

Design Guidance for Local Distinctiveness: Erection of Domestic Extensions and Dormers

This leaflet gives basic design advice on the design principles for the erection of house extensions and the installation of dormers to dwelling houses within West Yorkshire. The leaflet is one of a series offering supplementary design guidance to the Kirklees Unitary Development Plan. The advice given is appropriate for both listed buildings, unlisted buildings in conservation areas and unlisted buildings in general. This guidance is given to supplement the planning policies given in the UDP (BE 13, 14 and 15) which determine the limits of the bulk and mass of extensions which affect privacy, daylighting and front building line limitations. Some extensions, such as small porches, have the benefit of being included in permitted development which does not require planning permission. However, if this design guidance is followed, there should be a maintaining and a general upgrading of the visual quality of the environment since the accretion of ugly extensions which harm the visual environment should, in the main, be avoided.

Sympathetic design and attention to detail in retaining local distinctiveness.

Domestic extensions which respect the original style of the host building and local character always add aesthetic and investment value to property. Ugly, cheap and ill considered extensions and alterations almost invariably reduce the value of the property itself and of its neighbours. Designing extensions and alterations which respect local distinctiveness demonstrates a respect for one's neighbours, community and locality.

When buying a house, location is always a prime consideration (in addition to considerations of access and facilities) and the quality of the location is determined by the visual quality of the urban environment and the landscape setting. Why is it that some areas are more attractive than others? Much of the answer lies in buildings being well maintained and in character so that there is a cohesiveness of local character, material and detail. Everybody recognises, for example, a terrace of houses which has been made unattractive because each individual house has a different style of window, doors, porches and colour schemes. A very similar problem occurs with semi-detached properties where the neighbours have not cooperated in a joint decoration or extension scheme. The price for such individualism is, except in exceptional circumstances where demand is intense (e.g. Oxford), an incremental degradation of the urban environment in the medium and long term and an eventual fall in property values. Buying a house is a major investment and each prospective purchaser asks the basic question: Is this area going up or down? A cohesive local character (local distinctiveness), attention to detail and a high quality landscape setting are key indicators of healthy property values. Because of this, listed buildings and buildings in well protected conservation areas are potential good investments because they invariably retain their historic character and detail thereby enhancing the quality of the urban environment.

Unlisted Dwelling Houses

Owing to the permitted development rights of unlisted dwellings and of dwellings not controlled by Article 4 Directions (which remove permitted development rights for specified works), unlisted dwelling houses are prone to a greater variety of visual changes which do not necessarily harmonise aesthetically and thus are prone to visual degradation over the medium and long term. Such changes include, the erection of porches, installation of plastic windows and doors, stone or brick painting all of which spoil the character of the building thereby making it unattractive and contributing to the general air of clutter and untidiness in these localities.

Victorian Semi-detached House:

Ornate character and original detail retained.
Unspoilt roof-line without dormer
Traditional rooflight possibly to rear pitch.



Victorian Semi-detached House:

Flat roof dormers to front and rear
Dormer windows large and dominating
Dormers spoil symmetry of dwellings



Georgian Terrace House:

Elegant character and original detail retained.
Unspoilt roofline without dormer.
Traditional rooflight possibly to rear pitch.



Georgian Terrace House:

Large flat roof dormers spoil roof line.
Dormer windows large and dominating.
Dormers out of character.



West Yorkshire Vernacular Dwelling:

Strong local character: Stone slate roof:
Large stone quoins.(not illustrated)
Gable kneelers.



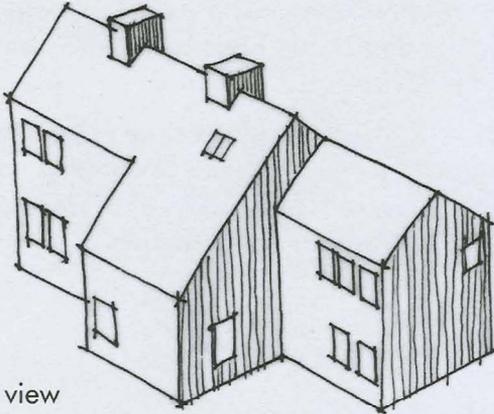
West Yorkshire Vernacular Dwelling:

Picture window dormer obtrusive and
detracting from local character.



Sympathetic House Extensions:

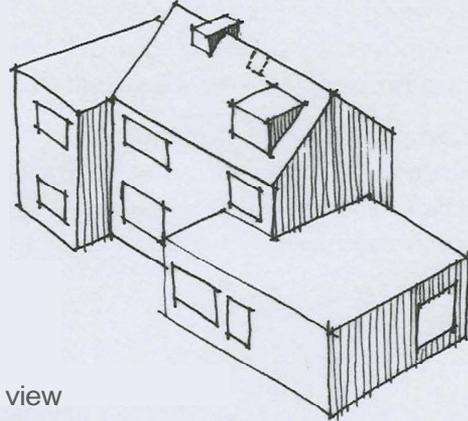
Roof slope same as host building.
Catslide roof to single storey extension.
Traditional rooflight possibly to rear pitch
Matching roof materials to retain character.



rear view

Unsympathetic House Extensions:

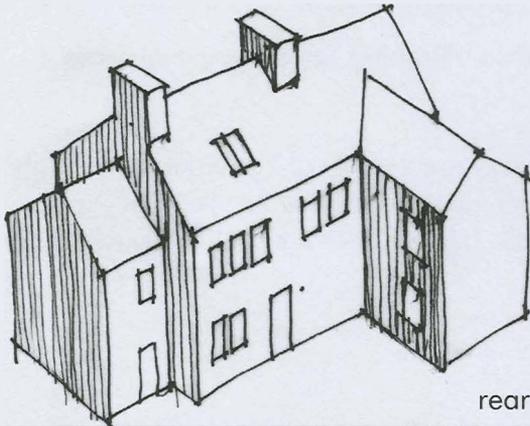
Flat roofed side extensions do not harmonise with host building.
Extensions dominate the host building.
Felt flat roofs requiring maintenance.



rear view

Sympathetic House Extensions:

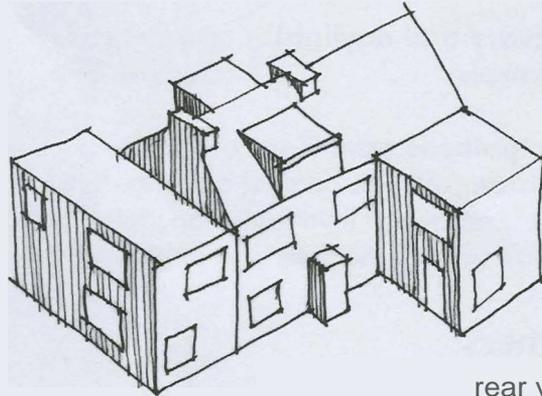
Roof slope same as host building.
Valleys conned to pitched gable roofs.
Side extension set back and lower than main roof.
Matching roof materials to retain character.



rear view

Unsympathetic House Extensions:

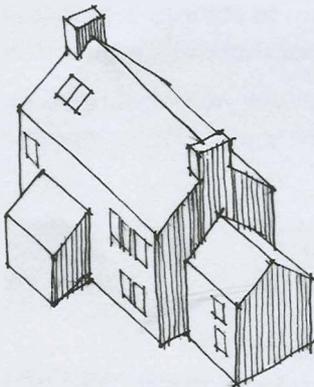
Flat roofed side extensions do not harmonise with host building.
Extensions dominate the host building.
Felt flat roofs requiring maintenance.
Flat roof dormers spoil roof line.



rear view

Sympathetic House Extensions:

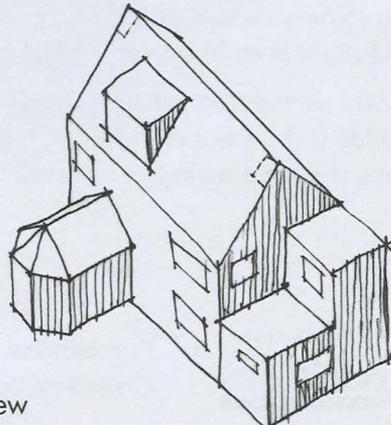
Roof slope same as host building.
Possible catslide to rear.
Traditional rooflight possibly to rear pitch.
Matching roof materials to retain character.



rear view

Unsympathetic House Extensions:

Flat roofed side extensions do not harmonise with host building.
Single storey extension out of character.
Felt flat roofs requiring maintenance.



rear view

Principles of House Extension Design: Harmonising with the host building.

The principles of design which respect the host building and enhance local distinctiveness are quite simple to follow. The basic principle is to respect and harmonise with the character of the host building. This is achieved by using the same materials, details and colours of the host building. Where original details have been removed by previous 'improvements', models for original details can often be sought from neighbouring properties or advice sought from the local Planning Service.

The extension should never dominate the host building either by bulk, height or by protruding beyond the principal elevations. At the roof and eaves, a two storey extension can either be joined by forming valleys or by a catslide roof. Single storey extensions should have leanto, gable or hipped roofs of a similar slope to the original roof. Extensions should always be set back from the corners avoiding quoins.

Checklist:

Roofs:	same slope as the original same materials as original same gutter details as original
Form:	does not dominate original set back from original
Windows and doors	same proportions, design and detail as the originals (not always as existing which could be modern inserts.)
Walls:	same material, same coursing, properly bonded and pointed
Privacy and daylight controls:	guidance obtainable from Kirklees Planning Services, Development Control Teams

Unsympathetic extensions are easily recognisable because they are usually obtrusive and obviously out of character with the original building. Invariably, unsympathetic extensions have flat felt roofs, large 'picture' windows of invariably horizontal proportions, have walls built of different and invariably cheaper materials and plastic gutters and rainwater goods.

Dormers:

It is invariably difficult to install a dormer window in an historic or traditional building without considerably affecting its character. Sensitivity to roof form and materials is an important consideration. Generally speaking, dormer windows should not be considered unless there are original dormers which can be replicated. Where daylight is required for a proposed loft extension, the gable ends or the rear pitch are usually the most favourable locations for windows, rooflights and, possibly, dormers (and in this order of preference) Rooflights are preferable to dormer windows and high quality design's which harmonise with traditional buildings are available. In rare cases where dormers appear to be an acceptable design solution, then they should be designed to minimise obtrusiveness and constructed in the same materials as the roof using joinery details copied from the building. It is advisable not to cut into major structural rafters and purlins. Gutters should be sympathetically designed using traditional materials e.g. cast iron.

For terraced and semidetached properties, it is good practice to consult with neighbours because if each neighbour builds a different dormer, then the pristine character of the house will be compromised and the property values reduced owing to the roof clutter.