

# HOUSE EXTENSIONS, CONVERSIONS AND DRIVEWAYS



**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

November 2020

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## Overview

Applicants considering alterations to a property in the Borough of Broxbourne should have regard to this Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) before submitting their applications for extensions to their property. The SPG supplements the policies in the Borough's Local Plan and sits within the framework established by the National Design Guide, which can be accessed online here.

## Purpose

Broxbourne has both historic centres and newer neighbourhoods, and many have a unique identity and character. Poorly designed alterations to existing housing can have a poor impact on the streetscape and the wider character of the area. Additionally it will detract from the appearance of the property, reduce the value of the property and impact neighbouring houses. This design guide aims to encourage functional designs that enhance the physical environment, and are sympathetic to existing architectural styles in the neighbourhood.

This Guide describes the key principles used by Broxbourne Borough Council to determine planning applications for extensions to houses. It supplements the policies in the Borough's Local Plan.

This Guide is not intended to constrain good imaginative designs. Well thought out solutions will always be welcomed, and if in doubt, applicants are encouraged to discuss their designs with the Council's [Development Management Officers](#).

## Local Plan 2018-2033 (adopted June 2020)

The Local Plan reflects the latest guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework and sets out the Council's design aspirations for the area.

The Local Plan is available at [www.broxbourne.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.broxbourne.gov.uk/localplan)

Specific policies relevant to house extensions to which particular regard should be had are as follows:

### Local Plan Policy DSC1: General Design Principles (p.114-5)

**I. The Council expects a high standard of design for all development. Wherever possible, development proposals must:**

**(a) enhance local character and distinctiveness, taking into account: existing patterns of development; significant views; urban form; building typology and details; height; roof form; fenestration detail; materials; building lines and other setbacks; trees; landscaping; and features of local and historic significance;**

**(b) significant natural features on site such as trees, waterbodies, habitats, etc. should be dealt with sensitively and retained where-ever possible;**

**(c) increase permeability of the area by providing easy to navigate and safe physical connections with surrounding spaces, streets, paths and neighbouring development;**

**(d) consider surface drainage requirements from the outset and work with the local topography to create low maintenance SuDS;**

**(e) reinforce existing pedestrian connections and create new ones with a clear hierarchy of paths and streets that promote pedestrian friendly environments and active lifestyles;**

**(f) provide coherent and logical layouts with active frontages and good natural surveillance;**

**(g) create local landmarks and marker features for a well-defined townscape;**

**(h) increase accessibility to open spaces, sports and play facilities where-ever possible;**

**(i) avoid the creation of blank walls on public fronted elevations;**

**(j) mitigate against flooding and climate change through incorporation of features such as trees and planting, water bodies, retention/filter beds, permeable paving, green energy features and the retention/selection of appropriate materials.**

**II. All developments should have regard to the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance in relation to design.**

THE BROXBOURNE  
LOCAL PLAN

A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOROUGH

JUNE 2020



[www.broxbourne.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.broxbourne.gov.uk/localplan)

Local Plan 2018 - 2033



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## **Local Plan Policy DSC2: Extensions and alterations to existing development (p.116)**

*I. All extensions and alterations to existing buildings will be required to respect the character and design of that building.*

*II. Proposals for extensions/alterations to existing dwellings must ensure that the scale, design and external appearance of the extension/alteration does not unduly impact upon the parent building and wider setting.*

## **Local Plan Policy H8: Residential Annexes (p.127-8)**

*I. Residential annexes will be permitted where:*

*(a) the accommodation forms an extension to the main dwelling and is capable of being used as an integral part of the dwelling; or forms a separate outbuilding which is in close proximity to, and shares some essential facilities with, the main dwelling; and*

*(b) the scale of the annexe is subordinate to the existing dwelling and is the minimum level of accommodation required to support the needs of the intended occupant/s; and*

*(c) there is sufficient space to park vehicles for both the dwelling and the annexe, in accordance with adopted standards, which is available and appropriately located within the curtilage; and*

*(d) the development accords with design policies on extensions and alterations to dwellings.*

*II. Where planning permission is granted for a residential annexe, planning conditions will be imposed to ensure that the occupants of the annexe are ancillary to the primary household and related to the occupants of the main dwelling.*

*III. The Council will maintain a presumption against the development of selfcontained residential units within the curtilage of existing dwellings, where the proposal would be in conflict with the policies in this plan or design or space standards.*

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Some changes to existing houses may fall within a special exemption named “Permitted Development” and may not need planning permission to build. However these may still require permission under Building Regulations. The Council encourages home owners and architects to look up the [planning portal](#) for guidance on whether or not their proposal falls under permitted development. The [Interactive House/Terrace House](#) on the planning portal website gives advice for general householder planning projects.

Sometimes the Council may have removed some permitted development rights for your area by issuing an ‘Article 4’ direction. This will mean that you have to submit a planning application for work which normally falls under Permitted Development and does not need one. The Council recommends that homeowners should check this with the Development Management Officers to verify whether or not they need planning permission for their proposed works.

Some alteration and extensions to your house will require planning permission.

These include:

- A dormer window in the roof of your house facing the road
- Most two storey extensions
- Putting up some large outbuildings and structures
- Changes in the use of land or buildings eg. converting a residential unit into a business unit.

You will also need consent from the Council in the following situations:

- Work on a listed building
- Work within a conservation area
- Work on a protected tree or trees within a conservation area;
- The display of advertisements
- Development restricted by an Article 4 direction (this reduces your Permitted Development Rights)



# General Design Principles



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This section sets out the Design Principles that should be considered when designing all alterations or extensions to existing houses. In addition, you must ensure that your development meets specific design criteria relevant to your extension type as set out in the following pages of this document under [Design Guidelines](#).

## 1. Maintain Character of Street

All proposals should maintain or enhance the character of the street. Your extension should sit comfortably with the main building and with neighbouring houses. Follow these pointers to help ensure the extension is acceptable.

- Take account of the architecture of houses nearby, and the scale and character of development along your street.
- Use a design and materials which blend in with the character and appearance of the existing house.
- Take account of changes in levels between properties, gardens and the road.
- Take account of the angle and position of your house. This may increase the visual effect of the extension in the street scene
- Ensure roof of extension complements the roof form of the original house and the surrounding area.
- Leave enough space between houses to retain the original pattern of buildings and gaps on the street.



*A front dormer on this row of terraces breaks the strict geometry of the facade and roof form and impacts negatively on the streetscene.*

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## 2. Keep in harmony with the original building

Proposed extensions and alterations should not dominate the existing building. They should normally be subordinate to and respect the original house. This can be achieved by:

- respecting the proportions of the existing house
- using a complementary roof form
- matching materials and details
- matching the window style, its proportions and position
- reflecting the character of the original house.
- the height of the extension should normally be lower than the height of the original building. As an example, this can usually be achieved for a two-storey side extension by stepping down the roof-line and setting back the front building line (see adjoining figure).



This large side extension with matching roof ridge lines and front aligned with the line of the front facade is unacceptable because it makes the house look unbalanced and lopsided.



This smaller side extension is more sympathetic to the original facade as it has a reasonable setback from the front facade and the ridge is lower than the original roof thus allowing due prominence to the original house.



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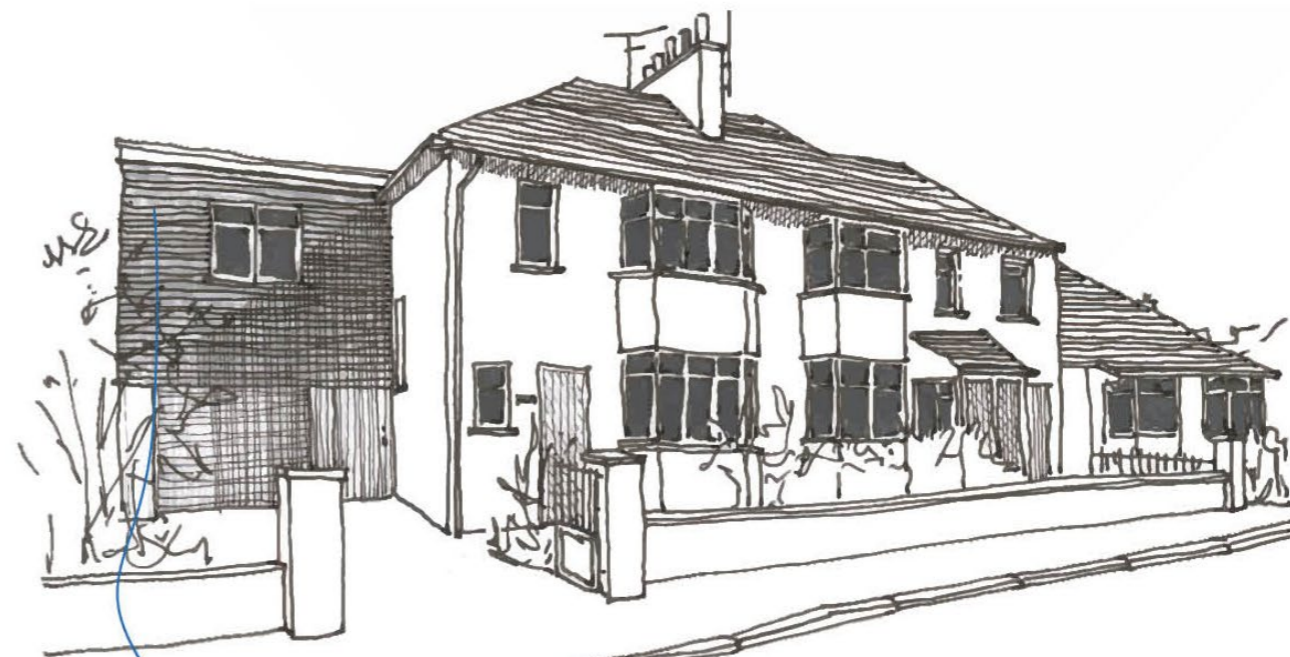
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## 2. Relation to Existing (host) Building (contd..)

Garage conversions are another example of house extensions where the relation to existing building needs to be carefully considered.



A flat roofed first floor extension over existing garage detracts from the architectural style of the house and is therefore unacceptable.



The sloping roof of the first floor extension over existing garage complements the roof form of the original house better.



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## 3. Be mindful of the impact on neighbours

Proposals should not have an adverse effect on the living conditions or the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Proposals for extension should not cause :

- Loss of light or overshadowing of adjoining properties, particularly loss of light to main windows serving principal rooms such as living or dining rooms
- Loss of privacy by overlooking adjoining properties
- Loss of outlook from adjoining properties
- Sense of enclosure or overbearing impact on adjoining properties
- Loss of garden, landscaping or open space which contributes to local amenity.
- Loss of parking space that is desirable to retain.

Seek the advice of the Council's Development Management Officers at an early stage to avoid difficulties later.

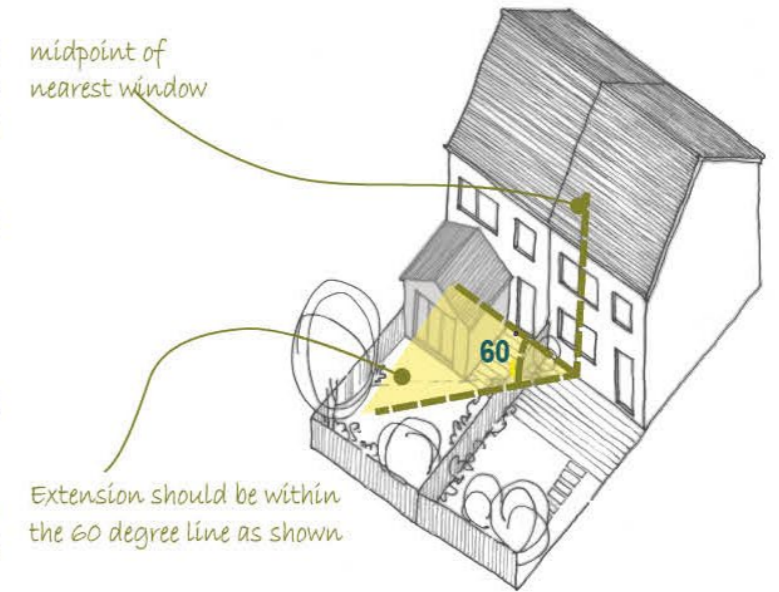
### Loss of Light

On assessing proposals for rear extensions the Council will use as a rule of thumb the 45° (or 60°) rule as shown in these diagrams to prevent the neighbouring properties from being too overshadowed by new extensions.

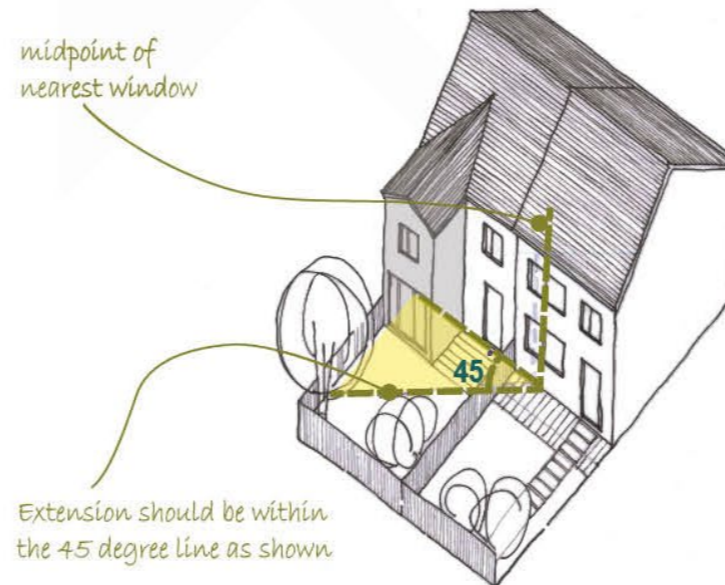
The reference point is the centre of the neighbours nearest habitable room window.

### The 45° rule of thumb seeks to:

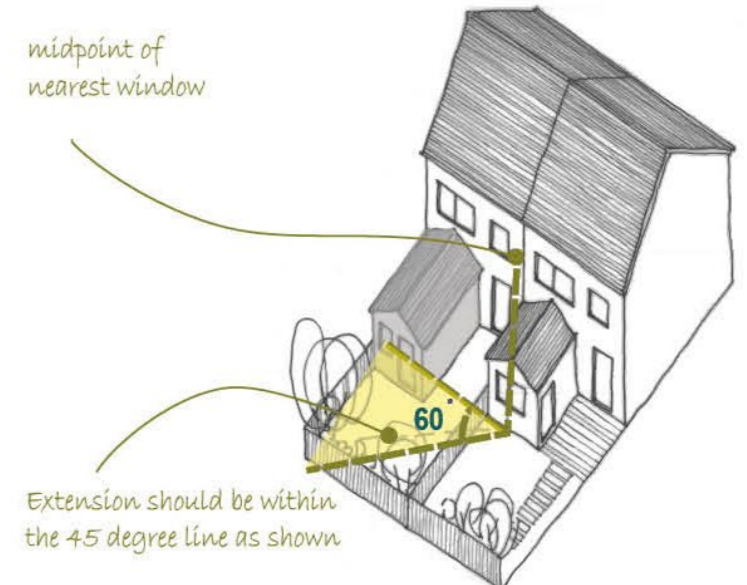
- Maintain a reasonable relationship between existing buildings and extensions;
- Avoid an overbearing visual impact in bulk and proximity to boundaries both from inside adjacent properties and from neighbouring gardens; and
- Prevent excessive daylight loss or overshadowing to habitable rooms of neighbouring properties.



Scenario 1-For Ground floor extensions- 60° rule to be applied from midpoint of nearest window of your adjoining neighbours habitable room.



Scenario 2 - For double storeyed extensions- 45° rule to be applied from midpoint of nearest window of your adjoining neighbours habitable room.



Scenario 3 - Where a neighbouring property has already been extended- 60° rule (or 45° rule in case of two storeyed extension) to be applied from midpoint of nearest window of neighbours habitable room.

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## 3. Amenity to Neighbours (contd...)

### Overlooking and Loss of Privacy

The Council is keen to ensure that all dwellings have attractive open outlooks and adequate privacy. Unnecessary overlooking between windows of habitable rooms of neighbouring properties should be avoided in all cases. All new dwellings or extensions to existing dwellings should be designed with this in mind. The Council will therefore assess all relevant planning applications against the criteria set out in the "Minimum Overlooking Distances" as set out in the adjoining cross-sections.

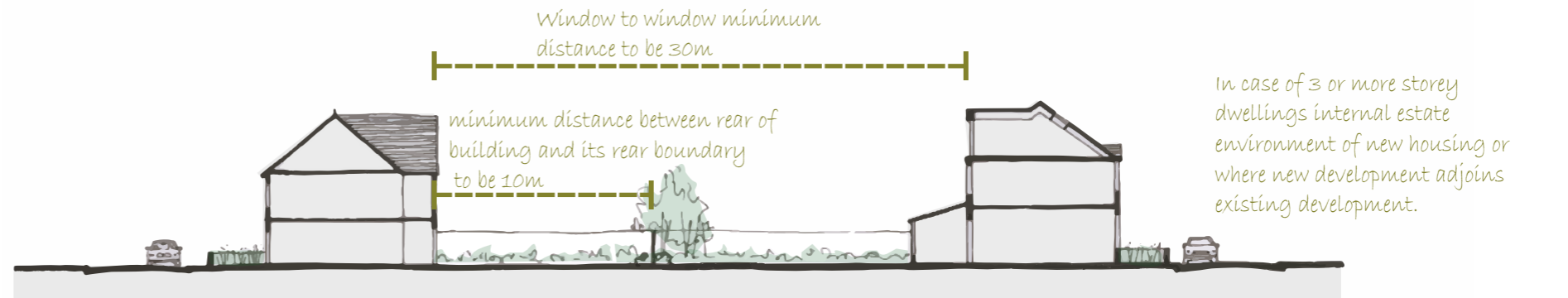
Overlooking distances on sloped terrain may need to be increased from those stated in the adjoining cross-sections. This is because overlooking may be a greater issue on sloped terrain and houses may need to be further apart in order to maintain adequate privacy. The appropriate distance in such cases will be determined on a case by case basis by the Council's Development Management Officers.

### Overbearing relationship with neighbours

An overbearing relationship is caused when the height and bulk of a proposed extension significantly dominates the outlook of a habitable room or area. This depends on the height

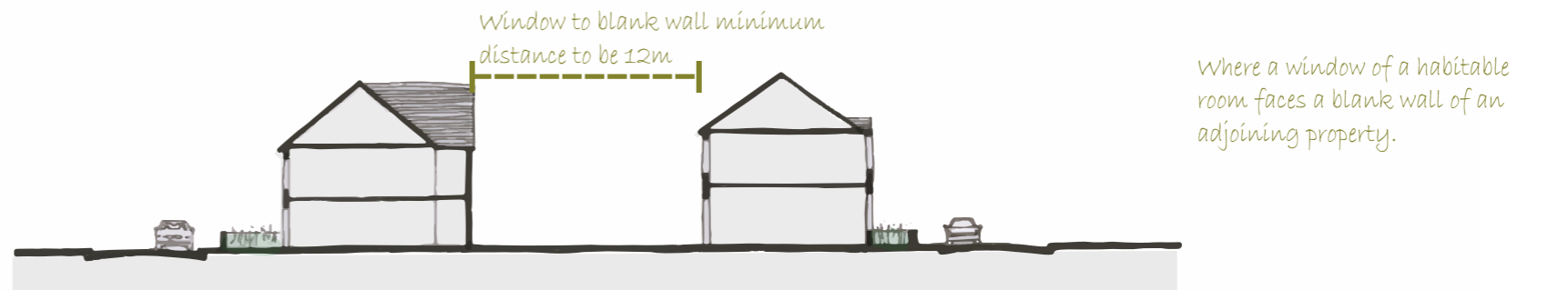
1 habitable room : a room where somebody might sleep e.g.. a bedroom, living room. A bath or kitchen is not a habitable room.

Minimum Overlooking distances



Minimum distance to reduce overbearing effect of new development

Minimum distance to reduce overbearing effect of new development



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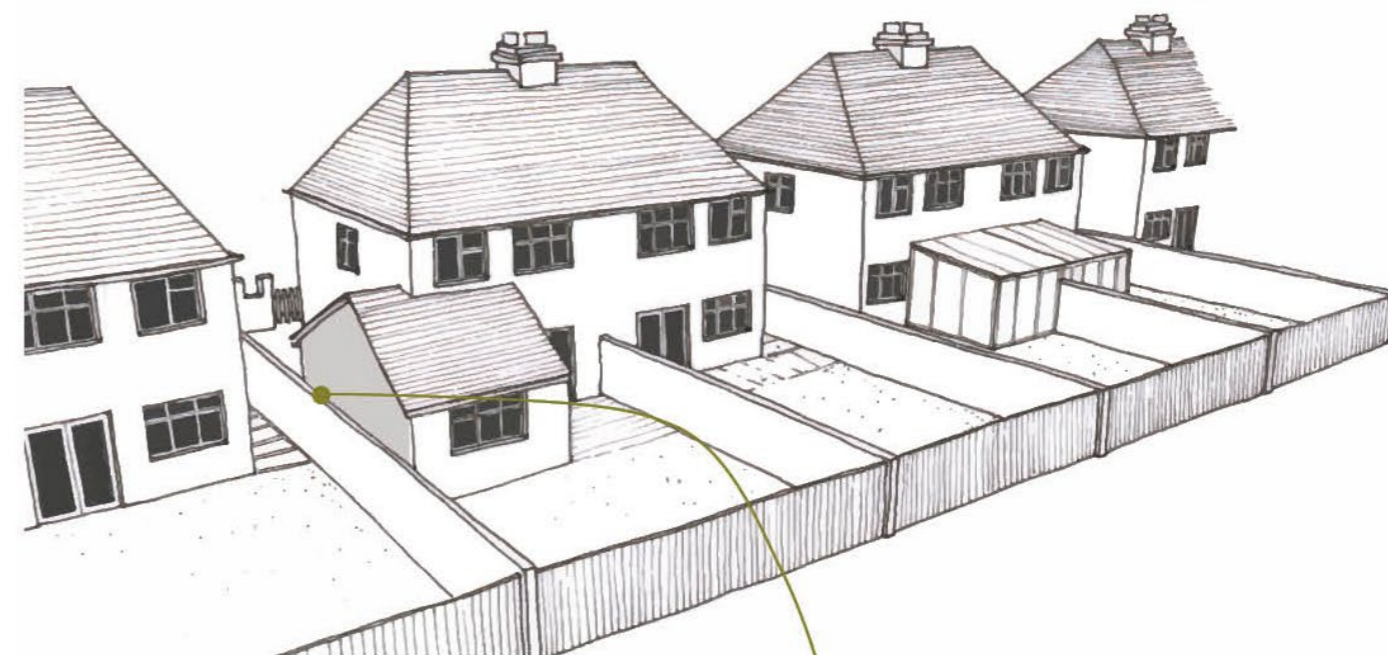
## 3. Amenity to Neighbours (contd...)

(contd from page 9)  
of the wall or roof of the extension, the proximity of the side elevations of the extension and neighbouring properties to their boundary, and the location of the main habitable rooms and areas. Overbearing relationship with neighbours

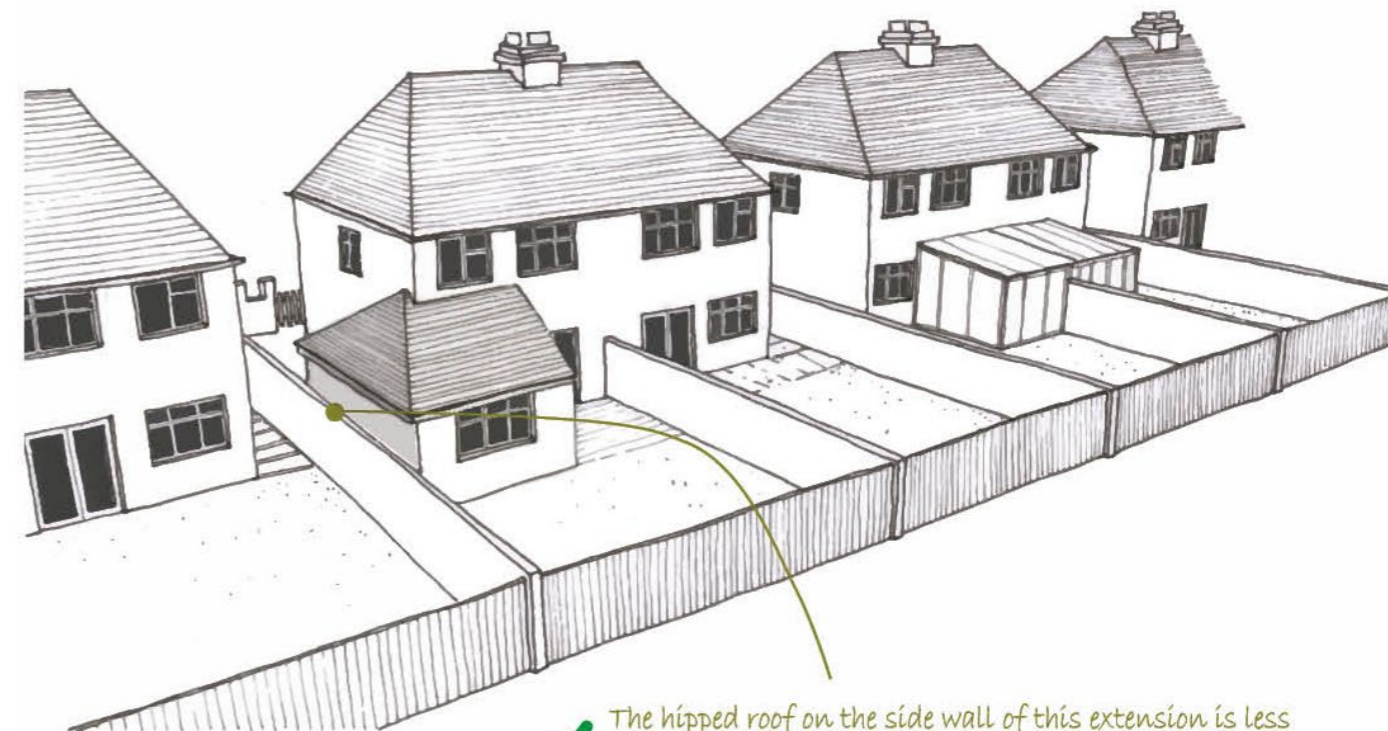
As shown in the adjoining figure even a single-storey extension can have an overbearing relationship to the adjoining property to the side, if the roof or the top of the side wall extends down the garden such that it would dominate the outlook from the neighbouring property.

The minimum distance between a window of a proposed extension and a blank wall should be 12m. See cross-section on page 10.

Also all new windows of habitable rooms in a new extension should have an adequate view such as the street or a garden rather than a blank wall or a bin store.



**X** This rear and side extension with its gable towards the neighbour's garden is overbearing onto the neighbour's usable garden space.



**✓** The hipped roof on the side wall of this extension is less overbearing on the neighbour's garden space.

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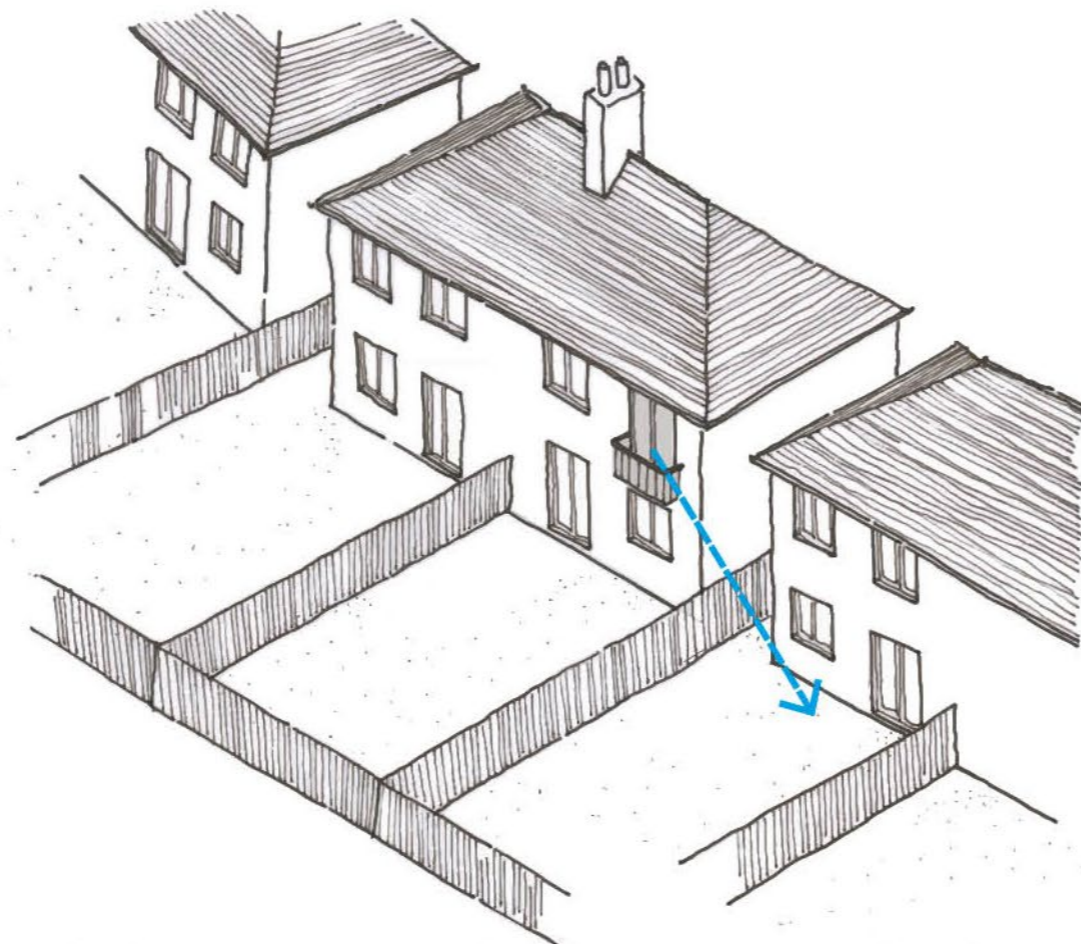
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## 3. Amenity to Neighbours (contd...)

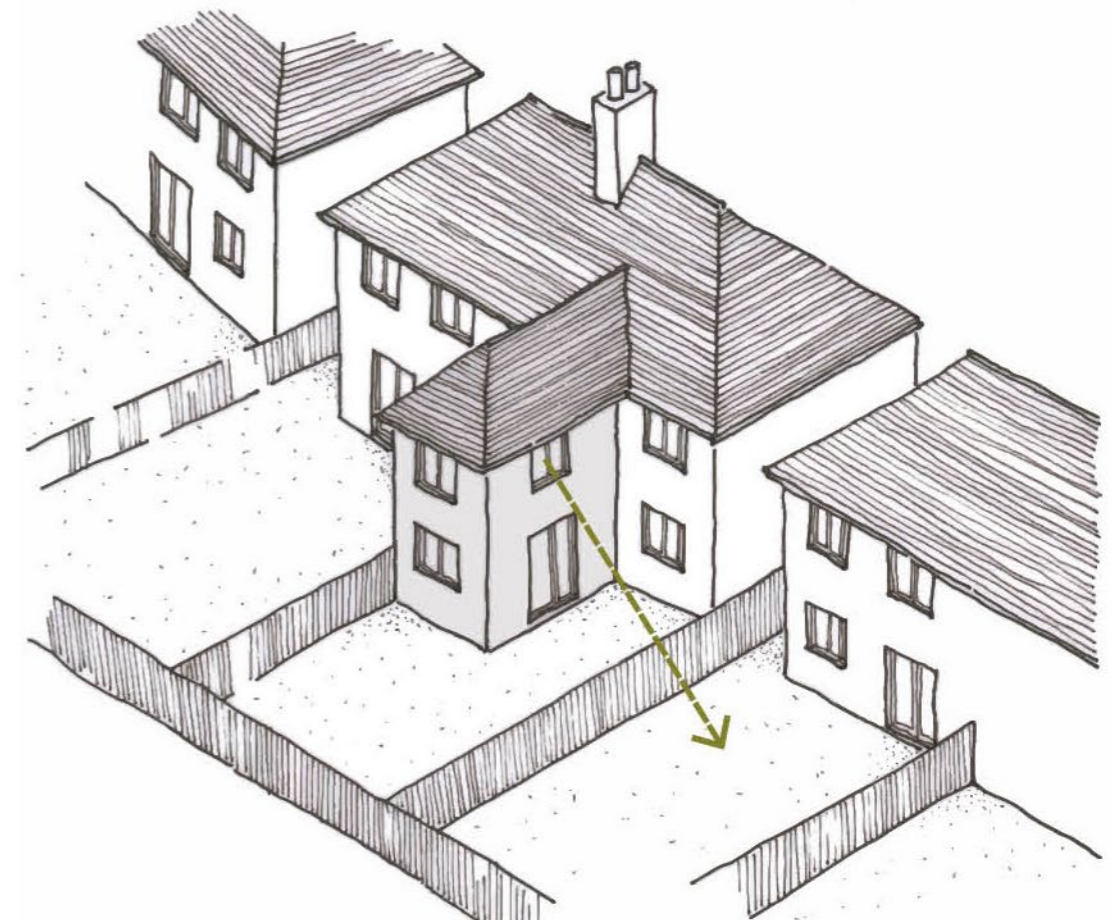
### Loss of Privacy

If first floor windows are proposed in the side wall, they should be at a high level, non-opening and fitted with obscured glass.

*Overlooking from Balconies*  
First floor balconies can have a significant impact on the privacy of adjoining neighbours and should be avoided if neighbours are likely to be affected.



**X** First floor balconies can have a significant impact on the amenity of the adjoining neighbours and should be avoided where this is likely.



**X** Extensions should not overlook neighbouring houses or gardens. In this example the first floor window on the extension has a direct view of the neighbour's garden and has a negative impact on the neighbour's amenity.

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## 4. Choose matching or complementary materials, finishes and details

External finishes, materials and architectural features will affect how your extension looks.

If the original house has a clearly defined traditional style façade, a good approach would be to match the materials on the extension with those of the existing house in terms of colour, type and size, etc. A different approach may be taken where a high quality minimalistic and contemporary addition looks equally good against an existing house, but this will need to be very well designed in order to achieve the high quality look.

With the traditional approach involving matching styles:

- The brick bond and mortar joints should be similar to the original house
- The design, proportions and position of joinery details, windows and doors should reflect those of the original building to ensure the details of the new extension are sympathetically in keeping and do not detract from the general character of the area.
- Windows on extensions should normally match those on the existing house, in terms of their design, material and proportions. Where necessary, they should also be recessed to match the original windows. Those on upper floors will often need to be slightly smaller than those on the floors below where an obvious hierarchy exists (i.e. they reduce in size the higher up the house they are).
- Original bay windows are important features which should not be enlarged or altered significantly, to avoid having an adverse effect on the appearance of the house. Also, any new windows on front facade should not compete with the original bay window features.
- Where a flat roof is appropriate on a single storey extension (and in many cases pitched roofs are a better design), the roof should relate to any existing horizontal elements such as string courses or to the line of change between materials e.g. brick to render or tile hanging. Brick on edge coping is usually more satisfactory than a timber fascia board.



The above two images are examples of two different approaches to designing an extension, both of which could look very pleasing if designed well and dependent on the context. The image to the left shows an extension that matches in style and materials to the original house.

The image to the right shows an extension that is designed to sit in contrast with the existing house. The white render and large glazing offer an interesting contrast to the traditional detail and textures on the original house.

# Rear Extensions



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## Rear Extensions

Any extensions to the rear of your property including conservatories, and other single/two storey structures will fall under this category. While a rear extension is rarely visible from the street, it can have a significant impact on the appearance of the rear facade of the house and the neighbours' properties. Due care should therefore be taken to ensure that this is of a suitable scale and design. Acceptability of your design will be assessed by the Council on a case by case basis based on the individual characteristics of your house and neighbourhood. Certain rear extensions fall under Permitted Development Rights. Applicants are encouraged to look up the [Planning Portal](#) and/ or discuss with our [Development Management Officers](#) to check if their proposals fall under PD Rights.

The following design criteria provide useful guidance and will be used by the Council to assess proposals if Planning Consent is required.

**All rear extensions should meet the General Design Principles set out in this document. In addition, they should also meet the following design criteria.**

**R1. The extension should not cause a significant sense of enclosure, or loss of outlook from, or loss of light to, principal windows of neighbour's habitable rooms and garden.**

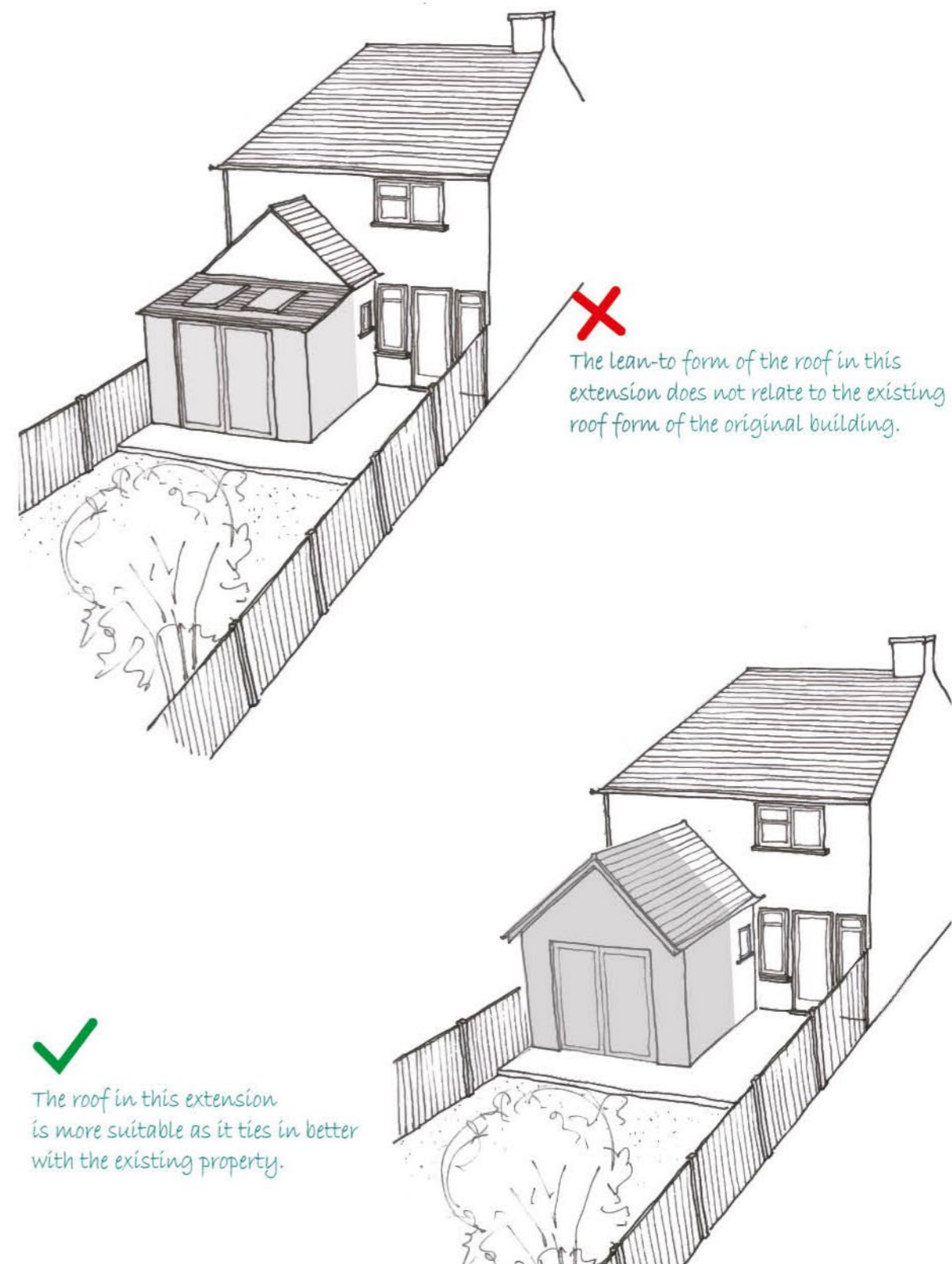
**R2. They should not look too bulky and prominent compared to the size of the main building and garden to which they relate.**

**R3. If your neighbour's house is set back from your rear building line, the depth of your proposed extension may need to be reduced in order to protect the amenity of your neighbour.**

**R4. Also, if your neighbour's house is on a lower level, it may mean that your neighbour may suffer from loss of privacy/light because of your extension. In such situations it may be required that the depth of your proposed extension is reduced to ensure that your neighbours amenity is protected.**

**R5. The design should create functional spaces internally and externally. Materials and window sizes should appear proportionate to the facade of the original house. Also, the design should allow for sufficient amount of daylight into the original and extended part of the property.**

**R6. The roof of the extension should have a complementary design to the original house. Eaves should match or be lower than existing. In most cases higher eaves**



# Side Extensions



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## Side Extensions

A side extension can have a significant impact on the appearance of the house frontage, and subsequently the character of the street. It should be designed with careful consideration in order to ensure these are subservient to the original house and do not affect the symmetry of the original house. There are several factors to be considered in determining the acceptability of a design as follows:

**S1. Often in streets with blocks of terraced houses, semi-detached houses and detached houses, the gaps between properties form a crucial element of the street's character. Large side extensions that cause filling up of these gaps can cause a terracing effect. Side extensions should therefore be reasonably sized to not fill up this gap. For this reason side extensions should be set at least 1.0m off the side boundary of the property.**

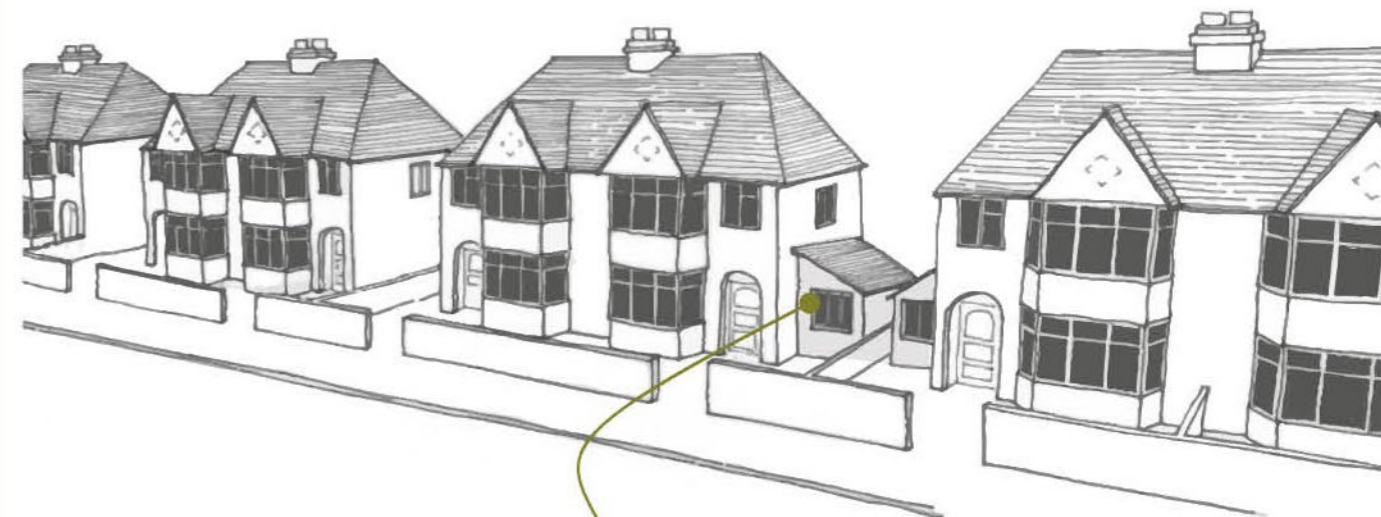
**S2. A side extension could cause an otherwise symmetrical building to look disproportionate. The scale, footprint and architectural style should be carefully designed to respect the original building, especially the front facade. Side extensions should therefore be set back by at least 1m off the front of the building to retain the prominence of the original front facade. Additionally, the roof ridge of the extension should be set down from the ridge of the main property for the same reason.**

**S3. Side extensions should not impact on the privacy or natural light enjoyed by the neighbours. Windows should not be positioned on side walls where they look down into private gardens of the neighbouring property. Where unavoidable these should be high level, obscured glazed and have restricted opening to prevent overlooking. In addition the size and bulk of the side extension should not cause overshadowing to the neighbouring property or appear overbearing or dominant in relation to the neighbour.**

**S4. Roof form of a two storey extension should respect the style of the original house.**



Large side extensions that close the gap between houses and cause a terracing effect are likely to be rejected especially on a street where the gap between houses forms a prominent element of the street's character.



Smaller ground floor only side extensions that are set back from the front facade may be more acceptable in such situations as this helps retain the gap between the houses.



# Roof Alterations/Loft Conversions



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## Roof Alterations (Loft Conversions)

Creating living accommodation in roof-space can be an effective way to extend your house. However some roofs may be too shallow to allow creation of a functional living space within. Also in other cases, the size of dormer windows required may not be appropriate to the character of the area.

Certain types of alterations to roofs may be classified as Permitted Development and may not require Planning Permission. Please look up [Planning Portal](#) for further details on these criteria. For others the following points should be considered while planning out roof extensions.

**L1. Dormers on the front of semi-detached or terraced houses will not normally be acceptable, due to the negative impact these have on the adjoining houses and street scene. In special cases where these may be considered on the front elevation dormers will need to be smaller and preferably have a roof that complements the original roof form.**

L1. Dormers on the front of semi-detached or terraced houses will not normally be acceptable, due to the negative impact these have on the adjoining houses and street scene. In special cases where these may be considered on the front elevation dormers will need to be smaller and preferably have a roof that complements the original roof form.

L2. Side dormer extensions on hipped roofs may be considered but these should still be set away from the ridge and clear of the hips. Side dormers will be unacceptable if these are seen to be too large and dominant on the front facade.

L3. Design of dormers should reflect the style and proportion of windows on the existing house. Flat, gabled, hipped or curved roofs may be used depending on the house style. Position and width of dormers should normally be designed to align with windows below.

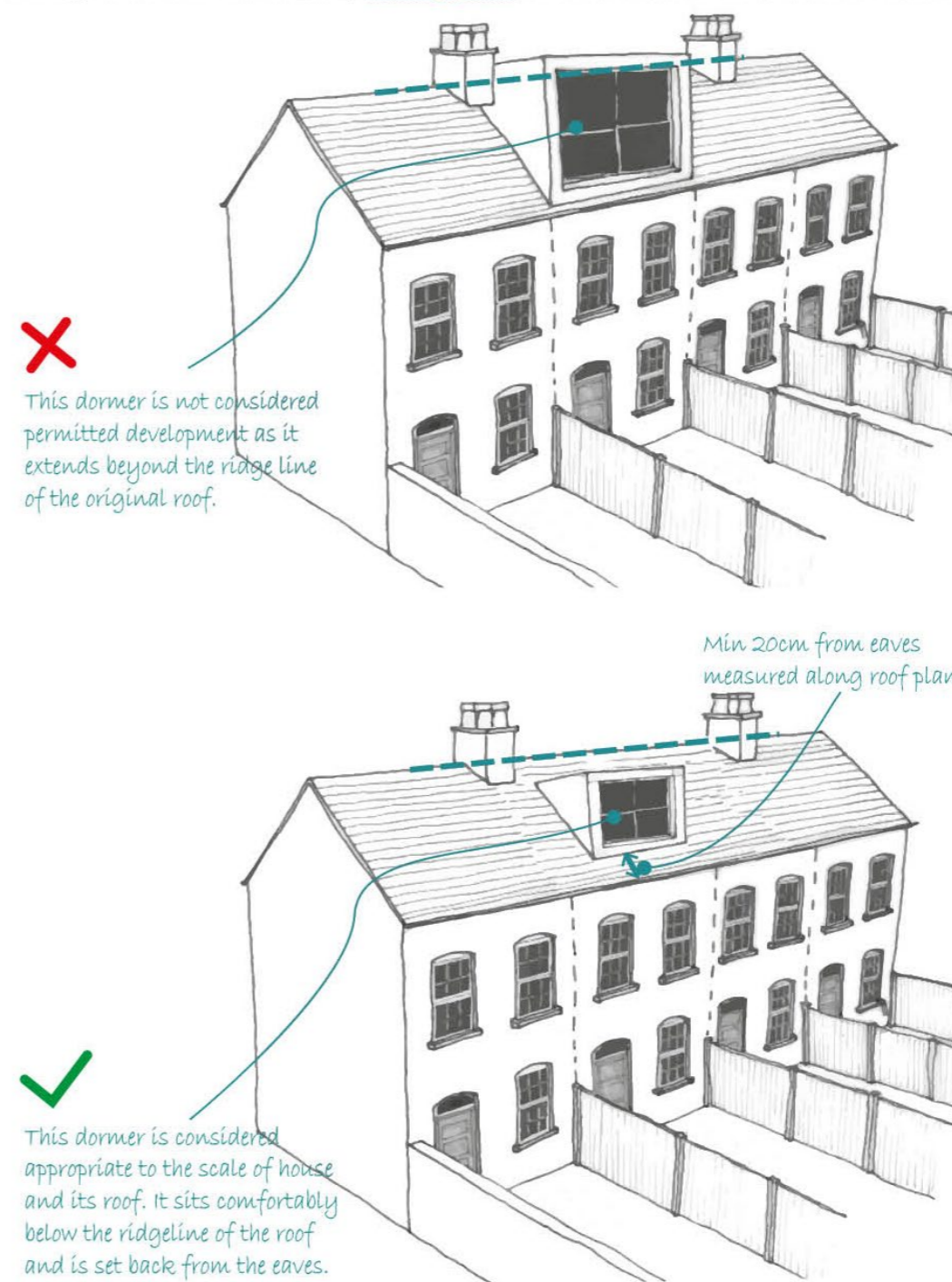
L4. The size and position of dormers should be determined to minimize overlooking of adjoining properties and gardens.

L5. Dormers should sit subservient to the main roof structure. There should be adequate roof slope above and below the dormer. Dormers should not sit taller than the original roof, nor should they overlap or wrap around the hips. In conservation areas, listed buildings or specific cases where PD rights for loft extensions have been removed and where large dormers do not already impact on the character of the area the Council will not permit dormers that are taller than half the height of the roof (measured from the eaves to the ridge) and / or are wider than half the width of the roof on which it is constructed. In other cases these criteria may be relaxed provided the dormer is seen as subservient to the roof on which it is built.

L6. Too many dormers on the roof of a house can have an unbalancing effect, will detract from the original form of the roof and should be avoided.

L7. The dormer window design should be in harmony with the rest of the house. Materials overall should be complementary to those on the existing house.

L8. Changing a pitched roof to a gable can only be successfully achieved in certain house styles and locations where such changes to roof designs are deemed appropriate for the character.





# Front Extensions and/or Porches



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## Front Extensions

The front elevation of a house is the most valuable in terms of its presence on the streetscape and therefore any extension that negatively impacts on this front facade will be discouraged. Only small additions which will not harm the quality or character of the building are generally permissible. Porches are usually acceptable provided that they are not over-dominant and that they relate to the character of the original building. Separate guidance on [porches](#) is provided in the following page.

In general, 2-storey or first floor front extensions can have a dramatic impact upon the street scene and should be avoided. Such extensions can have an adverse impact on the design of the parent building and can adversely affect the open aspect and other amenities of adjoining properties. However, exceptions may be allowed where a street has a varied building line or where properties are set in extensive grounds and there is no strong visual relationship between the property to be extended and its immediate neighbours. Single-storey front extensions will be considered using the same criteria but occasions where such extensions may be permitted will probably be greater than for 2-storey extensions.

**Large, front extensions will normally be discouraged because of their negative impact on the streetscene and character of the area in general. Where it is considered that a building may reasonably be extended forward (for example, on detached houses in low density areas or in roads with irregular building lines), the following principles should be observed:**

- F1. The new roof should normally reflect the roof form of the existing house (e.g. pitched with tiles to match if the original house has a pitched roof)**
- F2. Front extensions should fit in with the architectural style of the house.**
- F3. Care should be taken to ensure that front extensions have regard to, and do not conflict with or are not too close to, existing architectural features such as bay windows and first floor windows.**
- F4. Windows should be positioned where they do not have a harmful affect on the amenities of neighbouring properties.**
- F5. The Council will not normally grant permission for a front extension (either single or two storeyed) which protrudes beyond a 45 degree line (drawn in the horizontal plane) from the nearest part of the nearest window in a neighbouring house or flat.**
- F6. The proposal should not result in a reduction of parking provision below the Council's standard as set out in the [Borough-wide Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).**



**X** This double storeyed front extension sits well forward of the other gable features in this row and significantly changes the symmetry of the semi-detached units. This has a negative impact on the streetscene.



**X** This single storeyed front extension sits well forward of the building line, alters the balance of the front facade and reduces the driveway space in the front of the house. Such applications would generally be discouraged.

# Front Extensions and/or Porches



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## Porches

A porch is built around an external door, giving access to the house. It does not contain living accommodation - any structure which does contain accommodation is classed as an extension. Most front porches are permitted development if the footprint is less than 3m<sup>2</sup>, height no more than 3m, and distance to any of the boundaries is not less than 2m. If this is not the case or for properties where Permitted Development rights for front porches have been removed, a planning application will be required to build a porch. The Council will consider proposals against the following design criteria:

**P1. The character of the street and the houses along the row should be considered carefully when designing a new porch for your house. If there is a common style or design detail, this should be followed sensitively. Any special features which define the character of your area should be retained.**

**P2. The style of your existing house should be carefully considered. Your porch should blend in with the original house in terms of size, proportion and features.**

**P3. In order to ensure that the porch fits well with the existing house, all external finishes and materials should match or complement the existing building.**

Sketch of row of houses with their original entrance features



Sketch of proposed porch on house 2



This front porch stands out as an odd one in a row of houses where simpler canopies are a distinct feature. Besides, it breaks the symmetry on combined facade for units 2-3, and subsequently the block of terrace 1-4 and will therefore be discouraged.

# Garage Conversions



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## Garage Conversions

Converting your garage into living accommodation can be a cheap and quick alternative to extending your property.

The important factors to consider are:

### Design Criteria

**G1.** After the conversion has taken place, there must still be adequate space to park cars in accordance with the car parking standards set out in the [Borough-wide Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

**G2.** Replacement parking which results in the loss of a front garden and the front boundary will be rejected in locations where this causes a harmful effect on the character of the street scene;

**G3.** The new appearance of the front of your property must also be carefully considered. The positioning and size of new windows and doors should respect the existing arrangement on the elevation and the materials used should match with the rest of the property.

**G4.** The new garage conversion should remain subservient to the original building and should not compete or cause imbalance to the original facade.

Sketch of original house with garage



Sketch of garage conversion



This garage conversion into living accommodation ties in well with the facade style of the house and would be considered acceptable provided it meets the other design criteria stated in this design guide.

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# Garage Conversions



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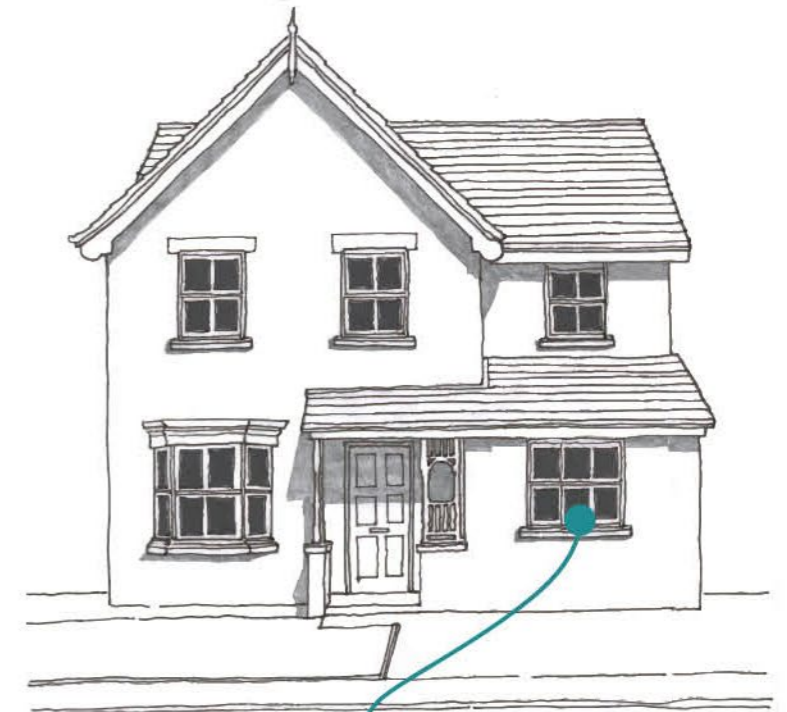
The front facade of this house has a clearly defined gable feature with enhanced porch and bay window at ground floor, thus pulling attention to the entrance of the house.

Original house with garage



**X** The bay window in this garage conversion is not preferred as it competes with the main gable feature of the house.

Possible garage conversion - Scenario 1



**✓** This garage conversion with the simpler window ensures that it sits well as subservient to the main gable.

Possible garage conversion - Scenario 2

# Annexes and Outbuildings



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## Outbuilding in Front Gardens

Detached buildings in front gardens of terraces and semi-detached houses will have a very detrimental impact on the streetscene and are not normally acceptable.

On detached houses, they will only be considered acceptable where detached buildings in front gardens form part of the existing character of the street. For instance, where detached buildings were built as part of the original form and layout of an estate.

## Outbuildings to the Side or Rear of House

It is common for people to accommodate an office space or other ancillary living space or a room for dependant relatives within an annexe structure. In general, the same principles apply to the design of an outbuilding as to rear extensions. The new building should complement the appearance of the main house and sit well in its surroundings by using appropriate materials and design features such as roof shape or window details. In many cases such a structure will fall within Permitted Development but the advice below is relevant to all such developments.

- O1. It should not unduly over-shadow neighbouring properties. It should not be too large or significantly reduce the size of a garden to become out of character with the area.**
- O2. It should not unduly affect outlook from an adjoining property's habitable rooms or principal garden areas.**
- O3. Its design and materials should be in harmony with the surrounding area.**
- O4. It must remain subservient to the existing property and be of a suitable scale for its purpose, over large buildings will not be considered acceptable.**
- O5. Creating an independent dwelling within the boundaries of an existing house is rarely viewed favourably and if permission is granted for an annexe, conditions will be imposed to ensure that the structure is not used as an independent home. The annexe must form part of the same planning unit and share facilities such as parking and garden areas. It must be accessible by going through the main house and cannot have a separate access to the street. It should not include a separate kitchen.**



# Driveways on Front Gardens



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## Driveways in Front Gardens

Creating parking space in your front garden could meet your functional requirements, but if not sensitively designed this could cause significant impact on the street's appearance and openness. Also it has been widely accepted that extensive paving of front gardens has increased flooding issues.

If the works involve creating new or amending vehicle crossovers on footways, and for any other work outside the property curtilage owners should consult the [Highways team at Hertfordshire County Council](#) and ensure that they get necessary consents prior to works.

Applicants should meet the following criteria to ensure the above mentioned issues are addressed appropriately.

**D1: Balance of Hard standing and soft landscaping.**  
**Front gardens provide a green and landscaped edge to the road and any proposals for paving these over completely will be discouraged. To retain the soft edge to the street, parking spaces should be well integrated into a soft landscape led approach. A reasonable balance must be maintained between the planting and hard paving in the front garden.**

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The Royal Horticultural Society has produced very useful advice on designing front gardens with well integrated planting and paving. Please click on the adjoining image to access this guidance.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/pdf/climate-and-sustainability/urban-greening/gardening-matters-front-gardens-urban-greening.pdf>



# Driveways on Front Gardens



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## D2: Standard Sizes

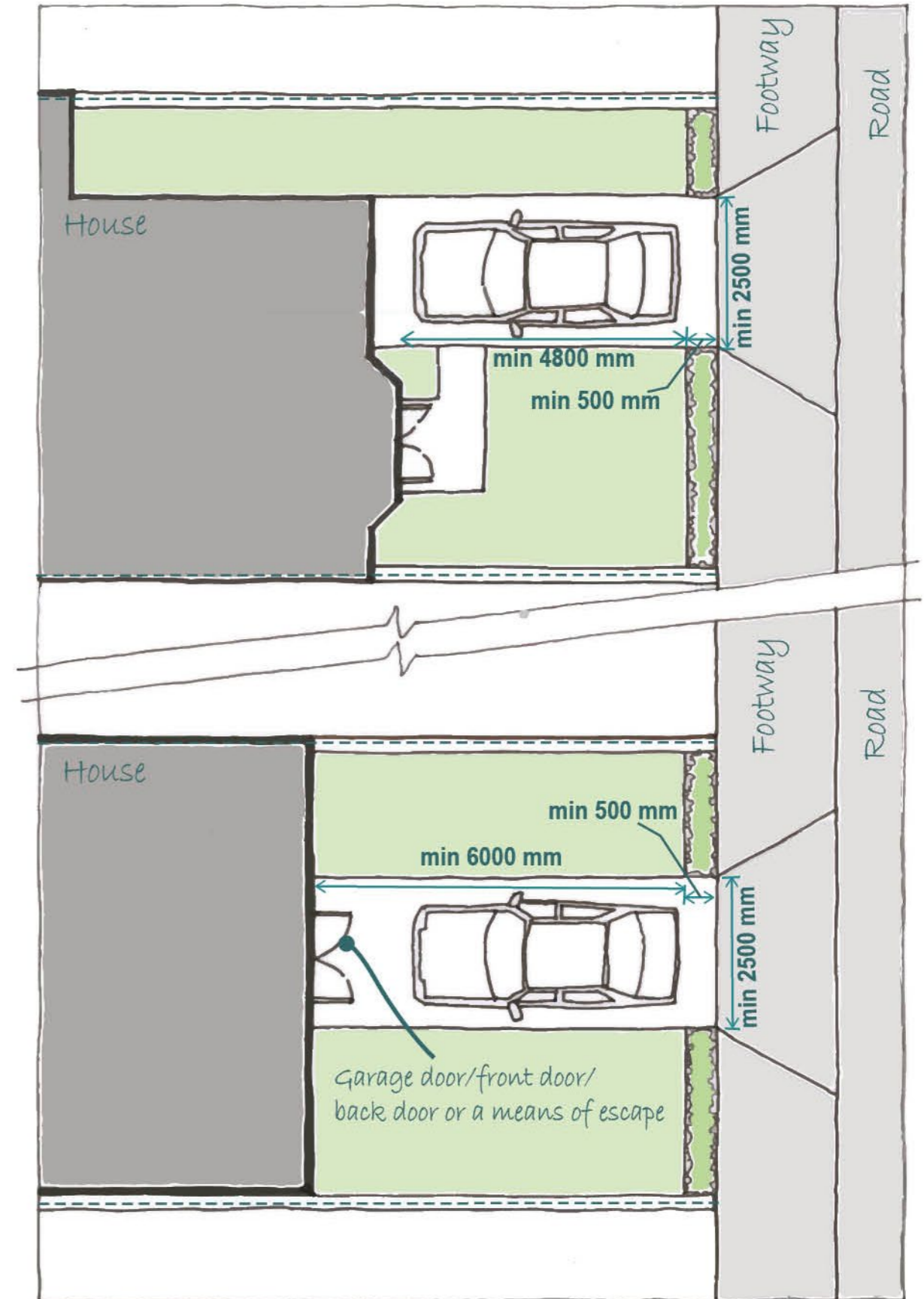
1) No part of a vehicle parked within your property may project onto or over the highway. The vehicle access crossing should not be used as a parking area. Parked cars should be well screened with planting when the property is viewed from the road. To comply, the parking space must be:

- Min 2.5m wide and at least (4.8m + 0.5m) long to allow for a parked car and for hedge planting, in the space between the back of the pavement or property boundary (the face of any wall, fence or hedge for example) and the front of your building.
  - Or min 2.5m wide and at least 6m long(+ 0.5m for hedge planting) where the parking area is in front of a garage or door where adequate means of escape needs to be provided, like a front/back door, or an exit from a fire escape, etc.
- (See adjoining figure illustrating the above two options)

2) The parking space must be at a right angle to the highway and it should be possible for the vehicle to enter and exit the property without excessive manoeuvring.

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## Parking space dimensions



# Driveways on Front Gardens



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### D3: Boundaries

To maintain the openness of the streetscape, these should be low height walls, timber picket fences and /or trimmed hedges.

The height of the boundary treatments should be between 0.5m and 1m. The adjoining pictures show a palette of some acceptable boundary treatments.

### Possibilities for Front Boundary Types

Colours and types should be chosen to complement relevant house and street character.



Low height brick wall (between 0.5m to 1m high)



Low height hedge or topiary planting



Low height fence combined with planting

### D4: Guidance on paving materials within the property curtilage

In order to ensure that the front gardens do not appear dominated by hard standing, the paving materials should blend well and appear subservient to the surrounding landscaping.

Paving the full front garden with hardstanding will usually be discouraged, and a reasonable balance of hard and soft landscaping should be sought.

Paving material should be of muted colour palette and complement the colour of the brick houses and landscaping.

### Possibilities for Surface Treatments in Front Gardens

Colours and types should be chosen to complement the house and street character



Permeable block paving



Conventional block paving



Paving with spacers for grass or other ground cover planting



Gravel

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# Driveways on Front Gardens



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## D5: Surface water drainage of paving

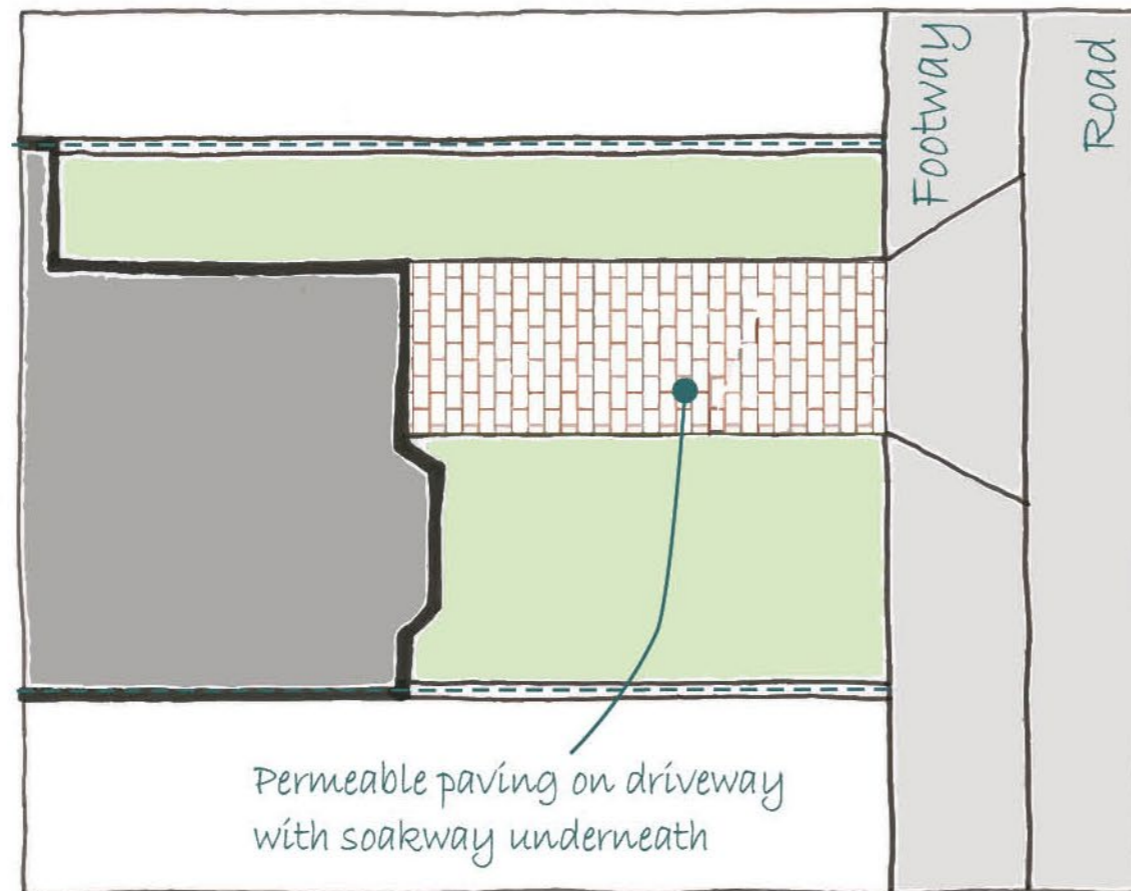
Rainwater falling on the hard standing should not drain on to the public highway.

The council will require owners to adopt one of the following options to ensure that rainwater is contained and soaked into the ground within the property boundary.



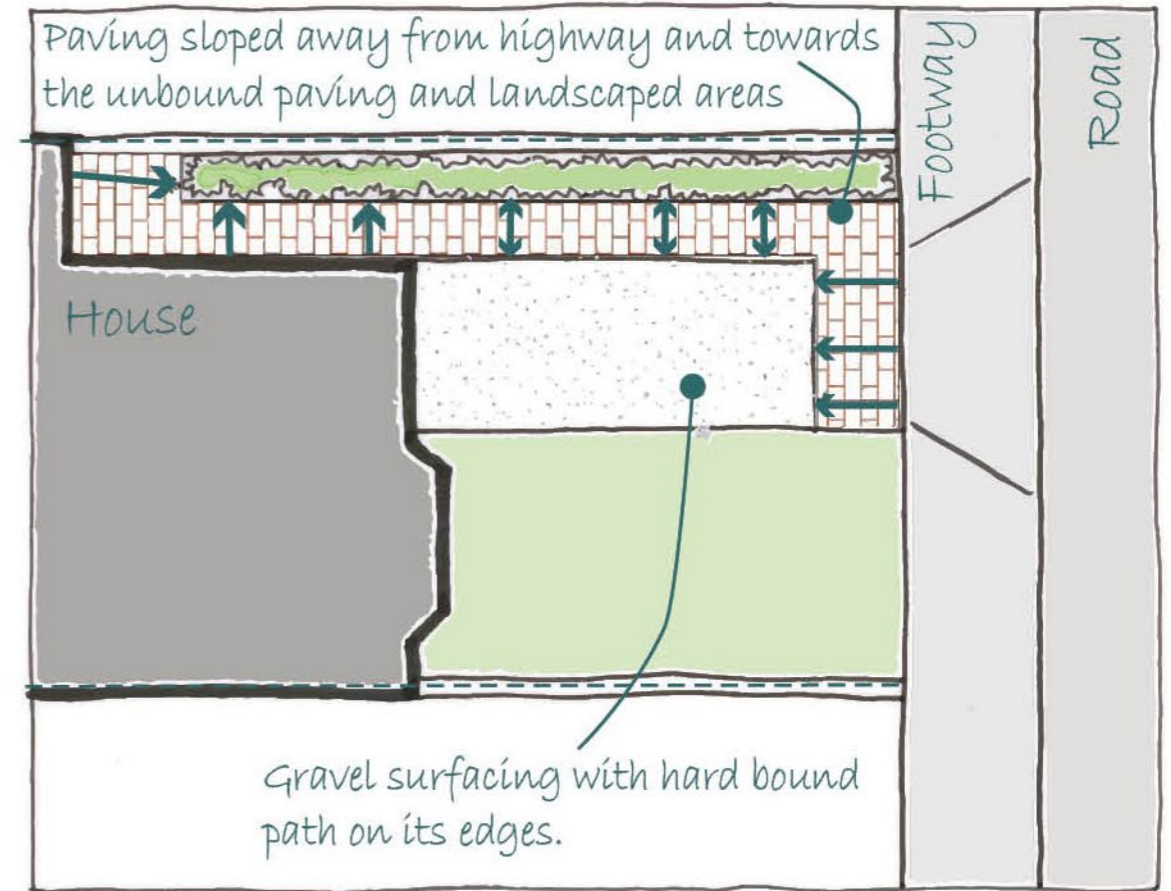
Permeable block paving with gaps in edges to allow water to soak through

### Example 1



Example 1: Permeable paving: Hard surfacing which allows water to soak into it can be constructed using porous concrete blocks or clay block permeable paving. The material has open voids across the surface of the material or around the edges of blocks that allow water to soak in. The surface is constructed over a permeable sub-base layer.

### Example 2



Example 2: Gravel or shingle - A driveway can be surfaced in gravel or shingle laid on a permeable sub-base if the drive is fairly flat. Gravel, however, can get spilled or dragged out onto the highway and is not suitable for wheelchairs. The first section of driveway and one edge to form a separate pedestrian path should therefore be constructed in a different, bound material such as slab or block paving.

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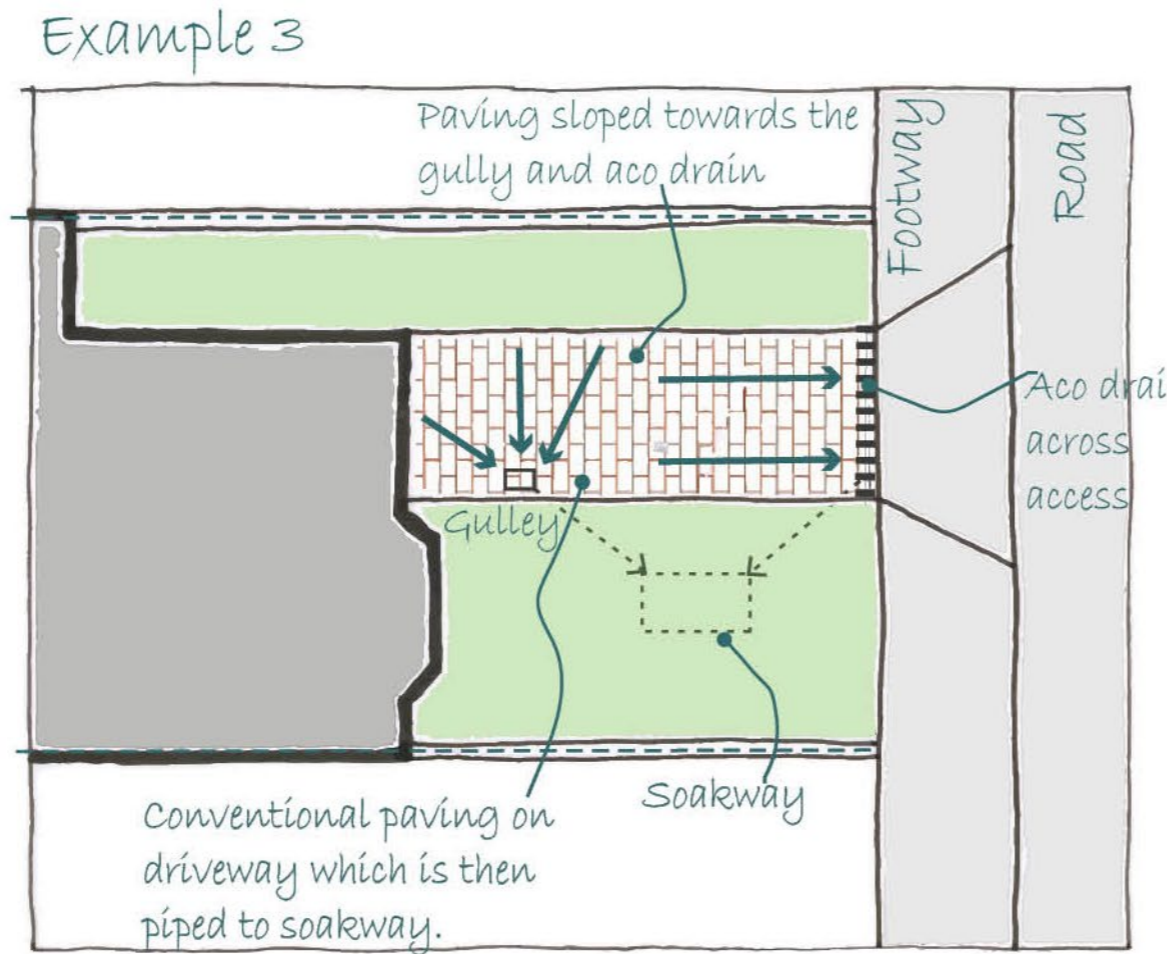
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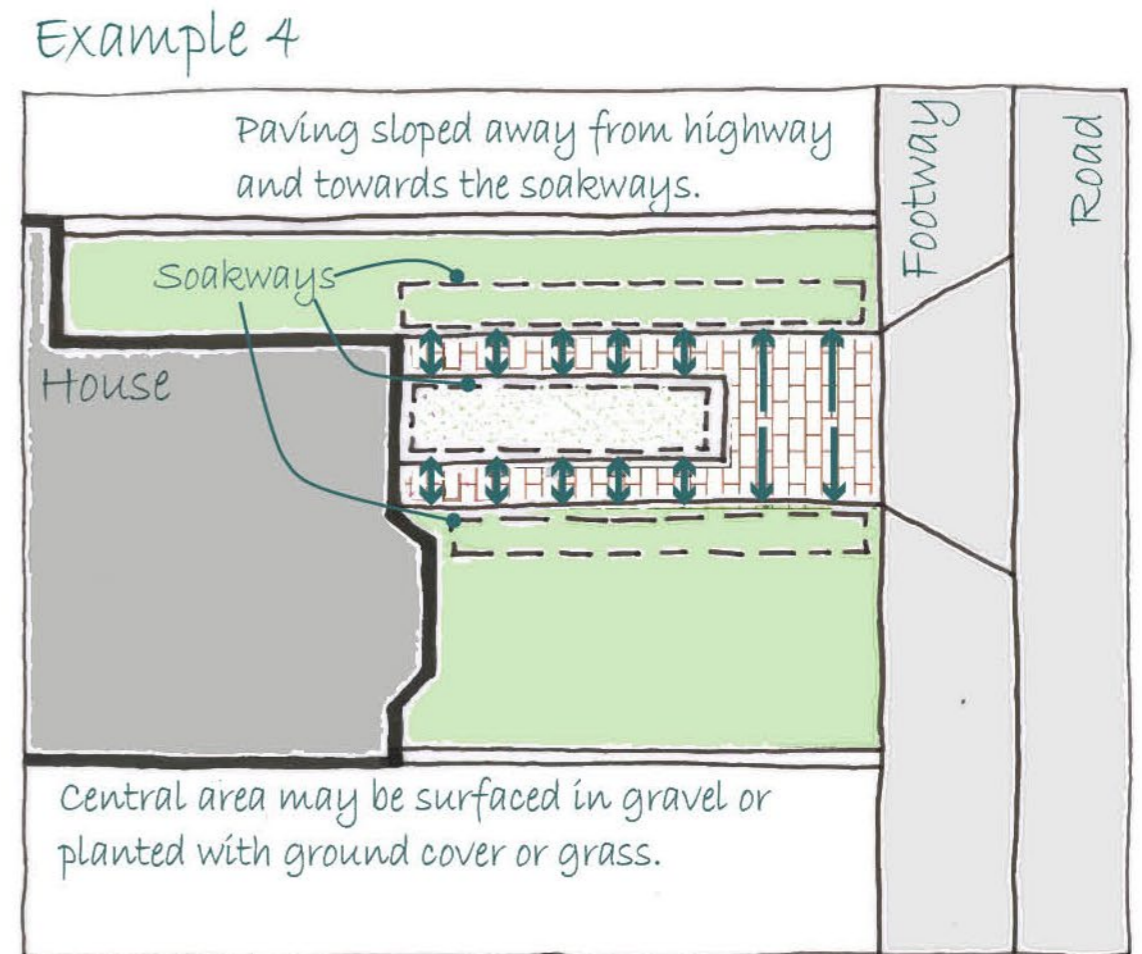
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**Example 3:** Conventionally surfaced and piped to a soakaway - A driveway can be surfaced in conventional materials which water cannot soak through, such as block paving if the water is collected using gullies or grated trench drains and is then piped to a soakaway, where water will then soak into the ground.



**Example 4:** Driveway sloped to garden soakaways - A driveway surfaced in conventional non permeable materials, such as standard block paving, can be sloped to each side of the driveway (and possibly the middle) to direct surface water to soakaways as shown in the figure below. The soakaways can be planted with suitable plants or filled with gravel or cobbles. For straight driveways, not all the driveway needs to be hard surfaced. Instead the central area could be surfaced in gravel, planted with ground cover plants or grass.



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## Planning (Development Management Team)

For informal advice from the Duty Planner, please book an appointment online [here](#).

For more information, including for information about how to apply for planning permission, visit [www.broxbourne.gov.uk/planning](http://www.broxbourne.gov.uk/planning)

Development Management  
Bishops' College  
Churchgate  
Cheshunt  
Hertfordshire  
EN8 9XQ  
[planning@broxbourne.gov.uk](mailto:planning@broxbourne.gov.uk)  
01992 785510 / 01992 785566

## Highway Authority

For advice on works affecting or projecting onto the public highway.

Highways  
Hertfordshire County Council, County Hall,  
Pegs Lane,  
Hertford,  
Herts, SG13 8DQ  
[hertsdirect@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hertsdirect@hertfordshire.gov.uk)  
0300 123 4047



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