

# Home Extensions and Alterations

## Design Guide

For Householder  
Planning Applications



March 2007

# 1

## Contents

1. Contents
2. Who is this guide for?
3. Is Planning Permission required?
4. Why is good design important?
5. Extensions
6. Neighbours
7. Garages
8. Porches
9. Dormer Windows
10. Windows & Rooflights
11. Materials
12. Boundaries
13. Satellite Dishes
14. Solar Panels
15. Access for Vehicles
16. Listed Buildings
17. Building Regulations
18. Planning Conditions
19. Other Consents
20. Biodiversity
21. Useful Contacts
22. Council Contacts
23. Glossary

# 2

## Who is this guide for?

This leaflet is aimed at householders who are intending to extend their homes. It aims to provide advice and general guidelines on how to design extensions that are likely to be granted planning permission.

If you are considering extending your home it is always advisable to discuss your proposals with the planning department at an early stage as there may be particular matters concerning your property which would affect your proposals. This is especially important in the case of extensions proposed to Listed Buildings, buildings within Conservation Areas or where other restrictions (such as Article 4 directions – see glossary) apply.



Another useful source of information is the Department for Communities and Local Government publication Planning: A guide for householders.

# 3

## Is Planning Permission Required?



A poorly designed extension can spoil the outside appearance of your home

### How to tell if Planning Permission is required

Planning Permission is normally required before any development can be carried out (other than for minor extension to the rear). We advise you to write to the planning department giving details of your proposals, including dimensions, to find out if your proposal needs planning permission well in advance of starting work. You are also strongly advised to contact us before submitting an application, especially for work to a listed building or any building in a conservation area. This advice is available free of charge and may help avoid delay, revised plans and extra expense.

# 4

## Why is good design important?

### The importance of design

The Council places great importance on good design and appropriate materials when considering applications for extensions to houses and this is supported by policies in the Development Plan which will include the Council's forthcoming Local Development Framework

This guide is not intended to discourage good contemporary design solutions. However each planning application is assessed against the policies in the Development Plan having regard to:

- The effect on neighbours' daylight, sunlight, privacy and amenity.
- The effect of the scale, design and materials on the existing property and the surrounding area.
- The effect on highway and pedestrian safety.

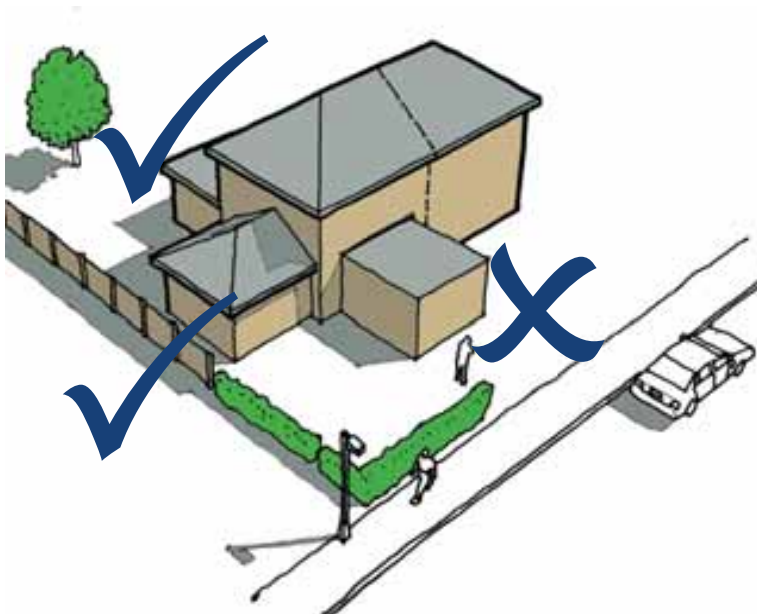
All information given is for guidance only. There may be exceptions to certain advice and Cherwell District Council will welcome alternative proposals as long as the design approach is valid, and the design is of high quality.

A professional designer can often make an important difference to the success of your scheme. Refer to section 21 (Useful Contacts).

# 5

## Extensions

Extensions to the front of a building towards the highway will normally need Planning Permission. Wherever possible extensions should be to the rear or side of houses. Extensions to the front of houses can disrupt the pattern of the buildings in a street and obscure the original elevation, so they are generally discouraged. Small and suitably designed porches at the front may be acceptable however.



Extensions should normally match the original building in materials, proportions, roof pitch and window detailing. Ideally, the eaves and ridge lines should be lower than those of the main roof to make the extension subservient to the original building. As a general rule, flat roofed extensions are discouraged unless they are well designed, use good quality durable materials and are appropriate in the context of the existing building and the wider area.

Rear extensions should be designed so that they do not cause loss of daylight, sunlight, privacy or amenity to neighbouring buildings or gardens. The extension should not dominate the original or neighbouring buildings.

The Council will also consider the size of the garden in which the extension is proposed, to ensure that the remaining garden is a usable size and that the plot is not over-developed. Orientation will also be taken into account, so that, ideally, north facing gardens receive some direct sunlight (particularly during winter months).

The Council aims to protect daylight to and amenity from neighbours' living area windows by considering matters such as:

- Type of property e.g. Terraced or detached etc.
- Proximity to a boundary.
- Orientation.
- Height of the extension.
- Design and materials used.
- Position of neighbours' windows and the rooms they serve.
- Boundary treatment, trees and landscaping.
- Garden size.
- Other extensions.
- Context.
- Overlooking.

As a general guideline, single storey extensions on a common boundary up to 4 metres in length and two storey extensions on a common boundary up to 2.4 metres in length would normally be acceptable.

In cases where extensions are not on the common boundary, an assessment of the effect on a neighbour's light and amenity will be made, based on an angle of 45 degrees taken horizontally from the mid-point of the nearest habitable room window.

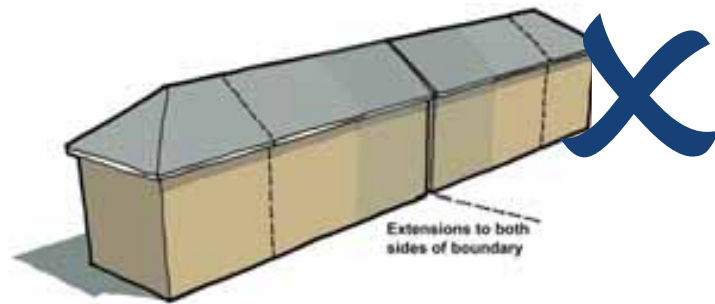
**However, in all cases, proposals will be assessed against the above bullet points and this may result in a reduction in the size of extension permitted.**

For conservatories it is important to consider the impact on neighbours. A badly planned conservatory can become a nuisance due to loss of privacy.

Consideration also needs to be given to using materials and an overall style which are appropriate to the existing building. The overall size of the conservatory should not dominate the existing property.

Any conservatory should be carefully designed to prevent overheating and to avoid the need for additional cooling equipment.





# 6

## Neighbours

A windowless elevation should normally be at least 14 metres from a window of a neighbour's habitable room to prevent overshadowing.

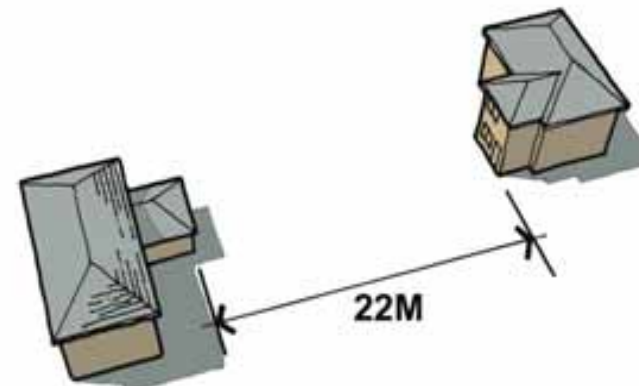
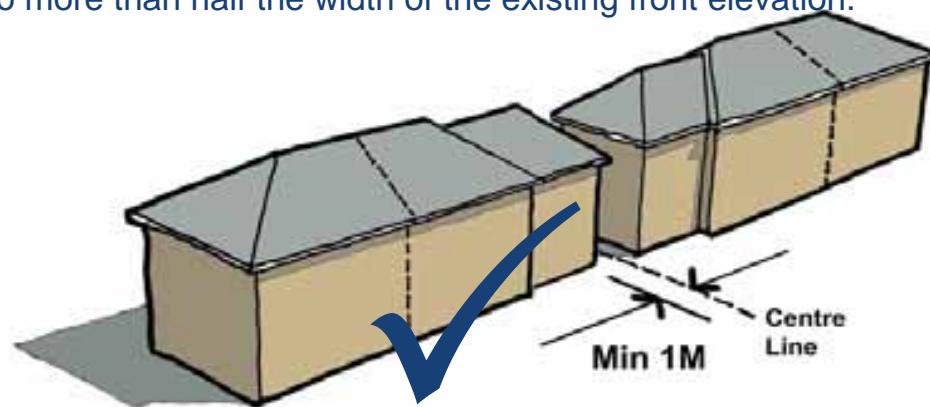
Extensions at the side of houses will normally only be acceptable if they do not fill the gap between neighbouring buildings, which would create a terracing effect. Side extensions should normally be set in by at least 1 metre from the side boundary and should also be set back from the front elevation and have a lower roof line so they are clearly secondary to the original building. Side extensions on symmetrical semi detached properties should not detract from the symmetry of the original building.

Whatever the type of extension you are planning it is always a good idea to discuss your plans with your neighbours before submitting an application.



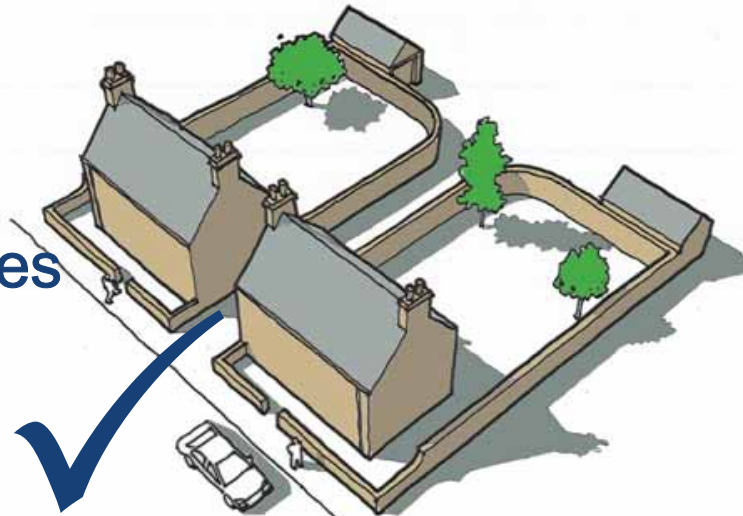
Extensions should be designed to reflect the character of the original building in the design. Windows in the side elevation of the extension should not overlook the neighbour's property and an extension should not overshadow neighbouring property. As a general guide, side extensions should be restricted to being no more than half the width of the existing front elevation.

Where the extension has a window at the rear, it should normally be at least 22 metres from a window of a neighbour's habitable room to prevent loss of privacy. However, in the case of single storey extensions, boundary fences, walls or hedges can overcome harmful overlooking.

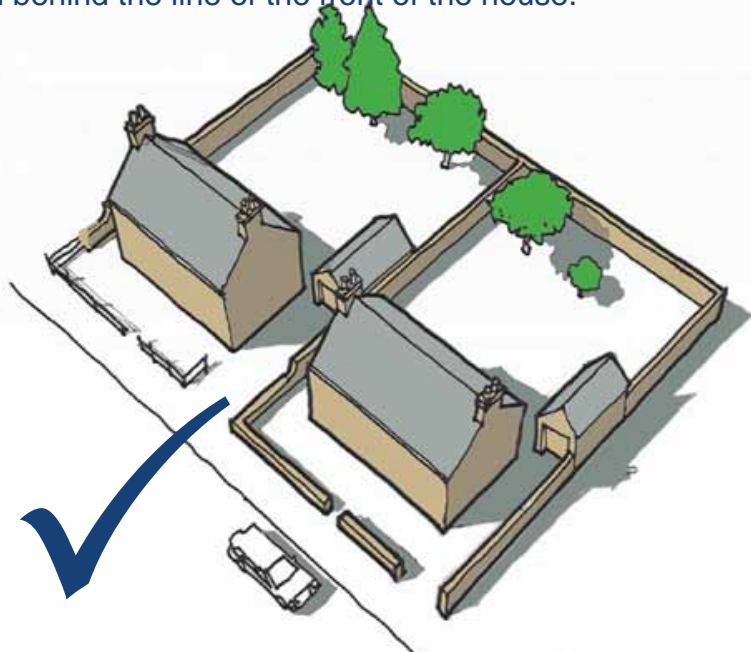


# 7

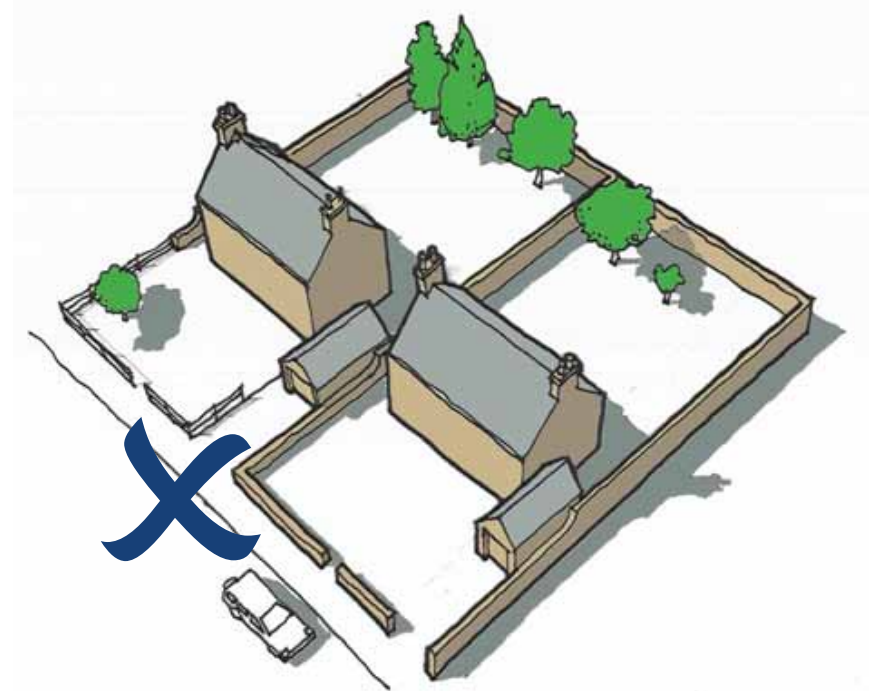
## Garages



Garages and parked cars can disrupt a street scene if they are dominant and can affect the amenity of neighbours. Wherever possible they should be sited to the side or the rear of the property, so that cars can be parked behind the line of the front of the house.



Garages will not normally be allowed in advance of the front wall of the house, except where this is part of the established character of the street.



Materials, roof design and scale should match the original house. Where a double garage is proposed, single doors with a central division are normally more appropriate than one double width opening because separate doors reduce the overall impact of a double garage.

# 8

## Porches



Original



When adding a porch care should be taken to reflect the character, proportion and scale of the existing building. Materials and roof pitch should also normally match. A porch should have either a lean-to or a pitched roof; flat roofs and large structures should be avoided.

# 9

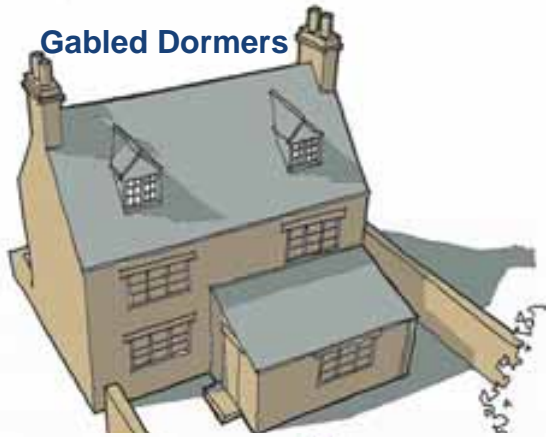
## Dormer Windows



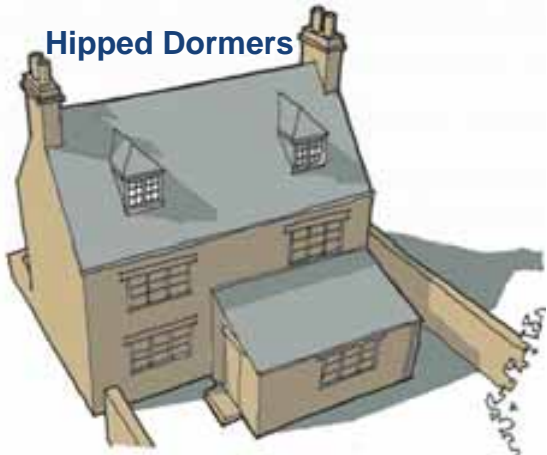
Before deciding to insert dormers, consider whether the roof-space could be lit by roof-lights on the rear elevation or windows in the gable. Dormer windows can be difficult to maintain. If you are using dormer windows to provide extra head height within the roof space it is likely that they will appear too big. Dormers should be for providing light only. Dormers can be wholly set within the body of the roof. Alternatively (where sufficient space within the roof space exists) they can be a vertical continuation of the house wall, set either wholly or partly above the eaves.



**Gabled Dormers**



**Hipped Dormers**



**Traditional Lead Dormers**



Small pitched roof dormers or lead clad, flat roofed dormers can be accommodated providing that the following guide-lines are followed.

- They should preferably be located to the rear, to be less conspicuous
- They should be set below the ridge line of the roof.
- Windows should follow an appropriate style and proportion and align with doors and windows of the house
- Small separate dormers look better than one large dormer and they should be smaller than the windows beneath.
- Gabled dormers should not have fascia or barge boards except in exceptional circumstances; eaves should be plain.

The dormer sides should be as narrow as possible and be faced in lead or rendered, like the gable.

In older properties dormers will probably be the most traditional solution but should not disrupt roof structures within Listed Buildings. Dormer windows should always be carefully detailed. Pre-fabricated dormers should be avoided as they can look clumsy. Dormer windows that look box-like and give the house a top heavy appearance will not be allowed.



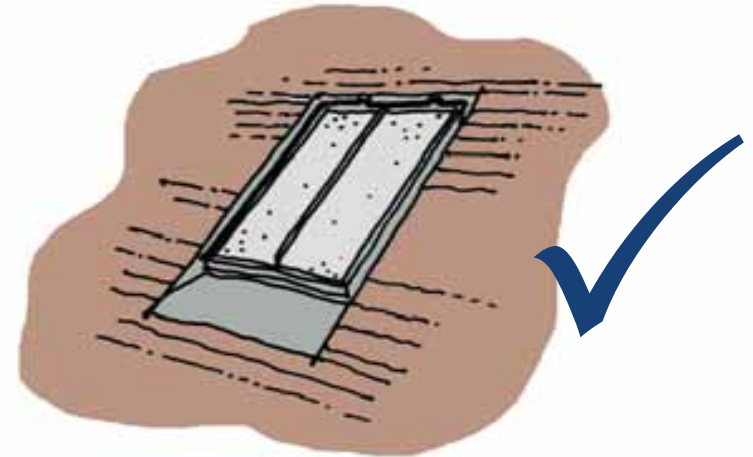
# 10

## Windows & Rooflights



If you are thinking about replacing window frames in a terraced house, do consider the disruption to the unity of the whole terrace that can be caused by unsympathetic frames. It is important to always retain the dimensions of the original openings. It is always preferable to retain vertical sliding sash windows rather than top hung pivot windows. The use of false glazing bars should also be avoided wherever possible. In older houses frames are normally set back at least 100mm from the face of the building. If this is the case with your property, new windows should be inserted to match.

Rooflights can be acceptable where dormer windows would overlook a neighbour's property. Small versions, with a vertical emphasis, that sit flush with the roof tiles are the most appropriate. It is better to restrict rooflights to rear elevations if you can. Avoid the insertion of roof lights in both front and rear roof slopes opposite each other because this creates the appearance of a hole through the roof.



Windows in extensions should match those in the original house as closely as possible in height, width, pattern of glazing bars, number of lights and materials. It is also important to match the type of sills and lintels with those in the existing house. If there is decorative brickwork, for example, this should be repeated. Secondary glazing is preferable to double glazing when trying to match older windows.

# 11

## Materials

Match the existing building materials in colour, texture and size as well as mortar colour. Natural stone should be laid, dressed and pointed to match the existing building (in the case of extensions) in the traditional manner using lime mortar. If a good match of material cannot be obtained, it is often better to change the material: a red brick extension to a stone house can be more acceptable than using artificial stone. There is a wide choice of bricks available, but if no close match can be found, render could be acceptable if appropriate in the local context.

# 12

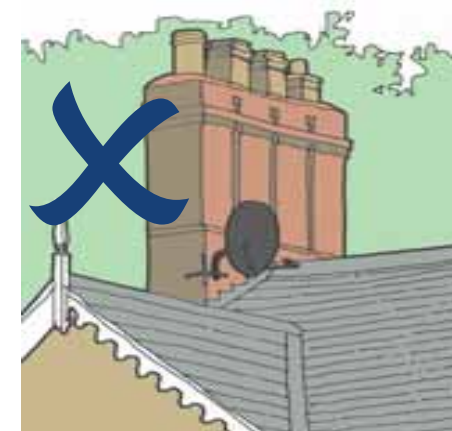
## Boundaries

Planning permission is needed for walls and fences over 1 metre high next to a highway. In other locations planning permission is normally only needed for walls and fences over 2 metres in

Look at the type of boundary treatment in the area and try to retain this character. On developments that have been designed (and “conditioned”) to be with open plan front gardens, Planning Permission will always be needed regardless of height. New means of enclosure in the curtilage of a Listed Building always needs planning permission. It is always advisable to check these aspects with the planning department before carrying out any works on site.

# 13

## Satellite Dishes



You are advised to contact the planning department to establish whether planning permission is required for your Satellite dish. The Council will seek locations that are not prominent and on the side or rear elevations.

*A Householder's Planning Guide for the Installation of Antennas, including Satellite Dishes* is available from the Department for Communities and Local Government.

This guide aims to do the following:

- Explain what the regulations say about the number and the size of antennas allowed and where they should be placed.
- Offer guidance on the most appropriate places to site antennas to try to help protect our environment.
- Help retailers and installers provide appropriate advice and service to you on where to place antennas.

This publication is available free of charge from DCLG publications, PO Box 236, Wetherby LS23 7NB. Tel: 0870 1226 236, Fax: 0870 1226 237, Textphone: 0870 1207 405, Email: [communities@twoten.com](mailto:communities@twoten.com). Product code: 05 PD 03533

# 14

## Energy Efficiency



Cherwell District Council is keen to promote Energy Efficiency throughout the District. Government guidance encourages low carbon and carbon neutral development. Solar collectors, rain-water harvesting and micro wind turbines are amongst methods used to increase energy efficiency in new developments. Planning Permission and/or Listed Building Consent may be required for the erection of solar collectors or micro turbines depending upon the location and size of the fixture and the type of property you own. Some energy solutions may be more suitable than others for your property. For example solar collectors may have a negative impact upon the character and appearance of a Listed Building or a Conservation Area. You are strongly advised to contact the planning department to discuss your proposal at an early stage.

The Energy Saving Trust provides Energy Efficiency Advice to homeowners. Their contact details are as follows: The Energy Saving Trust, 21 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BP Tel: 020 7222 0101 Fax: 020 7654 2460 Energy Efficiency advice for homeowners 0800 512 012

For further guidance regarding the requirement for planning permission for solar collectors, please refer to the Council's leaflet 'Solar Energy Collectors – A Planning Guide', which is available from the Planning Reception or on our website [www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk/planning](http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk/planning).

# 15

## Access for Vehicles



Planning permission will be needed for any form of new vehicular access to a home from a trunk or a classified road. Highway safety, such as visibility, manoeuvring and parking, and loss of trees, hedges or walls will all need to be considered. The following will normally be required:

- Maximum number of parking spaces: 1 Space for a single bedroomed dwelling and 2 spaces for a 2/3 bedroomed dwelling. For a dwelling with 4 bedrooms or more, 2 or more spaces are to be provided (on merit).
- A turning space within the site so there is no need to reverse into (or from) the road, where achievable.

Where practical, adequate space will be needed between the back of the footpath and a garage to park a car clear of the highway whilst allowing the garage doors to open. Normally a distance of 6 metres is required.

# 16

## Listed Buildings

Works to listed buildings (both **internally** and externally) will normally require Listed Building Consent. In addition, Planning Permission may also be required. However, Listed Building Consent may also be required when Planning Permission is not, for example, for small extensions, external or internal alterations. It is a Criminal Offence to alter a Listed Building without consent. You are advised to contact the planning department to discuss your proposals. A Design and Access Statement is required to accompany any application for Listed Building Consent or Conservation Area Consent.



# 17

## Building Regulations



Most construction works will need to comply with Building Regulations, even if planning permission and/or listed building consent is not required. Construction works include the replacement of windows, new electrical installations and renovation of a building.

Building Control can be contacted for advice:

Building Control  
Planning and Development Services  
Cherwell District Council  
Telephone: (01295) 221597  
Fax: (01295) 221857  
Email: [building.control@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:building.control@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

# 18

## Planning Conditions



In the case of newer houses, planning conditions often regulate what can be done to walls, fences, garages, or remove the right to extend without permission. It is important to be aware of such conditions before submitting an application for householder development. We advise you to check with the planning department to find out if your home is affected by such conditions before contemplating any work to your property. Otherwise, we recommend that you ask your professional advisers to check on your behalf.

# 19

## Other Consents

Extensions and walls that are built right on the boundary can often cause problems. In many cases the consent of the adjoining owner will be necessary and access for future maintenance could cause difficulties. If you intend to build near your boundary you will need to consider the requirements of the Party Wall Act.

The Party Wall etc. Act makes provision in respect of party walls and excavation and construction in proximity to certain buildings or structures. There will be some instances where both the Party Wall etc. Act and the Building Regulations apply to the work being carried out.

The Party Wall Etc Act 1996: Explanatory Booklet is available from the Department for Communities and Local Government. Refer to the website, <http://www.communities.gov.uk>

# 20

## Biodiversity



Extensions or alterations to your dwelling could have an impact on wildlife. It is important to check for birds or animals before work begins as some species are protected by law (Refer to the Natural Environment and Communities Act 2006). Some species of bird, such as swifts, swallows and house martins, depend on buildings for nesting sites, constructing nests under the eaves, within the roof space or on outside walls. It is illegal to damage nests or disturb any birds during the breeding season (usually March to September) and if roofing works are likely to affect nesting sites work should be avoided at this time.

Some types of bat use roof spaces and other parts of buildings as roosts. All species of Bats and their roosts are protected by Law and if you have a bat roost in your roof you should contact Natural England for advice ([www.naturalengland.org.uk/conservation/default.htm](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/conservation/default.htm)) or telephone 0845 601 4523.

In extending or altering your home you could consider incorporating features to enhance wildlife, such as including nesting sites or nesting boxes for swifts, swallows and house martins. The use of bat bricks, bat boxes or bat tiles can encourage bats and again Natural England can advise on this.

Also, check with Cherwell District Council's Tree Officer (Tel. 01295 221708) to find out if there are any Tree Preservation Orders or Hedgerow Regulations on trees or hedgerows which will be affected by the work. If you can, plant native trees such as birch, field maple and rowan in your garden and try not to cut hedgerows every year – trimming only some of your hedgerows each year will leave food and shelter for birds over winter.

In addition there are a number of opportunities for enhancing wildlife in your garden such as pond creation. More information on wildlife gardening can be obtained from [www.naturalengland.org.uk/](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/) or telephone the Natural England enquiry service on 0845 600 3078.



# 21

## Useful Contacts

Royal Institute of British Architects  
66 Portland Place  
London  
W1B 1AD  
Tel 020 7580 5533  
Fax 020 7255 1541  
E-mail [info@inst.riba.org](mailto:info@inst.riba.org)  
Website [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors  
RICS Contact Centre  
Surveyor Court  
Westwood Way  
Coventry CV4 8JE  
United Kingdom  
Tel 0870 333 1600  
Fax 020 7 334 3811  
Email [contactrics@rics.org](mailto:contactrics@rics.org)  
Website [www.rics.org](http://www.rics.org)

Royal Town Planning Institute  
41 Botolph Lane  
London  
EC3R 8DL  
Tel 020 7929 9494  
Fax 020 7929 9490  
E-mail [online@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:online@rtpi.org.uk)  
Website [www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)

The Chartered Institute of Building  
Englemere,  
Kings Ride  
Ascot  
Berkshire  
SL5 7TB  
Tel 01344 630700  
Fax 01344 630777  
E-mail [reception@ciob.org.uk](mailto:reception@ciob.org.uk)  
Website [www.ciob.org.uk](http://www.ciob.org.uk)

Institution of Structural Engineers  
11 Upper Belgrave Street  
London  
SW1X 8BH  
Tel 020 7235 4535  
Fax 020 7235 4294  
E-mail [mail@istructe.org.uk](mailto:mail@istructe.org.uk)  
Website [www.istructe.org.uk](http://www.istructe.org.uk)

The National Federation of Builders  
55, Tufton Street  
London  
SW1P 3QL  
Tel 0870 898 9091  
Fax 0870 898 9096  
E-mail [info@builders.org.uk](mailto:info@builders.org.uk)  
Website [www.builders.org.uk](http://www.builders.org.uk)

Department for Communities & Local  
Government  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London  
SW1E 5DU  
Tel 020 7944 4400  
Fax 020 7944 9645  
E-mail  
[Contactus@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Contactus@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

# 22

## Council Contacts

### Contact Details

Planning and Development Services  
Cherwell District Council  
Bodicote House  
Bodicote  
Banbury  
Oxfordshire  
OX15 4AA

Telephone 01295 221883/4  
Fax 01295 221856  
Email [planning@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:planning@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)  
DX 24224 (Banbury)

<http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk/>



# 23

## Glossary

<b>Amenity</b>	A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the inter-relationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquillity.	<b>Classified road</b>	A classified road is one which has an A, B or C number classification. This denotes the importance of the route, as part of the highways network. i.e. A is most important.
<b>Article 4 Direction</b>	Direction removing some or all permitted development rights, for example within a conservation area or curtilage of a listed building. Article 4 directions are issued by local planning authorities.	<b>Curtilage</b>	The area normally within the boundaries of a property surrounding the main building and used in connection with it.
<b>Building</b>	The term building refers to the whole or any part of any structure or erection. It does not include plant or machinery comprised in a building.	<b>Design guide</b>	A document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice often produced by a local authority with a view to retaining local distinctiveness.
<b>Character</b>	A term relating to Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings, but also to the appearance of any rural or urban location in terms of its landscape or the layout of streets and open spaces, often giving places their own distinct identity.	<b>Development</b>	Development is defined under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as "the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land." Most forms of development require planning permission (see also "permitted development").
<b>Conservation Area</b>	Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.	<b>Dwelling &amp; Dwelling house</b>	A self-contained building or part of a building used as a residential accommodation, and usually housing a single household. A dwelling may be a house, bungalow, flat, maisonette or converted farm building.
<b>Conversions</b>	Generally means the physical work necessary to change of use of a building from a particular use, classified in the use classes order, to another use. Can also mean the sub-division of residential properties into self-contained flats or maisonettes.	<b>Elevation</b>	The actual facade (or face) of a building, or a plan showing the drawing of a facade.
		<b>Habitable rooms</b>	Any room used or intended to be used for sleeping, cooking, living or eating purposes. Enclosed spaces such as bath or toilet facilities, service rooms, corridors, laundries, hallways, utility rooms or similar spaces are excluded from this definition.

<b>Highway</b>	A publicly maintained road, together with footways and verges.
<b>Listed Building</b>	A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and any buildings or permanent structures (e.g. wells within its curtilage). English Heritage is responsible for designating buildings for listing in England.
<b>Local Planning Authority</b>	The local authority or council that is empowered by law to exercise planning functions. Often the local borough or district council. National parks and the Broads authority are also considered to be local planning authorities. County councils are the authority for waste and minerals matters.
<b>Material Consideration</b>	A matter that should be taken into account in deciding a planning application or on an appeal against a planning decision.
<b>Overlooking</b>	A term used to describe the effect when a development or building affords an outlook over adjoining land or property, often causing loss of privacy.
<b>Overshadowing</b>	The effect of a development or building on the amount of natural light presently enjoyed by a neighbouring property, resulting in a shadow being cast over that neighbouring property.

**Planning Permission** Formal approval sought from a council, often granted with conditions, allowing a proposed development to proceed. Permission may be sought in principle through outline planning applications, or be sought in detail through full planning applications.

**Public Realm** Those parts of a village, town or city (whether publicly or privately owned) available, for everyone to use. This includes streets, squares and parks.

This document can be made available electronically or in alternative formats including Braille, audio and other languages on request. It is also available on the Council's website [www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk](http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk).

ਇਸ ਇਸ਼ਤਿਹਾਰ ਦੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ । ਇਸ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨੀ ਕਰਕੇ 01295 221578 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ।

本單張的資料亦有中文版本可供索閱，請電 01295 221578 。

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فون کریں: 01295 221578 -

