

# alterations and additions to existing residential buildings

section ten



# 10 Alterations and Additions to Existing Residential Buildings

Policy Link - Saved BLP Policy C11 - New Buildings, Extensions and Alterations

341. Alterations to existing buildings should be done so as not to destroy existing character. Even minor changes such as changing the window design can be detrimental. Key features and proportions should be retained where they are an integral part of the character.

342. Building an extension is one way of adapting to the changing needs of a household or business and most properties have the capacity to be extended in some form. A well designed and integrated extension can complement and even enhance an existing property, whereas a poorly designed addition can easily destroy the original character and have a detrimental effect on the streetscene.

343. Whether the proposed extension is modern or traditional, the simplest way to ensure that its does not conflict with the existing character of the property is to draw references from the parent building. For example:

- All extensions should be well designed, well detailed and respond to the unique constraints and opportunities of the site.
- The scale of the extension must be respectful of the scale of the present building - additions that are too large will be over dominant.

- Extensions that appear subservient to the parent building tend to fit more comfortably and integrate better with the existing building. Matching roof styles and pitches can help integrate old and new.
- Extensions must respect the amenity of neighbouring buildings and ensure not to adversely affect light, outlook or privacy of the habitable rooms in adjacent properties.

344. Where single storeys join to double storeys there should be a step in the plan form to give articulation and differentiation to the elevation

## 10.1 Permitted Development

345. If you live in a house, you can make certain types of minor changes to your home without needing to apply for planning permission. These rights are called 'permitted development'. They derive from a general planning permission granted not by the Local Authority but by Parliament (the General Permitted Development - Town and Country Planning Order, 1997 and amendment 2 2008 (the GPDO)). Flats, maisonettes and commercial properties have no permitted development rights.

346. However, in some areas of the Borough and individual properties, permitted development rights are more restricted. If you live in a Conservation Area, or an area covered by an Article 4 Direction, you will need to apply for planning permission for certain types of work which do not need permission in other areas. If you live in a listed building all works that affect the character of the building will require listed building consent.

347. It is always advisable to check with Southend Borough Council Planning Department whether planning permission is needed before commencing any development.

*Also see Section 9.8 Article 4 Directions and Section 6 Relationship with Neighbours. Further details about the General Permitted Development Order can be found on the Department for Communities and Local Government Website [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk) the Planning Portal Website [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk) and the Council's Website [www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk).*



A clever yet subtle roof accommodation intervention along Chalkwell Esplanade.

## 10.2 Types of Extensions

### 10.2.1 Rear Extensions

348. The easiest and most popular way to extend your home is to build a rear extension. These additions are generally preferred to other types of extension because they usually have little or no impact on the public realm and therefore preserve the character of the streetscene. Whether or not there are any public views, the design of rear extensions is still important and every effort should be made to integrate them with the character of the parent building, particularly in terms of scale, materials and the relationship with existing fenestration and roof form.

349. Rear extensions can sometimes adversely affect neighbouring properties through overlooking, and blocking of light. The design should therefore ensure that these are kept within reasonable limits. Each application will be assessed on a site by site basis. Extensions on the boundary can have a significant affect on the neighbouring property and may not be considered appropriate.

350. Proposals which would result in a neighbouring window, as the sole source of light to a habitable room, being contained between two projections will require careful consideration to ensure that light, outlook and spaciousness to the adjoining property is retained. In some cases this type of extension may be unacceptable in principle.



This side extension in Leighcliff Road complements the property's original character whilst bringing a new dimension & excitement to the street.

### 10.2.2 Side Extensions

351. Many properties in the Borough have the capacity to extend to the side. However, side extensions can easily become overbearing and dominate the original property. In order to avoid this, side extensions should be designed to appear subservient to the parent building. This can generally be achieved by ensuring the extension is set back behind the existing building frontage line and that its design, in particular the roof, is fully integrated with the existing property. Poorly designed side extensions will detrimentally affect the proportions and character of the existing property and so extreme care should be taken to ensure the original design qualities are preserved. Set backs can also alleviate the difficulty of keying new materials (particularly brickwork) into old and disguises slight variations.



Good quality materials and detailing on a rear extension in Eastwood Road.



This side extension integrates well with the existing building without being overbearing or upsetting the proportions of the original building.

352. Where a terracing effect would be out of character, it is important to maintain a degree of separation between two neighbouring properties. This separation should be maintained at all levels - narrowing an extension at first floor level creates an unacceptable design and must be avoided. Extensions over one storey should be set off the boundary to provide an equivalent amount of contextual separation that reflects the prevailing local character and should always be continuous in their form.

353. Side extensions will undoubtedly impact on neighbouring properties and care should be taken to ensure that they do not cause an unreasonable loss of light. This is particularly important when the adjacent property has side windows, to habitable rooms, which are the sole source of light. Each application will be assessed on a site by site basis.

### 10.2.3 Extensions incorporating Garages

354. Garages should be designed so that they do not dominate the parent building or the streetscene and in most cases they should be set back from the front building line. New garages should be large enough to accommodate a medium sized car and bicycles but not so large that they appear out of proportion with the main building.

355. The roof design and materials of a garage extension is the key to its successful integration with the parent building. It is usually a good idea to draw reference from the roof of the parent building. Where this is not possible a parapet is preferred over a flat roof as it provides a neater solution. Small



The garage in this new build at Shoebury Garrison has been designed to be subservient to the main dwelling so that it does not dominate the frontage.

pitched roofs that lead into flat roofs behind are not considered an acceptable design solution.

356. Garages should normally be set back at least one car's length from the footway to prevent cars parked in the driveway from overhanging the pavement. Integral garages that are set back behind the first floor building line can create a dark void below which may be detrimental to both the main property and the streetscene. This will not be considered acceptable. Where there is not enough space to achieve this alternative off street parking arrangements, such as parking to the rear, should be considered.

357. In exceptional circumstances, buildings that have their frontages on the highway may be able to incorporate a garage, however it should form an integral part of the design of the development and include an automated entry system.



In most cases, subservient scale extensions have a better relationship with the parent property.

### 10.2.4 Detached Garages and Other Detached Buildings

358. Detached garages and other ancillary buildings within the grounds of an existing building should be designed to complement the character of the associated building. As with all new buildings they should embrace the design principles set out in this document. Garages in particular should be set back from the pavement to allow room to pull up without causing obstruction.

### 10.2.5 Conversion of Garages to Habitable Rooms

359. Converting an existing garage to a habitable room may be one relatively easy option for extending a property but will not always be considered acceptable in principle. The viability of this option will depend on whether the parking space in the garage is required to meet the demand of the enlarged property and whether an acceptable design solution that successfully blends the converted garage with the rest of the dwelling can be found. Provided the loss of parking can be justified, a design that achieves a seamless integration with the existing house is normally the best option. This should include matching the materials and fenestration with the main building. However, where the garage is a particular feature that is replicated in a row of properties or where it projects significantly forward of the main front building line this type of proposal may be considered out of character with the existing building and the wider streetscene.

### 10.2.6 Front Extensions

360. Extensions to the front of existing properties are generally discouraged as they alter the relationship of property within the street and may be detrimental to the wider townscape. Where front extensions are considered not to harm the local townscape care must be taken to ensure that they are of an appropriate size and scale, that they show consideration for the established street frontage and do not unreasonably obstruct light to habitable rooms within the existing property or on the flank or front walls of adjoining properties.

### 10.2.7 Porches

361. Porches are a common addition to residential properties. Most property entrances are located on



The dormers on this chalet in Thorpe Bay draws reference from the ground floor windows in their design and alignment but are subservient in scale

the front elevation and therefore it is particularly important that the design of the porch is of an appropriate scale, well integrated with the parent building and does not obscure or conflict with existing features such as bay windows.

362. Projecting porches are not normally appropriate in the historic environment. In these areas many of the properties have recessed open porches which contribute to the special character and the wider streetscene and these should be retained.

### 10.2.8 Conservatories

363. Conservatories are a common type of rear extension. Many new conservatories are not site specific designs so it is important that the size and style chosen is appropriate for the existing building. Generally the style of the conservatory should



This custom designed conservatory is a significant asset to this property in Thorpe Bay.

Large box dormers dominate the roofspace and are detrimental to the character of the house and the wider streetscene



Dormer windows should always appear incidental in the roofspace.

respect the period of the original property. This can be in either a traditional way that blends in with the period of the building or a contrasting simple modern design that does not try and compete with the original building. Choosing the appropriate design and materials is especially important in conservation areas. In all cases the placement of any conservatory should normally be at ground level and preferably located away from the boundary to avoid overlooking.

### 10.2.9 Balconies

364. Balconies, particularly on front elevations are a traditional feature of seaside towns such as Southend. As an integral element of local character existing balconies should not be infilled. Where new balconies are proposed on existing buildings, care needs to be taken to ensure that the design is of a high quality, of an appropriate style for the period of property and that the privacy of neighbours is not compromised. Obscure screens may be used to prevent overlooking but these should not be at the expense of good design. Balconies created by cutting into the roofslope are a low impact alternative to the traditional projecting balcony and are more appropriate in some areas. All new balconies will need to meet building regulations and should be designed to minimise the risk of crime.

365. For new developments balconies and roof terraces can be a good way of adding visual interest and layering to a building whilst also providing additional private outdoor space. In flatted developments a usable private balcony or terrace can be a valuable asset to the future resident.

*See also Section 4.5.2 Amenity Space*

Chimney stacks are integral to the character of a property and should be retained



dormers on the front and side elevations should be small and unobtrusive and substantial roof slopes should be maintained either side of the dormer

### 10.2.10 Roof Extensions and Dormer Windows

366. Proposals for additional roof accommodation within existing properties must respect the style, scale and form of the existing roof design and the character of the wider townscape. Dormer windows, where appropriate, should appear incidental in the roof slope (i.e. set in from both side walls, set well below the ridgeline and well above the eaves). The position of the new opening should correspond with the rhythm and align with existing fenestration on lower floors. (Note: one central dormer may also be an appropriate alternative.) The size of any new dormer windows, particularly on the front and side elevations, should be smaller to those on lower floors and the materials should be sympathetic to the existing property. The space around the window must be kept to a minimum. Large box style dormers should be avoided, especially where they have public impact, as they appear bulky and unsightly. Smaller individual dormers are preferred.

367. There are many types of dormers and it is important to choose the most appropriate one for the style of property. For example small dormers with a vertical emphasis tend to suit the Borough's older properties, whereas thin dormers with a horizontal emphasis (flat roofed or catslide) are better suited to the chalet style post war properties.

368. Some contexts, for example where there are unbroken roof slopes in a terrace or street, where the existing pitch is too shallow or where it would over dominate neighbouring properties, dormers and roof extensions will mainly be inappropriate. Where dormers to the front would disrupt the overall balance of the property or the wider streetscene they also will be considered unacceptable.

369. Side dormers often dominate the front elevation and, where appropriate, will only be acceptable where they are small scale, set back from the front building line and have limited visual impact.

370. In some cases it may be possible to increase the roofspace and remove the need for a side dormer by changing a hipped roof to a gable end. This type of development can be more acceptable than a side dormer provided it is not out of character with the streetscene or leads to an unbalanced street block or pair of semis i.e. It is more appropriate for a detached or end of terrace property than only one of a matching pair of semi's which would be considered unacceptable.

371. Rooflights are a less obtrusive, cheaper alternative to dormer windows and may be more appropriate in certain circumstances. Flush fitted 'conservation style' rooflights are less conspicuous and are therefore preferred, especially in conservation areas. In the historic environment, rooflights may only be acceptable if they are not visible from the street.

372. All dormers and rooflights must be kept away from other forms within the roof including chimneys, dormers and gable features, etc.

373. 'Mansard roof' style extensions are generally inappropriate for the style of buildings within the Borough. They are often unsightly and tend to significantly increase the scale of the property to the detriment of the wider streetscene.



The roof of this bungalow in Hillside Crescent, Leigh has been cleverly remodelled to accommodate additional living space.

374. Extensions that raise the ridge height of an existing building are only considered acceptable in principle where they complement the design of the original building and where they do not break the continuity of the streetscene or appear overbearing.

### 10.2.11 Additional Storeys

375. In a few cases it may be possible to extend a property upward by adding an additional storey however this will only be appropriate where it does not conflict with the character of the street. For example adding another storey to a bungalow will not be considered appropriate where the street comprises predominately of single storey dwellings or where there is a regular pattern of bungalows and other style of properties which is part of the local character. It is advisable to establish the principle of this kind of development with the Council before progressing onto the detailed design.

376. Where it is considered acceptable in principle, in order to achieve a cohesive development it is essential that the additional storey draws strong references from the lower floors and adjacent properties, or an overall integrated design is developed. It is also important to ensure that proposed new windows, particularly on the side and rear elevations, do not give rise to any overlooking (or perceived overlooking) of habitable rooms in neighbouring properties or unreasonably overlook into private gardens.



This property in Chalkwell has in an interesting way integrated roof accommodation into this gable which has a minimal impact on the streetscene.



*See also Section 4.2 Scale, Height and Massing and Section 6.2 Overlooking and Privacy*

377. Additional storeys to flatted and commercial buildings will, in the main, be unacceptable as the increase in scale is normally a significant issue. In the few instances where such additions will have an acceptable and limited visual impact, the design should have maximum transparency and a lightweight structure and complementary to the existing building. Where this type of development is proposed it is recommended that the principle is agreed with the Council at an early stage.

*See also Section 11.2 Extensions to Commercial Buildings below.*