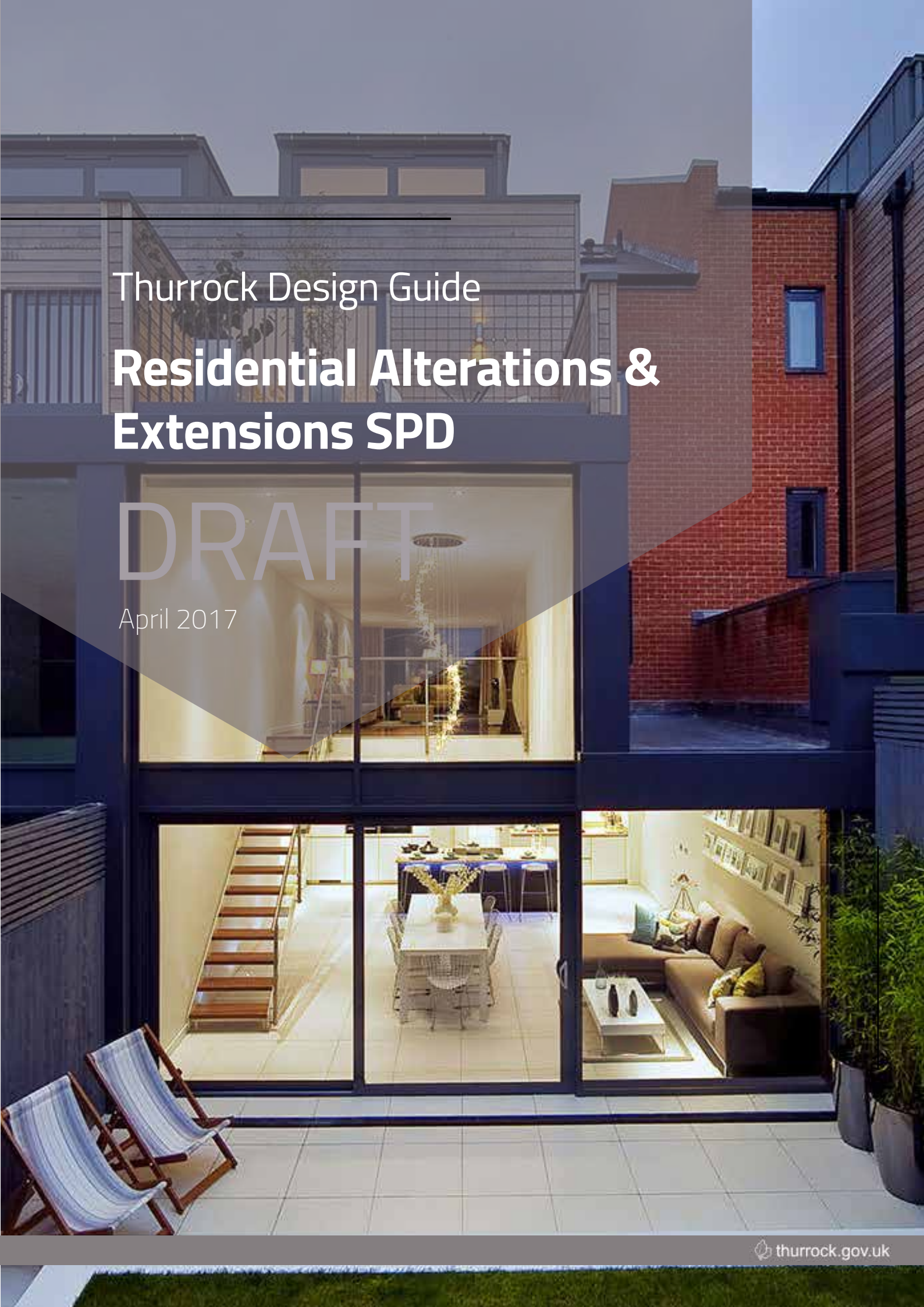

Thurrock Design Guide

Residential Alterations & Extensions SPD

DRAFT

April 2017

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Good quality achieved on a tight budget by Dallas Pierce Quintero

1. Introduction

Our homes have a vital importance to our identity and quality of life, and cumulatively they have an equally important role in shaping how our towns and landscapes look, and feel. This Guide has been published by Thurrock Council to provide advice to residents who wish to expand or alter their home, or to convert other buildings into homes. Our intention is that, by offering clear guidance and design standards, we can help to protect and enhance the quality of Thurrock's built environment for all.

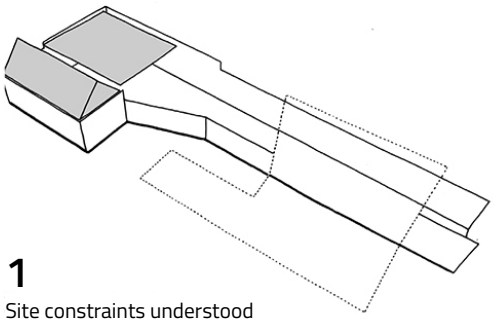
The council has planning policies that determine the kind of development it can support and wants to achieve. The policies are available via The council's website[1], and should be consulted if you wish to make a planning application for your extension, alteration or conversion. You can also look up your address using The council's on-line map[2] to see what area-specific constraints are relevant to your home.

This publication offers guidance to both planning officers and applicants on how to comply with the policies and achieve the best possible residential environment.

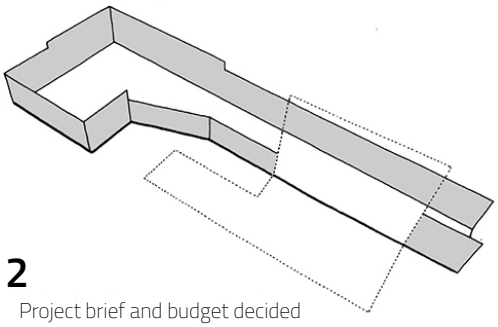
When developing a proposal, you will need to balance your own needs and that of your family with the needs and rights of your neighbours and what is also best for the wider community. This Guide has been structured to help you achieve this balance.

The Guide begins with advice about good design process and all the things that residents will need to consider when planning and building their extension or alteration (Section 2). It then explores the particular character of Thurrock and how alterations and extensions may differ depending on where they are (Section 3). Then, we outline some general design principles for all residential alteration, extension and conversion projects (Section 4), before giving more detailed, project-specific guidance and standards (Section 5). The Guide ends with advice about how to seek further information (Section 6) to assist your project, a glossary (Section 7) explaining the meaning of technical terms used in this Guide, and a standards chart (Section 8) containing all the crucial guidance and standards set out in this Guide.

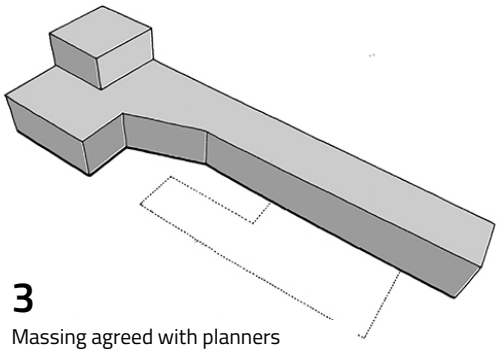
1. Thurrock council's policy map available at: http://www.planvu.co.uk/thurrock/
2. see on-line constraints map at thurrock.maps.arcgis.com



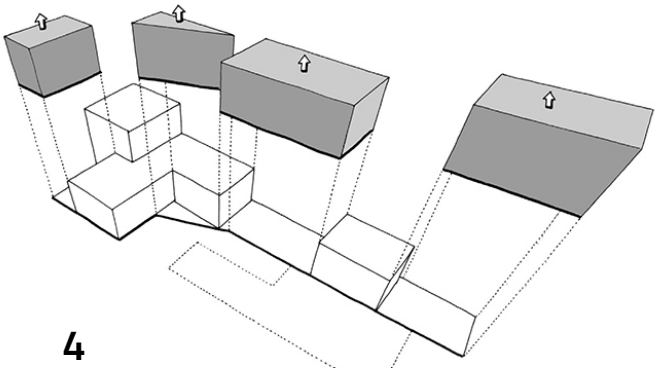
1
Site constraints understood



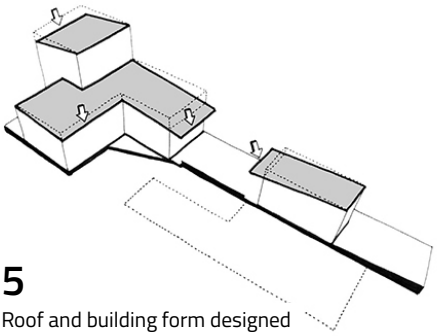
2
Project brief and budget decided



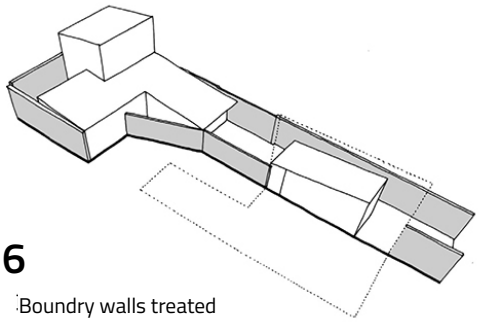
3
Massing agreed with planners



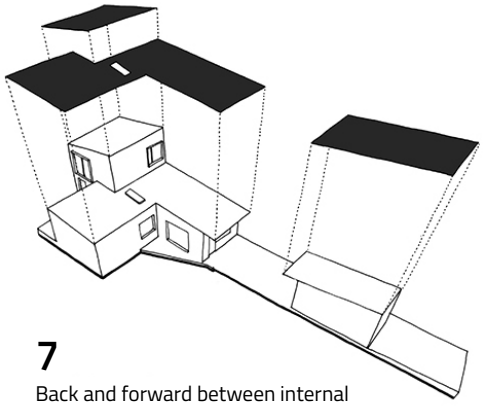
4
Buildable areas defined



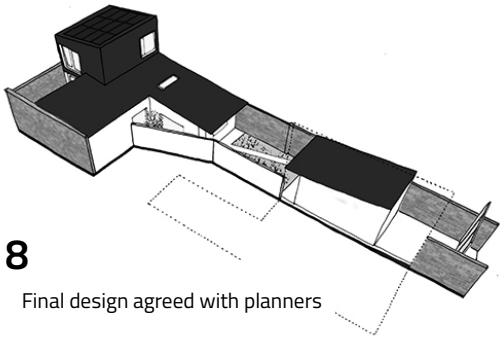
5
Roof and building form designed



6
Boundry walls treated



7
Back and forward between internal and external design



8
Final design agreed with planners

An example of the design process by Dallas Pierce Quintero

2. Design Process

Design is a process, however large or small your project is. This section offers some principles for achieving a good design process and therefore a well-designed extension or alteration. It is not exhaustive – see Section 6 for advice on where to get further information or assistance.

PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT OR PLANNING PERMISSION?

The first thing to think about is the best process for building your extension, alteration or conversion. In the UK, there are two main routes for this, Permitted Development[12] and Planning Permission, and your decision about which to choose may have a big impact on the size and character of your project. It is always advisable to contact The council's planning team for advice on which route to choose.

Permitted Development (PD) is a set of rules that allows the public to alter or create buildings without needing to seek permission from the local planning authority. The scale and complexity of what can be built under PD are limited, and the rules for this are set nationally.

If you choose to build under PD rules, you should make sure that the development complies with these national rules, but you do not need to seek formal approval before building your project.

Many people choose, for peace of mind or to resolve any potential disputes, to seek a Certificate of Lawful Development from The council that proves that their project is lawful.

Permitted development does ***NOT*** apply in all places and to all buildings, including:

- residential buildings that are not single houses, such as blocks of flats or houses converted into flats;
- where PD rights have been removed by Article 4 such as many Listed Buildings;
- buildings where there are 'conditions' in place relating to prior planning permissions.

In some places, such as in the Green Belt or in Conservation Areas, Permitted Development[12] may be different or suspended entirely, and you should check whether any of these situations apply to your home both to aid in choosing the best route and to establish any restrictions that may be in place that will impact upon your project. See Section 3 for more on this.

The rules for PD are set nationally and therefore change occasionally in ways that are outside

of The council's control. See Section 6 for advice on how to find and interpret current PD legislation.

If you think that your proposed extension or alteration is larger or more ambitious than PD allows, or if PD does not apply or is limited in your local area, you will need to seek planning permission from The council. This will involve producing a planning application, including drawings of the project[3], for review by The council, from whom you need planning permission before work can commence on site. The council may also reject the application or propose conditions for how the project is built and howits impact on its surroundings can be managed.

Although the guidance and standards in this Guide are intended primarily for residents who choose to gain planning permission for their extension or alteration project, and will also be used by planning officers and their colleagues to assess individual applications, a lot of its contents will be equally applicable to residents who choose the PD route.

Whichever route you choose, please note that a separate Building Control approval may be needed for any project. Please contact The council's Building Control team to understand more about this process.

PROFESSIONAL HELP

Working with a good architect or designer can be invaluable in helping to make the best possible residential extension or alteration, and although the cost of paying design fees can be seen as an extra, the added value can, often offset this cost. For example, avoiding a refusal on design grounds saves you time and money. Higher design and built quality rewards you with styles that last and higher property value.

The council recommends that residents use a suitably qualified and experienced professional (such as a qualified architect) to prepare your planning application, but it is generally best to engage with them earlier than this so that they can help turn your requirements into a brief and advise on the best planning or construction process for your project.

The Royal Institute of British Architects offers a 'Find an Architect' service[4]that allows residents to search for architects by location and by specialism, and the ARB Architects Register[5] has a public database of all registered architects in the UK.

Whatever your intentions for your project, and whether you intend to develop a scheme using PD or planning permission, we also advise that you consult with the council's planning team as early as possible in your development of the project. There is a charge for pre-application services but the advice you receive can be vital in creating a better quality scheme and one that better relates to planning policy.

FUNDING

A clear budget is as important to achieving a good quality project as getting the design right. An extension can cost about 1500-3000 per square meter but unpredictable factors, such as the weather or availability of materials, can affect costs.

Employing professionals such as an architect or a qualified quantity surveyor can help ensure that a project stays in budget without compromising quality. The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors offers a 'Find a Surveyor' service[6] to help find a local qualified professional to help with your project.

3. Examples of drawings available at: https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/householder-planning-applications/overview
4. Find an Architect service available at: https://www.architecture.com/FindAnArchitect
5. ARB Architects Register available at http://www.architects-register.org.uk
6. Find a surveyor service available at: www.ricsfirms.com/search

An examples of innovative design proposal, MClaren Excel

DESIGN QUALITY

The council wishes to encourage the best quality design in all applications it receives. In general, The council will seek to ensure the standards of quality to be achieved in way that conforms to current planning policy, whilst also encouraging excellent design that exceeds minimum standards.

The council advocates good quality innovative design regardless of the scale of a project, and schemes will be considered on their merits in relation to both their immediate and wider context.

Existing alterations and extensions that were built under previous guidance will not necessarily be acceptable justification for poor design or projects that do not comply with the new standards.

The guidelines and examples offered in this document are not exhaustive and may not be relevant in every case. If you believe that your proposal differs from these guidelines but demonstrates an innovative, contemporary and sustainable design approach that is appropriate to the context of your proposal, you will be given opportunity to explain in detail with supporting drawings the reasons for departing from the guidelines. Each application will be considered on its own merits and tested against the planning policies outlined in the Local Plan.

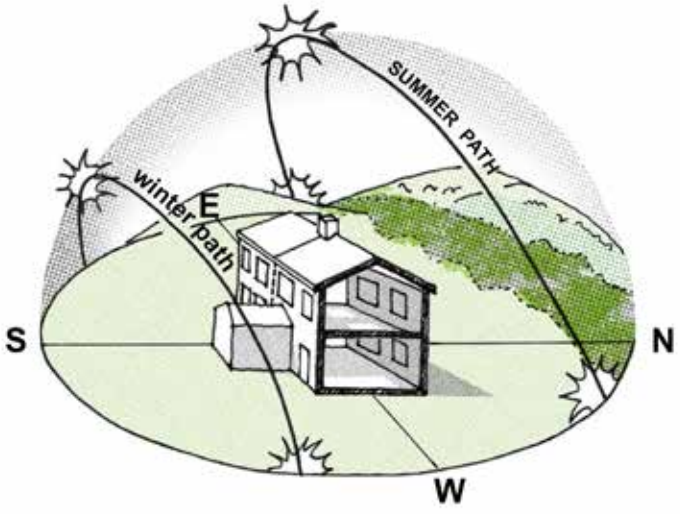
SITE & CONTEXT

When beginning to design your extension or alteration, or when talking to an architect or designer about what you need, the site and the existing building(s) are fundamental. Thinking about the particularities of your site will help to create extensions or alterations that preserve or enhance the positive qualities of your home as well as ensuring that the new or changed spaces are as good as they can possibly be. What is positive about the house and site that should be preserved or enhanced? What is negative that should be corrected or resolved as part of the works?

Daylight: Another aspect of 'site' to consider is sunlighting and daylighting, and the impact your project could have on the daylight received in your garden, home and within the extension itself, as well as any impacts on your neighbours' light. Observe how the different areas of the home are lit at different times of the day and year and how this might be impacted – for the better or for the worse – by the proposed development.

Ground Level: If there is a difference between your plot and external ground levels then this may increase the impact of your extension on the daylight and privacy of your neighbour. In cases where the level difference between properties is particularly significant you may be required to either: a) reduce the maximum height of your extension or b) set in your extension from the boundary c) alter or restrict external ground level.

Location: Another crucial consideration is where your home is located in Thurrock. The local context should play a key role in determining not only the scale or shape of what you build, but also its character and materials. In Section 3 of this Guide, we have provided a map of Thurrock that will help you locate your home and make decisions about how your location should shape your project. This will include practical considerations, such as which materials to build with, as well as any development restrictions that may be in place, such as Conservation Areas.



The relationship between sun, house orientation and daylight

Consider some common minimum dimensions for a comfortable home

INSIDE-OUT

Whilst the majority of standards and guidance in this Guide are concerned with the exterior of the home and the impact of extensions or alterations on its context, as a design process it is important to first consider the internal arrangement. Thinking about the whole home, including how existing rooms may be affected by any extensions, can result in a better layout. Think about how you use the spaces that you currently have, and what could be improved about their arrangement. For example, do you spend a lot of your time in the darkest part of the ground floor of your home? Could you reconfigure the home so that the best part of the house is where you spend the most time? You then need to go back and forth between the internal arrangement and external appearances to ensure they are balanced.

The nationally described space standard is a document provided by the Department for Communites that offers guidance on the minimum areas of new homes. Building Regulations 'Part M' offers guidance on how to achieve accessible new buildings.

TALKING TO THE NEIGHBOURS

If you apply for planning permission, your neighbours will be informed of the proposals and given the chance to view, comment on, object to or support them, and the planning documents you submit will be available to the public at The council offices or on-line. Whilst you are not obliged to discuss your proposals with your neighbours before this formal process begins, The council strongly advises that you do so as honest, clear communication from the start of a project has a better chance of achieving a good quality scheme. Explaining your ideas to neighbours in an informal way, and considering their comments, can help to create a smoother and more positive process for all in the long run.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY

The council wishes to encourage energy efficiency and sustainable development in even the smallest of projects, from choosing local or ethically-sourced materials through to high-technology solutions to minimise energy consumption or generate heat. You may wish to include details of your intentions regarding sustainability and energy use in your planning application.

The notes below provide some quick tips for achieving more sustainable proposals, whilst Section 6 contains some useful contacts to find out more about achieving a sustainable, energy-efficient project:

- Bigger is not always better. If the extension is too deep for natural light to penetrate, the resulting spaces may become dark and uncomfortable, with an effect on wellbeing.

- Invest in good quality materials. good quality windows and high performance insulation can reduce your home's energy consumption. This may mean a higher initial outlay but long-term savings. New windows and doors will need to meet the current U-values required by the Building Regulations.

- The same design can work completely differently depending on your building orientation. Large south-facing glazing might result in overheating, for example, if no shading is provided.

- Careful planting of trees and shrubs can improve the visual appearance and environmental quality of a home, for example by protecting open space from a busy road. Well-landscaped houses tend to have a significantly higher market value too.

This rear return extension by Sam Tisdall features strong environmental strategy: the glass box contributes by acting as a solar collector, with hot air distributed throughout the house by a heat recovery system; a green roof offers attractive view from upper level of the extension; solar water heating and photovoltaic panels were installed and a recycled water tank placed in the old cellar provides water for the garden.

- Think about drainage and water run-offs.Green roofs can be an attractive solution whilst reducing rainwater run-off and wherever possible paving should be permeable. Hard-landscaped private gardens contribute to flash-flooding in local areas.

- Energy can be collected from naturally replenished resources, such as wind or sunlight. Systems which use renewable energy can increase the energy efficiency of a home and reduce energy bills.

A small building brings out the character of its community in Thurrock

2. Thurrock

However small or insignificant you consider your extension or alteration, it is important to understand its context in order to ensure good quality design and appropriate development. Amongst other considerations, proposals will be assessed in how well they respond to their context. The requirements for contextural considerations do not, however, suggest that designs that closely mimic past architectural languages are necessarily appropriate. The council will equally support good quality designs that respond positively to the context in a contemporary way .

THURROCK

Thurrock is closely associated with the Thames. Development, and Thurrock's larger settlements, have tended to occur near the river and adjacent to key industrial sites such as Tilbury Port.

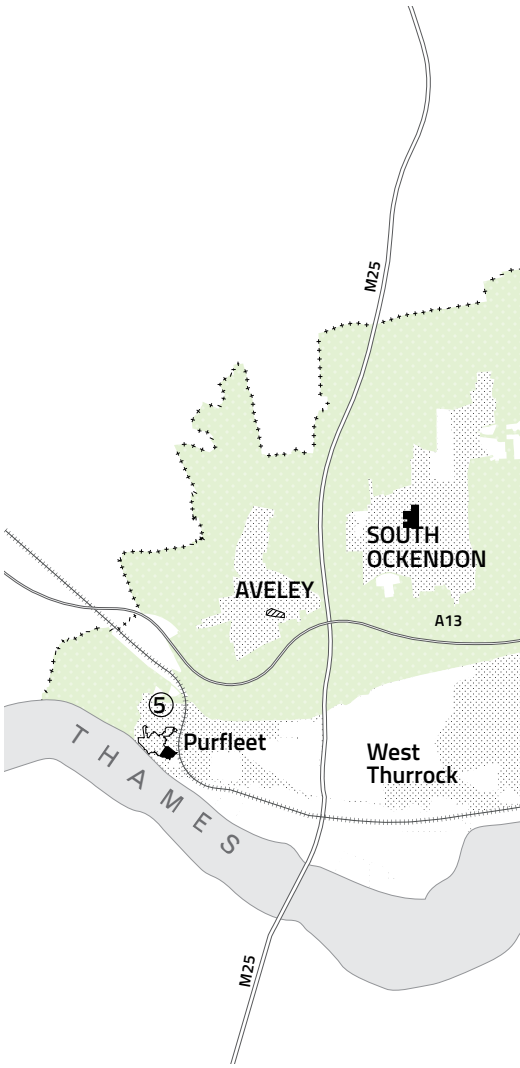
Many of Thurrock's settlements have their roots in ancient parishes and many survive as villages or hamlets. Others grew in the 19th and 20th centuries into more significant settlements, often in relation to Thames-side industry. At the start of this period, development included terraced houses for port workers and larger homes for wealthier families in areas such as 'the Avenues' in Grays.

Significant areas of residential estates have been built since then. They have a highly varied character, from low-density interwar bungalows to Modernist townhouses and tower blocks and late 20th century private houses such as at Chafford Hundred. Some of these estates and the housing on them are of local, national and international heritage value, such as the Bata Estate at East Tilbury.

65% of Thurrock is designated as 'Green Belt', which means that development, including residential extensions or alterations, is more tightly controlled in order to preserve the shape, scale and character of the area's established settlements.

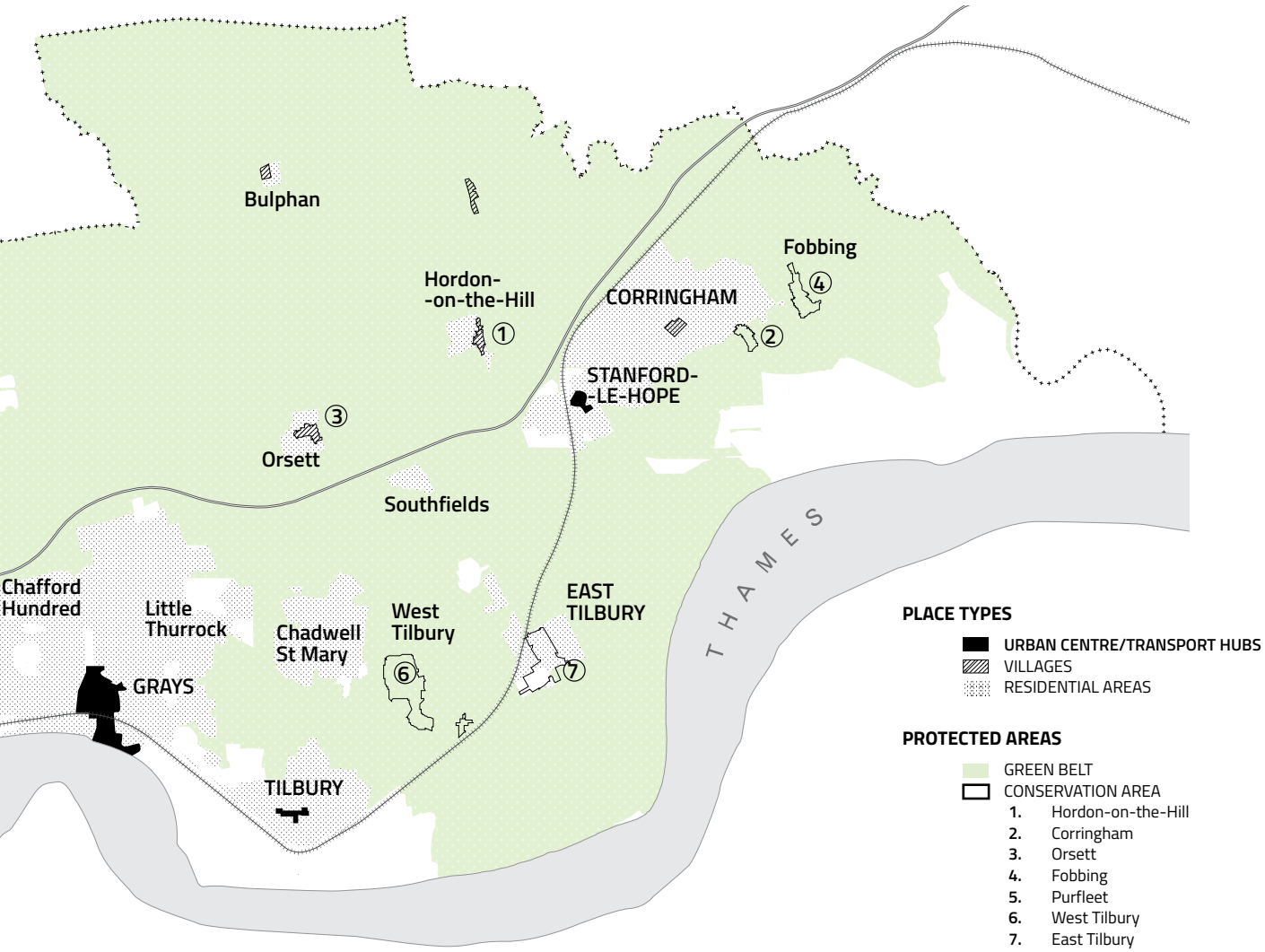
Thurrock Council has set out a series of 'place typologies' in its Design Strategy SPD – this Guide refers to these types as a way of helping you understand the context of your project. Please also refer to the Design Strategy SPD, available via the council's website, for more on these place types.

Your home is likely to be located in three of the five place typologies outlined in the Design Strategy: Urban Centres & Transport Hubs, Residential Areas and Rural Locations.The map and accompanying notes present a simplified version of Thurrock's setting and types of place, as well as showing Conservation Areas. The right design response to a project's context will depend a great deal on where your project is in relation to the type of place in which it is situated as well as whether or not the project is in a Conservation Area or near Locally Listed Heritage Assets.



Urban Centres & Transport Hubs

Thurrock has five urban centres, the largest of which is Grays. Urban centres are mixed-use locations which serve as a focus for retail, commercial, community and education uses, with good accessibility particularly by foot, cycle and public transport. These are places where an increase in residential development, in principle, will generally be encouraged, particularly if close proximity to public transport can be demonstrated. Close attention should be paid to the established character of the urban centre in which your project is situated.



Rural Locations

Thurrock's Rural Locations contain several villages, Green Belt and Residential frontages. The Green Belt in Thurrock is protected and maintained though the principles set out in Government guidance. There are a number of localities within the Green Belt, identified by The council as Established Residential Frontages, where there can be some relaxation of normal Green Belt Policy. Each of Thurrock's villages has a particular rural character, reflected in the layout and appearance of its buildings and spaces, and this character should be considered if you are proposing a project there.

Residential Areas

Thurrock's residential areas vary from nineteenth century terraces on the fringes of urban centres through to early twentieth century detached villas (e.g. at Grays), post-war, low-density suburban estates (e.g. at Corringham) and more recent, higher-density housing estates such as at Chafford Hundred. The majority of Thurrock's residents live in these housing-dominated areas and each has a particular character.

An example of rear extension by Diseño Interior Bruto

4. Design Principles

If you are considering an alteration or extension to your home, you will need to balance your own needs and that of your family with the needs and rights of your neighbours and what is best for the wider community.

This section of the Guide includes a number of standards grouped into these three categories – home, neighbour and community – to help you find a way of balancing all of these needs and constraints in a way that makes the best possible alteration or extension project.

4.1 HOME

These standards are about ensuring that the quality of your home – for you and for any future residents – is maintained and improved by the proposed extension or alteration. They should be closely followed for all residential extension or alteration projects except in circumstances where the proposal breaches any design principles concerned with Neighbours (4.2) and with the wider Community (4.3).

A ***subservient*** approach

CONSIDERATIONS

The new extension or alteration should respect and respond positively to the character of the original dwelling such that its character is maintained or enhanced. There are different ways to achieve this.

Subservient: This would include making the addition smaller and lower than the existing house and setting back from the prominent outer wall so that it appears subordinate to the main house. If this approach is taken, the materials used should complement the materials used in the main house but need not match them.

A ***seamless*** approach

Seamless: Another approach is to make the addition look like part of the original house, matching the materials and continuing the form of the existing building. In projects adopting this approach, there is a particular need to ensure that factors like materials and window details and proportions have been carefully considered to ensure a seamless final development.

Special: Finally, there are cases in which the extension or alteration deliberatedly differs from the existing dwelling, whether by using the most up-to-date materials, method of construction or design ideas in the technical and aesthetic sense. The council welcomes such proposals if a positive relationship with the existing dwelling and its context is achieved (see the rest of the chapter and Section 5 for more details).

A ***special*** approach

An extension which transforms the organisation of the ground floor of the dwelling, Emily Greeves Architects

Extensions or alterations should be designed so that new rooms benefit from adequate daylighting and existing rooms do not have their amount or quality of daylighting reduced. This may influence the shape, size, proportion and location of windows. Rooflights can help to bring light into the middle of a dwelling and provide light to rooms with reduced light as a result of extensions or alterations.

Extensions or alterations should ensure that they provide an environment which is usable, accessible and welcoming to people of all abilities. Building Regulations requires that new construction should not be less accessible than the existing building [https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/approved-documents].

Extensions or alterations should be secure. Design advice is provided by the Police Secured by Design website [www.securedbydesign.com]. In general, it is advisable that windows and doors should meet British Standard BS7950 and any ironmongery should meet PAS23/24.

Extensions or alterations should be designed so that internal floor to ceiling heights are adequate for a good quality internal environment. Residents should take into account internal surfaces and floor finishes when working out the final floor to ceiling height.

It is worth noting that simply 'adding a room' to the existing dwelling is not always the best solution. Thinking about the whole home, including how existing rooms may be affected by any extensions, can result in a better layout.

It is important to think not only about the extension or alteration in relation to the home, but also in terms of its impact on your external amenity, i.e. any gardens, yards or other open space associated with your home. Whilst some extension or alteration projects will inevitably result in a reduced amount of this amenity space, The council will expect proposals to demonstrate than an acceptable amount and quality of amenity space is preserved, with adequate daylight and access to the home.

4.1.1 The extension or alteration should respect and respond positively to the character of the original dwelling such that its character is maintained or enhanced.

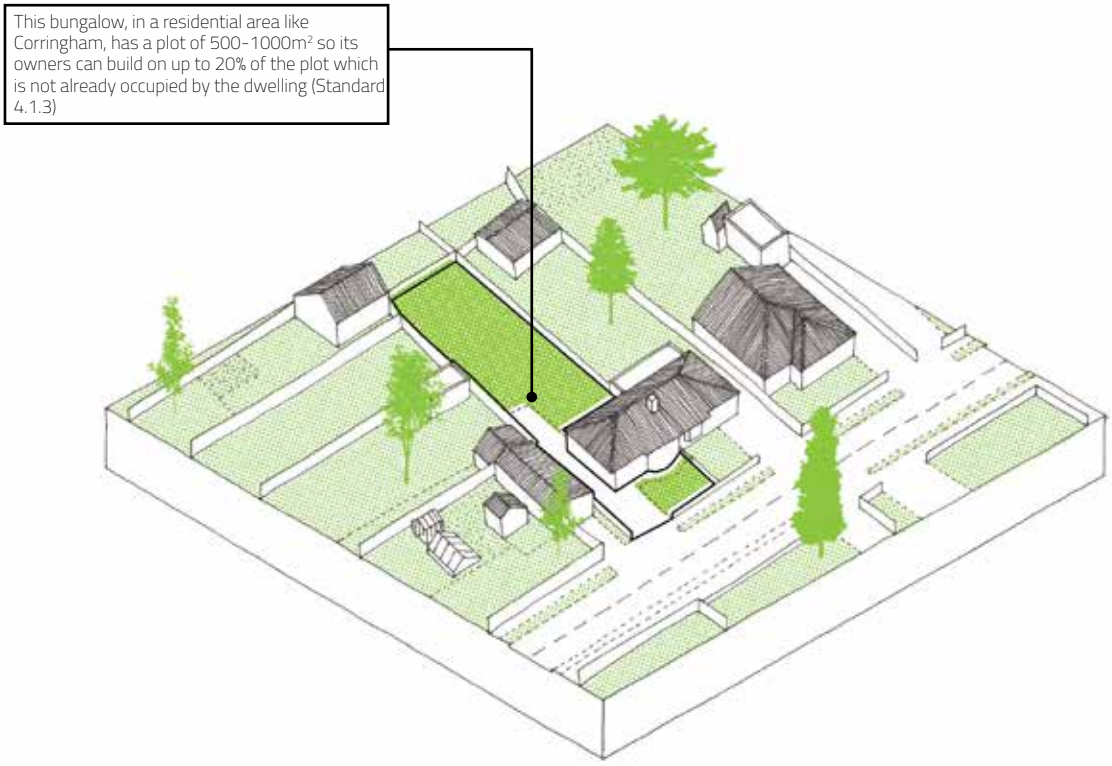
4.1.2 An alteration, extension or outbuilding should function well for its intended use, and adequate daylight and natural ventilation should be maintained to the new construction and to the existing building where the addition is attached.

4.1.3 As a result of the proposed extension or outbuilding, the total area of the curtilage covered by buildings should not exceed the following proportions, and the remaining garden should be usable and fit for purpose.

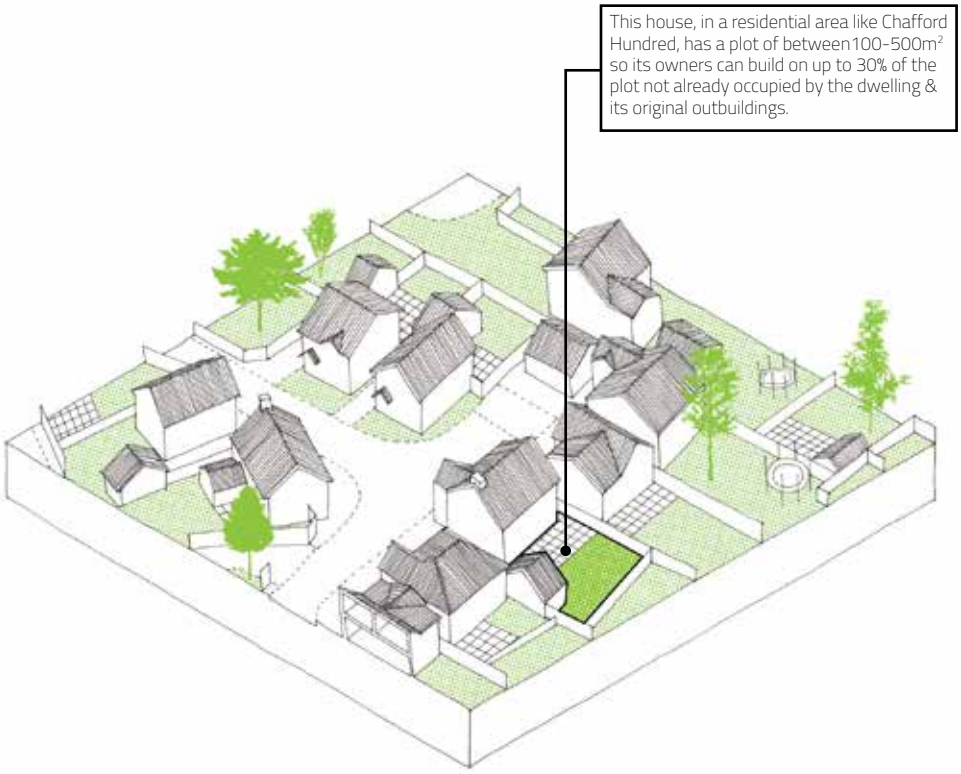
Area of curtilage (m^2)	Proportion buildable
up to 100	40%
100 — 500	30%
500 — 1000	20%
>1000	10%

To calculate the curtilage, subtract the footprint of the original house and any original outbuildings from the total land area of the plot (see Case Study 1 & 2). This standard must be applied in conjunction with other standards in the the Guide., Those standards may further reduce the buildable areas.

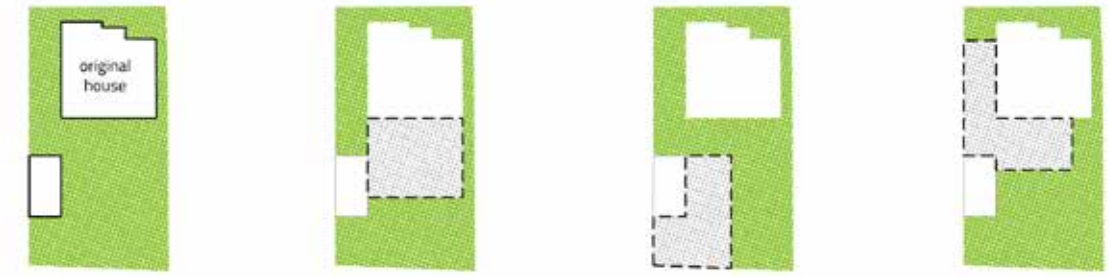
4.1.4 Extensions and alterations should comply with Approved Document M of the Building Regulations, including ensuring that extensions and alterations are no less accessible than the existing building.



Case Study 1
Interpreting Standard 4.1.3 to extend a property with a large plot



Case Study 2
Interpreting Standard 4.1.3 to extend a property with a medium-sized plot



Project

This is a plan of the example above. Minus the original dwelling and its original garage, the plot is 211m², meaning that an area of 63m² (30%) can be added, subject to other planning policies and standards. Here are three possible approaches.

Approach 1 - Rear Extension

You could propose a single rear extension of up to 62m²

This example connects the dwelling to its garage.

Approach 2 - Outbuilding associated with existing garage

You could propose a single outbuilding of up to 62m² , in this case expanding the existing garage.

This approach might be particularly suitable for creating space for a hobby or start-up business.

Approach 3 - Combined rear and side extensions

You could propose to extend to the side and rear of the property, with a total combined area of 62m². Such an approach would lead to a larger retained rear garden.

4.2 NEIGHBOUR

These standards are intended to ensure that changes to your property do not adversely affect your neighbours' enjoyment of their own properties.

CONSIDERATIONS

The rooms of a dwelling can be divided into 'habitable rooms' (which are occupied for long periods of time, such as bedrooms, living rooms or kitchen-diners) and 'non-habitable rooms' (such as bathrooms or separate kitchens). Habitable rooms are more sensitive to overlooking and overshadowing than non-habitable ones. Extensions or alterations should be careful not to have an overbearing impact on adjacent properties, with particular attention to habitable rooms and their windows.

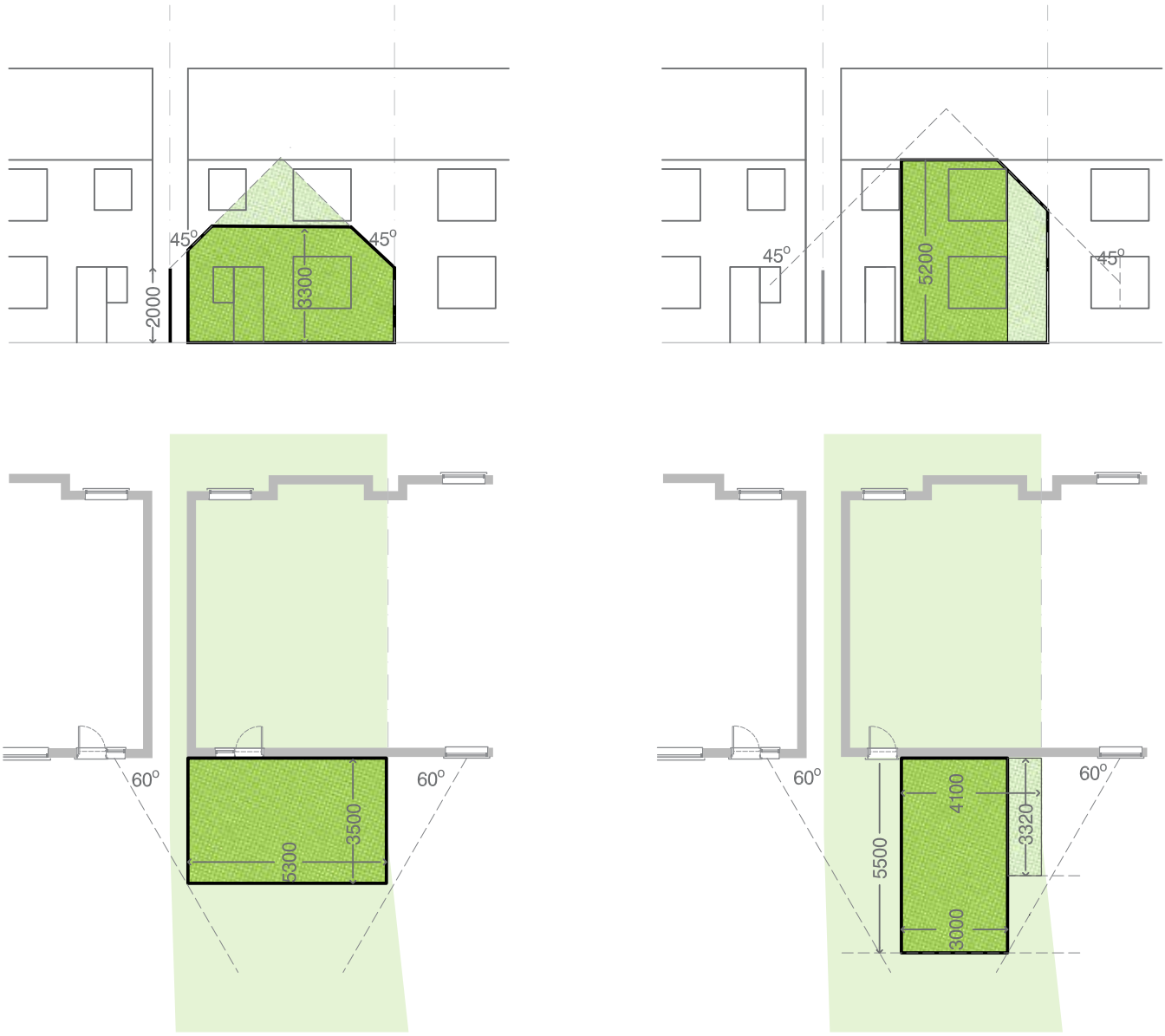
Two-storey extensions and outbuildings typically have a larger impact on neighbours; particular care should be taken to minimise their impact on neighbours' amenity, daylight, and overlooking.

It is essential that privacy is maintained between dwellings. Designs should ensure that privacy (which works both ways) is not compromised by new developments, for example windows overlooking a neighbour's garden.

In fulfilling guidance about overlooking and overbearing impact, you should also avoid creating awkward roof in an effort to comply with the standards, for example small pitches on the edge of extensions to comply with standard 4.2.2.

If you and your neighbour decide that you would both like to build an extension on the same side of the house, you may consider submitting a 'joint application'. This will remove the mustual impact of the extension. A planning permission on a joint application will normally be subject to certain conditions such as both extensions being constructed at the same time.

A joint application removes the impact of the extension on each other



Case Study 3

Interpreting 4.22 (a) and 4.2.3

Option 1 - 1 Storey Extension
45 degree from 2m at boundary

Option 2 - 2 Storey Extension
45 degree from middle of the closest window

4.2.1 Extensions and outbuildings should not have an overbearing impact on adjacent properties or cause them to be excessively enclosed or overshadowed.

4.2.2 The height of an extension or outbuilding should not normally exceed the following limits:

(a) a vertical plane inclined at 45 degrees from the boundary, starting at a level 2m above the ground on the neighbour's side, or from the middle of closest ground floor window of a neighbouring property.

(b) a vertical plane inclined at 45 degrees from the top of a neighbouring building, where it is located on or next to the boundary.

(c) Taller buildings and extensions may be acceptable where two adjoining properties are being extended at the same time.

4.2.3 The depth and width of an extension or outbuilding should not normally exceed a horizontal plane inclined at 60 degrees from the middle of a closest ground floor window of neighbouring property.

4.2.4 Two-storey extensions and outbuildings will normally be required to meet the following criteria:

(a) The dimensions comply with standard 4.2.2 and 4.2.3.

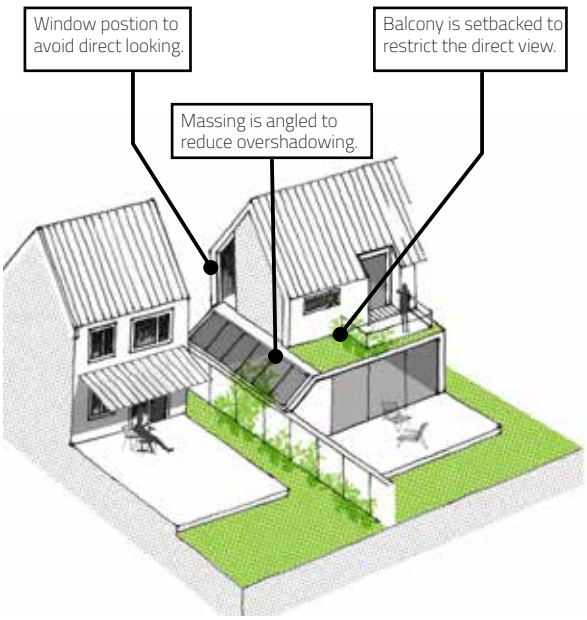
(b) The proposal demonstrates high quality design.

(c) The roof form, if visible from a public realm, should be the sympathetic to the host building.

4.2.5 Windows in elevations that directly face a neighbouring property that would lead to overlooking should be avoided unless obscure glazed, and either fixed shut or restricted to an opening width of 100mm. Windows and glazed doors that are set back from the property boundary and well screened by boundary structures will normally be considered acceptable.

4.2.5 Where an extension or outbuilding is constructed on or up to a property boundary, no part of the construction should overhang or intrude into the adjacent property, including eaves and rain gutters.

4.2.6 Proposals which exceed the dimensional standards 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 will be required to provide the extra design and technical information where it can be shown that they are acceptable in terms of design, amenity, daylighting, overlooking, and avoiding over-dominance in relation to neighbouring properties. The extra information required will be based on each site condition but it will normally include professional shadow analysis, outlook and daylight analysis and realistic façade rendering(s).



A proposal featuring a variety of solutions to reduce the impacts on neighor's privacy and daylight.

4.3 COMMUNITY

These standards are about ensuring that changes to your property do not adversely affect the community at large and the character of the built environment surrounding your home.

CONSIDERATIONS

The extension or alteration should respect and respond positively to the surrounding setting, so that its character is maintained or enhanced. A first step towards achieving this would be to locate your home using The council's Planning Constraints map and to see what special policy designations, such as the Green Belt or a Conservation Area, may apply. Each of these will have an impact on what you can propose.

The map in Section 3 also illustrates a number of 'place types' that make up Thurrock's built environment. Consider what 'place type' your proposals sits within to help consider what kind of extension, alteration or conversion will be appropriate in that context. These place types will be taken into consideration by planners evaluating applications.

It is also important to consider the more immediate context of your proposal – the surrounding street, public space, square, close or landscape. What is the predominant character and organisation of the place and how might your proposal positively respond to this character? For instance, in most cases where there is a strong, repetitive architectural character to the homes in your area, proposals which damage this repetition will not be appropriate. In other locations where there is a great variety of architectural characters, a more varied approach is likely to be appropriate.

Extensions which address or are situated on street corners have a particular prominence in the street scene and may be more suitable for 'seamless' or 'special' design approaches than those within blocks or streets, in order to positively address the surrounding public spaces.

Satellite dishes and aerials tend to create visual clutter and can detract from the character of the street if located in a prominent position. In these situations, cable services and ground-level dishes in the back garden may be suitable alternatives.

Trees in close proximity to a proposed extension may be specially protected by Tree Preservation Orders or protected from felling and heavy pruning by virtue of being in a Conservation Area. It is advisable to check with The council first if you intend to remove or undertake works to a tree to accommodate an extension.

The majority of land within Thurrock is designated as 'Green Belt', which means that development is more tightly controlled. If your home is within the Green Belt this is likely to have a significant impact on what will be appropriate, as identified in the standards below.

You should also consider the impact of your proposal on parking in the area. The extra accommodation may be refused if the required additional parking cannot be accommodated in an area where there're insufficient parking spaces. New parking spaces within your property are likely to need 'drop-kerbs' onto the property and this can have an impact on on-street parking. Conversely, a loss of space within your property, for instance to make way for an extension, can increase pressure on existing on-street parking. The impact of these questions on the acceptability of proposals will be considered in relation to parking demand in the local area, and you may wish to discuss this in your application, with reference to the 'place type' in which your proposal sits.

4.3.1 The form and scale of the extension or outbuilding should be appropriate to the original dwelling and the surrounding development pattern.

An example of corner plot side extension with design features respect its surrounding enivironment.

4.3.2 Corner plots require a distinct design approach that responds positively not only to the dwelling but also to the neighbouring houses and the street scenes.

4.3.3 The extra parking requirements and the impact of the proposal on on-street parking will be taken into account according to the council's current policy.

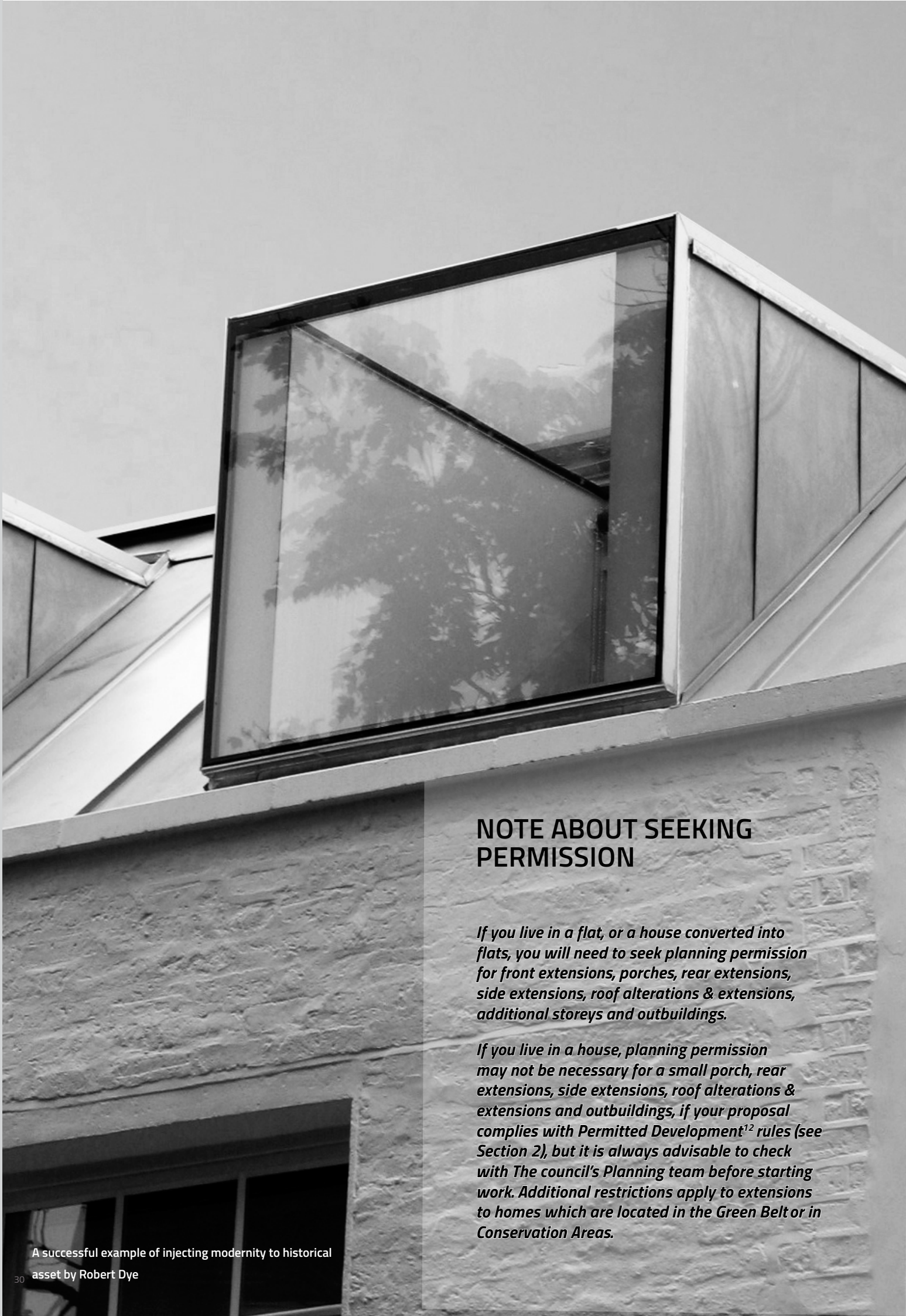
4.3.4 If your project is in the Green Belt, the following restrictions apply:

(a) Where an extension is considered acceptable, it should be proportionate in size to the original dwelling. Extensions will be limited in size to the floor area of two reasonably sized rooms of the original dwelling. Any extension should be of a scale, size, siting and design, and of materials of construction, such that it does not harm the appearance of the original dwelling, the immediate locality and the countryside in general.

(b) There will be a presumption against extensions to dwellings that are not in permanent residential use, to temporary dwellings, and to dwellings nearing the end of their lives on sites where replacement would not be permitted.

(c) Extending the curtilage of a residential property in a way that involves an incursion into the Green Belt will not be permitted.

4.3.5 Satellite dishes and aerials should be sited in an unobtrusive position and should not be located on walls, chimneys or roofs that are visible from the street. Multiple dishes and aerials should be avoided. Cables should be run internally or up the rear wall in discrete positions and be coloured or painted to match the background wall.



NOTE ABOUT SEEKING PERMISSION

If you live in a flat, or a house converted into flats, you will need to seek planning permission for front extensions, porches, rear extensions, side extensions, roof alterations & extensions, additional storeys and outbuildings.

If you live in a house, planning permission may not be necessary for a small porch, rear extensions, side extensions, roof alterations & extensions and outbuildings, if your proposal complies with Permitted Development[12] rules (see Section 2), but it is always advisable to check with The council's Planning team before starting work. Additional restrictions apply to extensions to homes which are located in the Green Belt or in Conservation Areas.

A successful example of injecting modernity to historical asset by Robert Dye

5. Common Projects

In this section we explore ten common extension, alteration or conversion projects. Whatever your plans for your home, it is likely that they will be one of these common projects, or a combination of them.

Different kinds of projects have different kinds of impact: on your home, on your neighbours, and on your community. Accordingly, the guidelines and standards in this section are grouped, like the general design principles, into three categories: home, neighbour, community. Getting the balance right between these three considerations is the key to achieving a great extension, alteration or conversion.

The guidelines and standards for these common projects should be read (and used) in conjunction with the general design principles that apply to all projects in Section 4.

5.1 FRONT EXTENSIONS AND PORCHES

Porches and front extensions can have a big impact on the quality of life of a home and its market value becasue they not only fulfil multiple functions but also set the tone for your entire house.

Being located at the front means that they are subject to more restrictions under neighbour and community design principle than other forms of extension.

HOME

A front extension or porch should be carefully designed so as to create a sense of arrival while remaining a cohesive part of the exterior scheme.

A front extension or porch should function well for its intended use and maintain adequate daylight and natural ventilation to the interior of the existing house.

A porch should provide a welcoming and direct entrance route and sufficient circulation space, taking into account any coat storage and door swings. Porches and front extensions should complement the appearance of the existing building and should not normally merge with existing projections such as bay windows.

NEIGHBOUR

An insensitively designed or excessively large front extension or porch could have an overbearing or overshadowing effect on a neighbour's front garden and the interior of their home, or spoil the appearance of a semi-detached pair or terrace of houses.

COMMUNITY

Porches and front extensions are generally highly visible alterations that can change the character of a building and the street. They can have a particular impact where front gardens are an important characteristic of the area, and where the street has a regular pattern of buildings and a clearly defined building line (as in many streets of terraced and semi-detached houses).

5.1.1 Front extensions and porches should complement the character of the street, including any existing pattern of front extensions, and respect existing building lines, particularly where a strongly defined building line forms an important characteristic of the street.

5.1.2 Front extensions that are larger than porches will generally only be acceptable where the front garden is unusually deep and the extension does not break clear of existing building lines along the street. In areas where there is an irregular building line and properties are well set back with large front gardens, front extensions may be more acceptable.

5.1.3 In areas where entrance canopies or open porches form a particular feature of the original dwelling, these should generally not be enclosed as porches.

What a case office would consider for front alterations and extensions on this street in Thurrock

5.2 REAR EXTENSIONS

Being located at the rear means they are less visible from public domain, and for this reason, the requirements for rear extensions, particularly single-storey, will be more relaxed in matching the design, fenestration or roof type of the existing building. A well-designed rear extension can radically improve the quality of life within the home with relatively little impact on your neighbours or wider community.

Best practice photograph
An angled glazing providing daylight to the extension without overshowing the neighbor

Best practice photograph
A contemporary rear extension following the historical extension pattern

HOME

A rear extension is an opportunity to improve the quality of your living space, better connect the house with the garden, and bring more light to the centre of the main house. Think about orientation and daylighting in relation to the activities that the extension should provide and the times of day it will be occupied.

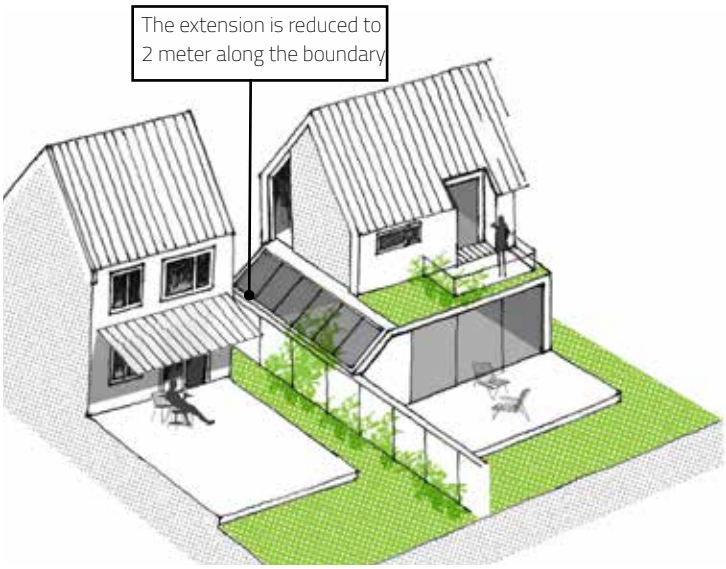
It is often desirable to have larger openings than are present within the existing house. Bear in mind the larger the openings, the more heat exchange. So it is important you invest in quality windows, doors and overall construction method to make your extension energy efficient.

A full rear extension offers a more integrated and comfortable space than a conservatory. The common problems with conservatories is their tendency to be too cold to use in winter and too hot at the height of summer. Making a conservatory into a full extension can integrate an otherwise isolated space as part of the house by openning up the exterior wall between them, although you may need planning permission for doing so. Most importantly it offers opportunity to make your house more comfortable and more energy efficient to use.

NEIGHBOUR

The design should create comfortable living spaces within the home while avoiding overshadowing and overlooking neighbouring properties or creating an overbearing impact.

Two-storey extensions are more visible and have a greater impact on neighbouring properties, therefore more restrictions apply. Two-storey rear extensions are often unsuitable at the rear of terraced and semi-detached properties because of the visual intrusion and overshadowing that would be caused to neighbouring properties. However, each case will be considered on its merits, and two-storey extensions may be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that there is no harm, subject to compliance with Standard 4.2.2 and 4.2.3.



An example of rear infill extension employs a variety of solutions to reduce the impacts on neighour's privacy and daylight.

Flat roofs and monopitch (lean-to) roofs are considered acceptable in most circumstances for single storey rear extensions. Where a pitched roof is proposed, the ridge height should normally be lower than the cill of the first floor windows. To protect the privacy of adjoining owners, flat roofs should not normally be used as terraces or balconies.

A rear infill extension is a single-storey extension to a terraced house that has an existing two-storey rear projection, where the proposed extension fills the gap between the rear projection and the side boundary wall. Care needs to be taken with the height of the extension on the boundary where the neighbour has a small external space adjacent to the boundary wall.

5.2.1 Where a rear extension extends beyond a side wall of the building, standards associated with side extensions apply. (See Section 5.3).

5.2.2 Rear infill extensions should be as close to 2m in height along the boundary as reasonably possible, where the boundary is an existing garden fence or wall of up to 2m in height.

COMMUNITY

Single storey rear extensions often have little or no impact on the street and are less visible from neighbouring properties. In some cirmcumstances, rear extensions are visible from a public domain such as on a bend of a street or a corner plot, rear garden overlooking a park or raised highway. In these senarios, more restrictions apply because they can have similar impacts to the character of the community as side or even front extensions.

5.2.3 Where rear extensions can be seen from a public realm, more restrictions apply including how well they complement historical pattern of the neighboring rear extensions, the treatment of the façade visible and roof form.

5.3 SIDE EXTENSIONS

HOME

A side extension can be an opportunity to alter the circulation and organisation of a home's ground storey, or in the case of unusually-shaped plots can have the same transformative impact on the home as a rear extension.

NEIGHBOUR

The design should create comfortable living spaces within the home while avoiding overshadowing or overlooking neighbouring properties or having an overbearing impact on them (see Section 4.2).

COMMUNITY

Side extensions can have a significant impact on the character of the street. The design should respect the architectural rhythm of the houses and the gaps between them. Side extensions should not visually join together semi-detached or detached houses in a way that gives the appearance of a terrace. Two-storey side extensions may be more acceptable at the end of a terrace, or for detached houses, where the context is more irregular and houses are spaced well apart.

If a side extension will be positioned on a corner plot, for instance at the junction of two roads, particular attention should be paid to how the extension will make a positive contribution to the corner, including considering landscaping and side façade.

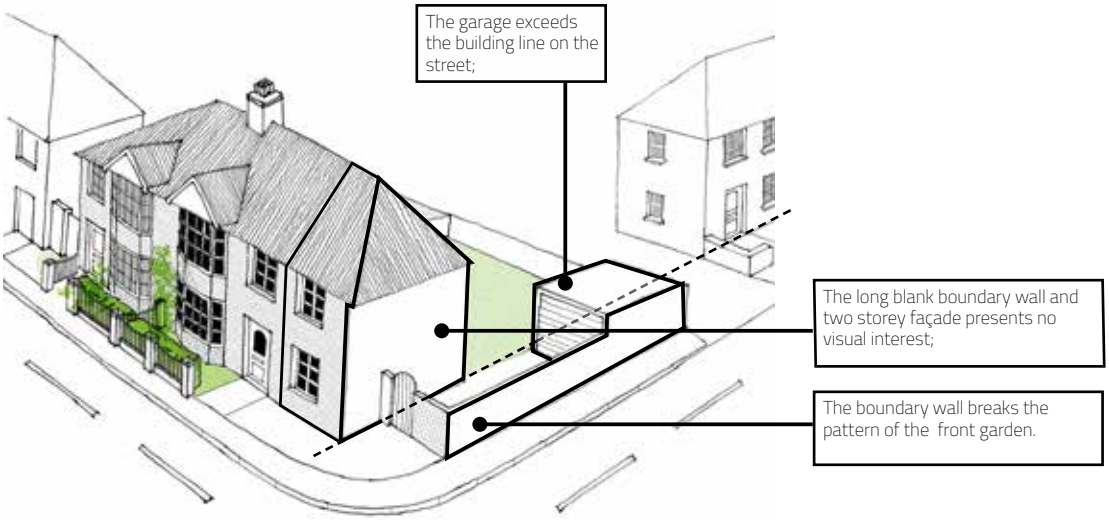
Home & Neighbour: Best practice photograph
A proposal by Robert Dye feature an unconventional openning avoiding overlooking while providing a desired natural light

Community: Best practice photograph
A similar architectural approach is continued in this side extension by Sam Causer

The appearance of the extension from the street should be considered, with choosing between subservient, seamless or special depending on the particular context of the project (see Section 4.1).

'False pitched roofs', or tiled fascias applied to the façade of flat-roofed buildings to give the appearance of a pitched roof, tend to look awkward when viewed from the side and should generally be avoided.

5.3.1 A side extension should respect the context of the street, preserving gaps between buildings and ryhthm of roof profile where these are characteristic of the area.



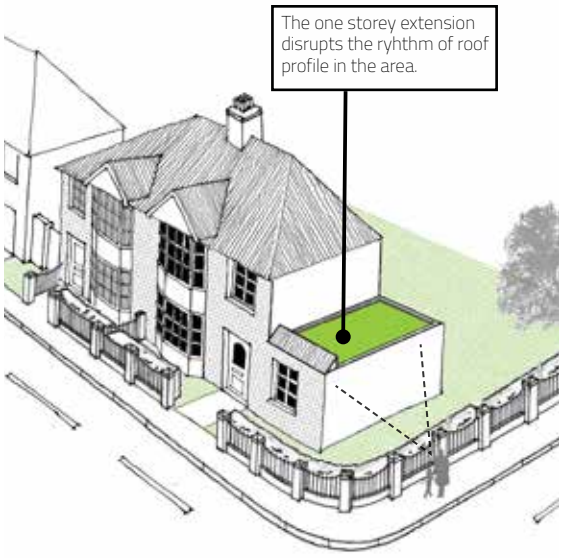
An example to avoid:
A corner plot side extension with negative impacts to its community. Compare this one with the positive example on page 29.

5.3.2 Two-storey side extensions are generally not considered acceptable where the existing layout of detached or semi-detached housing is protected townscape. They may be appropriate in the following circumstances:

a) they are set back from the side boundary, if the impression of 'terracing' is avoided;

b) they are on a corner plot and not further than the builiding lines of both streets;

c) they are located in the areas where the council encourages incremental changes or higher density.



5.3.3 Adding 'false pitched roofs' to the face of flat roofs should be avoided.

An example to avoid:
one storey flat roof side extension with a false pitched roof.

5.4 ROOF ALTERATIONS

HOME

A roof extension can be a cost-effective way of increasing space in the home. However, not all houses are suitable for conversion at roof level, due to limited headroom, insufficient area, modern trussed rafters, or lack of suitable supporting structure. In these cases, alteration may be expensive or technically difficult.

The main purpose of adding dormer windows is to bring daylight into the roof space. If an extra floor is created through raising the roof height or adding large box dormers on multiple sides of the roof, different guidance and rules (see 5.5 Additional Storeys) apply.

The layout of the storey below roof level requires careful consideration, as the addition of a stair and any necessary fire partitions tends to encroach on space, typically the bedroom area. Fire escape, structural supports and thermal insulation are important technical considerations that need to be considered early. All roof alterations will need to meet Building Regulations requirements for stairs and fire safety.

When applying for planning permission for roof extension projects, typical section drawings should be prepared and presented along with plans. These can help both you and the planners to understand the actual usable space within the dwelling.

NEIGHBOUR

Roof additions can cause problems of overlooking. Where dormer windows are orientated towards a dwelling's own private garden, overlooking is usually indirect and is therefore acceptable. However, privacy can be an issue in high-density residential areas where overlooking has otherwise been minimized. Side-facing dormer windows will not normally be acceptable where they are orientated directly towards the private garden or window of an adjoining dwelling.

Larger roof alterations such as large 'box' dormers can appear overbearing from neighbouring properties, particularly when they occupy the full width or height of the roof slope, and tend to give a greater perception of overlooking than modest, traditional dormers.

Roof terraces and balconies can provide small but useful amenity spaces, but they can also cause overlooking or noise disturbance to neighbouring properties. Roof terraces and balconies are most suitable where dwellings are well-separated, and in high density areas where amenity space is limited at ground level and neighbouring gardens are already overlooked. Solid or obscure glazed balconies can help to provide privacy but tall screens can have an overbearing or overshadowing effect and should generally be avoided.

5.4.1 Large 'box' dormer windows occupying the full width or height of the roof slope will NOT normally be acceptable.

Avoid: an overbearing full-width box dormer to the rear slope of the house.

Best practice photograph
A successful roof alteration in a high-density urban context by Robert Dye Architects

5.4.2 Dormer windows should normally face the street or the property's own private garden so that any overlooking of adjoining gardens is indirect. Dormer windows should normally be avoided on side elevations facing neighbouring gardens or windows.

5.4.3 Roof terraces and balconies that would lead to a substantial increase in overlooking of other residential properties should be avoided.

COMMUNITY

Due to their prominent position on the building, roof alterations can have a significant effect on the appearance of a property and the wider street environment. The size of the proposed alteration, the prominence of the roof slope and the character of the surrounding area will be taken into account when considering whether a proposed roof alteration is acceptable.

Alterations that provide additional headroom tend to be more dominant and are generally unsuitable on prominent roof slopes, while alterations to provide daylight (for example, small dormer windows and roof-lights), are suitable in a wider variety of circumstances.

For corner plots, carefully designed dormer windows can create extra interest from streets but in certain contexts, dormer windows would not be appropriate on the street-facing elevation of a property, regardless of design. Some areas of semi-detached or terraced houses are characterised by long runs of unbroken roofs, and the introduction of front dormers would be uncharacteristic and visually disrupting. Semi-detached pairs of houses can also be harmed when the roof of one house is enlarged by a dormer window or hip-to-gable conversion in a way that makes the pair appear unbalanced.

Solar panels are encouraged in principle. Unobtrusive models such as integrated solar panels (panels that do not project above the roof tiles) and photovoltaic roof tiles are recommended. Solar panels should preferably be located away from street-facing roof slopes.

5.4.4 Roof conversions and additions will only be acceptable where high quality design is employed, where additions are in scale with the existing roof, and where the addition does not spoil the existing roof form.

5.4.5 On street-facing roof slopes and on side and rear roof slopes that are visible from the street, rooflights and small dormer windows may be acceptable, but large 'box' dormers and hip-to-gable conversions will generally not be acceptable. The design should follow design guidelines set out in the table 1 below. On rear roof slopes that are not visible from the street, 'box' dormers may be acceptable where they meet the guidelines in the table below and do not cause unacceptable overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impact.

5.4.6 Where the house forms part of the semi-detached pair or the house is at the end of a terrace, it is not normally acceptable to change the overall form of a roof, for example from a hipped to a gabled roof. In some circumstances, such changes may be acceptable where they restore the symmetry of the pair or the terrace.

5.4.7 Solar panels are encouraged in principle. Where they are visible from the street, solar panels mounted at an angle on supporting frames on flat roofs should generally not be visible above the height of any surrounding parapet walls.

A hip-to gable extension with no regards to the existing hipped roof profile of its streets.

Best practice photograph
An award winning project by Robert Dye Architects

Dormer Windows and Roof Lights

Dormer windows often look best if they are no wider than the windows in the façade below and located in line with them. Dormer windows should not normally be wider than their heights unless it can be demonstrated that this approach is appropriate to the original buidling. Dormers should be set away from hips, verges and below the orginal ridge lines.

The fascia to either side of the dormer window should generally be kept as thin as possible and there should not be areas of cladding around or below the window unless it can be demonstrated that this approach is appropriate to the original building. The glazing proportions, detailing and frame colour should generally reflect those of the main house.

Roof-lights can be less obtrusive than dormer windows and are generally suitable in more circumstances, although it is important to carefully consider the size and layout of the roof-lights in relation to the scale of the roof and the arrangement of windows in the façade below. Roof lights that lie in the same plane as the roof tiles tend to be the least obtrusive but are not the only acceptable type. Balcony convertible roof-lights should pay attention to overlooking.

Street-facing roof slope

The proposed dormers should follow the guidance in the first column of table 1.

Two proposals, a single dormer and multiple dormers in this example, are within the dimentional limits, align with the existing window of the dwelling and borrows from the form and character of the dwellings' existing openings.

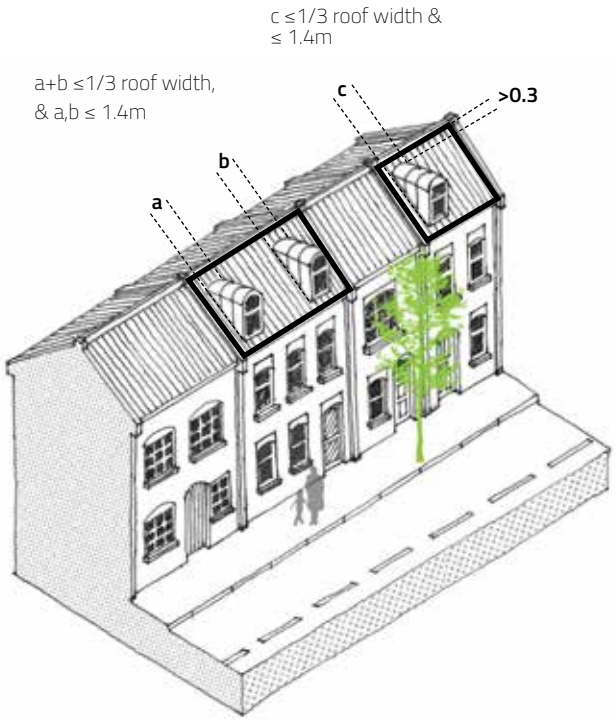


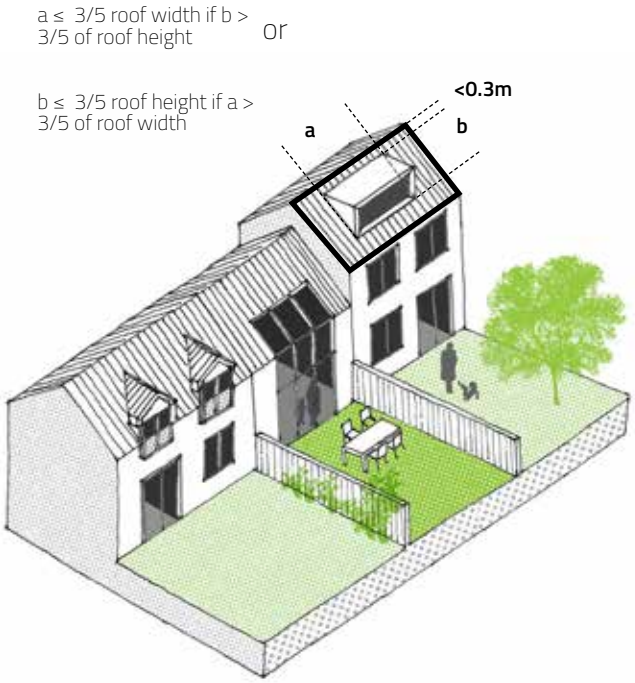
Table 1: Dormer Windows and Roof-Lights

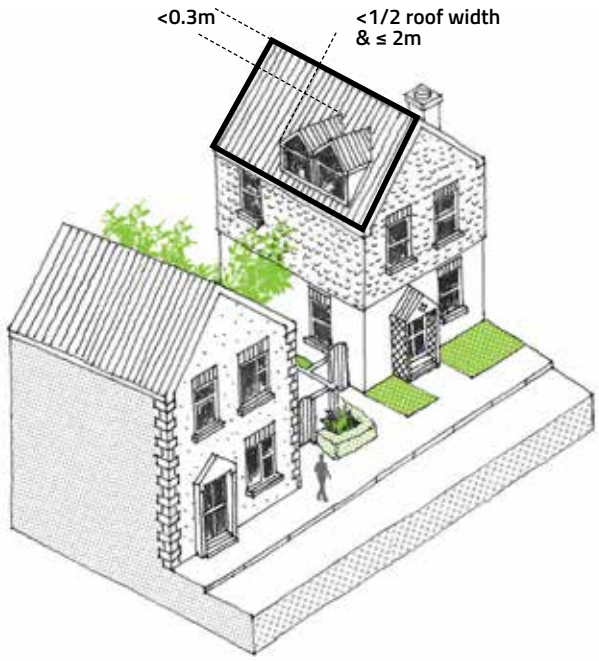
Street-facing roof slope prominent side roof slope	Visible but less prominent side or rear roof slope	Rear roof slope that is not visible from a public space
Dormer window may not be acceptable regardless of design. Box dormer unacceptable except where this is characteristic of the original architecture of the area.	Dormer window acceptable where the proposal avoids overlooking. Modest box dormer may be acceptable subject to size restrictions.	Dormer window acceptable in principle where the proposal avoids overlooking, subject to size restrictions.
Dormers should not occupy more than one third of the width of the roof. Maximum width of individual dormer 1.4m.	Dormers should not occupy more than one half of the width of the roof. Maximum width of individual dormer 2m.	Dormers should not occupy more than three-fifths of the roof width if the height exceeds three-fifths of ridge-to-eave distance; or not occupy more than three-fifths of the ridge-to-eave distance if the total width exceeds three-fifths of the roof width.
Top of dormer window to be at least 0.3m below the roof ridge. No plane of a dormer should be within 0.6m of a hip line or verge.		
Roof-lights may not be acceptable in sensitive settings.	Roof-lights generally acceptable in principle, where design and layout are considered acceptable.	Roof-lights generally acceptable in principle, where design and layout are considered acceptable.

Rear roof slopes (invisible from the public realm):

The proposed dormers should follow the guidance in the third column of table 1.

This example shows three types of roof alterations to the rear slopes and among which a box dormer is subject to more dimentional limits.





A visible but less prominent side roof

The proposed dormers should follow the guidance in the second column of table 1.

A double dormer design is proposed so each dormer has a similar width to that of the orginal windows. The total width of two dormers is less than 2m wide, up to 1/2 of the width of the roof. The design also has a pitch similar to that of the dwelling's roof.

5.5 ADDITIONAL STOREYS

Extending a building upwards by adding an extra storey can sometimes be preferable, both visually and functionally, to retrofitting multiple dormer windows to the roof.

In the case of a detached bungalow, adding large dormer windows on multiple sides of the roof can spoil the appearance of the house, while the sensitive conversion of the building into a two-storey house can be visually more cohesive, as well as creating better rooms internally.

HOME

Bear in mind that this method of adding space can be one of the most costly and complex, where the building's existing structure is not capable of taking an extra storey, and the new construction will be required to meet Building Regulations requirements for new-build dwellings even if the rest of the property currently does not comply.

The options presented in Section 4.1 (**subservient**, **seamless** or **special**) are very relevant for additional storeys. Any of these approaches may be appropriate for additional storeys, but with a particular focus on how the 'whole' building will feel once the development is complete, considering proportion, scale and character. Continuing the character and materials of the floor below and extending the external walls in the same plane is often an appropriate approach for a well designed building. When an existing building is of a low quality, The council encourages other innovative design solutions that can enhance the existing appearance.

For the wellbeing of the future tenants, the council does not encourage the approach of adding more storeys with low ceiling height.

5.5.1 Where an additional storey is proposed, the dwelling as a whole will be expected to meet the nationally described space standard and council's other planning policies for new-build dwellings.

NEIGHBOUR

Increasing the height of a building can have an overbearing impact on neighbouring gardens or cause overshadowing or overlooking. There will generally be more scope to add an extra storey where neighbouring properties are higher, and where the property is well separated from neighbouring houses.

The appearance of a terrace or semi-detached pair of houses can be damaged when a storey is added to one property without a careful design.

Additional storeys will only be acceptable where they do not disrupt the unity of a series of dwellings or buildings, for example within a terrace or sequence of semi-detached homes.

5.5.2 Where an additional storey is proposed, design features that would result in excessive overlooking, overshadowing or noise disturbance should be avoided.

COMMUNITY

In general the taller a building becomes, the greater the visual impact it has to the community. Therefore the level of weight The council will give to design increases depending on the impacts of the additional storeys.

Best practice photograph
An innovative example for an additional storey by Studio Webb Architects

Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis, but some areas may be better suited than others to additional storeys. These include areas within or immediately around town centre locations (see the council's Planning Constraints map and the summary map in Section 3) where The council's planning policies encourage higher density.

In an area where there is no detectable unity in building height and profile, The council welcomes high quality innovative design in additional storeys to bring out place identity.

5.5.3 The roof of the new storey should complement the roof form of the surrounding houses.

5.5.4 Additional storeys will not be acceptable where the unity of a series of dwellings or buildings represent local distinctiveness, for example within a terrace or sequence of semi-detached homes.

5.6 OUTBUILDINGS

Outbuildings are the annexes to the existing dewellings. In another words, the houses and annexe will share services, access and parking, and gardens. If you wish to create a new dwelling which will be occupied independently, sold separately, or used for paying guests, you will need to apply for permission for subdivision (see section 5.7) in addition to construction of the outbuilding.

Where planning permission is required, only one outbuilding will normally be permitted in each garden, though officers will evaluate proposals on their merits.

HOME

New outbuildings should be carefully designed so that they form a positive relationship with the amenity or garden in which they are situated, and enhance or preserve its use for all residents. The maximum size of the outbuilding will usually be determined by its location and the size of the garden.

The location of the outbuilding should be considered in relation to its intended use. For example, it is more convenient to have easy access from the front door to the bicycle storage for frequent bikers.

If submitting a planning application for an outbuilding or outbuildings, it is a good idea to show the landscaping proposals on your drawings in order to demonstrate a positive relationship with adjacent open areas and gardens, and to show likely access arrangements.

The internal layout of an outbuilding is as important in its own right as that of the main house, particularly if it will be inhabited for long periods of time, such as for hobbies or for home working.

If the outbuilding is less than 15sqm in area and does not contain sleeping accommodation, it is not normally necessary to apply for Building Regulations approval. However, you should ensure that any outbuilding that is intended to be used as incidental habitable space (for example as a home office or family room) has a suitable structural design and provides an appropriate level of thermal insulation, damp proofing, daylighting, ventilation and fire proofing.

5.6.1 A new garage should provide enough space to store a car, get in and out, and for garage doors to open outwards onto a private driveway. Garage doors should not open outwards over the public highway. Garage spaces, car ports and under-croft parking will only be considered as suitable for parking if they meet the minimum internal dimensions:

Garage Space	**3m width x 7m depth per space**
Car Port/Under-croft parking	**3m width x 5m depth per space**

NEIGHBOUR

The location and scale of outbuildings should be carefully considered so that they have minimal impact on neighbouring properties. This might mean setting the building back from the main building line, aligning the outbuilding with existing outbuildings in the neighbour's property, or using the end part of the garden.

5.6.2 New outbuildings should be situated to minimise the impact on neighbouring dwellings.

Best practice photograph:
A garden pavilion containing a small office alongside garden storage space by Platform 5 Architects

COMMUNITY

Outbuildings can improve the appearance of a neighbourhood, by concealing parked cars, bins or garden equipment, or through their quality of design, but sheds and outbuildings that are excessively large or sited unsympathetically can also have a cluttering and visually harmful effect.

If you want to create an independent dwelling such as 'granny annexe', you must apply for planning permission because outbuildings that are used as independent dwellings can fall below the standards required for new-build homes or are otherwise unfit for purpose. They may also lead to an increase in traffic and parking, disturbance of neighbours.

To avoid your proposed outbuildings later becoming used as independent dwellings without going through the application process, you will be required to demonstrate that they are dependent on the main dwelling. This may be demonstrated through the clear sharing of facilities with the main building, including garden space, kitchen and bathroom facilities, and site access. Your may also asked to demonstrate that the occupant of the annexe is a dependent relative, domestic employee, or non-paying guests.

5.6.3 The use of outbuildings is restricted to ancillary residential functions, including use as a home office, private garage or storage. Outbuildings should not be designed in a way that would facilitate their use as independent dwellings or commercial premises. A clear dependency should be retained at all times with the existing dwelling.

5.6.4 Outbuildings and annexes will only be acceptable where the area and height of the building is modest in proportion to the site, and where the plot is a sufficient size to accommodate a separate building without restricting the usefulness or quality of the open space or garden.

5.6.5 Detached garages will not generally be acceptable in front gardens unless the site is large and exceptional design solutions are proposed.

5.7 FRONT GARDENS

Some types of changes to front garden will require planning permission, for instance if you are making a new access into the garden across the footpath or pavement.

If you are not in a Conservation Area or subject to a Tree Preservation order, paving over a front garden does not require planning permission in some circumstances. As ever, please check with the Planning team before starting work.

HOME

The front garden forms the first impression of your home. In many areas, front gardens contribute significantly to the characters of properties and subsequently property values.

Whereas providing parking spaces might be a practical need, paving the entrie front garden can have a devaluing effect on your house, and creating extra parking spaces should be balanced against preserving landscape. Royal Horticultural Society offers some simple design solutions for getting a parking space into the gardens large or small on their website[7].

If there's no direct access to the side or rear of the house, a bin storage area should be considered when you alter your front garden. You should maintain convenient access to your bins while making them as unobstrusive as the area possibly allows.

NEIGHBOUR

Some property types have historically joint garden without fences in between the property boundaries. Making changes to your garden in such circumstances can harm the value of your neighbour's property. There may be a convenant from the orginal developer that limits changes. If your neighbour makes objections to your proposal, it may require the intervention of the planning service.

You may have to notify all affected neighbours if you intend to carry out building work that involves one of the following:

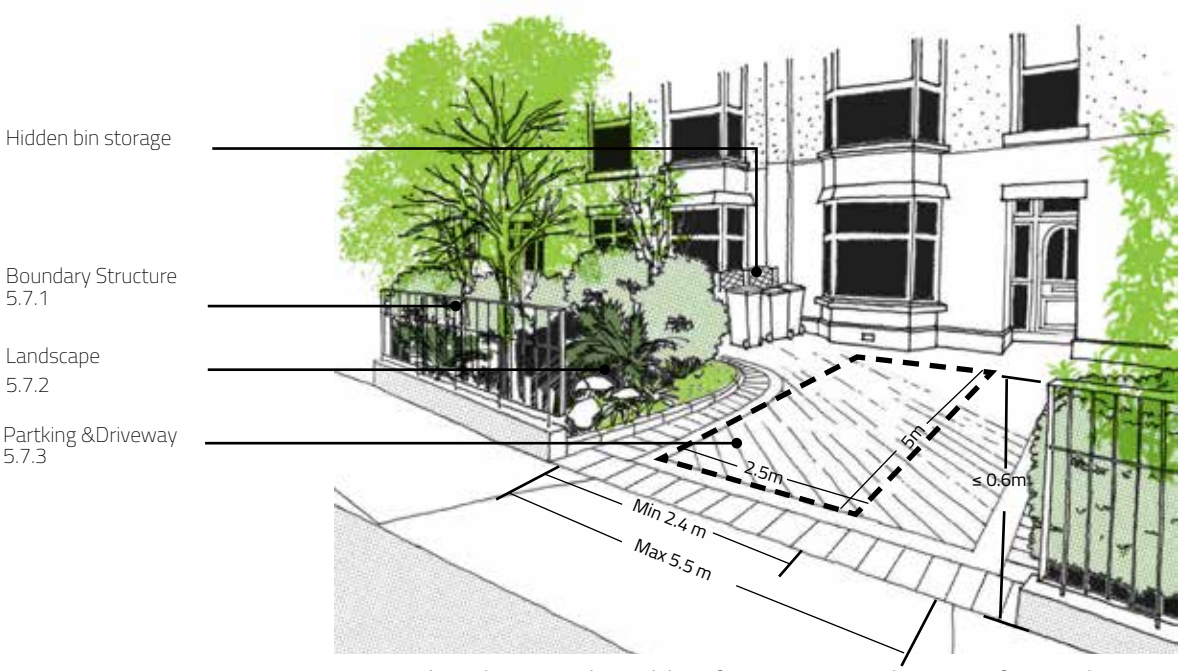
- **building a free standing wall, or a wall of a building, up to or astride the boundary with a neighbouring property**
- **work on an existing wall or structure shared with another property**
- **excavating near a neighbouring building**

COMMUNITY

Front gardens and boundary structures (walls, fences, hedges and railings) are important elements that define the character of the street environment. Streets where the design of boundary structures changes frequently, often have a disorderly, cluttered appearance. New boundary structures should generally respect the dominant boundary style along the street and protect original boundary structures, hedges and trees.

Paving over a front garden to create a car parking space can harm the character of the street and contribute to problems with surface water run-off, while access to the new space

7. RHS https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=738



An example implementing the guidelines for creating a new drive way in front garden

can remove street parking for others. Hard surfacing, particularly non-porous surfaces, should be kept to a minimum in front gardens, to allow for the maximum area of porous surfaces and planting. The council's car and cycle parking standards indicate what is considered to be a suitable level of off-street parking in different contexts.

5.7.1 Alterations to boundary structures and gardens at the front of a property (including the introduction of a parking space) should respect and enhance the character of the street and disturb the least original walls, fences, railings, hedges and trees.

5.7.2 Front gardens should generally provide the maximum area of soft landscaping and sustainable urban drainage and the minimum of hard surfacing (particularly non-porous surfaces).

5.7.3 The minimum size for a single parking space within a front garden is 5m x 2.5m excluding the area needed to open garage doors and gates or access bins. The car should fit entirely within the front garden. The height of walls, hedges and fences should be 0.6m or below near the pavement for visibility. The length of the dropped kerb should be kept to a minimum. A 2.5m width is generally sufficient. When a site is restricted, a minimum 2.4m width will be accepted. For creating more than one parking space, a maximum 5.5m dropped kerb will be accepted by the council.

5.8 SUBDIVISION

Subdividing existing residential properties to create two or more self-contained dwellings can broaden the range of housing types in areas dominated by family housing.

In designing conversion projects, size and layout are vital considerations. It is also important to consider a wide range of design issues affecting the quality of the home, including daylight and ventilation, access, soundproofing, privacy, amenity space, and arrangements for parking, refuse and recycling. Further advice on these issues may be found in Thurrock's guidance for new-build housing.

Subdividing a dwelling into multiple dwellings will always require a planning application. All of the dwellings that result from the subdivision will be expected to comply with Thurrock's design standards for new residential. This is the case even where the existing building does not currently comply with new-build housing standards. Bear in mind that Building Regulations for new-build dwellings will also apply to all new dwellings that are created as a result of the subdivision of a residential property.

HOME

All new dwellings created as a result of subdivision should meet the same minimum space standards as new homes. The nationally described space standard provides a clear indication what is considered appropriate and fit for purpose for the internal area of new homes. Not all houses are large enough to be subdivided, and The council wishes to avoid conversion projects that result in flats that are so small that they are compromised in terms of use or well-being.

When planning the dwelling layout, it is important to make sure that all habitable rooms have a good outlook and good levels of daylight and ventilation. Direct overlooking between neighbours within the proposed development should be avoided ,

Privacy from noise is as important as visual privacy. Wherever possible, rooms of the same use should be placed above one another to help reduce noise transmission from living rooms to bedrooms. Approved Document E of the Building Regulations sets out the technical requirements that will need to be met for soundproofing in separating walls and floors. Acoustic tests will normally be required on completion of the work.

Access and internal circulation are important design considerations. Each new dwelling should have its own separate entrance, which may either be external or from a shared hall, and internal circulation spaces should not be cramped. External staircases and additional entrance doors in the front elevation can harm the appearance of a property, where it forms part of a regular pattern of houses. Refuse and recycling containers should be located in a place that is convenient and accessible both from the dwellings and from the collection point.

5.8.1 Planning permission for the subdivision of a residential property into two or more self-contained dwellings will only be granted where all of the following requirements are met:

a) all of the proposed dwellings meet Thurrock's most up to date design standards for new-build housing.

b) each new dwelling has a gross internal area of at least 50 sqm and a bedroom separate from the main living room with a minimum area of 11.5 sqm.

c) the new accommodation is self-contained, all habitable rooms are provided with a good outlook and good levels of daylight and ventilation, and the design makes suitable provision for privacy, acoustic separation, access, circulation, and refuse and recycling.

NEIGHBOUR

Subdividing a house can increase the potential for overlooking or noise disturbance to neighbouring homes, as well as neighbours living above or below each other within the subdivided house. The design considerations to minimise these impacts are demonstrated in section 4.2. Bear in mind that the existing house would then be treated as a neighbouring property when assessing impact.

The restrictions on overlooking or noise is generally more relaxed if a project is above, below, next to the uses insensitive to such disturbance(such as commercial buildings), and in a high density area.

COMMUNITY

A large number of residential conversions concentrated in a small area can change the character and appearance of a street, and lead to pressure on local amenity including, but not restricted to, car parking. This pressure will be more acceptable in some areas than others, so you should always check the location of the project and the most current planning policy in relation to this type of place (see Section 3).

5.8.2 Planning permission for the subdivision of a residential property into two or more self-contained dwellings will normally only be granted where not more than 20% of the houses on the street have already been subdivided into multiple dwellings. This standard may not apply in particular places where the council wishes to encourage incremental changes.

5.8.3 The parking requirements for the additional dwellings created through subdivision are the same as the council's most current parking standards for new built (see table 3).

5.8.4 Proposals in the Green Belt for the subdivision of a dwelling into two or more self-contained dwellings will be required to show that the work can be accomplished without the need for any further extensions or additions to the building or its curtilage, and that any alterations are appropriate to the character of the existing building and the surrounding area.

Table 3: Minimum Parking Requirements

	Studio/1 bedroom		2 or 3 bedroom		4 or more bedroom	
Accessibility	M	L	M	L	M	L
Vehicle	1	1.25	1.5	2	2	3
Bicyle	1	1	1	1	1	1
Visitor	0.25					

Medium accessibility (M)

Within 400m walking distance of a bus stop facility that has a bus service with a frequency of at least 30mins; within 1km walking distance of a main line train station;within 1km walking distance of a designated Town Centre.

Low accessibility (L)

All areas outside the walking distances of the medium accessibility criteria

5.9 CHANGE OF USE

Converting a non-residential building such as an agricultural barn, shop or church to a residential dwelling can offer the opportunity to create generously-sized rooms and a unique or unconventional home. However, they can also present particular design challenges. Buildings that were not originally intended for domestic use typically have deeper plans and taller spaces that can be hard to subdivide into domestic-scaled rooms, without sacrificing daylight or natural ventilation to parts of the building.

The change of use of a building or part of a building to residential use will normally require a planning application. In coming to a decision on the application, The council will consult their local planning policies and consider the value of the existing use to the surrounding area, including any loss of employment. In Conservation Areas, the use of the building may also have particular historical significance that may restrict its conversion.

The current regulations governing Permitted Development allow the conversion of offices, some shopes and sui generis uses to residential use in some areas without the need for planning permission. If you wish to pursue this form of conversion, it will be necessary to inform The council first through a 'prior notification' application. Permitted Development rights may have been removed by 'Article 4 Directions', or by conditions attached to previous planning consents at some locations – you should use the planning constraints map [thurrock.maps.arcgis.com] to check whether constraints may affect your development plans.

HOME

The design should respond positively to the character and layout of the existing building and its original use. This may entail a 'subservient', 'seamless' or 'special' approach to the character of the alterations (see Section 4). Choosing which will depend a lot on the character of the existing building.

Thinking of alternative ways that the new domestic uses of the building might be arranged within existing rooms can help to unlock new possibilities for the design. Introducing new windows in an existing façade, for example where an additional storey is created within a tall room, can be one of the most difficult design challenges of conversion projects.

NEIGHBOUR

Conversion projects may be surrounded by other non-residential buildings. Care should be taken to ensure that the new residential use does not constrain the operation of neighbouring businesses and community facilities, such as through sensitivity to noise.

Best practice photograph:
A pub is re-purposed into a retail space with new flats added above by Mclaren Excell

COMMUNITY

Proposals for change of use will not be permitted unless the council is satisfied that any consequential loss or impact on utility, community facilities, infrastructure or emergency services is fully mitigated.

5.9.1 Proposals for change of use of a building to residential will only be considered acceptable where all of the following requirements are met:

a) the proposal is consistent with Thurrock planning policy

b) the design responds positively to the character and layout of the existing building and streetscene

c) the proposal will not constrain the operation of neighbouring community or businesses uses.

5.10 HOME BUSINESS

Home businesses make an important contribution to the economy, and working from home can be a flexible way to start a new business or combine work and family life. Many more people are now able to combine working from home for part of the time with commuting to their place of employment, and indeed the growth of internet sales has allowed small businesses to thrive in locations not traditionally thought of as places of commercial activity.

You are not likely to need planning permission to use part of your home for a business if your answers to the following questions are 'NO', but you should check with the planning team before starting work.

- Will your home no longer be used mainly as a private residence?
- Will your business result in a marked rise in traffic or people calling?
- Will your business involve any activities unusual in a residential area?
- Will your business disturb your neighbours at unreasonable hours or create other forms of nuisance such as noise or smells?

HOME

If you plan to extend your home, convert a garage or add an outbuilding to accommodate work space, the standards in the other sections of this document will apply and a planning application may be necessary.

NEIGHBOUR

Restrictions on home businesses will generally only apply where the business causes nuisance to other people. This can happen when staff, customers or goods movements generate additional traffic and parking, and when work gives rise to noise that causes disturbance to others. In these cases, The council will investigate any complaints and may bring enforcement action.

COMMUNITY

Where the home business employs other people, serves customers from the home or requires the frequent delivery or collection of goods, this can give rise to additional traffic and parking demand, that can cause problems in some circumstances. For instance:

- Restrictions on having a shop, café or takeaway business (use class A1, A3, A4, A5).
- Restrictions on running a hotel or B&B or letting through Airbnb.

Some types of businesses are less well suited than others to residential areas. For example, using an outbuilding as a vehicle repair garage or for commercial storage or light industrial activities can involve storing flammable, toxic or hazardous materials, give rise to fumes or excessive noise, or detract from the appearance and residential character of the street.

5.10.1 Businesses run from residential properties should not cause nuisance to neighbours through additional vehicle movements, additional on-street parking, noise disturbance, the storage of flammable or hazardous materials, or by detracting from the appearance of the street environment.

6. Find Out More

Thurrock Council's local planning policies relate to national planning policies. These national policies can be found at the gov.uk website, and guidance on their interpretation is also available here.

The **Planning Portal** offers guidance on 'Permitted Development' which may help you choose whether this is the right route for your project or not. Thurrock Council's Development Management team is available to discuss your project, whatever route you propose to follow to develop it, and are contactable via dm@thurrock.gov.uk.

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) offers a '**Find an Architect**' service that allows residents to search for architects by location and by specialism, and the Architects Registration Board (ARB) maintains a public database of all registered architects in the UK.

The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors offers a '**Find a Surveyor**' service (www.ricsfirms.com/search) to help find a local qualified professional to help with your project.

The Department for Communities and Local Government publishes guidance on ways to meet the statutory **Building Regulations** here:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/approved-documents

For queries regarding **Building Control** applications, please contact the Thurrock Building Control team via Building.Control@thurrock.gov.uk

For advice on **sustainability**, the following websites are useful sources of information:

www.cen.org.uk
www.bre.co.uk/greenguide
www.livingroofs.co.uk
www.saveenergy.co.uk
www.greenenergycentre.org.uk
www.fsc-uk.org

For further advice on improving **energy efficiency** in your home and the availability of grants, contact your local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on 0800 512512.

Location Plans for planning applications [provide link to Ordnance Survey or council website]

Advice on designing for **building security** is provided by the official Police website, Secure by Design [www.securebydesign.com]. Secure by Design focuses on crime prevention at the design, layout and construction stages of homes and commercial premises and promotes the use of security standards for a wide range of applications and products.

Advice on the **Party Wall Act** and Party Wall procedures may be found at www.gov.uk in the section 'Party Walls and Building Work'. The Party Wall Act regulates work carried out on or near to a boundary, whether or not the work needs planning permission. It is always advisable to check before you start work.

7. Glossary

Article 4 Directions These are put in place by The council in certain areas to remove normal Permitted Development rights, meaning that planning permission will be required.

Building Regulations Nationally-set regulations intended to ensure the health and safety of people in and around all types of building.

Curtilage A legal term describing the area of land associated with a dwelling within the property boundaries. This area excludes the dwelling but may include garages and other non-habitable outbuildings.

False-pitched Roofs Roofs designed to appear pitched from the front of the dwelling or from the street, but which actually conceal a flat or shallow-pitched roof.

Green Belt A land-use designation designed to restrict development within certain areas, usually in order to control where development happens and to preserve the form and organisation of settlements. Around 13% of England is Green Belt, and around 60% of Thurrock is.

Ground Level The surface of the ground immediately adjacent to the dwelling in question. Where ground level is not uniform (eg if the ground is sloping), then the ground level is the highest part of the surface of the ground next to the dwelling.

Habitable Room Any room used or intended to be used for sleeping, cooking, living or eating purposes; not including spaces such as hallways, utility rooms, bathrooms and similar spaces which are not typically occupied for extended periods of time.

Listed Building A building or structure that has been judged to be of national historical or architectural interest. Listed building are subject to stringent legislation regarding their transformation. See Listed Building Consent.

Listed Building Consent Permission required from The council for the demolition of, or material alterations, both internal and external, to a listed building or within the curtilage or setting of a listed building.

Original Dwelling This term means the house as it was first built or as it stood on 1 July 1948 (if it was built before that date).

Party Walls You must tell your neighbours if you want to carry out any building work on or near your shared property boundary, or 'party wall'. The Party Wall Act (1996) gives you and your neighbours rights and responsibilities in relation to work on or near to party walls and other party structures, such as separating floors within a block of flats.

Permitted Development (PD) The set of rules that allows the public to alter or create buildings without needing to seek permission from the local planning authority. The scale and complexity of what can be built under PD are limited, and the rules for this are set nationally.

Rear infill A particular kind of extension that 'fills-in' a space to the rear of a terraced dwelling, in cases where the original dwelling has, as part of its original design, a room or rooms extending out into the garden, which is known as an 'outrigger'. This design is typical to Victorian terraced houses.

Roof Pitch The angle of a roof, measured from 0 (flat).

Tree Preservation Order (TPO) A Tree Preservation Order is an order made by The council, giving legal protection to trees or woodland. A TPO prevents cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, willful damage or destruction of trees (including cutting roots) without The council's permission.

Two reasonably sized rooms This figure is expressed as floorspace [sqm] and is calculated from the dwelling as originally constructed. Take the average internal floorspace of the habitable rooms in the original dwelling [excluding bathrooms and circulation areas] and multiply that figure by two.

U-values U-value is used to measure how effective elements of a buildings fabric are as insulators. It is a rating of how much heat that can to pass through the structure such as windows and doors.

8. Standards Chart

4.1 DESIGN PRINCIPLES – HOME

4.1.1	The extension or alteration should respect and respond positively to the character of the original dwelling such that its character is maintained or enhanced.	
4.1.2	An alteration, extension or outbuilding should function well for its intended use, and adequate daylight and natural ventilation should be maintained to the new construction and to the existing building, where the addition is attached.	
4.1.3	As a result of the proposed extension or outbuilding, the total area of the curtilage covered by buildings should not exceed the following proportions, and the remaining garden should be usable and fit for purpose. Area of curtilage buildings — Maximum proportion of curtilage covered by (sq m) up to 100 — 40% 100 — 500 — 30% 500 — 1000 — 20% >1000 — 10%	To calculate the curtilage, subtract the footprint of the original house and any original outbuildings from the total land area of the plot.
4.1.4	Extensions and alterations should comply with Approved Document M of the Building Regulations, including ensuring that extensions and alterations are no less accessible than the existing building.	

4.2 DESIGN PRINCIPLES – NEIGHBOUR

4.2.1	Extensions and outbuildings should not have an overbearing impact on adjacent properties or cause them to be excessively enclosed or overshadowed.	
4.2.2	The height of an extension or outbuilding should not normally exceed the following limits: a) a vertical plane inclined at 45 degrees from the boundary, starting at a level 2m above the ground on the neighbour's side, or from the middle of closest groundfloor window of a neighbouring property. b) a plane inclined at 45 degrees from the top of a neighbouring building, where it is located on or next to the boundary. c)Taller buildings and extensions may be acceptable where two adjoining properties are being extended at the same time.	The curtilage calculated from the dimsions of standard 4.2.2 & 4.2.3 cannot exceed the limits set in 4.1.3. Other standards in the guide may also further deduct the buildable area/height.
4.2.3	The depth and width of an extension or outbuilding should not normally exceed the limits formed by a horizontal plane inclined at 60 degrees from the middle of a closest groundfloor window of neighbouring property.	

4.2.4	Proposals for two-storey extensions and outbuildings will only be approved where it can be shown that they are acceptable in terms of design, amenity, daylighting, overlooking, and avoiding over-dominance in relation to neighbouring properties. Two-storey extensions and outbuildings will normally be required to meet the following criteria: a) The height of the extension complies with standard 4.2.2 and 4.2.3. b) The proposal demonstrates high quality design c) The roof form, if visible from a public realm, should be sympatheric to the host building.	
4.2.5	Windows in elevations that directly face a neighbouring property that would lead to overlooking should be avoided or obscure glazed, and either fixed shut or restricted to an opening width of 100mm. Windows and glazed doors that are set back from the property boundary and well screened by boundary structures will normally be considered acceptable.	
4.2.6	Where an extension or outbuilding is constructed on or up to a property boundary, no part of the construction should overhang or intrude into the adjacent property, including eaves and rain gutters.	
4.2.7	Proposals which exceed the dimensional standards 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 will be required to provide the extra design and technical information where it can be shown that they are acceptable in terms of design, amenity, daylighting, overlooking, and avoiding over-dominance in relation to neighbouring properties. The extra information required will be based on each site condition but it will normally include professional shadow analysis, outlook and daylight analysis and realistic façade rendering(s).	

4.3 DESIGN PRINCIPLES – COMMUNITY

4.3.1	The form and scale of the extension or outbuilding should be appropriate to the original dwelling and the surrounding development pattern.	
4.3.2	Corner plots require a distinct design approach that responds positively not only to the dwelling but also to the neighbouring houses and the street scene.	
4.3.3	The extra parking requirements and the impact of proposal on on-street parking will be taken into account in areas of high demand.	
4.3.4	If your project is in the Green Belt, the following restrictions apply: a) Where an extension is considered acceptable, it should be proportionate in size to the original dwelling. Extensions will be limited in size to the floor area of two reasonably sized rooms of the original dwelling. Any extension should be of a scale, size, siting and design, and of materials of construction, such that it does not harm the appearance of the original dwelling, the immediate locality and the countryside in general. The reasonable size of an extension will be judged on whether it is adequate in relation to the internal space of the dwelling, rather than the requirements of a particular existing or prospective occupier. b) There will be a presumption against extensions to dwellings that are not in permanent residential use, to temporary dwellings, and to dwellings nearing the end of their lives on sites where replacement would not be permitted. c) Extending the curtilage of a residential property in a way that involves an incursion into the Green Belt will not be permitted.	

4.3.5	Satellite dishes and aerials should be sited in an unobtrusive position and should not be located on walls, chimneys or roofs that are visible from the street. Multiple dishes and aerials should be avoided. Cables should be run internally or up the rear wall in discrete positions and be coloured or painted to match the background wall.	

5.1 FRONT EXTENSIONS AND PORCHES

5.1.1	Front extensions and porches should complement the character of the street, including any existing pattern of front extensions, and respect existing building lines, particularly where a strongly defined building line forms an important characteristic of the street.	
5.1.2	Front extensions that are larger than porches will generally only be acceptable where the front garden is unusually deep and the extension does not break clear of existing building lines along the street. In areas where there is an irregular building line and properties are well set back with large front gardens, front extensions may be more acceptable.	
5.1.3	In areas where entrance canopies or open porches form a particular feature of the original dwelling, these should generally not be enclosed as porches.	

5.2 REAR EXTENSIONS

5.2.1	Where a rear extension extends beyond a side wall of the building, standards associated with side extensions apply. (See Section 5.3).	
5.2.2	Rear infill extensions should be as close to 2m in height along the boundary as reasonably possible, where the boundary is an existing garden fence or wall of up to 2m in height.	
5.2.3	Where rear extensions can be seen from a public realm, more restrictions apply including how well they complement historical pattern of the neighboring rear extensions, the treatment of the façade visible and roof form.	

5.3 SIDE EXTENSIONS

5.3.1	A side extension should respect the context of the street, preserving gaps between buildings where these are characteristic of the area.	
5.3.2	Two-storey side extensions are generally not considered acceptable where the existing layout of detached or semi-detached housing is protected townscape. They may be appropriate in the following circumstances: a) they are set back from the side boundary, if the impression of 'terracing' is avoided; b) they are on a corner plot and not further than the builiding lines of both streets; c) they located in the areas that The council encourages changes or higher density.	
5.3.3	Adding 'false pitched roofs' to the face of flat roofs should be avoided.	

5.4 ROOF ALTERATIONS

5.4.1	Large 'box' dormer windows occupying the full width or height of the roof slope will not normally be acceptable.	
5.4.2	Dormer windows should normally face the street or the property's own private garden so that any overlooking of adjoining gardens is indirect. Dormer windows should normally be avoided on side elevations facing neighbouring gardens or windows.	
5.4.3	Roof terraces, balconies and 'Juliet' balconies that would lead to a substantial increase in overlooking of other residential properties should be avoided.	
5.4.4	Roof conversions and additions will only be acceptable where high quality design is employed, where additions are in scale with the existing roof, and where the addition does not spoil the existing roof form.	
5.4.5	On street-facing roof slopes and on side and rear roof slopes that are visible from the street, rooflights and small dormer windows may be acceptable, but large 'box' dormers and hip-to-gable conversions will generally not be acceptable. The design should follow design guidelines set out in the table 1 provided within the design guidance. On rear roof slopes that are not visible from the street, 'box' dormers may be acceptable where they meet the guidelines in table 1 of this Guide and do not cause unacceptable overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impact.	
5.4.6	Where the house forms part of the semi-detached pair or the house is at the end of a terrace, it is not normally acceptable to change the overall form of a roof, for example from a hipped to a gabled roof. In some circumstances, such changes may be acceptable where they restore the symmetry of the pair or the terrace.	
5.4.7	Solar panels are encouraged in principle. Where they are visible from the street, solar panels mounted at an angle on supporting frames on flat roofs should generally not be visible above the height of any surrounding parapet walls.	

5.5 ADDITIONAL STOREYS

5.5.1	Where an additional storey is proposed, the dwelling as a whole will be expected to meet the nationally described space standard and council's other planning policies for new-build dwellings.	
5.5.2	Where an additional storey is proposed, design features that would result in excessive overlooking, overshadowing or noise disturbance should be avoided.	
5.5.3	The roof of the new storey should complement the roof form of the surrounding houses.	
5.5.4	Additional storeys will not be acceptable where the unity of a series of dwellings or buildings forms an important characteristic of the street, for example within a terrace or sequence of semi-detached homes.	

5.6 OUTBUILDINGS

5.6.1	A new garage should provide enough space to store a car, get in and out, and for garage doors to open outwards onto a private driveway. Garage doors should not open outwards over the public highway. Garage spaces, car ports and under-croft parking will only be considered as suitable for parking if they meet the minimum internal dimensions: Garage Space 3m width x 7m depth per space Car Port/ under-croft parking 3m width x 5m depth per space	
5.6.2	New outbuildings should be situated to minimise the impact on neighbouring dwellings.	
5.6.3	The use of outbuildings is restricted to ancillary residential functions, including use as a home office, private garage or storage. Outbuildings should not be designed in a way that would facilitate their use as independent dwellings or commercial premises. A clear dependency should be retained at all times with the existing dwelling.	
5.6.4	Outbuildings and annexes will only be acceptable where the area and height of the building is modest in proportion to the site, and where the plot is a sufficient size to accommodate a separate building without restricting the usefulness or quality of the open space or garden.	
5.6.5	Detached garages will not generally be acceptable in front gardens unless the site is large and exceptional design solutions are proposed.	

5.7 FRONT GARDENS

5.7.1	Alterations to boundary structures and gardens at the front of a property (including the introduction of a parking space) should respect and enhance the character of the street and retain original walls, fences, railings, hedges and trees as much as possible.	
5.7.2	Front gardens should generally provide the maximum area of soft landscaping and sustainable urban drainage and the minimum of hard surfacing (particularly non-porous surfaces).	
5.7.3	The minimum size for a single parking space within a front garden is 5m x 2.5m excluding the area needed to open garage doors and gates or access bins. The car should fit entirely within the front garden. The height of walls, hedges and fences should be 0.6m or below near the pavement for visibility. The length of the dropped kerb should be kept to a minimum. A 2.4m width is generally sufficient. For creating more than one parking space, maximum 5.5m of the dropped kerb will be accepted by The council.	

5.8 SUBDIVISION

5.8.1	Planning permission for the subdivision of a residential property into two or more self-contained dwellings will only be granted where all of the following requirements are met: a) all of the proposed dwellings meet Thurrock's design standards for new-build housing. b) each new dwelling has a gross internal area of at least 50 sqm and a bedroom separate from the main living room with a minimum area of 11.5 sqm. c) the new accommodation is self-contained, all habitable rooms[7] are provided with a good outlook and good levels of daylight and ventilation, and the design makes suitable provision for privacy, acoustic separation, access, circulation, and refuse and recycling.	
5.8.2	Planning permission for the subdivision of a property into two or more self-contained dwellings will normally only be granted where not more than 20% of the houses on the street have already been subdivided into multiple dwellings. *This standard may not apply in particular places where The council wishes to encourage subdivision.*	
5.8.3	The parking requirements for the additional dwellings created through subdivision are the same as the council's most current parking standards for new built.	
5.8.4	Proposals in the Green Belt for the subdivision of a dwelling into two or more self-containted dwellings will be required to show that the work can be accomplished without the need for any further extensions or additions to the building or its curtilage, and that any alterations are appropriate to the character of the existing building and the surrounding area.	

5.9 CHANGE OF USE

5.9.1	Proposals for change of use of a building to residential will only be considered acceptable where all of the following requirements are met: a) the proposal is consistent with Thurrock planning policy b) the design responds positively to the character and layout of the existing building c) the proposal will not constrain the operation of neighbouring community or businesses uses.	

5.10 HOME BUSINESSES

5.10.1	Businesses run from residential properties should not cause nuisance to neighbours through additional vehicle movements, additional on-street parking, noise disturbance, the storage of flammable or hazardous materials, or by detracting from the appearance of the street environment.	

Credits

Prepareation of this design guide has been led by the Planning Service on behalf of Thurock council with strong support from the following Agencies and individuals:

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