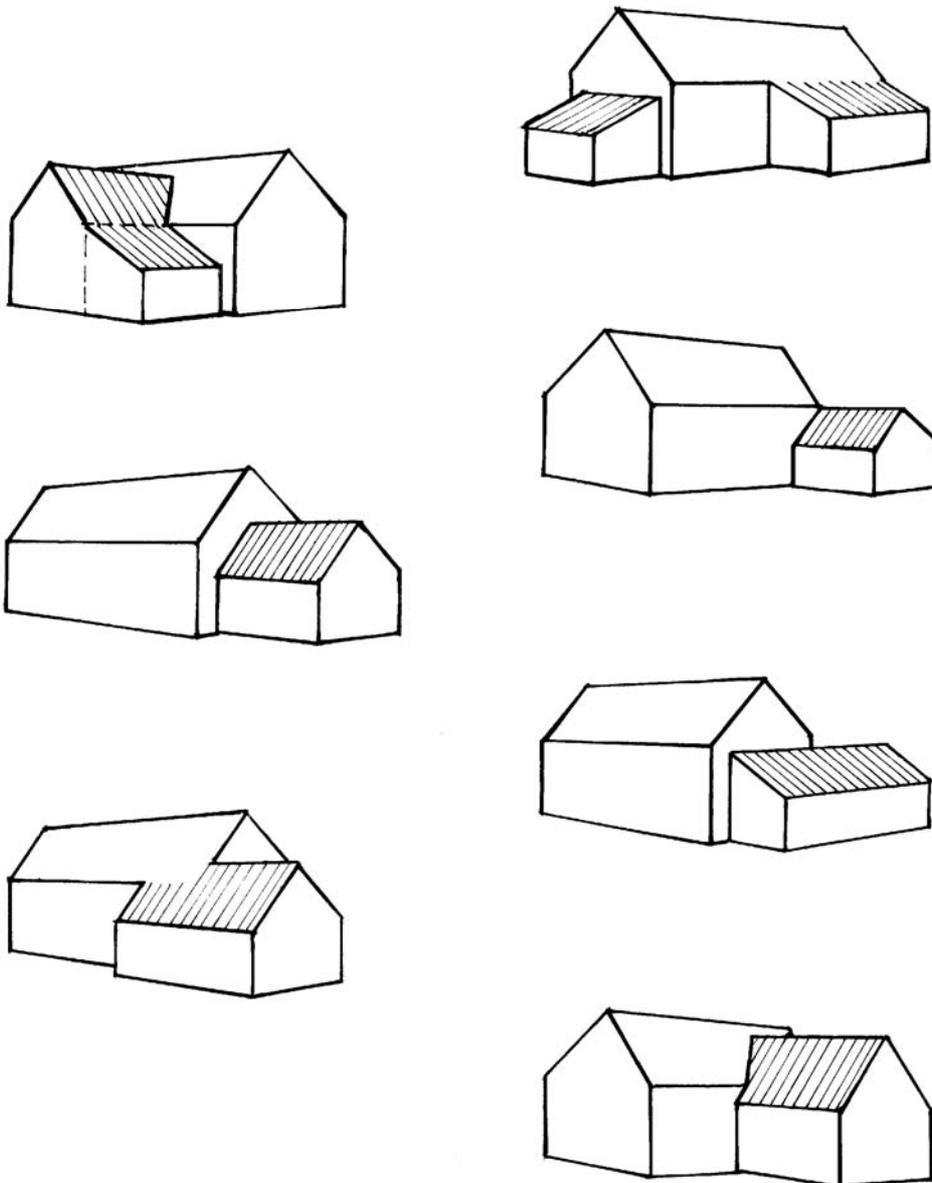
4. APPEARANCE

Basic Principles

- 4.1 Extensions and alterations to existing dwellings should respect the character and design of the original building. Over-large extensions which lose the character of the original building are likely to be unacceptable in design terms, and would not be 'modest' in the context of extensions in the Countryside (see Appendix 3).
- 4.2 In order to provide a design break between old and new work a set back will often be advisable (*see Drawing below*). This will lessen the impact of the extension and help retain the integrity of the original building. When building on a matching alignment it is important to match materials and detailing.



- 4.3 Extensions of similar form to the original house but of a subordinate style may be acceptable subject to other criteria in this SPG being met. (*See Drawing 3 below*).



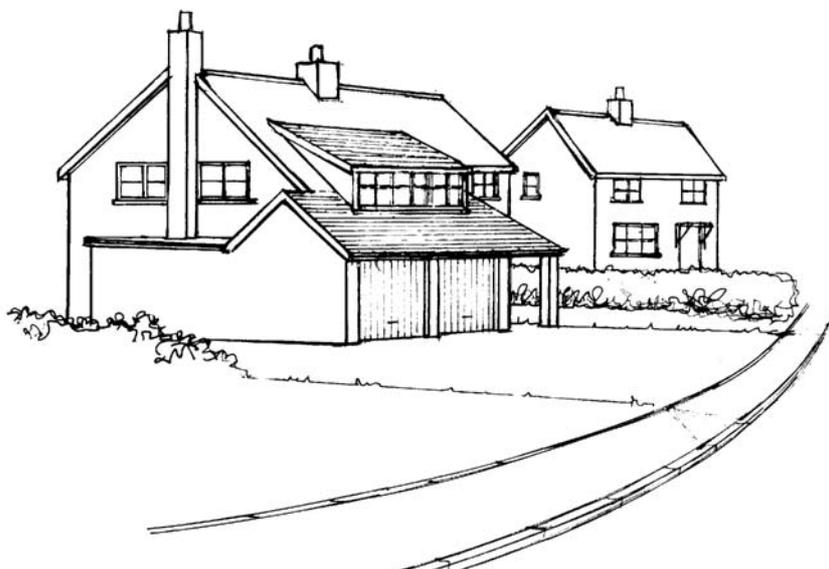
- 4.4 At the outset consideration should be given to the need to retain adequate off road car parking and amenity space for the dwelling. The requirements for amenity provision will depend upon the size/nature of the dwelling and that for parking will relate to local road conditions and location. For example an extension to a one-bed flat in a town centre may require no car parking and limited amenity space given the local availability of transport, services and public open space. A family house in a suburban location with poor public transport links and limited available on-street parking is likely to require the retention of garaging/parking and reasonable amenity/garden space.

Impact on Streetscene

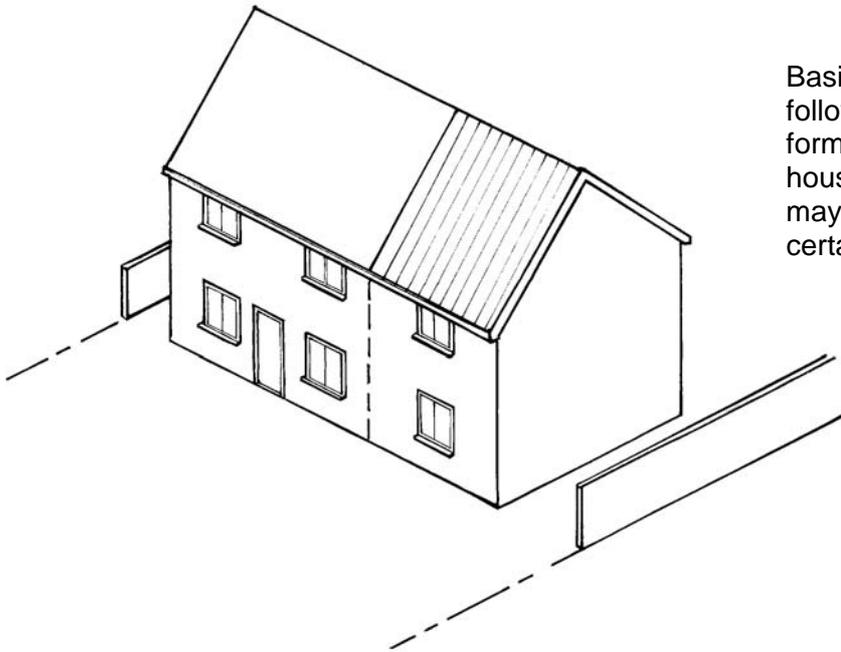
- 4.5 The position of an extension will influence the effect it has on the appearance of the building. By far the most common and practical type of extension is to the rear. Such extensions rarely have an impact on the streetscene.
- 4.6 Side extensions present greater problems as they may have an impact on the streetscene and the 'public' face of the building. However, single storey extensions can often be added without difficulty. Two storey side extensions on the other hand can damage the character of an area by closing the gaps between buildings and producing a terracing effect. (*See Drawing below*).



- 4.7 Large front extensions can also have a significant adverse impact upon the streetscene. (*See Drawing below*).

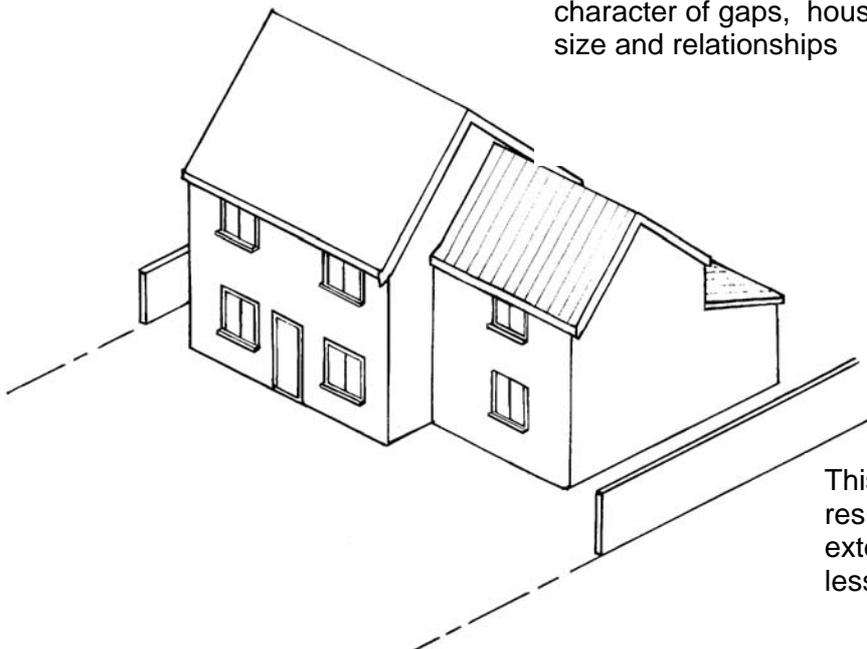


- 4.8 The Council will usually seek to set back side extensions to maintain 'gaps' between buildings and, where necessary, to preserve the character of the streetscene may insist that first floor extensions are set from the boundary by between 1 and 2 metres. *(See Drawing below).*



Basic extension that follows closely the shape, form and character of the house. This approach may be acceptable in certain cases

A set back may be needed to retain the street character of gaps, house size and relationships



This approach may result in the extension having less first floor space

Design Details

4.9 Detailed guidance in respect of altering and extending traditional buildings is contained in SPG13. This SPG therefore sets out in summary some of key issues the Council will consider when determining proposals to extend/alter dwellings.

a) Overall Shape and Proportions

The shape and proportions of the extension should be in harmony with the house. Shape is heavily influenced by the type of roof chosen. Usually, the shape of the roof on the extension should be of similar shape and style to the roof of the main building. New roof ridges should not normally exceed the height of the original. A new ridgeline which is set lower than that of the original will generally be preferred. Any set back used on the front elevation should preferably be carried through at roof level as this can help accommodate an extension without affecting the appearance of houses. Single storey extensions should also have pitched roofs, especially where visible from public viewpoints. (*See Drawing below*).



b) Roof Extensions

Dormers should generally have pitched roofs, be physically small and set into the roof slope so they are not a strident feature in the roof as a whole (*see Drawing opposite*). Rear roof slopes, which are less visible, may be able to accept larger additions but these need to be carefully designed as over-dominant or box-like roof extensions can be particularly incongruous. Alterations to the roof, as a whole, should not destroy the original roof form and the materials selected should be compatible with the existing roof material. Roof lights should be small and preferably positioned in less prominent roof slopes. Care needs to be taken when introducing upper floor windows/dormers in terms of the impact upon a group of houses of the same design. Such alterations can look incongruous and may adversely affect the streetscene as a whole if not carefully designed. In some sensitive locations, eg the setting of a listed building or in a Conservation Area, such alterations may be inappropriate because of their adverse impact on the streetscene.

Dormers can appear wide; bulky; here they are located too close to the ridge. They are out of character on low pitch bungalows



Long large dormers are too bulky for the size of the roof



Small dormers located further down the roof appear more balanced



c) Windows and Doors

Generally it is preferable to continue the pattern of openings from the original building and to position openings to complement the balance created by the new extension. The proportion and style of windows, including window heads and cills, should echo those of the main house. (*See Drawing below*).



d) Materials

Choose materials for the exterior that make the extension seem as if it is part of the original house. The use of different material may completely undermine visual continuity. Careful matching of materials is important if a close match cannot be achieved then a significant setback may be the only option.

e) Details

A good design with appropriate detailing produces a satisfactory end result. Details are often the key to successful integration of designs for extensions, especially for traditional buildings. Details such as string courses, interesting bargeboards, cast iron rainwater goods, brick detailing or chimneys can often be carried across into extensions. If ornamental lintels and sills are used on the main house they should be repeated – it is important that they appear large enough to bear the load above. Many windows and doors are recessed on older houses and it will look best if this is repeated on the extension. Recessing windows also helps to protect the frames from damage by rainwater.

f) Garages

Garages are utility structures which should not obscure or dominate the house. Ideally free-standing garages should be situated behind the main house frontage and be modest in scale and match the design of the dwelling. Integral garages should be designed such that the opening/door does not dominate the front elevation of the dwelling.

g) Porches

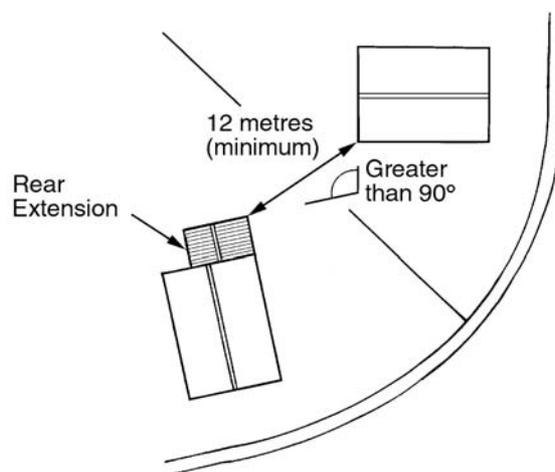
Porches should be simple in design and modest in size. Meter cupboards and bin storage areas if visible from the street should be accommodated unobtrusively whilst being easy to get to.

5. IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURS

- 5.1 The impact of alterations/extensions, particularly rear extensions, upon neighbours is a material planning consideration which the Council will have regard to when determining householder applications. In this context applicants should submit details of the relationship of a proposed extension/alteration to adjoining/surrounding properties. The key issues the Council will consider when assessing householder applications will be impact of any proposals upon privacy, sunlight, daylight and outlook.

Privacy

- 5.2 People expect more privacy on the private garden sides of their homes. In urban areas some overlooking may be inevitable, however every effort should be made to avoid overlooking of rear facing living room windows and garden 'sitting out' areas. This can be achieved through distance and design using potential changes in ground level to assist privacy.
- 5.3 In order to maintain a reasonable level of privacy, 1st floor windows on extensions to the rear of houses should, ideally, be at least 24 metres from the back of homes directly opposite. Where this separation cannot be achieved overlooking should be avoided by the use of high level windows or opaque glazing. In dense urban areas where there is already excessive mutual overlooking a lesser standard may be acceptable. This distance can be reduced to around 12 metres at the nearest corner where the back of houses are arranged at more than 90 degrees to one another. (*See Drawing below*). If the site slopes, or if the upper floors to the extension contain living rooms, these distances may have to be greater to maintain privacy. Similar issues arise when additional rooms/windows are formed in existing roofs, eg loft conversions.

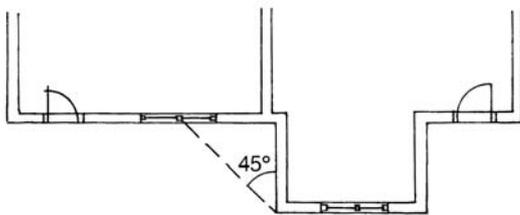


- 5.4 It is often permissible to overlook side flank walls or gable ends of adjoining properties or semi-public spaces. This is particularly so when no windows are overlooked or those windows that are overlooked serve non-habitable rooms eg bathrooms, hallways, utility rooms.
- 5.5 Particular care should be taken when seeking to accommodate upper floor balconies which may give rise to noise and disturbance as well as overlooking. Generally such balconies should only face onto public spaces, eg roads or front gardens or the house owner's private garden. Potential oblique overlooking of neighbours' gardens should be designed out using appropriate screening or separation.

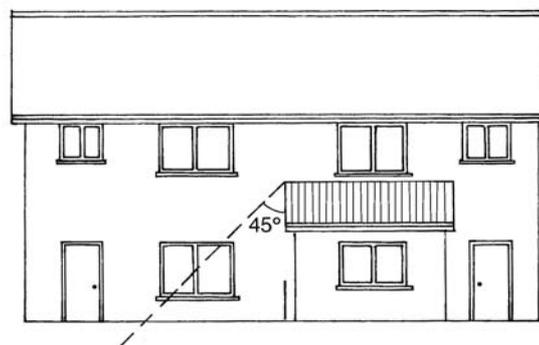
Daylight/Sunlight and Visual Intrusion

- 5.6 Good levels of natural daylight (light available generally from the sky), and direct sunlight, make houses more attractive, pleasant and energy efficient.
- 5.7 The size and position of extensions will affect the amount of light available to both the extended house and neighbours' homes. The impact of an extension on the light levels in the living rooms, dining rooms and kitchens of a neighbour's home are important. Bedrooms should also be considered but are less vital.
- 5.8 The Council will have regard to a set of standards known as the 'BRE Report Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A Guide to Good Practice 1991'. As a rough guide, extensions that cross both a horizontal and a vertical line drawn at 45° from the centre of a neighbour's window will significantly affect the amount of light entering that window and are unlikely to prove acceptable if the window lights a habitable room. In looking at cases where there is a marginal infringement of this rule the Council will have regard to the orientation of the affected window. If it falls due south with no other restrictions to light then such an extension next door may not be unacceptable.
- 5.9 Whilst nobody has a right to keep the existing view from their home, the Council will consider the effect an extension may have on the outlook from a house. The emphasis here is not on preventing a change in outlook, but in avoiding undue intrusion to windows that make an important contribution to the amenities of the house.
- 5.10 The application of the 45° rule is likely to limit the depth of any rear extension to semi-detached or terraced house to prevent undue loss of sunlight (depending on aspect), daylight and outlook. Two storey extensions of greater depth than 3.6 metres on semi-detached houses and 3 metres on terraced houses are likely to have an unacceptable impact upon neighbours' amenities and will need to be justified on the basis of the particular facts of the case. (*See Drawing below*).

Plan



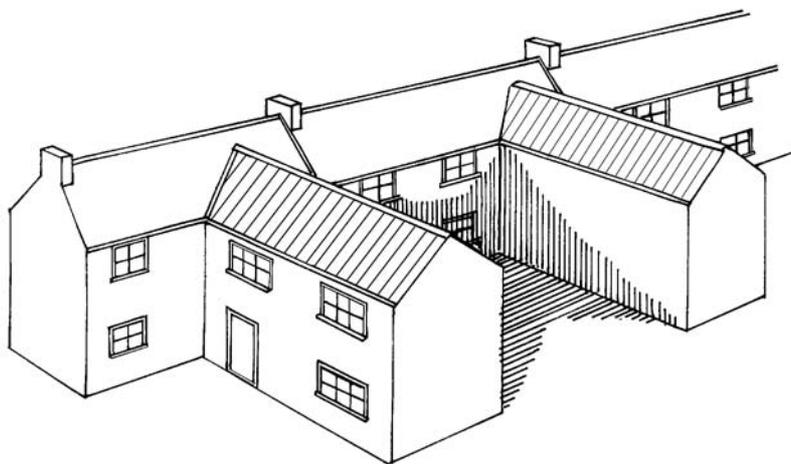
Elevation



A significant amount of light is likely to be blocked if the centre of the window lies within the 45 degree lines on both plan and elevation. As illustrated the amount of light reaching the adjoining windows would not be adversely affected.

Rear Extensions

- 5.11 Aspect and the proximity of an extension to the boundary are likely to be the key issues. A two storey rear extension to the north of a neighbour's house may be entirely acceptable even if it exceeds the depths referred to in para 5.8 above. The same extension to the south is likely to overshadow its neighbour. When dealing with rear extensions to terraced houses it is important to consider the cumulative impact that extensions may have and the potential for producing a tunnel-like impact upon centre terrace properties. Such an impact is likely to prove unacceptable. (*See Drawing below*).



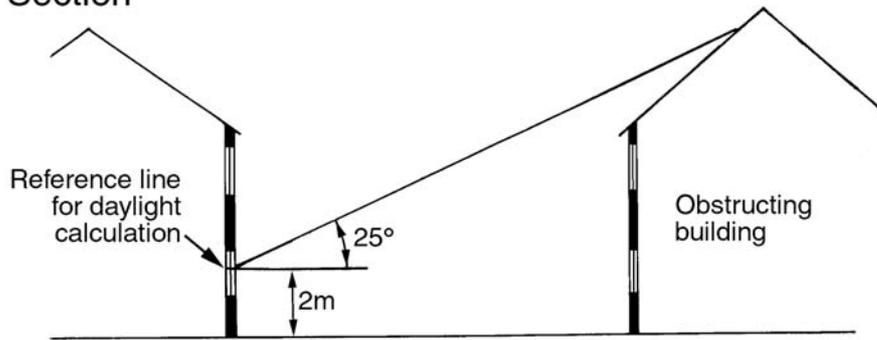
A tunnel effect can occur if windows are obstructed by extensions on both sides.

- 5.12 Windows serving rear extensions should overlook the garden of the property being extended not the neighbours. Ground floor windows are seldom a problem unless the property is on a sloping site. First floor windows may have to be high level or obscurely glazed to avoid overlooking and loss of privacy to neighbours.

Side Extensions

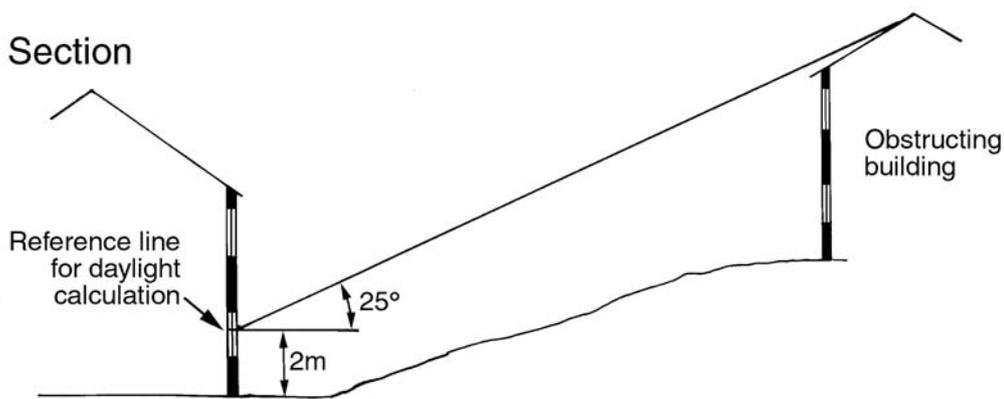
- 5.13 In terms of their effect on neighbours side extensions tend to be acceptable if single storey or when two-storey where there are no windows overlooking the site. In many cases, however, there are side windows facing towards the boundary and it will be necessary to assess the impact of the extension upon the rooms served by these windows.
- 5.14 Where the windows affected serve hallways, utility rooms, bathrooms there is likely to be no issue of loss of sunlight/daylight. These rooms can be lit by artificial light and it is not reasonable for an applicant to be prevented from extending their property on this basis. The same principle would apply when the window(s) in question is a second window to a room.
- 5.15 When the windows affected serve habitable rooms such as lounges, dining rooms, kitchens/dining rooms then it will be necessary to assess the impact upon light reaching these rooms. A simple check can be undertaken by drawing a section in a plane perpendicular to the main face of the building affected. If the potential obstructing extension subtends an angle to the horizontal, at a height 2 metres from ground level, less than 25° then there will still be the potential for good daylight to the interior. (*See Drawing over*).

Section



Section in plane perpendicular to the main face of the building

Section



On sloping sites overshadowing is more of a problem and greater spacing is required to obtain the same access to daylight for buildings lower down the slope

- 5.16 Where it is clear that there will be some loss of daylight then an individual assessment of the exact extent of the impact will have to be undertaken.
- 5.17 Where first floor windows in proposed side extensions face the boundary with a neighbouring property regard will be had to the need to protect privacy. Where such windows would overlook previously private areas or windows to habitable rooms they are likely to be unacceptable. Windows designed to prevent overlooking may, however, be acceptable in such circumstances.

Additional Floor/Roof Alterations

- 5.18 The general advice regarding the impact upon privacy and sunlight/daylight will also apply to roof alterations and additional floors proposed. This is most likely to occur with conversions from bungalows to 1½ storey dwellings or when a whole floor is added overshadowing gardens/yards.

Overshadowing of Gardens/Yards

- 5.19 The general criteria set out above will, in the main, retain well lit spaces to the rear of residential properties where residents can reasonably expect to enjoy good access to daylight and sunlight.

6. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Issues such as space heating and water use are principally dealt with under the Building Regulations. Whilst the Council will not consider the following issues as part of a planning application, energy efficiency considerations have been included in this document so that they may be considered by you at the beginning of the building process. It is often too late to make changes to the design by the time the Building Control authorities are approached. The following principles and ideas are offered as advice. Applying them can lead to warmer, safer homes that are cheaper to run and cause less damage to the environment.

Energy Efficiency

- 6.2 Buildings in the UK use around half of the nation's energy and are responsible for around half of the CO₂ 'greenhouse gas' pollution. Much can be done at little or no extra cost to minimise the impact new buildings have on the environment. Energy efficiency is especially important for extensions because any rooms outside the original building envelope tend to be more difficult (and expensive) to heat. The use of photo voltaic panels and water heating panels should be considered as part of an integrated design for energy efficiency.
- 6.3 The energy efficiency of buildings is governed by two factors:
- Minimising heat loss thorough high levels of insulation; and,
 - Maximising heat gain from sunlight (Solar Gain).

Insulation

- 6.4 It is worth remembering that the Building Regulations Standards on insulation levels are minimum standards. Insulating the building to higher standards will lead to greater benefits of warmer rooms and reduced heating bills.
- 6.5 The benefits of insulating the roof space, cavity walls and installing double-glazing are well known. It is also worth considering insulating the floor and supplementing the cavity wall insulation with internal wall insulation when designing the new building. Additional insulation such as this will reduce heating bills and help rooms to warm up quickly. In general, 200mm of loft insulation and around 75mm of cavity wall insulation are recommended. Remember that high insulation levels can lead to condensation problems. Either 'warm roof' construction or a ventilated roof space can overcome this risk.

Solar Gain

- 6.6 If the extension will receive direct sunlight (ie faces within 30°c of south), designing it to make good use of that 'free energy' will reduce heating bills. The most important principle is to ensure windows on the southern side of the building cover a greater area than those on the north side. The height of windows usually has a greater impact on the amount of sunlight a room will receive than their width.
- 6.7 Arranging the internal layout of the extension so that living rooms and main bedrooms are on the southerly side of the building will further help to reduce heating bills. Care must still be taken to avoid problems of overlooking and to produce an attractive design.

- 6.8 Heating large extensions can over-stretch the existing heating system. If you are considering upgrading your heating system fitting a condensing boiler will generally be more efficient. Fitting thermostatic controls will also help to keep heating cost low.

Building Materials

- 6.9 Using appropriate high quality reclaimed building materials can not only save resources but may allow a closer match to be made with the materials of the original house. Take care to ensure they are fit for the purpose.
- 6.10 Ideally the use of tropical hardwood should be avoided. A good range of soft and hardwood is now available from sustainably managed forests in the UK and Europe, check the source of the wood from the supplier. The use of UPVC as an alternative to wooden door and window frames is often inappropriate to traditional buildings and may be less sustainable than using timber.
- 6.11 Some insulation materials contain chemicals that are harmful to the environment (such as CFC's). However, it is now possible to buy more environmentally benign insulation materials based on manmade mineral fibres or recycled paper. Again, check with the supplier to ensure you do not buy environmentally harmful products.

Water

- 6.12 Water conservation is an important issue in the region. Incorporating water butts within the design of new extensions can help to reduce the amount of water used in the garden or for washing cars. Selecting appliances that make efficient use of water such as low flush WCs will also help. If ground conditions permit, the use of soakaways which allow surface water to filter naturally back into the ground is recommended.

Other Factors

- 6.13 The Council encourages development which enhances accessibility for disabled people. Making rooms more accessible to disabled people living in or visiting your home, and the extra circulation space can make life easier for able-bodied people. If your extension involves relaying the driveway, try to make it wide enough for a wheelchair user. Side extensions often encroach on passages to back gardens – if you are planning a side extension, try to leave the side passage wide enough for wheelchairs.
- 6.14 Some houses are designed to make use of windows as a means of escape in the event of a fire. Think about how the extension may affect emergency escape routes.
- 6.15 Extensions often involve a new front or back door. The fitting of locks to a recognised standard can enhance the security of your home.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Building Regulations:** Regulations controlling all building works. They control the layout and materials used in buildings to ensure strength and durability of the fabric, energy conservation and health and safety of occupants.

CO₂: Carbon Dioxide

- **Condensing Boiler:** A highly efficient gas fired boiler that cools the flue gases to 50-60°C, causing condensation, thus extracting 86% of the heat available in the fuel, instead of 70% for a conventional boiler.
- **Conservation Area:** A part of the District where the Council is charged with a duty to preserve and/or enhance the character of the area.
- **Development Control:** That part of the planning service which deals with the determination of planning applications and the enforcement of planning regulations.
- **Dormer:** A window which projects from a sloping roof.
- **Gable:** The triangular upper part of a wall between the sloping ends of a pitched roof.
- **Habitable Room:** Rooms used for sleeping (bedrooms) or everyday living (lounges, dining rooms).
- **Lintel:** A horizontal structural member spanning above a door, window, fireplace, opening, etc.
- **Listed Building:** A building of special architectural or historic interest. Such buildings should not be demolished, altered or extended in any way which would affect their special character without first having obtained 'Listed Building Consent' from the Council.
- **Local Plan:** A document, prepared by the District Council, which sets out, in words and maps, the planning policies for the Suffolk Coastal District.
- **Non-habitable Room:** Ancillary rooms such as bathrooms, hallways, utility rooms, kitchens not used for dining purposes.
- **Perpendicular:** Vertical, standing upright.
- **Ridge:** On a roof, the intersection at the top of the main roof slopes.
- **Roof Light:** A window set in a roof slope.
- **Sill:** The horizontal base of a doorway or window frame or the horizontal foundation of a timber framed house.
- **Soakaway:** A hole in the ground filled with permeable materials, eg aggregate, into which roof drainage, etc, is piped to soakaway into adjoining ground.
- **Street-scene:** The appearance of properties which collectively front a street or road.

- **String Course:** A thin decorative, horizontal course of brick along a wall.
- **Subtends:** To be opposite to.
- **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG):** A document which explains in more detail how policies in the Local Plan should be interpreted/used.
- **Thermostat:** An automatic control for maintaining temperature between links.
- **'Warm Roof' Construction:** A pitched roof with heat insulation above the roof space which is not insulated with a vapour barrier under the insulation.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Copies of the Consultation Draft of this SPG were sent to all Town and Parish Councils along with local amenity bodies, local planning agents and other interested parties. A full list of those consulted is available on request (Planning and Leisure file 10.10.16).

Appendix 2a consists of a summary of comments received following public consultation, the responses of the Director of Planning and Leisure and changes agreed by Cabinet at its meeting of 31st July 2003. The views of the Council's Development Control Committee are set out in the minutes of its meeting of 15th April 2003 (Appendix 2b).

**SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED, RESPONSES OF
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND LEISURE AND RECOMMENDED CHANGES**

1. **Go-East**

Comment: Commend the approach of preparing SPG in support of development plan policies which will ensure that once approved the guidance will be given substantial weight by the Secretary of State in making decisions that come before him. It points to the need to include Appendices 2 and 4 in the final document and to change 'compromise' to 'comprise' in para 2.2.

Response: Support for document welcomed. The minor change and addition of appendices are appropriate.

Recommendation: Add summary of consultation and contact details as Appendices 2 and 4. Change 'compromise' in line 2 of para 2.2 to 'comprise'.

2. **Grouped Parishes of Benhall and Sternfield**

Comment: The Parish Council commented:

- “
1. Drawings need to be situated next to the appropriate text.
 2. The need to 'retain a stock of small dwellings' is strongly supported, but there is no criteria as to what this or how it is to be achieved (albeit 100% increases are not acceptable) what percentage of change of available stock is acceptable? Current experience on extension applications does not show any significant endeavour to retain small dwellings (especially when they change hands).
 3. Otherwise it is felt that the document offers good advice.
 4. It would be useful to issue enough of these, and other guidance, to Parish Councils, so that their planning observations can be related even more to planning considerations rather than general views.”

Response: It is acknowledge that as part of the Local Plan Review Policy AP34 relating to extensions in the countryside needs to be re-evaluated. It is not considered appropriate to pre-empt the Review via this SPG.

It is agreed that the illustrations need to be more closely allied to the text.

Recommendation: That illustrations be re-ordered in the final document such that they more directly relate to the text.

3. **Boyton Parish Council**

Comment: Regard the general principles set out in Chapters 2, 4 and 5 relating to appearance and impact on neighbours to be 'sensible and apposite'. Query whether there should be guidance or legislation relating to hedges/trees affecting sunlight/daylight and views.

Make the following comments regarding Chapter 6 as it relates to access for people with disabilities:

“It can be understood that public buildings should and must have access for people with disabilities – ramps, wide doors, etc are essential. However, to impose these same facilities on a private dwelling smacks of political correctness and bureaucratic overkill.

If any householder has a regular disabled visitor, he/she will make the necessary provision. Similarly, if the house is owned by a disabled person, provision will be made.

For most householders, the possibility of a visit by a disabled person is remote. To have ramps leading up to the front door means extending them well beyond the building which has the effect of causing a long raised barrier above normal ground level. This provides an awkward step for any access at right angles to the door and is dangerous during icy conditions, not to mention an extract hazard for young children. Why not install a stair lift? Surely common sense must prevail – why put in a facility which has little or no use for the private householder? The legislators would not have to pay for such extra facilities.”

Response: The District Council seldom specify additional tree or hedge planting in association with domestic extensions and for this reason no advice on landscaping has been included in the document.

The advice in Chapter 6 is not mandatory but does reflect the general thrust of Government policy as reflected in Part M of the Building Regulations and the Disability Discrimination Act. The advice is intended to highlight for householders the benefits of thinking ahead to a time when they or their families may have need of appropriate provisions for a less active lifestyle.

Recommendation: No change.

4. **Felixstowe Town Council**

Comment: Welcomed the SPG and made the following specific comments:

“4.1 Unless documentation is submitted with the application it is not always possible to determine the original character and design of the building. Buildings are frequently extended and changed over the years, sometimes using permitted development rights. The original character is particularly important when considering applications for listed buildings or buildings in a Conservation Area. It is therefore suggested that suitable documentation should be sought from applicants to determine the original character and design of the building.

5. In order to gauge impact on neighbours it is important that the site plan should show the juxtaposition of the neighbouring properties on all four boundaries. This is particularly important information for consultees who require this in order to provide helpful and accurate responses to consultation. Correct and accurate information concerning the site plan is therefore

required. In section 5.3 of the draft guidance, the distance of 24 metres from the back of homes directly opposite is mentioned. However, this cannot be judged without information concerning the juxtaposition of existing buildings.

5.15 The final sentence of this paragraph is difficult to interpret and perhaps should read “less than 25⁰”.

6.12 Drawings submitted with planning applications should show the disposal of surface water and sewage effluent.”

Response: The need to establish the ‘original’ character of a building is likely to be necessary outside settlements to gauge whether a proposal conforms with Policy AP34. However, it has to be recognised that such information may not be readily available to an applicant and to insist upon submission of such information could be seen to be unreasonable.

It is not unreasonable for applicants to be asked to provide information in respect of the relationship to neighbouring properties although this may not always be possible if access to survey adjoining properties is denied any recent alterations to neighbouring properties have not been updated on Ordnance Survey.

The final sentence of para 5.15 should, it is agreed, say ‘less than’ not ‘greater than’.

Para 6.12 could, it is agreed, recommend that foul and surface water details be included as part of any planning submission.

Recommendation: Para 5.1 be amended to include a reference to the need for applicants to submit details of the relationship of a proposed extension/alteration to adjoining/surrounding properties.

That the final sentence of para 5.15 be amended to state ‘less than 25⁰’ rather than ‘greater than 25⁰’.

That para 6.12 makes reference to the need to submit details of any new or amended foul or surface water drainage arrangements.

5. **Kesgrave Town Council**

Comment: Welcome the document.

Response: Acknowledge the support of the Town Council.

Recommendation: No change.

6. **Kirton and Falkenham Parish Council**

Comment: The Parish Council commented that:

“The Planning Committee of the Kirton and Falkenham Parish Council have considered the above Guidance Note and find it a most informative and useful guide; indeed some have taken copies for future reference and will be interested to see the adopted version.

Nevertheless, they hoped that it would not be too rigidly adhered to, thus stifling originality of design, bearing in mind the effects this can have upon interior design. Paragraph 2.3 was particularly applauded in its efforts to maintain supply of small dwellings.”

Response: Welcome support. Acknowledge need for flexible interpretation of advice.

Recommendation: No change.

7. **Parham Parish Council**

Comment:

“The draft document gives a great deal of thought to proposed alterations with sympathetic attention to neighbours and environment.

However, Councillors felt the wording in ‘*Development affecting existing dwellings*’, section 3.42

“Any such proposal is of a scale and design compatible with the existing dwellings and its surroundings” was very vague and believe the word “compatible” should be defined in terms of % increase, as the statement was open to personal interpretation.

Similarly, the word “substantial” was also open to personal interpretation.

“where a proposed extension involves substantial change”.

Section 3.43 tries to define things but once again leaves the wording open to interpretation,

“a modest change will vary according to the circumstances”.

Councillors feel that rural parishes should retain a mixture of different sized property and are concerned that section 3.42 and 3.43 are too vague to use as an objection to an application.

Special attention should be given to parishes who have only infilling and do not have suitable sites for first time buyers. Great care should be taken to protect small dwellings from conversion to expensive properties by excessive extensions. Often a site with a small property and large garden is developed with an ‘executive style’ property so reducing the stock of cheaper property for the potential first time buyer.

Councillors fully agreed with section 2.8 (iv) to retain visual compatibility. They also felt that the drawings would be very helpful when passing comments on planning applications.”

Response: The Parish Council’s concerns centre around the current Local Plan explanatory text relating to Policy AP34 which would be more appropriate dealt with as part of the Local Plan Review.

Recommendation: No change.

8. **Swilland and Witnessham Grouped Parish Council**

Comment: Raise two major concerns relating to the use of 'modest under Policy AP34 and the assessment of changes to a dwelling being based upon the building as built or as it existed in 1948.

Response: This is largely a matter for the review of the Local Plan.

Recommendation: That the Parish Council's comments be referred to the Local Plan Task Group when the issue is considered.

9. **Woodbridge Town Council**

Comment:

"We feel this is an excellent document for this Town Council and is most understandable, furthermore the illustrations are helpful.

We welcome 6.2 and 6.3 relating to energy efficiency but are sorry there is no specific reference to the use of photovoltaic panels and water heating panels and would like to see these included in the document."

Response: Welcome support for document and helpful suggestions be energy efficiency.

Recommendation: Include reference to photo voltaic panels and water heating panels in paras 6.2/6.3.

10. **Aldeburgh Society**

Comment: Aldeburgh Society comments that:

"For anyone embarking on the study of planning applications this is a helpful and reasonable paper. The draft makes no mention of guidance with regard to gardens or private yards. We feel that extensions should not be so large that there is no room for these.

Mention should also be made of on-site car parking. The extension should not mean the complete loss of this.

The paper would be easier to read if the illustrations related more closely to the appropriate text. We hope that the illustrations in the final text will be of better quality.

We shall hope to receive a copy of the final adopted version in due course."

Response: The District Council has no published standards regarding minimum amenity or garden size but reference to the need to have regard to this issue is relevant as is the need to retain appropriate parking provision.

It is acknowledged that further work is required in respect of the illustrations.

Recommendation: That reference to the need to retain appropriate amenity and parking space be included in the SPG.

10. **The Felixstowe Society**

Comment:

- “ 1. We welcome the objective of publishing these guidelines for good architectural practice that can be followed when alterations and extensions are being considered.
2. We think there is an error in 5.15. Comparing it with drawing No. 12 it would appear that the angle should be “Not Greater than 25 degrees”.
3. There is not enough stress in Section 5 on the adverse effect of upper and dormer windows on a street of similar properties. For example when one in a terrace is allowed to have a dormer window which affects the appearance of the whole terrace. Similarly, in a row of detached or semi-detached houses there is one with a roof or upper-storey alteration (as can be seen in Beatrice Avenue).
4. On the whole a worthwhile document – our only reservation is on whether SCDC will have the will to apply these criteria.”

Response: The issue of the error in para 5.15 is already addressed (see Felixstowe Town Council’s comments). Further advice on dormer/upper floor windows can be included in the final document.

Recommendation: That reference to the need to carefully consider the impact of upper floor windows, both in terms of design and overlooking, be included in the final document.

12. **Suffolk Preservation Society**

Comment:

- “* While the document is aimed at helping in the determination of planning applications, it should perhaps be remembered that a large proportion of house extensions are built under permitted development rights without the need for planning permission. We suggest that the contents of the guidance need to be brought to the attention of all those considering building extensions regardless of the need or otherwise for planning approval. This would help raise the overall standard of house extensions across all of Suffolk Coastal District.
- The text at present only suggests that extensions which copy, mimic or are a pastiche of the original house will be approved. However, there are many instances where a contrasting modern extension of the current period would be equally if not more appropriate, and the SPG offers no guidance on this. It is important that a balance between both the copy and modern approach is maintained in the document if good modern architecture is to be encouraged.

- No mention is made of the need to retain a proportion of private space or garden when constructing an extension. The Society is concerned that without guidance there might be instance where extensions are so large that little, if any, private space is left.
- There needs to be mention in the SPG of the need to take account of on site car parking. It is surely not acceptable for extension(s) to lead to the total loss of on site car parking. Such a situation will only lead to more on street car parking which we would consider to be unacceptable.
- *Paragraph 4.8c) Windows and Doors.* In the last sentence we would suggest that you need to refer to window heads and sills as well as proportions and styles in order to ensure the aim of this part of the SPG is clear.
- *Paragraph 4.8c) Details.* While we agree that detailing is very important to achieving a good overall impact it cannot make up for a poor basic design and this point needs to be made in the first part of this section. A good design with appropriate detailing produces a satisfactory end result.

The use of illustrations help amplify the text of the SPG. The Society feels that the quality of the current drawings needs further attention, and they need to relate more to the appropriate section of text. At present the text and drawings appear rather disjointed with the latter being an afterthought.

This SPG, as *para 1.5* suggests, indicates that criteria that will help provide consistency to the decision making process. This is a very necessary aim, but it carries the possibility of proposals that simply meet the criteria, when flair and imagination could produce an even better result. A section saying that the SPG provides information to ensure that proposals meet the minimum requirements might help, as could be a section on “how the SPG will operate”.

Response: The SPG will be available as a published document, ultimately on the Council’s website, to which householders can be referred. It is not intended to stifle modern design but experience suggests that most householders seek to extend their properties in a matching or traditional form with which they are familiar.

It is acknowledge that reference needs to be made to retaining amenity space and parking (see recommendations under Aldeburgh Society comments).

The specific changes suggested to para 4.8 c) are sensible and can be supported.

Recommendation: That para 4.8 c) be amended in line with the comments of Suffolk Preservation Society.

13. **Neal Sons and Fletcher (Chartered Surveyors)**

Comment: Neal Sons and Fletcher commented that:

“There can obviously be some generalisation for a design to be considered against relatively hard and fast rules but this results in ‘identikit properties’ being created such as the proliferation of one and

a half storey buildings which have emerged during the course of the last 15 years or so. Not very 'Suffolk'!

Innovative design should not be excluded and my fear is the basic principles under the heading 'appearance' will lead to the vast majority of extensions being remarkably similar. The emphasis on having a set back front elevation as a preference may be appropriate in certain cases but certainly not in all. The proposal shown on page 4 of the side extension will probably lead to problems within the internal layout, especially with floor levels and restricted ceiling heights, despite it being argued that the extension looks 'pretty'. Similarly drawings on page 11 relating to dormer windows, etc has a tick against the bottom illustration where in truth the dormer windows appear to be out of proportion with the scale of the drawing. The middle illustration might be appropriate for 1960/1970s architecture but is dismissed.

In essence, I think my view would be to support the production of a very general set of guidelines but to try and avoid a mass duplication of bolt-on extensions, purely designed to fit the criteria rather than a specific property.

With regard to the replacement of dwellings it is disappointing to see the continuation of the proposal for replacement dwellings only to involve a modest change in size from the original building. Quite often small properties occupy large areas of land which would support a considerably larger building. In such cases appropriate development should not, I contend, be excluded from redevelopment but treated on its merits. There is, as you will be aware, a need for large as well as small homes. The very tight wording on Policy AP34 may require some adjustment to cater for these sort of circumstances."

Response: The guidance is not intended to promote 'identikit' extensions and alterations but rather to stress the need to respect the character of the original dwelling and to have regard to the amenity of neighbours.

The comments regarding Policy AP34 need to be addressed as part of the Local Plan Review.

Recommendation: No change.

14. **Peacock Short**

Comment:

- “1. There is absolutely no need for the District Council to embark upon the publication of SPG16. The expertise in the private sector far out weights that available to the Council and the advice is gratuitous.
2. The above comments are borne out by the fact that the standard of advice and drawing work within the SPG is poor, indeed so poor as to be almost embarrassing.
3. The advice itself is poorly explained as to why the Council believe that they have a monopoly on how to design extensions for domestic buildings.

4. This objection is also made on the grounds that if it is not made then the Council will always raise the point at any subsequent inquest which may involve reference to SPG such as at planning appeal.

There is no need for yet more control from the Council and the SPG should be abandoned.”

Response: These comments would be apposite were it the case that the majority of proposed alterations/extensions to domestic properties were prepared by applicants with a full appreciation of the issues set out in the SPG. Such is not the case, however, and guidance is therefore felt to be necessary. It is acknowledge that the illustrations need to be upgraded and related more closely to the text.

Recommendation: No change.

PLEASE RETAIN FOR:

Council: 22nd May 2003
Development Control Committee: 26th June 2003

Meeting of the **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**
held on Tuesday, 15th April 2003 at 3.00pm.

PRESENT: Mr C R Bentley (Chairman)
Mr I K Jowers (Vice-Chairman)

Mrs J M Bridson	Mr J A Leggett
Mrs M J Dixon	Mr K J Welton
Mr R Else	Mr W J R V Rose
Mr J W Hammond	Mr P M Wragg
Mr G W Laing	

Also present: Mrs V R Read

Officers in attendance: Mr R S Chamberlain (Assistant Director of Planning and Leisure (Development Control and Building Control))
Mr M A Gee (Committee Administrator)
Mr J G Schofield (Director of Planning and Leisure)

1. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19th December 2002 were signed as a true record.

2. **SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE 16: HOUSE ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS**

At its meeting held in September 2002 the Council had resolved to adopt a revised Scheme of Delegation subject, inter alia, to the adoption of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) relating to householder developments.

The Committee received a report by the Director of Planning and Leisure (**DC 01/03**) which introduced the Consultation Draft of SPG16 "House Alterations and Extensions" and invited the Committee to determine whether it wished to recommend to Cabinet any changes or additions which would assist those making or commenting upon householder applications to understand the criteria the Council had regard to when determining such applications or to recommend adoption of the document as presented.

Copies of the Consultation Draft were being sent to all Members of the Council, all Town/Parish Councils, Amenity Bodies, local agents and other interested parties.

The deadline for Town and Parish Councils to respond to the consultation was 23rd May 2003 following which responses received together with any proposed changes to the content of the Draft SPG would be reported to the Cabinet. The Committee went through the document in detail.

It agreed that the inclusion of drawings was very useful but that Drawing 3 needed to have shading added to it to be more easily understood. Unlike most of the other drawings in the SPG Drawing 3 did not have any ticks or crosses to indicate which extensions were acceptable and which were not. If the extensions shown were all acceptable then that the Drawing should make that clear.

A comment was made that the purpose of Drawing 2 would be much clearer if the acceptable and the unacceptable extensions were shown by way of two separate drawings.

The view was taken that Drawing 5 should include a road on it so that the reader could determine the relationship of the large extension to the property frontage.

The Committee recognised that the SPG referred in various places to bulky extensions but it pointed out that much of the time it was roof alterations which were the problem. The Director of Planning and Leisure agreed to give some further thought to this issue.

The Committee questioned whether it would be appropriate/desirable to review the SPG after 12 months as the Area Development Control Sub-Committees would no longer be determining householder applications. It was concluded, however, that town and parish councils would soon alert the District Council to any problems arising from the SPG.

With regard to the section on Privacy, the Committee requested that the phrase "using potential changes in ground level to assist privacy" be added to the final sentence of paragraph 5.2 of the SPG.

The Committee considered that paragraph 5.3 of the same section was somewhat difficult to envisage without the assistance of a drawing and the Director of Planning and Leisure undertook to include this to enable the middle section of this paragraph to be more readily understood.

Reference was made by the Committee to conservatory extensions being erected as permitted development. The Committee was informed that officers were in the throes of sorting out advice on this matter for inclusion on the Council's website but the Director of Planning and Leisure advised the Committee that he would give some further thought to including some advice in the SPG.

The Director confirmed that it was the intention to put the finally-approved SPG on the Council's website and that this would pick up any typographical errors in the draft document.

RESOLVED

To recommend to the Cabinet that the Supplementary Planning Guidance 16 relating to householder developments be adopted subject to the changes recommended above.

The meeting closed at 3.45pm.

**SUFFOLK COASTAL LOCAL PLAN (Incorporating First Alteration)
POLICIES AP19 and AP34 PLUS SUPPORTING TEXT**

DESIGN GENERALLY

- 2.6 As stated previously, the combination of the overall high quality of the historical built and rural environments, the character of the settlements, its landscape quality, and the possible damaging effect of modern development pressures, make it imperative that any new development is carried out to a high standard of design.
- 2.7 Consequently, the District Council will not only reject new designs which are obviously poor and out of scale and character with their surroundings, but will also resist alterations and extensions which will have a detrimental impact upon the character, appearance and form of existing buildings. In addition, development should have regard to the needs of people with disabilities in the design of houses and other buildings. The District Council will, therefore, expect all forms of development to conform to the following policy.

POLICY AP19

Design

Proposals which comprise poor design and layout or otherwise seriously detract from the character of their surroundings will not be permitted. In considering the design aspects of planning applications the District Council will have regard to Supplementary Planning Guidance which has been prepared and adopted and will generally resist proposals which do not conform to that Guidance.

- 2.8 The following criteria will form the basis of Supplementary Planning Guidance, and will be used to assess design aspects of proposals:
- (i) proposals should normally relate to the scale and character of the surroundings;
 - (ii) new development generally should make adequate provision for public transport, cars, cycling, garages, parking areas, access ways, footways, etc, in a manner whereby such provision does not dominate or prejudice the overall quality of design and appearance;
 - (iii) in areas of little or varied townscape quality, the form, density and design of proposals should create a new composition and point of interest, which will provide a positive improvement in the standard of the built environment of the area generally;
 - (iv) alterations and extensions to existing buildings should normally respect the plan form, period, style, architectural characteristics and, where appropriate, the type and standard of detailing and finishes of the original building;
 - (v) in order for extensions to existing buildings to be acceptable, particularly on those which are considered to be architecturally and historically important, those located within a Conservation Area, or those that are 'Listed', the

extension shall normally be visually 'recessive' and its size and design shall be such that the original building will remain the more dominant feature on the site;

- (vi) the use of materials and finishes, including colours, shall relate to, and respect, where appropriate, those of the immediate locality or the area generally;
- (vii) layouts should be related to, incorporate and protect any important natural landscape features on, or adjacent to, the site, including existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows. Where an existing hedgerow or group of trees are an important feature of the street scene and landscape, proposals should aim to retain all, or most, of them;
- (viii) adequate care and attention must be given to the form, scale, use, and landscape of the spaces between buildings and the boundary treatment of individual sites, particularly on the edge of settlements. Therefore, proposals for all new development should incorporate a hard and soft landscaping scheme, which forms an integral part of the overall design concept;
- (ix) the design of houses and other buildings should have regard to the requirements of people with disabilities;
- (x) proposals for development will be expected to take into account the need for crime prevention. Particular attention will be paid to such features as secure design, natural surveillance, adequate lighting and visibility. Proposals aimed at reducing crime within existing developed areas will be supported provided that they are not in conflict with the objectives of other Local Plan policies;
- (xi) the District Council will support and strongly encourage the conservation of energy and the use of alternative and renewable sources of energy in the design and layout of development proposals for new buildings and conversions of existing buildings;
- (xii) The District Council will also support and strongly encourage water conservation measures such as grey water systems, permeable soakaways, and water efficient devices.

Development affecting existing Dwellings

- 3.41 Often, particular care needs to be taken in respect of extensions to existing dwellings in the Countryside or their replacement. In the case of **replacement** dwellings, a modest change in the size or appearance of a dwelling is likely to be acceptable, providing there is no detriment to landscape or amenity. On the other hand, the replacement of a dwelling with one which is a substantial increase in size in relation to the original dwelling, is likely to have a significant impact on the Countryside, particularly in visual terms, and will be regarded as unacceptable. Such replacements will be treated as applications for new dwellings in policy terms. The replacement of any property should not result in an increase in the number of dwelling units.
- 3.42 With regard to an **extension** to an existing dwelling in the Countryside, the District Council will wish to ensure that any such proposal is of a scale and design compatible with the existing dwelling and its surroundings. As with proposals for replacement, where a proposed extension involves substantial change, it will be treated as a proposal for a new dwelling in the Countryside. It is also essential to ensure that there remains a range of dwelling sizes, particularly small dwellings, which are available to meet local needs. This will be a factor which the District Council will consider when assessing proposals for extensions. In respect of **self-contained residential annexes**, these are considered in paras 3.67 to 3.71.
- 3.43 A 'modest' change will vary according to the circumstances. A 100% increase would not be a 'modest' change and in the vast majority of cases, only something considerably less than this will be acceptable. In respect of the 'original' building, as used in the following policy, this refers to the building as existing on 1 July, 1948 or, in relation to a building built on or after 1 July, 1948, as first built.

POLICY AP34

Replacement and Extension of Dwellings in the Countryside

Proposals for the replacement or extension of existing dwellings in the Countryside will generally be acceptable, provided the existing property is an authorised residential unit which has not been abandoned, does not result in an increase in the number of dwelling units, does not result in or exacerbate a serious traffic hazard and involves only a modest change in the size of the original building. In assessing proposals, the District Council will have regard to:

- (i) the landscape setting of the house and its grounds;**
- (ii) the relationship between the dwelling and its plot;**
- (iii) the effect on residential amenity;**
- (iv) in the case of extensions, the need to retain a supply of small dwellings in rural areas;**
- (v) in the case of extensions, the effect on the character and appearance of the original building;**

- (vi) in the case of replacements, the character and quality of the existing building and its contribution to the landscape in comparison with its replacement.**

Where proposals involve more than a modest change, they will be treated as proposals for new dwellings and, therefore, will not normally be permitted.

An "authorised residential unit" is a recognisable dwelling which has the benefit of planning permission or was built before the need for it.

CONTACT DETAILS

The Council has two Area Planning Teams which deal with planning applications. The South Area Team covers from Felixstowe through Woodbridge to Wivesham, and the North Area Team covers from Bawdsey to Walberswick and as far west as Otley and Cratfield. The teams can be contacted by telephone or e-mail:

South: e-mail: dc.south@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk
tel: 01394 444686

North: e-mail: dc.north@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk
tel: 01394 444279

The Council's website (www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk) contains up to date information about how to make a planning application and the criteria used to determine whether planning permission is required for the development proposed. If in any doubt as to the necessity for planning permission or the procedures involved in making a planning application please contact one of the two Area Planning Teams.

If your property is a listed building then you will require listed building consent for any works which would materially effect the character of the building. You would be well advised when considering such works to seek advice from a suitably qualified professional agent. General advice is available in SPG13 'Historic Buildings: Repairs/Alterations and Extensions'.

For most building works you will normally need to obtain approval under the Building Regulations. For more information/application forms/advice please contact the Building Control Section:

Building Control: tel: 01394 444219 or 01394 383789
e-mail: building.control@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

All correspondence should be sent to:

Director of Development and Community Services
Suffolk Coastal District Council
Melton Hill
Woodbridge
Suffolk IP12 1AU

Fax: 01394 385100