

THREE

General Design Guidelines

3.1 The following general design guidelines should be considered before a householder development is proposed.

Siting

3.2 Any proposed householder development should be positioned so that it does not dominate the street scene. It

must instead complement the existing dwelling and respect neighbouring properties.

3.3 New extensions should effectively be incorporated into the existing urban fabric hence they should respect building lines and the pattern of buildings and spaces.

3.4 In some instances, it may not be possible to design an acceptable extension due to the sensitivity of the site, limited space, or the relationship with neighbouring dwellings.

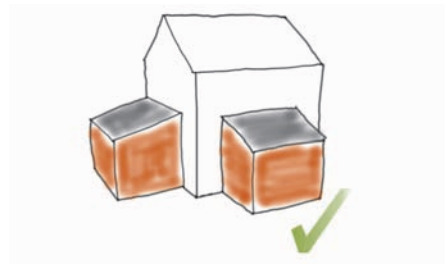
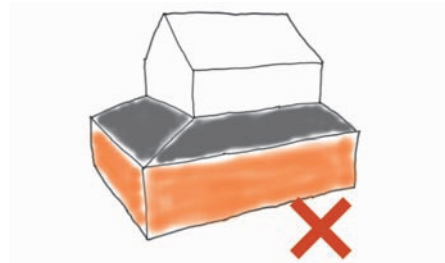


Extensions should be subordinate and positioned to not dominate the street scene

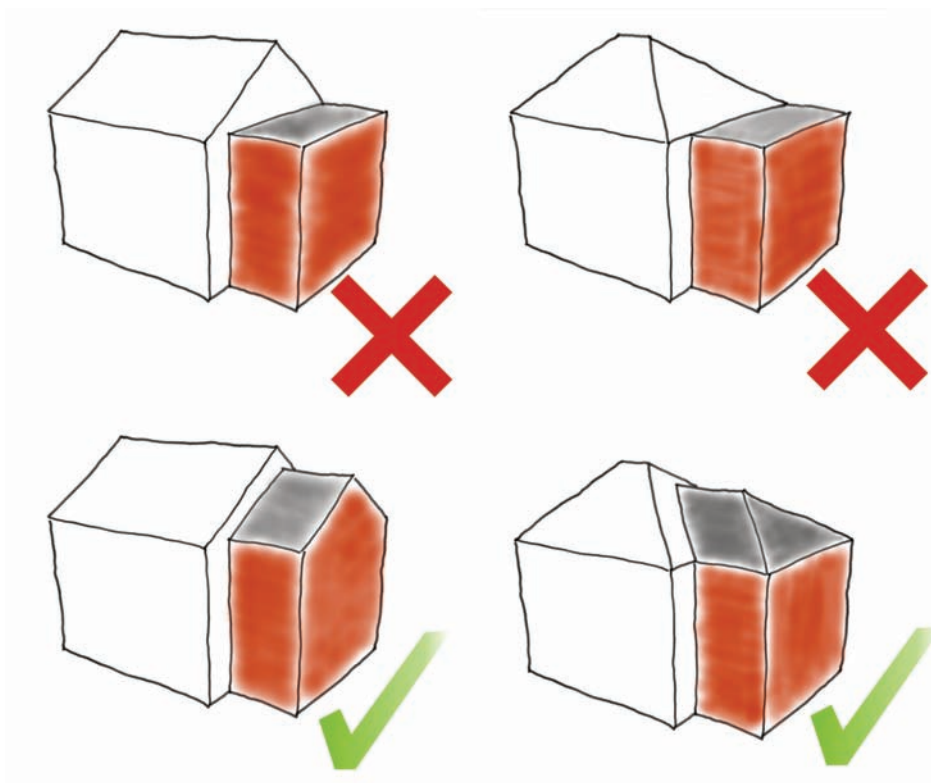
Built Form and Scale

3.5 The form and scale of the extension should be subordinate to the existing and neighbouring buildings.

3.6 The roof is a key feature that helps define the shape and massing of a building. Any proposed extension should have a roof that enhances the character of the existing building. This often means that flat roofs are unacceptable. Instead, either a pitched or a mono-pitched roof is likely to be more appropriate.



Extensions should not visually dominate the built form of the original building



Extensions should have a roof form that enhance the character of the original building

Architectural Details

3.7 The architectural detailing found on a residential dwelling gives it a unique character and contributes to the appearance of the street scene.

Therefore, a householder development should, where appropriate, repeat any architectural detailing on the existing building as they are important features that define the character of the building. For instance, the continuation of plinths and string courses, sills and lintels, decorative brickwork and quoins, barge boards and cornices, fascias and/or decorative tiling.

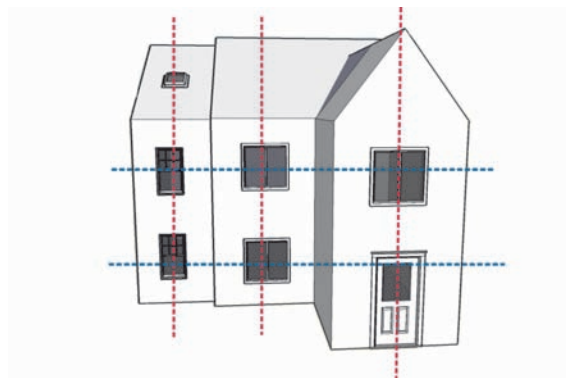


Key architectural features should be replicated on house extensions

3.8 Innovative or interesting designs which address the objectives of the guidance, and enhance the design and character of the building will be given consideration.

New Openings

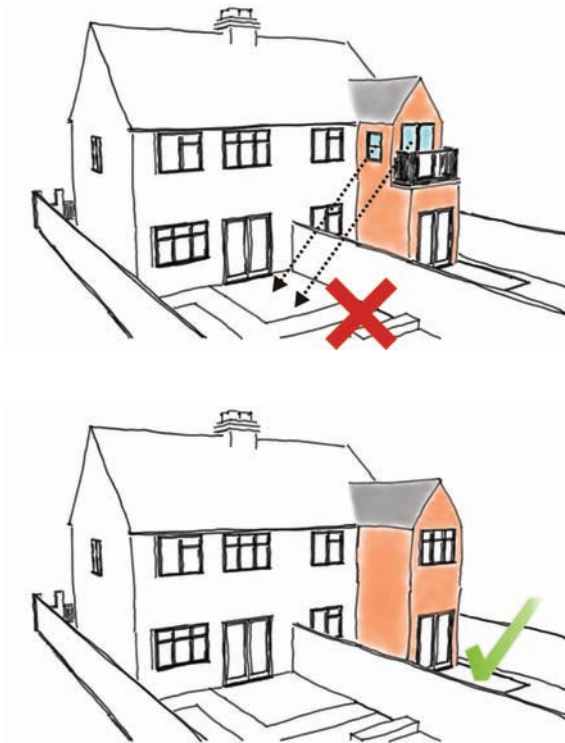
3.9 When introducing new windows (including rooflights) or doors, careful attention must be given to the sizes, proportions and styles, as well as the internal division of the proposed openings and the materials used. In general all windows or doors should be the same or complementary to the existing windows or doors. The positioning of windows or doors within an elevation should 'line up' with existing openings.



New and existing openings should align vertically as well as horizontally

3.10 The installation of new openings should not compromise a neighbour's residential privacy in terms of overlooking. Therefore, habitable room windows, roof terraces, Juliet balconies

and balconies that overlook or compromise residential privacy will not be permitted.



Overlooking must be avoided

Building Materials

3.11 To ensure that an extension enhances the appearance of a dwelling and the character of the local area, it should be constructed from building materials that match or complement the main building.

3.12 Many older buildings use a red brick type called 'common brick.' After a number of years the brick becomes soiled and appears to have a mix of blacks, and red shades. When the brick is cleaned,

the original mix of red shades is restored. It is good practice to use a brick type that complements the original brick colour and not the soiled brickwork.

3.13 It is also important that care is taken when trying to match the brick or stone bond, the colour of the mortar mix and pointing method on an extension.

3.14 Where slate has been used on the original building roof it is recommended that this is retained and also used on the extension. Tiles do not often visually complement the slate roof and tend to be a lot heavier than slates.

Alterations to assist People with Disabilities

3.15 A dwelling may need to undergo a number of alterations to make it possible for people with disabilities and older people to be able to remain living there.

3.16 For instance, a level or ramped approach may be needed to a widened front door or the ground floor may need to be extended to enable it to accommodate a bedroom or bathroom. However, a disability will not automatically mean that a scheme can breach guidelines stated within this document.

3.17 In such cases the applicant will need to produce a case for special circumstances to justify a scheme. It will

have to be shown that what is proposed is the best design to adequately meet the specific requirements of the people living there. At the same time protecting the amenity of neighbouring dwellings and ensuring the character of the street is not adversely affected.

FOUR

Development on Sensitive Buildings and in Sensitive Areas

4.1 More stringent planning legislation and policies will apply to a statutory listed building; a building or structure of local architectural or historic interest; or if development falls within a conservation area, the green belt, a flood risk area; or if it is likely to affect a protected tree, a protected species or the ground stability. These are explained briefly below and require specific consideration when preparing proposals. In some instances this may mean the owners aspirations are not achievable. Personal circumstances and need is not acceptable as reasoned justification for inappropriate changes.

Heritage Assets

4.2 The borough has a substantial number of listed buildings, buildings and structures of local architectural and historic interest (BLINTs) and conservation areas, which are all identified under the planning section of the council's website (together with Conservation Area Appraisals, of which have been undertaken) (www.wigan.gov.uk). The

council has a statutory obligation to preserve, protect and enhance these heritage assets.

4.3 In addition to satisfying the principles set out in this guide it is important that development affecting heritage asset(s) must also satisfy other policy documents such as:

- Planning Policy Statement 5 Planning for the Historic Environment
- Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan
- Emerging Wigan Core Strategy
- Conservation Area Appraisals

4.4 In addition to submitting a planning application, Listed Building Consent will be required if you are proposing works to listed buildings including, carrying out alterations, extensions or conversions. Furthermore, Listed Building Consent applications must include a Design and Access Statement, justifying the proposals and impact on the significance of the heritage asset.

4.5 The council encourages the use of traditional and historic materials. Typical examples include the loss of traditional wooden sash windows with replacement uPVC and the removal of traditional slate or stone roof tiles for man-made substitutes.

4.6 The council will support a contemporary design proposal where it would not detract from or harm the special character and appearance of the heritage asset. A contemporary design may be a more appropriate solution than a pastiche design.

4.7 The council will always seek to protect original historic and architectural features of listed buildings and their settings as well as for buildings or structures of local architectural or historic interest. The council will not usually permit development where there is a loss of key physical and natural features that contribute towards the character of a conservation area, such as walls, railings, trees and spaces between the buildings.

4.8 It is recognised that trees form an important feature within conservation areas and loss of tree cover can have a detrimental impact upon the appearance of a conservation area. Any trees which measure over 7.5cm at a height of 1.5m from the ground within a conservation area are protected under government legislation from being topped, lopped or felled without the relevant permission having been granted. Tree Preservation Orders can be applied to individual trees and are a method by which local authorities can protect specific species and groups of trees from being damaged or removed.

Article 4 Directions

4.9 In certain cases where it is felt necessary to exercise a greater degree of control over minor items of work, the council can bring additional work under its control by implementing specific measures known as Article 4 Directions. This means that certain permitted development rights are removed and planning permission will be required for works, which previously were allowed under the General Permitted Development Order.

4.10 Areas that have to accord with Article 4 Directions are listed under the planning section of the council's website (www.wigan.gov.uk).

4.11 An Article 4 Direction does not prevent you from altering or repairing your home. It is a method of ensuring that works are carried out which are sympathetic to the appearance of the building and the character of the area. It also prevents the loss and the encouragement of traditional features.

Green Belt and Safeguarded Land

4.12 To maintain their primary purposes a more restrictive approach will be taken for proposals in the green belt or in safeguarded land. Guidelines outlined in this document will apply in principle but it

will be important for proposals to accord with Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts as well as policies GB1, GB1A, GB1B and GB2 of the Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan.

4.13 Particular attention will be given to the setting, scale, form and design of an extension as well as any previous additions in order to maintain the openness of the green belt and safeguarded land.

Areas of Flood Risk

4.14 Before extending your property it is important to check whether or not your house is located within a flood risk area. This can be done by contacting the Environment Agency (www.environment-agency.gov.uk).

4.15 In line with policy G1C of the Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan, you may be required to incorporate flood proofing measures into the design and construction of any extension, in compliance with Environment Agency advice. Further information on flood resilient construction techniques can be found on the Communities and Local Government website (www.communities.gov.uk).

4.16 Where a watercourse is designated as a main river, any development within 8 metres of the bank top will need Environment Agency consent under the Land Drainage Byelaws of the Water Resources Act 1991. This 8 metre easement will allow for any essential maintenance works to take place. Applicants should contact the Environment Agency for further information (www.environment-agency.gov.uk).

Protected Trees

4.17 In line with policy EV2E of the Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan the council will protect and enhance trees, woodlands and hedgerows.

4.18 Trees and hedges are key soft landscape elements, which provide a street with visual variety and interest. They help give a street a sense of maturity and offer a green setting within a built context.

4.19 It is important to ensure that an extension is appropriately located to preserve existing trees and hedges, whether they are protected or not. Where it can be demonstrated that this is not possible, trees and hedges should be replaced with suitable new planting.

4.20 The council has additional powers to protect important trees in the interest of amenity with the use of Tree Preservation Orders.

4.21 If a tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order you need the council's consent to prune or fell it. Unauthorised works may result in legal action.

Protected Species

4.22 A house may provide refuge for protected species, such as a roost for bats or a nesting place for birds. Particular attention will be given to Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, Part IV of the Circular 06/2005 and policy EV2D of the Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan and the Protected Species Supplementary Planning Document. The presence of any protected species or their natural habitat, is a material consideration in determining a planning application.

4.23 It is important for a proposal to comply with the current legislation for protected species as it is an offence to knowingly disturb the habitat of a protected species.

4.24 Further information on development with regards to protected species can be obtained from Natural England's website

(www.naturalengland.org.uk) or under the planning section of the council's website (www.wigan.gov.uk)

Ground Stability

4.25 Extensions should take account of the potential for ground stability, or other mining related hazards to exist on sites within existing residential areas. Further advice in relation to previous mining activity can be obtained from the Coal Authority website (www.groundstability.com).

FIVE

Good Practice for Householder Development Submissions

5.1 This section will outline a number of considerations that should be taken into account before an extension or alteration is proposed. It will also detail the necessary procedures for a successful planning application.

Benefits of Good Design

5.2 It is strongly recommended that early professional advice is sought for any proposals to alter or extend a dwelling as this will help in the examination of the design options and the costing of the scheme. If a proposed scheme involves a listed building, trees, or is within a conservation area, ensure that the advisor has experience or specialises in dealing with such sensitive situations.

5.3 The use of a good designer will save time and money by offering a good quality design which addresses all the issues outlined in this document. Furthermore, it is likely to be repaid in

terms of reduced maintenance costs, more efficient building performance and an increased re-sale value of the dwelling.

Site Appraisal and Survey

5.4 An appraisal of the surrounding area, the existing dwelling and its setting should be undertaken as part of understanding the context of the site and making design decisions with regards to extensions.

5.5 An appraisal should note unique characteristics of the building, the site and its immediate surroundings. It may note:

- key views and ground level changes across the site;
- relationships to adjoining dwellings and whether walls are blank or contain windows;
- the position of trees, their canopies and root spread as well as other landscape features;
- the path of the sun and shadows that will be cast from buildings and trees;
- site access points;
- any subsidence and other mining related hazards;
- and service constraints.

Pre-application Discussions

5.6 The council welcome pre-application discussions with applicants. Ideally, these should be carried out at an early stage, so that the scope of relevant policies and all issues can be identified. Specialists in matters such as highways, access, urban design, conservation, protected trees and ecology should be involved.

5.7 Depending on each individual case the council can also advise on other external agencies, organisations and interested parties who may require specific discussions.

Consultation with Neighbours

5.8 The council strongly recommend that you consult with your neighbours and anyone else who may be affected by your proposals at as early a stage as possible. This is good practice and minimises any potential dispute and subsequent delay in the processing of your planning application.

What a Planning Application should include

5.9 When submitting an application for planning permission, the council will require certain information to be submitted to enable an informed decision to be made on a proposal. An application must

satisfy criteria listed on the council's Validation Checklist for Planning Applications, which can be found under the planning section of the council's website (www.wigan.gov.uk).

Sustainable Design and Construction

5.10 Requirements for sustainable construction are going to become increasingly challenging as the Government strives for zero carbon development. All new extensions will be required to meet these tougher standards through compliance with the building regulations.

5.11 Therefore, the applicant is encouraged to consider more wide ranging energy efficiency improvements and the use of more sustainable methods of construction, as a first step in improving a dwelling's energy and carbon performance, in line with these more challenging standards.

5.12 Simple measures such as insulation can often be applied at little cost. For further information on how to make a dwelling more energy efficient, visit the Energy Saving Trust website (www.energysavingtrust.org.uk).

5.13 Low carbon technologies such as solar panels, heat pumps and biomass boilers can also be installed on homes. As well as the environmental benefits and cost savings achieved from such technologies the Government also offers an incentive to install low carbon technologies by paying a set price to the owner for any electricity or heat that is generated. For further information visit the Department for Energy and Climate Change website (www.decc.gov.uk).

5.14 Although the council recommends the use of small scale low carbon technologies we recommend that you fully consider their effectiveness and suitability for your property before installation. Some technologies do not require planning permission, but there are exceptions, so it is advisable to check with the council.

5.15 It is good practice for you to consider the following questions before submitting your planning application, such as:

- What energy efficiency measures will be implemented and how will this lead to reduced energy use/carbon savings?
- Are low carbon energy technologies suitable such as more efficient boilers, solar panels, ground source heat pumps?

- What will be the impact on flood risk and surface water run-off and what measures have been taken?
- Are any water efficiency measures such as low flush toilet and spray taps to be implemented?
- Are the proposed security features certified or recommended by bodies such as 'Secured by Design'?
- Is the extension or the alteration to a dwelling able to support the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life, in line with the principles of 'Lifetime Homes?' (www.lifetimehomes.org.uk)
- Is there adequate provision for the storage of waste for recycling?
- Will development use construction materials with a high recycled content?
- Will development use construction materials with low embodied energy content such as timber instead of PVC?
- Are construction materials sustainably sourced, for instance are timber goods accredited?
- How is it intended to minimise construction waste?

Secured by Design

5.16 Altering or extending a dwelling provides an opportunity to improve security. It is recommended that where

appropriate development should satisfy the principles of 'Secured by Design,' which can be found on the Association of Chief Police Officers Secured by Design Initiative website (www.securedbydesign.com).

Design and Access Statements

5.17 A Design and Access Statement is required if the dwelling that is intended to be extended or altered is a listed building and/or is within a conservation area. Guidance on how to prepare a Design and Access Statement is available from the planning section of the council's website (www.wigan.gov.uk).

Other Consents

5.18 There are a range of other consents that may be necessary before works are undertaken, for example,

- *Building Regulations*

5.19 These cover the technical aspects of construction and are entirely separate from the planning system. For information with regards to Building Regulations please see the council's leaflet 1 "Applying for Building Regulations approval." A form can be completed and submitted to the council to enquire whether building regulations are required.

5.20 This form as well as advice on Building Regulations is available from the council's Civic Buildings Offices, New Market Street or from planning section of the council's website (www.wigan.gov.uk). Alternatively, you can call the council on 01942 404364.

- *Party Wall Act 1996*

5.21 This controls works that are close to, or on, the boundary of the property, or party wall. It is recommended that advice is sought from an appropriately qualified person as this is not controlled by the council, although there is guidance under the planning section of the council's website (www.wigan.gov.uk).

- Covenants

5.22 It is recommended that all the necessary checks are made to ensure that land proposed for development is examined for any associated covenants which may restrict development.