

# **RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS**

Supplementary Planning Guidance No.2



LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

# Residential Extensions

## Supplementary Planning Guidance

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*This guidance is non statutory planning guidance which supplements the policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted on the 30th January 1997, and sets out the Council's policies and proposals for the use of land in the Borough.*

*Only the policies in the Development Plan can have the special status afforded by section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 (as amended), in deciding planning applications. However, the Government advises that supplementary planning guidance may be taken into account as a material consideration, the weight accorded to it being increased if it has been prepared in consultation with the public and has been the subject of a Council Resolution. This document has undergone public consultation and was adopted by the Council at its Planning and Environment Committee on 17th December 1997.*

*This guidance supplements policies BE1-14, BE16-18, the policies on Urban Conservation, as well as H7. The guidance also replaces the Council's previous supplementary planning guidance note 3: House Extensions. The Council has also produced Supplementary Planning Guidance on Residential Conversions.*

## Introduction

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- 1.1 Each year the Council deals with approximately 700 planning applications from householders seeking to extend their properties. A well planned and designed extension can satisfy a need for more accommodation and consequently improve living conditions. However, such extensions are likely to have some effect on neighbouring properties and the appearance of the street scene, and the impact of these extensions over a period of years can have a significant effect on the overall character of an area.
- 1.2 In a Borough as large and varied as Croydon, it is not possible for a brief guidance note to cover every possible situation. Much will depend on the characteristics of the existing property, and its relationship with adjoining properties. For example, there may be significant changes in ground level or building lines, or a house may stand in such extensive grounds that there would be little impact on neighbouring properties. In addition, the guidance is not intended to stifle innovative, well designed solutions that may contrast with the original design of the house. Furthermore, there may be other factors which have to be taken into account over and above the general guidelines eg. trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order, a building listed as being of special architectural or historic interest, and Conservation Areas.
- 1.3 This guidance note is for the assistance of anyone considering an extension to their property, from a side or rear extension, to a porch or dormer window. The note explains the basis on which decisions are made and gives information on the factors to be taken into account when designing an extension.
- 1.4 The information in the guide will show you how best to provide additional accommodation without harming visual and residential amenity.

## The Original Dwelling

- 1.5 The design and features of most dwellings have an appropriateness to their setting and an aesthetic appeal (fig. 1). Many estate agents, in their sales particulars increasingly emphasise these original features as opposed to extensive modernisations and alterations.

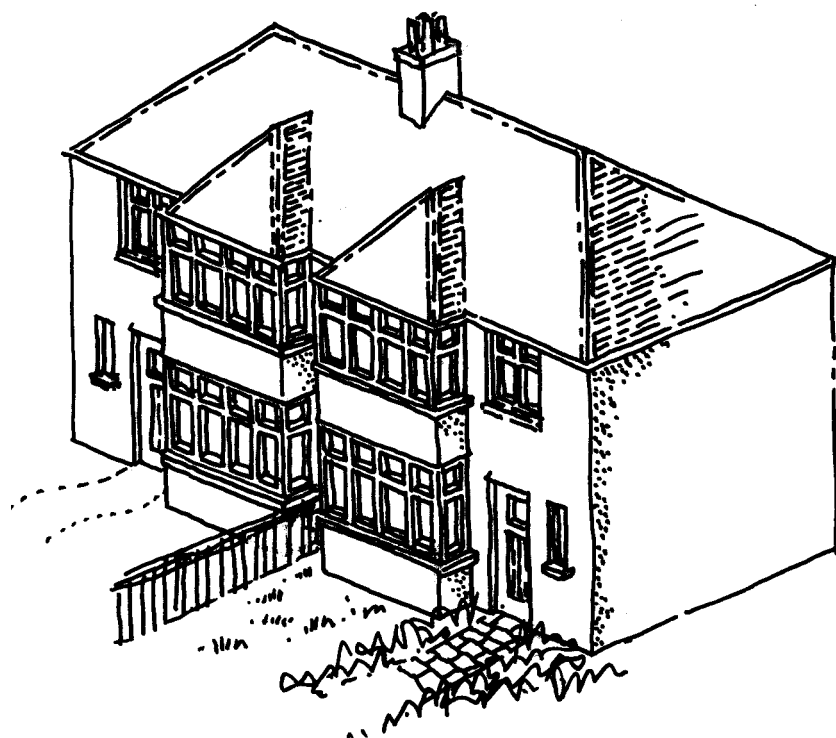


fig.1

- 1.6 This does not mean that dwellings must not be altered, or that improvements based on changing needs cannot be made, but rather that changes should be made that are sensitive to the style of the dwelling. It is important therefore to consider the appearance of your property in relation to the adjacent buildings, whether it is detached, semi-detached or terraced. Where dwellings in a street are of a uniform design, extensions should generally appear subordinate to the main dwelling.

## Extending your property

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- 2.1 The Council is keen to encourage efforts to improve and maintain the housing stock, and to secure its most efficient use and recognises, in particular, the role that extensions can play in alleviating overcrowding. However, a balance has to be struck between the desires of individual householders to extend their properties and the need to protect both the character of the area and the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties. The primary concerns of land-use planning policies and supplementary planning guidance remain with the physical characteristics of a dwelling and the amenity and residential character of an area.

### What needs permission

- 2.2 Certain minor types of development do not require planning permission from the Council, and are known as “permitted development”. This is explained in a leaflet called “Planning - A Guide For Householders” published by the Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office, available free from the Council’s Planning Department. Planning law can be complicated on this subject, and it is therefore always advisable to check with the Council’s Planning Department at an early stage to determine whether or not planning permission from the Council is required, or if there is any other relevant legislation or possible restrictions (eg. The Party Wall etc. Act 1996 or restrictive covenants). If you are uncertain, and would like written confirmation, this is best done by submitting an application for a Lawful Development Certificate. If planning permission is required, it is advisable to employ professionally qualified architects or surveyors to design your scheme. This is particularly important if your property is within a Conservation Area, or is a statutorily listed building. Good quality, accurate, scaled drawings showing a plan and elevations will be required.
- 2.3 Even though planning permission may not be required, you may still need approval under the Building Regulations. These cover such matters as structural stability, fire precautions, sound and thermal insulation etc. The Building Control Division of the Planning and Development Department will be able to give you more information on this aspect.
- 2.4 In addition, the Council uses its powers to impose tree preservation orders (TPO) and protective planning conditions on trees which are of particular importance. Trees within Conservation Areas are protected. The Council should be consulted before any work is carried out, including felling, lopping or pruning. It is therefore always essential to check that any trees you are intending to remove or that may be affected by your extension eg. by lopping, or by cutting of roots, are not protected by TPO’s or other constraints.
- 2.5 The effect of residential extensions will often be to increase the number of habitable rooms in a dwelling. In such cases, the Council may seek additional parking within the curtilage of the

site where it is considered to be necessary in the interests of traffic movement and road safety, and where there would be no material adverse affect on residential amenity (please refer to para. 15 of Appendix 2 of the UDP).

- 2.6 If planning permission from the Council is not required for the development you are proposing, the design principals set out in this guidance note will still be of use to you, as the enhancement of the appearance of your property will inevitably increase its value.

## **General Principals**

- 2.7 In accordance with the Design and Layout section of the Environment Chapter of the UDP, the following are all aspects of your development which will be considered by the Council when determining a planning application for an extension:

All extensions should aim to:

- achieve a design of high quality.
- complement the size, shape, and character of the existing dwelling.
- use external materials to match or complement those of the existing dwelling.
- fit into the general street scene, respecting the character of nearby buildings and the spaces between them.
- have a roof form and pitch that respect the visual character of the existing dwelling. Original roof features such as chimneys, gables and dormers, can make a valuable contribution to the skyline.
- not significantly reduce the levels of daylight or sunlight to adjoining buildings and gardens.
- not unduly affect the privacy of adjoining occupiers, either within their properties or their gardens.
- not visually dominate neighbouring properties.
- have reasonable regard to issues of safety and security.

The importance of the above issues will vary according to the position and size of the proposed extension, and the type of property involved, as well as physical constraints such as levels, orientation and changes in building line.

- 2.8 If considering the addition of an ancillary structure to your property such as a detached garage or covered swimming pool, the above principles will still apply.

## Design Considerations

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### Single Storey Extensions

- 3.1 Single storey rear extensions are generally acceptable provided that the amenities and privacy of neighbours are not unduly affected. On terraced houses an extension should not normally project more than 2.7m beyond the rear of adjoining properties (fig.2). On other types of dwelling, the maximum acceptable projection beyond the rear of the neighbouring building is generally 3m., although on well separated detached dwellings, a larger extension may be permissible. Larger extensions may also be acceptable when two adjoining semi detached dwellings are being extended at the same time. Pitched roofs are generally preferable to flat roofs but care should be taken to minimise detrimental effects on neighbouring property. Flat roofs should not normally be used as terraces or balconies.

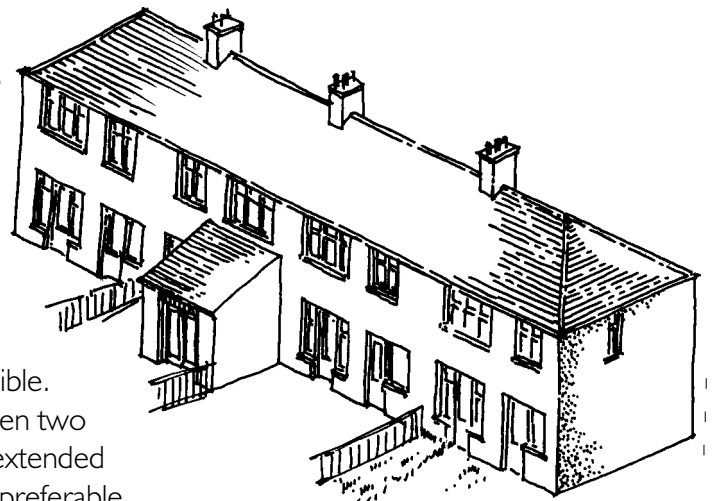


fig.2

- 3.2 Single storey side extensions should normally be set back by at least 215m (1 brick) from the main front wall of the dwelling (fig.3). This helps to retain the visual character of the original dwelling and also assists in detailing the junction between the old and new.

- 3.3 For the roof, a simple lean-to may well provide an inexpensive and trouble-free solution.

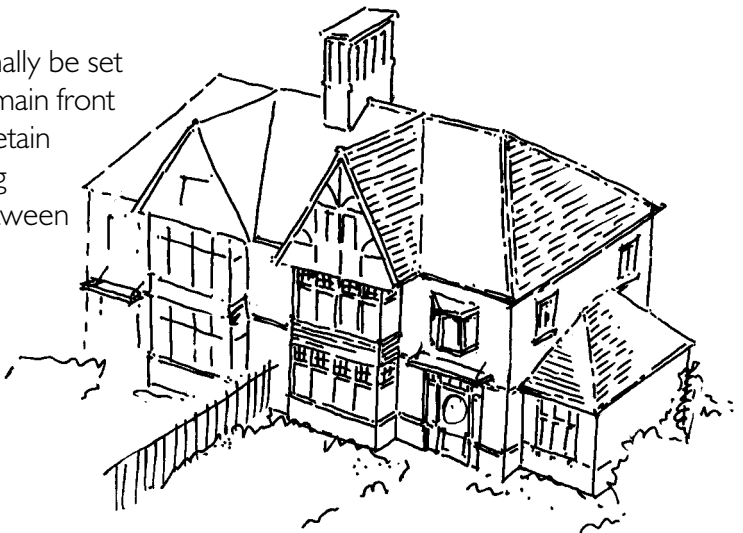


fig. 3

3.4 Alternatively a flat or low pitched roof may be acceptable. This can often be hidden behind a parapet (fig.4).

3.5 Generally, pitched roofs provide more harmonious designs than flat roofs as well as being longer lasting with less chance of water penetration.

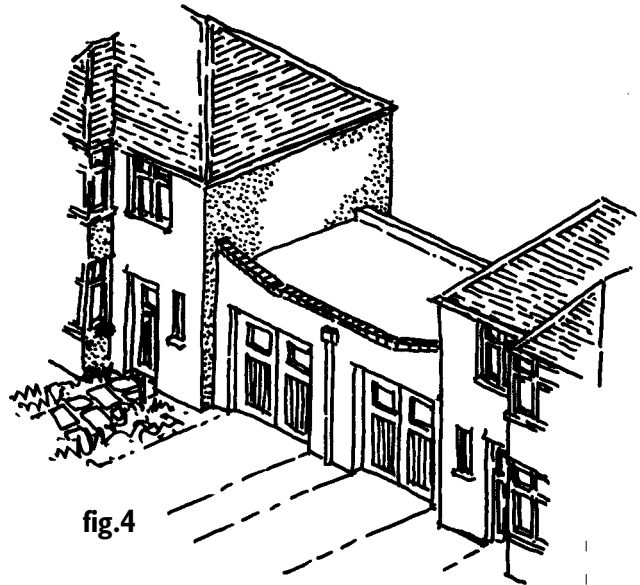


fig.4

3.6 The design is more successful when the pitch is the same as on the existing dwelling (fig. 5). However, in some cases, windows on the flank wall above ground floor level are awkwardly placed and careful detailing is required (fig. 6).



fig. 5

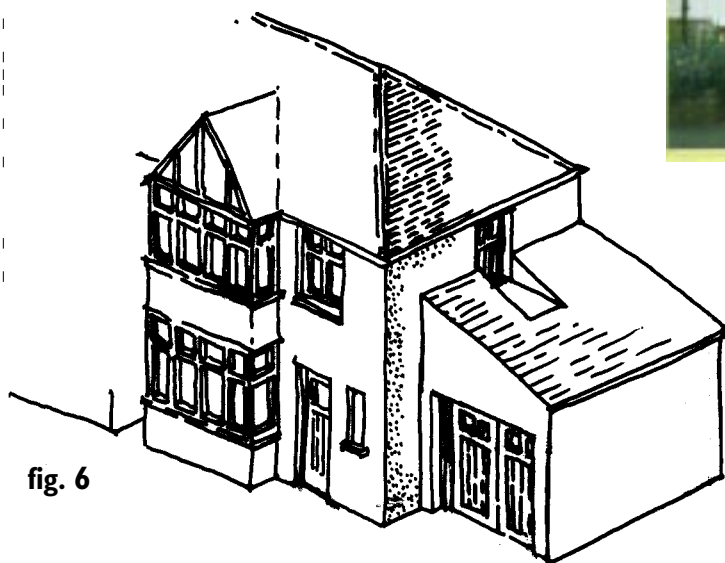


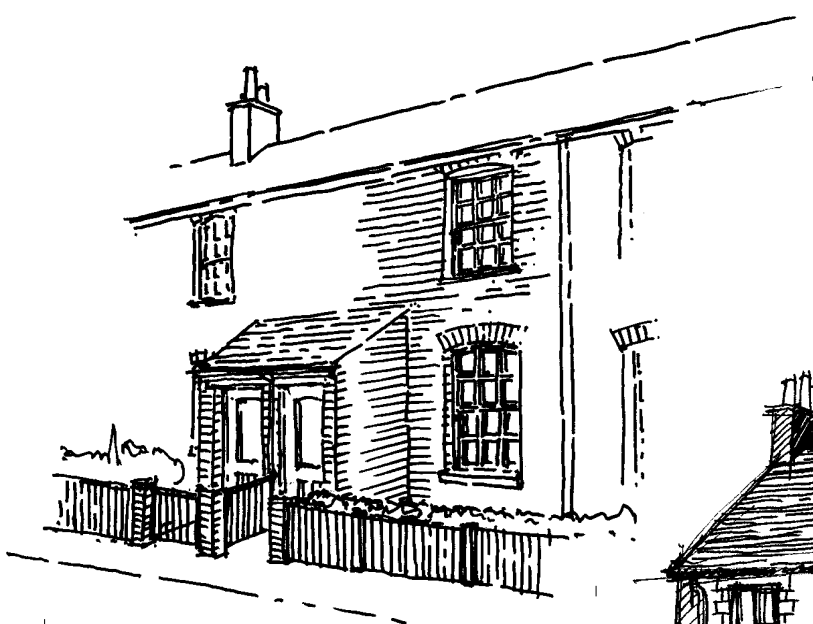
fig. 6

- 3.7 A side extension should not project in front of the existing house except where it is combined with a new porch, or linked to an existing one (fig.7). It should not project in front of the line of an existing bay window. Where there is no bay, the projection of the side extension and porch should not exceed 1.2m.

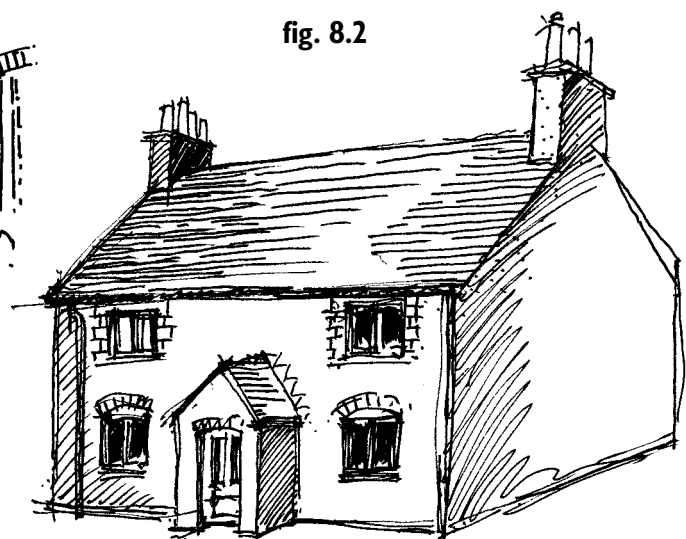


**fig. 7**

- 3.8 Large front extensions will not usually be permitted. Porches should be made to appear to be part of the original property, and not as an obvious addition. On certain modern buildings, a flat roof may be acceptable, but on older or more traditional buildings, a gable or lean-to roof would be more appropriate (figs. 8.1 & 8.2).



**fig. 8.1**



**fig. 8.2**

## Two Storey Extensions

3.9 These are not usually permitted at the rear of a house because of the dominance, visual intrusion and overshadowing which would be caused to neighbouring properties. They can often be accommodated at the side of a house. The most important considerations are the effect on the street scene and on the neighbouring property. Thus, extensions of this type must respect not only the amenities of the adjoining occupiers, but also the character of the street and, in particular, the architectural rhythm of the houses and the spaces between them. Generally, the extension should be designed to appear subordinate to the original house. Usually this can only be achieved by setting extensions back from the main front wall so that they become subordinate elements in the street elevation and a “terracing” effect is avoided.

3.10 The set back required depends to some extent on the pitch of the roof (a shallow pitch calls for a bigger set back) but is usually about 2m (fig.9). Where the extension is at least 2m from the boundary, the “terracing” effect is not evident because of the distance between the houses. However, a set back may still be required to ensure that the extension remains subservient to the original house. On extensions to semi-detached properties, this may be necessary to respect the form of the original building and the rhythm of buildings and spaces between them in the street scene.

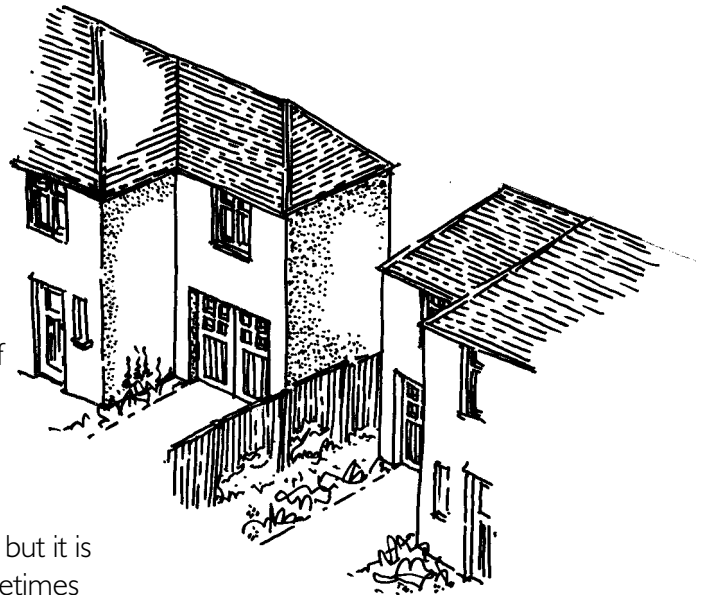


fig. 9

3.11 Ideally the set back should be at both floors, but it is particularly important at first floor level. Sometimes the extra space desired calls for a garage or other ground floor accommodation that projects in front of the upper floor of the two storey section. Various designs are possible, but the ground floor element should normally be set back one brick from the main front wall of the house, as in a single storey extension (Fig. 10).



fig. 10

- 3.12 Flat roofed extensions will rarely be acceptable. Roof shapes and pitches should be matched to those on the existing house. For example, a house with a hipped roof will need a hipped roof on its extension. However, care should be taken to avoid the encroachment of gutters and eaves over neighbouring boundaries. The design of the junction between the old roof and the new, particularly at eaves level, is very important both in visual and constructional terms. It is here that in the long term, most practical defects occur.

## Roof Extensions

- 3.13 The use of loft space to provide additional accommodation can often provide more space for relatively little cost. The best solution if possible is to avoid any enlargement of the roof volume at all, with natural light being provided by roof lights, parallel with the roof slope (fig. 11). Roof extensions such as dormer windows which project out from the roof slope should be used where there is a need to enlarge the useable floor space.

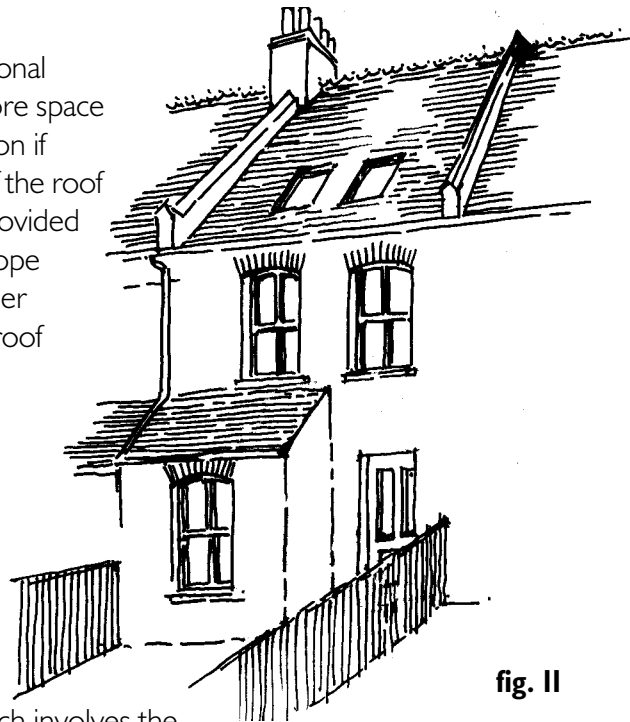


fig. 11

- 3.14 Roof extensions should ideally be located on the rear elevation of a dwelling and are not normally acceptable on the front elevation. When providing additional accommodation in the roof space which involves the construction of a roof extension, it is essential that it should not dominate the original building. Some of the existing roof should be left around the extension (fig. 12). The extension should not be higher than the existing ridge line and any new window should relate to the shape, size, position, and design of the existing doors and windows on the lower floor.

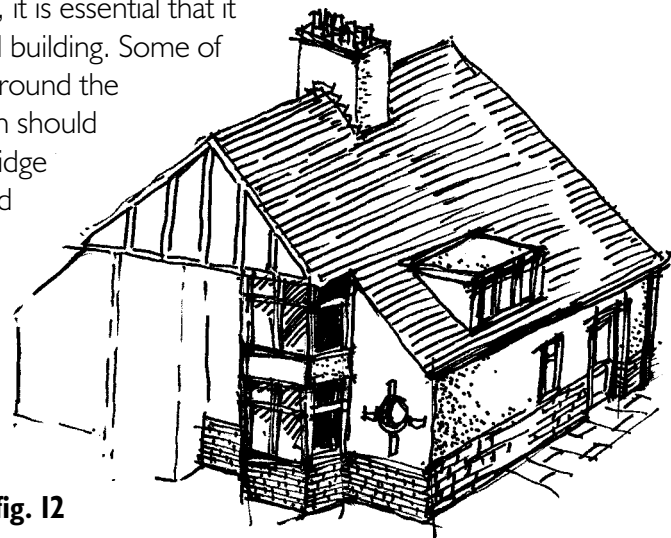
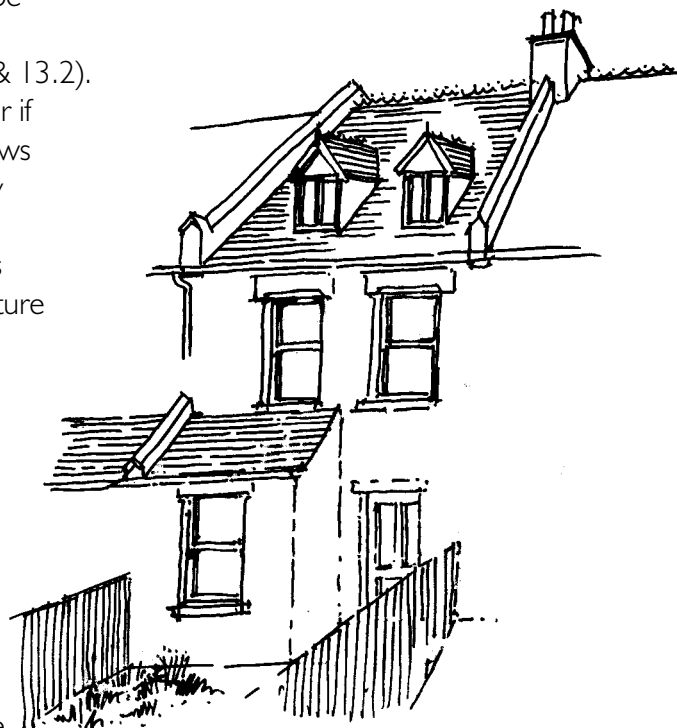


fig. 12

3.15 The design of the dormer should be appropriate to the character of the building to be extended (figs. 13.1 & 13.2).

Dormer windows often look better if they are no wider than the windows in the main facade below, and they should not normally be wider than they are high, unless such a form is appropriate to the original architecture of the building. Dormer windows should normally be located directly above the centre line of windows in the main facade of the building below. In some cases, the architectural style of the building does allow this principle to be relaxed. Roof extensions should not wrap around two sides of a hipped roof and interrupt the original form of the roof. A change from a hipped roof



**fig. 13.1**

to a gable end is not usually acceptable particularly where hipped roofs are a dominant feature of the locality (fig 14). Roof extensions should be covered in materials which match or complement the main building.



**fig. 13.2**



fig. 14

## General Design Considerations

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### Privacy

- 4.1 An extension should be designed to not unduly affect the privacy in neighbouring dwellings and gardens. Generally there should be no windows in any side wall directly facing a neighbouring property, other than windows serving bathrooms, W.C.'s and landings. In some cases high level or obscure glazed windows with restricted opening may be acceptable. A balcony on the roof of an extension would usually be unacceptable for reasons of overlooking and the effect on the privacy of occupiers of adjoining properties.

### Visual Intrusion

- 4.2 An extension should be designed to not have an overbearing effect on the amenities of the occupiers of surrounding properties by reason of its size, siting, height and design.

### Daylight and Sunlight

- 4.3 No extension should result in unreasonable loss of daylight or sunlight to neighbouring habitable rooms or gardens.

# Detailed Design

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## Windows and Doors

- 5.1 Windows or doors to be used in an extension should generally be of a style and material to match those existing on the main house. New windows and doors should echo the proportions and locations of those on the main building. If there is an existing symmetry to the windows on the main house, this should be reflected in the extension. Where existing windows are recessed, new windows should be set to the same depth as the existing.

## Materials

- 5.2 External materials on any extension should be in keeping with the appearance of the original dwelling. New materials which are unrelated to the style of the original house should be avoided unless there is a valid aesthetic reason for their selection. What is “fashionable” now may quickly date. Extensions to recently built dwellings should be constructed in materials similar to those originally used, if they are still available. With older properties the existing materials will have changed colour and texture due to age and weathering, and it may not be possible to achieve a perfect match. It is important with brick extensions to match as far as possible the bonding, mortar mix, colour, and pointing.

## Detailing

- 5.3 Architectural detailing on existing properties should be repeated, where appropriate on any extension.
- 5.4 Existing features which are part of the original design should be reflected in the detailing of the extension where possible. The continuation of plinths, string courses, decorative brickwork, barge boards, fascias etc are important elements in the overall design (see cover photograph).

## Special Architectural and Historic Considerations

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- 6.1 There are many historic areas and buildings in the borough where the design of extensions is particularly sensitive. By controlling the design of development within these areas, the Council aims to preserve and enhance their character and appearance. Within these areas the Council will therefore require extensions to be designed with particular care in order to complement the character of the existing buildings.

- 6.2 Within conservation areas the demolition of a building is unlawful without first obtaining Conservation Area Consent from the Council. There are proposals statements for each of the borough's eleven conservation areas. To check if your property is within a Conservation Area and to get a copy of the relevant statement, contact the Council's Urban Design Team on extension 2251/2051. If your property is a listed building, Listed Building Consent will be required for any alterations, extensions or demolition.

## **Further Advice**

- 6.3 If you have any queries concerning the contents of this leaflet please contact the Planning Control Division on extension 5403 for properties in the north of the borough, or 5404 for properties in the south of the borough. Additional guidance on the submission of applications and the fees payable is also available. It is particularly important to seek guidance if your building is either listed, or is within a Conservation Area. Additional guidance is also contained within the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance No. 3, "Residential Alterations".

## **Design Awards**

- 6.4 The Croydon Design award scheme recognises excellence in design. The scheme is run on a biennial basis and was first launched in 1983. It gives recognition to all kinds of development projects, whether building or landscape, of any size, type or use, which are judged to have been well designed and make an outstanding contribution to the environmental quality of the Borough. The scheme has recently been revised to include six categories of awards including one for residential extensions and alterations. If you would like more information, please contact the Urban Design Team on extension 2051

# APPENDIX I

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## COUNCIL CONTACTS

### Council

London Borough of Croydon  
Taberner House  
Park Lane  
Croydon  
CR9 1JT  
Tel: 0181 686 4433

For general enquiries as to the need for Planning Permission etc. please contact:

Planning Control (North Team)  
Tel: 0181 760 5403

Planning Control (South Team)  
Tel: 0181 760 5404

The following services can be reached by dialling the main number above and asking for the appropriate extension.

Building Control	Ext. 2231
Urban Design/Conservation	Ext. 2251/2051
Drainage	Ext. 2349

### Other

Royal Institute of British Architects  
(South East Region)  
Clients Advisory Service  
17 Upper Grosvenor Road  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent  
TN2 1DU  
Tel: 01892 515878

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors  
12 Great George Street  
Parliament Square  
London  
SW1P 3AD  
Tel: 0171 222 7000

Federation of Master Builders  
(London Region)  
14-15 Great James Street  
London  
WC1N 3DP  
Tel: 0171 242 2200

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Adopted 17th December 1997

# APPENDIX 2

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## UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

The policies particularly relevant to this supplementary planning guidance are listed below. Please refer to the plan for reasoned justifications to the Policies.

### Quality of Design

- BE1 The Council will seek a high standard of design and layout in all development, which should respect the visual character of the area in which it is located in terms of elements such as, scale, proportions, materials, detailing and roof form.
- BE2 In areas of high environmental quality the design of development should respect those qualities that contribute to their particular value.

### Siting and Massing

- BE3 The siting and massing of development should respect or improve the existing pattern of buildings and the spaces between them and maximise opportunities for creating an attractive and interesting environment.

### Building Frontage

- BE4 Development should respect the form of the street of which it is a part by building to the established line of building frontages. However, where side extensions are visually subservient to the main building they should generally be set back behind the building frontage.
- BE5 Where frontage widths contribute significantly to local character, those in the immediate locality should be respected in any proposals for new plots and buildings.

### Building Height

- BE6 Where uniform building height plays an important role in determining the character of a street, the Council will require development to respect the height of the existing buildings.

## **Roofscape**

BE7 Roof designs that create visual interest and emphasis will be encouraged provided that they do not harm the character of the area. Existing attractive roof features should be retained when buildings are altered.

## **Public Spaces**

BE8 Where the size, nature and location of the site allows, applicants will be encouraged to provide publicly accessible space as part of the development. This space should be designed to integrate with the surrounding pedestrian network.

BE9 Where buildings front public areas, they should have ground floor windows and doors facing those areas wherever practical.

## **Parking and Access Arrangement**

BE10 The design and layout of access roads, footways, footpaths, parking and service areas should be attractive, safe, convenient and appropriate to the type and scale of development.

BE11 Parking and service arrangements should be designed to minimise their visual impact and to ensure that residential amenity would not be unduly affected.

## **Refuse Storage**

BE12 New development should include adequate screened refuse storage facilities. These should be sited where they do not unduly affect the amenity of nearby occupiers and the street scene.

## **Materials**

BE13 In all new development, materials should be sympathetic to the surroundings and to any existing buildings which are to be modified by that development.

## **Landscape**

BE14 The Council will require a landscape scheme to form an integral part of development, secured where appropriate by the use of agreements. Applicants will be expected to provide sufficiently detailed landscape information to enable the scheme to be considered in context. Landscape design should ensure that:

- a) any trees, existing natural habitats or other features which can be effectively incorporated

are retained;

b) plant species, surfacing and other materials are appropriate to the site and locality; and  
c) the likely level of maintenance is taken into account.

Where adequate opportunities exist, the Council will encourage the replacement of trees and worthwhile natural features lost through development.

## **Daylight and Sunlight**

BE16 In considering design and layout proposals the Council will take account of the incidence of sunlight and potential energy saving benefits. It will also ensure that those proposals cause no significant loss of sunlight or daylight amenities for occupiers of adjacent properties.

## **Privacy and Visual Intrusion**

BE17 In controlling development the Council will require that new and existing occupiers are protected from undue visual intrusion and loss of privacy.

## **Safety and Security**

BE18 The Council will seek to ensure that the design and layout of buildings and public areas helps to deter crime and reduces the fear of crime.

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## **Residential Extensions**

H7 Alterations and extensions to residential property will be permitted subject to meeting policies for the design and layout of development set out in policies BE1 to BE14 and BE16 to BE18.

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