

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE:**

**A DESIGN GUIDE**

**FORHOUSEHOLDER DEVELOPMENT**

April 2010

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## 1. Introduction

- **The planning system for Wales requires that all new development, extensions and alterations to existing properties be well designed.**
- **Well-designed and built alterations and extensions can help owners meet their changing needs, add value to properties and enhance the local area. With good design it is also possible to reduce energy bills and avoid wasting natural resources.**
- **Part 3 (Guidance Notes) of this document gives guidance on design to householders who are planning alterations or extensions to their properties. It explains the design issues the Council's planning department will want you to consider.**
- **However you are also recommended to follow the guidance for changes that do not require planning permission.**
- **This document also sets out the information you will need to submit with your planning application**

### 1.1 Purpose of this document

1.1.1 This document sets out design guidance for householders. It aims to raise the standard of householder development to ensure that new

development makes a positive contribution to regenerating communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

National Planning Policy for Wales requires all new development, including extensions and alterations to existing dwellings to be well designed.

1.1.2 Well-designed alterations and extensions can help owners meet their changing needs, add value to properties, and enhance the local area. With good design it is also possible to reduce energy bills and avoid wasting natural resources.

1.1.3 However, badly designed alterations and extensions can spoil the appearance of a building, and have a negative impact on the surrounding streetscape/landscape, as well as the living conditions of neighbours.

1.1.4 The content of this Design Guide is an important consideration in deciding all householder planning applications. Applications may be refused if the guidance contained within is not followed.

### 1.2 Status of this design guide

1.2.1 This design guide relates the Wales-wide "A Design Guide for Householder Development", prepared by the Planning Officers Society for Wales, to the local context of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

1.2.2 All development should comply with the relevant Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan 2006-2021 policies and this Supplementary Planning Guidance will assist with achieving this.

### 1.3 Preparing your design

1.3.1 Good preparation is key to achieving good design. Good preparation will give you a better understanding of how your property could be extended or altered in a way that is acceptable to the Council. Following the steps below will help to address design issues before a planning application is submitted.

### 1.4 Working out your requirements

1.4.1 You should think about why you wish to extend or alter your property and your requirements to achieve this. Then think about which of your requirements you consider to be essential and which are just desirable. For example:

#### Essential

Additional bedroom  
Enlarged kitchen

#### Desirable

Additional bedroom with en-suite bathroom  
  
Downstairs bedroom and study  
Garage and workshop

1.4.2 After you have worked out your requirements you should consider the advice of this design guide by referring to the Guidance Notes in Part 3.

### 1.5 Speak to the Council

1.5.1 The Development Control Service will be able to advise on whether you need planning permission or other consents. They will be able to advise on any particular design issues you will need to address.

1.5.2 When you have decided what you propose to carry out, you should use this guide to assess whether your proposal would comply with the good practice guidance contained within.

### 1.6 Pre-application advice

1.6.1 The Council responds to pre-application enquiries on request. Nevertheless, individuals are expected to have done some preliminary work and to have decided what kind of extension or alteration they wish to proceed with before making an enquiry.

1.6.2 Responses to these enquiries are the informal advice of individual Planning Officers and do not guarantee that planning permission will be granted or otherwise, nor that additional issues will not arise during the application process. The ability of planning officers to provide useful informal advice is also dependent on the amount and quality of information supplied.

1.6.3 Site visits and meetings to discuss pre-application enquiries will be held at the discretion of Planning Officers. Written/ drawn details of intended works should be submitted prior to any site visit or meeting.

### 1.7 What permissions do I need?

1.7.1 Certain minor changes to your house and small buildings in the garden may be allowed by planning rules without planning permission and are known as 'permitted development'. The Development Control Service can provide advice regarding whether planning permission is required or not. In addition you may require one of the other permissions or consents outlined in Appendix 5.2.

1.7.2 In some cases two or more different types of applications are required to be submitted concurrently, to ensure all matters are considered at the same time. For example, an extension to a listed building is likely to require a planning application and a Listed Building Consent application.

1.7.3 If you carry out any work including building an extension or making alterations that need planning permission or another consent without first obtaining the necessary permissions, you may have to put things right later at considerable inconvenience and cost.

## **1.8 Speak to your neighbours**

1.8.1 After you make a planning application the Council will publicise your application with a site notice and consult with your neighbours. If your neighbours or other third parties object in writing to the Council, it may delay your application or you may need to change your proposals.

1.8.2 If your proposals affect a party wall you will need to comply with the 1996 Party Wall Act. The Council's Development Control Service has copies of a booklet on this, but you will need to speak to an appropriate surveyor if you want further advice.

1.8.3 It is recommended that you talk through your proposal with your neighbours prior to submitting a planning application (and indeed where a planning application is not required to develop). As well as being courteous, this could be useful to ensure issues such as the following are dealt with at an early stage, preventing delays to developing:

- Any specific concerns your neighbours may have regarding the design. You may be able to address these through revisions. This may prevent your neighbour making a formal objection to your planning application at a later stage.
- Issues associated with construction and maintenance, such as obtaining access to adjacent land or ascertaining the exact position of property boundaries. These issues are not typically considered in the planning application process, but could affect your ability to build and maintain your development.
- Discussions with your neighbours are particularly important for properties where extensions affect party walls, or where development (including guttering and drainage pipes) overhangs adjacent properties. Again, these issues are not considered in the planning application process, but it is important to resolve them at an early stage.

## **1.9 Consider professional design advice**

1.9.1 The Development Control Service is unable to design a proposal for you, nor prepare plans for a planning application. However, plans need to be clear, accurate, and drawn to scale in metric measurements. Although it is not mandatory, many applicants seek a professional consultant to prepare plans for them.

1.9.2 A professional advisor can help you prepare plans that meet the local Council's requirements. Finding Professional Advice: The Royal Society of Architects Wales (RSAW) provides guidance on selecting and appointing an architect. In addition the Royal Town Planning Institute, (RTPI), The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT) can provide advice. The Association of Building Engineers (ABE) may also provide advice. Contact details are provided Appendix 5.5. Alternatively you may know someone who has carried out similar work and may be able to recommend someone to assist you. It is a good idea to obtain references from previous clients if possible.

1.9.3 It is in your interests to write down your design requirements, how much you want to spend and what drawings are required to accompany your planning application as a brief to the designer. An important part of your brief should be to meet the requirements of this guide, and to comply with the Council's Development Plan Policies

1.9.4 If you use a professional consultant to prepare plans, you should make sure you have carefully reviewed them before submission and are happy that they meet your requirements.

### **Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings**

Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings are areas and buildings of special architectural and/ or historical importance. If you live in a Conservation Area and/ or a Listed Building, there tends to be a heightened requirement for sensitive and sympathetic design, to ensure that the character of the area / building is preserved or enhanced. The Council in considering applications has statutory duties that may result in additional requirements and restrictions to the advice given in this Guide.

It is recommended that if you live in a Conservation Area or Listed Building and want to undertake works, that you employ a professional consult with a good understanding of built heritage and conservation matters. You should also note that if you are undertaking works to a Listed Building, you are likely to need Listed Building Consent (see Appendix 5.2). Some works in a Conservation Area may also require Conservation Area Consent (also see Appendix 5.2).

### **1.10 Follow the design guidance**

1.10.1 You should check with the Council's Development Control Service what drawings and plans they would require with your application. Submitting incomplete or inadequate drawings can slow down your planning application. Advice on typical requirements is given at the end of this document in appendix 5.3.

1.10.2 You should follow the guidance set out in this guide to help you achieve a good design. The Council will

check if your plans follow this guidance. If they do not you may be refused planning permission.

### **Extending/ Altering Dwellings in the Countryside**

The extension and alteration of dwellings in the countryside is more strictly controlled than such works to dwellings in the built up areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, particularly if you live in a building that has been converted from another use. It is generally considered inappropriate to extend a dwelling in the countryside by more than one third of its existing volume. If you live in the countryside, there may be additional requirements and restrictions to the advice given in this Guide.

## **2 Policy Context**

2.1 The Local Development Plan sets out the policies that will be applied in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The relevant policy for the majority of householder development in Rhondda Cynon Taf is AW5 set out below.-

### **2.2 Policy AW 5 New Development:**

Development proposals will be supported where:-

#### **1. Amenity**

- a) The scale, form and design of the development would have no unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area;

- b) Where appropriate, existing site features of built and natural environment value would be retained;
- c) There would be no significant impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers;
- d) The development would be compatible with other uses in the locality;
- e) The development would include the use of multi-functional buildings where appropriate;
- f) The development designs out the opportunity for crime and anti social behaviour.

#### **2. Accessibility**

- a) The development would be accessible to the local and wider community by a range of sustainable modes of transport;
- b) The site layout and mix of uses maximises opportunities to reduce dependence on cars;
- c) The development would have safe access to the highway network and would not cause traffic congestion or exacerbate existing traffic congestion;
- d) Car parking would be provided in accordance with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Access, Parking and Circulation.

### 3. Guidance Notes

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#### 3.1 Guidance Note 1 - Understanding your House and Area

3.1.1 One purpose of the planning system is to safeguard the existing qualities of buildings and streets. Extensions and alterations should be designed to complement the character of your property and street or area. To achieve this you need to understand the character of your property and area. In particular you should consider how your proposals would fit in with the characteristics shown on the drawings below.

3.1.2 One noticeable characteristic of the Rhondda Cynon Taf area is the steep topography. Many properties are built on the Valley sides and the rear of these can therefore often be just as visible as the front. Due to this, additional care is required to ensure that the appearance of a property is acceptable from all public viewpoints. Steep topography can also exaggerate the visual impacts of householder development, as well as impacts on neighbours.



**Typical view of the Valley showing it's distinct topography and urban environment**

3.1.3 Throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf there is a legacy of past coal mining activity. Hazards that result from coal mining legacy, such as mine entries and shallow mine workings, can sometimes be disturbed by small-scale development. Given that the Planning Authority will not always consult The Coal Authority as a matter of course, it would be prudent for householders undertaking development to consult coal mining information, by contacting The Coal Authority, to identify if any mining legacy issues are present. Contact details for The Coal Authority are listed in Appendix 5.

## 3.2 Guidance Note 2 - Extensions and Conservatories

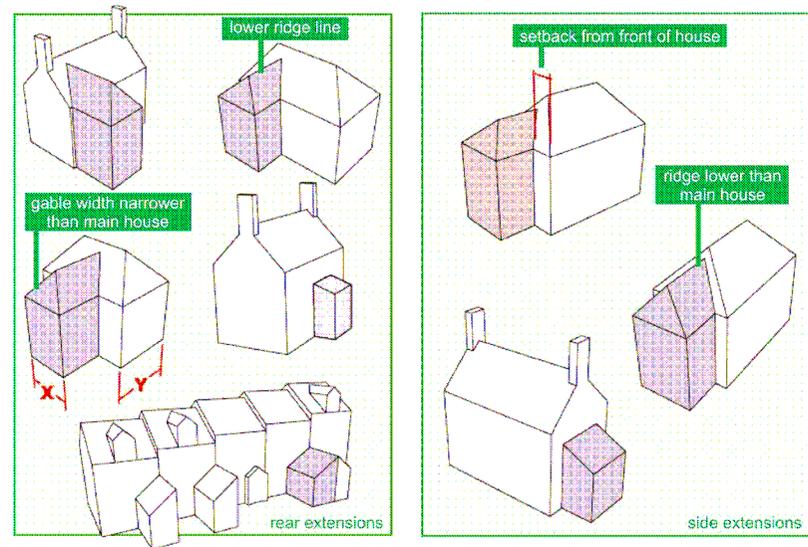
3.2.1 An extension or conservatory is likely to be the most significant change you will want to make to your Property. If poorly designed, it will affect your property, neighbours and street.

### 3.2.2 The size, shape and position of extensions and conservatories

3.2.2.1 Key principles to consider when considering the size, shape and position of your extension or conservatory are set out below. Front extensions or conservatories will not normally be acceptable except in special circumstances.

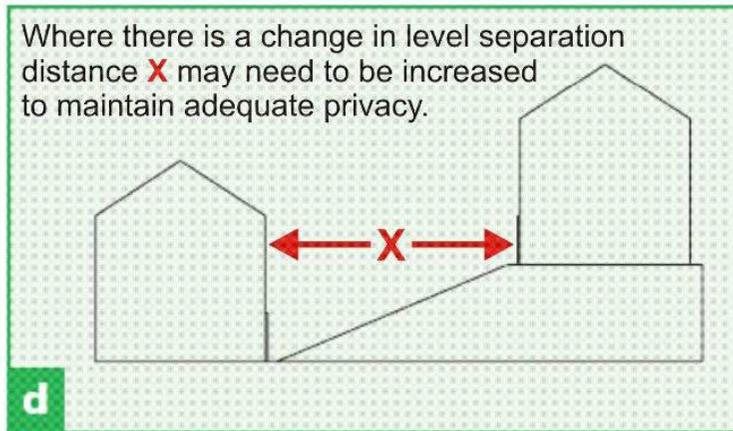
- It is important to consider how your extension or conservatory impacts on access and parking as set out in guidance note 3.7.
- The extension or conservatory should not dominate your house. Unless you are proposing to build a porch to the front of your house, as a general rule extensions and conservatories should be smaller than the house and positioned to the side or rear;
- The extension or conservatory should have similar x and y proportions and the same roof pitch as your house;
- Where possible the extension or conservatory should leave a reasonable space around the house and an adequate area of garden;

- On corner plots extensions or conservatories need to respect the street scene and have suitable boundary treatments;
- Sometimes neighbours can combine extensions to provide mutual benefits. As shown overleaf



### 3.2.3 Privacy and overlooking

3.2.3.1 Extensions should not overlook neighbouring houses or gardens. If habitable rooms such as bedrooms, living rooms, studies or kitchens are proposed on the first floor or above, care should be taken to avoid direct overlooking from windows and balconies particularly where the extension is close to the boundary. In some cases such as sloping sites, care should be taken to avoid overlooking from ground floor extensions.



3.2.4 The erection of a 1.8 metre wall or fence can provide a privacy screen between a single storey extension or conservatory and a neighbour's garden.

3.2.5 Conservatories should not overlook a neighbour's garden. This is particularly an issue where the conservatory is elevated.

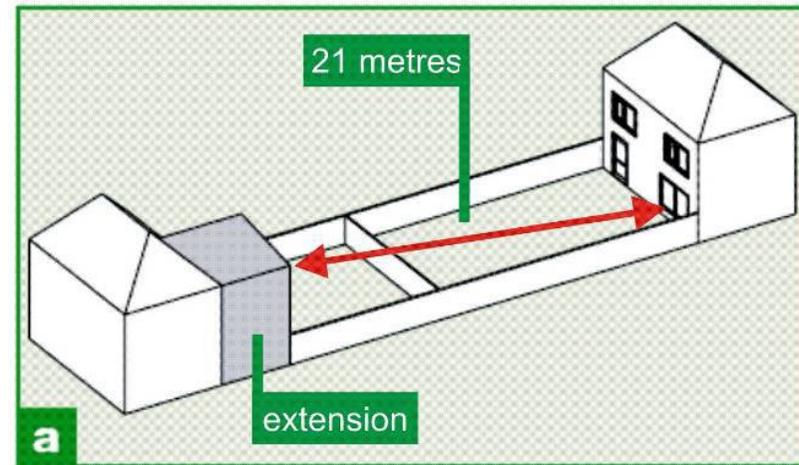
### 3.2.6 Single storey extensions

3.2.6.1 Shorter distances than above may be acceptable for bungalows, single storey extensions and conservatories depending on the arrangement of the windows and boundary fencing or hedge planting.

### 3.2.7 Two storey extensions in a back-to-back situation

3.2.7.1 A large proportion of existing dwellings in Rhondda Cynon Taf consist of terraced dwellings which are close to one another and which do not allow a great distance between habitable room windows. However, where possible there should be at least 21 metres between habitable rooms of the extension and those in

directly facing neighbouring homes. In some circumstances this may be relaxed, such as where adequate privacy will still be maintained and where a directly facing neighbour already has an extension of similar length to the one proposed in the rear of their property.



### 3.2.8 Avoiding 'overbearing'

3.2.8.1 Extensions and conservatories should not be overbearing to your neighbours. As a general rule lengthy two-storey extensions should not be positioned very close to the boundary adjacent to the garden of a neighbour's property and positioning any two-storey extension adjacent to a neighbour's boundary should be avoided where possible.

3.2.8.2 Side extensions should also be sufficiently set back from the front of the property and have a lower ridgeline, to give the impression of subservience to the main house. This is also important when extending one of a pair of semi-detached houses, to maintain a

symmetrical appearance and avoid “unbalancing” the pair of houses.

3.2.8.3 Side extensions and conservatories should leave an adequate gap between adjacent properties. This is particularly important for streets with detached or semi detached houses where large side extensions and garages can fill the gaps and create the impression of a terrace. The Council may refer to this as the 'terracing effect'.

### **3.2.9 Windows and doors**

3.2.9.1 Extensions should have windows and doors that are similar to the house in size, shape, design and proportion. They should also reflect the pattern and arrangement of the windows of the house.

3.2.9.2 The existing front door and main entrance to the house should be kept unless the Council advises you that an alternative entrance into the house would be acceptable.

### **3.2.10 Architectural style**

3.2.10.1 As a general rule, the architectural style of your extension should be the same as your existing house with similar roof details, windows, doors, and external materials.

3.2.10.2 If you think a more contemporary approach to the design might be appropriate, you should discuss this with the Council at an early stage. In either case, the Council will want to be sure your proposals will contribute to the quality of the locality.

### **3.2.11 Using the right materials**

3.2.11.1 You should avoid external materials that clash with the existing property and the surrounding area.

- In most circumstances the materials that you use for your extension, garage or outbuilding should match those used on your house;
- Although it may not be possible to find matching materials, particularly for older houses, and Building Regulations may have requirements such as double-glazing that will make it difficult to match existing windows, your proposals will be expected to use materials that complement the colours, tones and textures of your house.

### **3.2.12 Conservation Areas**

3.2.12.1 Any proposals must be considered to either preserve or enhance the special character of the area.

### **3.2.13 Listed Buildings**

3.2.13.1 A proposed extension or conservatory needs careful consideration to how it will affect the character and setting of the listed structure. A successful design will respect the existing and be sympathetic in scale, proportions, materials, and architectural features.

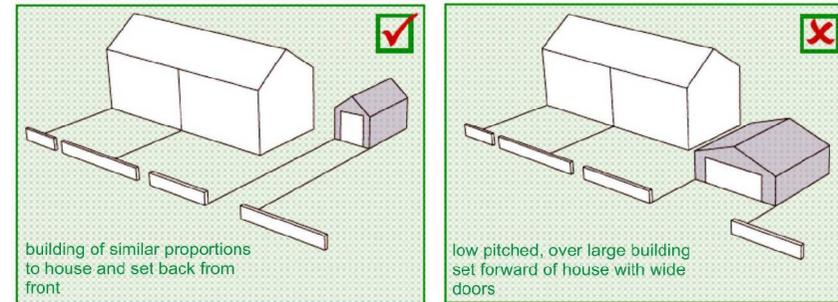
## **3.3 Guidance Note 3 - Garages and Outbuildings**

3.3.1 Key principles to consider when considering the size, shape and position of your garage or outbuilding are:

- Garages and outbuildings should not impact detrimentally on the space about buildings and should be designed to take into account access and parking set out in Guidance Note 3.7.
- They should not result in the loss of trees or other features that are important to the area.
- An outbuilding must be smaller in scale and subservient to the house.
- Garages and outbuildings should normally not be in the front of domestic properties and should not be over dominant in relation to the existing and surrounding properties.
- Garage doors should be as narrow as practical with two single garage doors preferred over one double door. Metal rollers are less likely to be acceptable particularly on front elevations due to their appearance.
- They should be located to have the least impact on neighbouring properties
- Existing outbuildings within the curtilage of a listed building could in some cases be considered to be part of the listing. This could result in the need for consent to carry out works that affect the character. For further information, please contact the Conservation Officer.

3.3.2 A garage attached to the dwelling should follow the same principle as for side extensions. They should have the same roof type and materials as the main dwelling.

3.3.3 Rooms above detached garages are not normally acceptable due to the size and scale of garage required and the impact on the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings.



### 3.4 Guidance Note 4 - Dormer Windows and Roof Lights

3.4.1 Increasing the height of the roof to accommodate a loft conversion can disrupt a consistent pattern of development. Where groups of buildings have a common roofline, this would not normally be acceptable. Any proposal should respect the existing pitch and style of roof in the surroundings. Increasing the roof pitch, ridge or eaves height can significantly alter the appearance of a dwelling

3.4.2 Dormer windows are not normally permitted to the front of your house, unless they are an existing local feature.

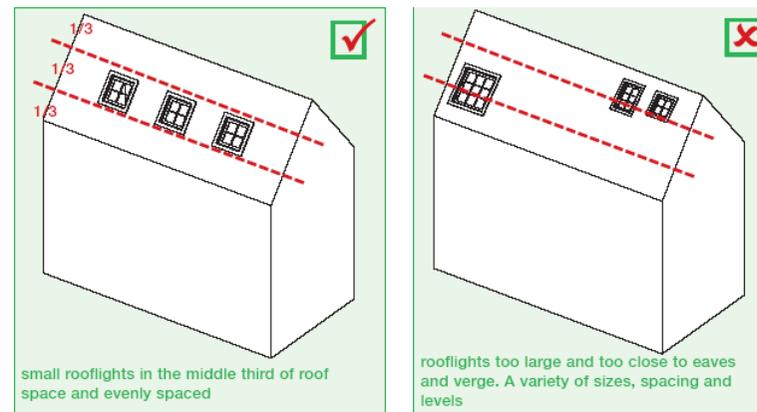
3.4.3 Sloping roof lights are less intrusive than dormer windows and can reduce the problems of overlooking.

3.4.4 The traditional two-storey rows of terraces characteristic in the Valleys do not tend to lend themselves to the addition of dormer windows due to their consistent roof profiles. The steep topography of the area also increases the visual prominence of both the front and rear of properties. Dormer windows are only likely to be permitted on rear elevations where the proposal will not have an adverse impact on “cross valley” views.

Key principles are:

- Dormer windows should be subservient to the main roof and use the same pitch and roofing details as the main roof;
- Dormer windows should cover no more than a maximum of 50% of the roof area on which they are located
- Dormer windows should normally be set well back from the eaves, down from the ridge and in from the sides of the roof;
- New dormer windows should reflect the design of dormer windows that are an original feature of other buildings in your area or street;
- Dormer windows should be positioned to match the pattern of the windows on the rest of your house;
- Two smaller dormer windows are often preferred to one large window;

- Roof lights should ideally be set within the middle third of the roof slope away from gables or roof abutments and chimneys;
- If there is more than one roof light they should be at the same level, evenly spaced, and of the same size, shape and design.
- Excessive numbers of rooflights could be detrimental to the appearance of a dwelling. If the property is in a Conservation Area, is a Listed Building or is a historic building of local importance (e.g. a barn or a chapel), prior consultation with the Council is recommended. Rooflights may only be acceptable on rear elevations and “Conservation Area” type or similar rooflights should be used.





Above right- no dormers would be appropriate on the front of this terrace due to the visual impact of breaking the consistent roofline. Above left- additional appropriately designed dormers may be acceptable here due to the varied rooflines and the existing presence of dormers.

### 3.5 Guidance Note 5 - Boundary Treatments

3.5.1 Boundary treatments can be a feature of the locality, and an attractive addition to the street scene. Consistent frontage treatments (often found where the housing in the street was all built at the same time) contribute to the character of an area and should be retained. New and alterations to boundary treatment often require planning permission.

3.5.2 Frontage boundary treatments such as walls, railings and gates contribute to the quality of the street and provide security. They also help to enclose streets and make them more attractive to pedestrians. Streets can become unattractive if frontage boundary treatments vary or are missing.

3.5.3 Examples are walls (made of stone and brick), metal railings, wooden fences, hedges and gates. In the

steeper areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, there are also many retaining walls, which also act as boundary treatments

#### 3.5.4 Key principles:

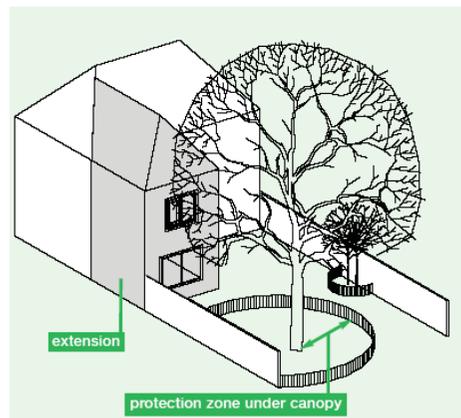
- Frontage boundary treatments should match height and type of properties on either side. This is particularly important where they are generally the same along a street, or a feature of the locality.
- New frontage boundary treatments should not obstruct views of the house from the street, or of the street from the house.
- Boundary treatments may not be considered acceptable if your street was originally designed as open plan (i.e. if the front/ side gardens in your area are not enclosed). You should also check in this circumstance that there is no covenant in your Deeds restricting the erection of boundary treatment- this could prevent you doing so regardless of if you manage to obtain planning permission.

### 3.6 Guidance Note 6 - Planting

3.6.1 Existing trees and planting help make areas more attractive. However it is easy to damage trees and planting when carrying out works either by affecting the soil around the root zone or by cutting roots in the construction of services and foundations.

- Building works should not be carried out underneath tree canopies or within a two metre radius of smaller trees with an undeveloped crown;
- Equipment or materials should not be stored underneath tree canopies or within a two metre radius of smaller trees with an undeveloped crown;
- Some trees are protected by law by Tree Preservation Orders. It is illegal to carry out work on, or remove these trees without permission. If in doubt check with your Council whether any of the trees on your property are protected by Tree Preservation Orders.
- Also, if your property is within a Conservation Area you should check with the local Council before carrying out any work that might affect any trees.

3.6.2 The roots of large trees generally need to be protected within an area that corresponds with the canopy above. Within this zone building materials should not be stored and roots should not be severed.



### 3.7 Guidance Note 7- Providing for Access and Parking

3.7.1 You must obtain a separate approval from the Highways Department of the Council if your proposed extension or alteration will result in changes to your vehicular access, more parking spaces, a new driveway, a new crossing to the pavement or verge or if a new dropped kerb is required. You will also need to apply for planning permission if you want to make a new or wider access for your driveway on to a trunk or other classified road. The Council can tell you if the road falls into this category.

Key principles:

- Maintain existing off street parking spaces;
- Check with the Council whether your extension may require additional parking spaces. This may be the case if it includes additional bedrooms;
- The access should be safe and the Council will advise on their safety standards and how to meet them;
- Gates will not be allowed where they open out onto the footway or highway.
- New vehicular access off a main road or a very busy road may require a turning area within your plot so vehicles do not have to reverse in or out.

- Driveways for parking should measure 2.8m wide by 5.5m long to allow for car doors to be opened comfortably, and to allow garage doors/front doors to be accessible once a car is parked. Garages should have internal measurements of at least 5.5m by 2.8m, however ideally they should be 6m by 3m to allow for additional storage. Parking spaces should be long or larger for disabled access (up to 3.8 by 6m long).
- Any new garage required to provide for parking should not have a detrimental impact on the safety of users of the highway
- Where possible vehicles should be parked where they can be seen to reduce the opportunities for criminals, but should not dominate the space in front of dwellings.

### **3.8 Guidance Note 8 - Raised Decks and Balconies**

3.8.1 Certain decking and balcony designs require planning permission. If you are considering building decking or a balcony you should ensure that when it is constructed it does not result in overlooking of your neighbours property. You should also ensure that the decking or balcony does not dominate the character of the property or its appearance as viewed from the street. If you are considering constructing raised decking or a balcony, you should write to the Development Control Service to ascertain whether or not planning permission is required.

#### **3.8.2 Balconies**

3.8.2.1 Balconies may appear on certain building types such as blocks of flats as original features. However, in many areas they are not traditionally found. Balconies on the fronts of properties and which dominate elevations or are excessively large should be avoided. 'Juliet-style' balconies may be more appropriate to minimise overlooking of nearby properties.

3.8.2.2 When considering a balcony it is necessary to take into account:

- Its impact on neighbours. Will it detrimentally overlook your neighbours' houses and gardens? Would you be happy if your neighbour proposed the same on their property?
- Materials should match the existing property where possible.
- The scale of the balcony should respect the size of the original house and window and door openings

#### **3.8.3 Decking**

3.8.3.1 Decking is a popular way of creating useable space in a garden occupying a steep slope. This kind of raised decking usually requires planning permission.

3.8.3.2 Raised decking on a Valley side can have a tremendous impact on the appearance of the Valley side and your garden. In general, raised decking on stilts is not acceptable, and the area between the original ground level and the decking should be kept to a minimum. You should also think about whether any proposed decking overlooks neighbouring properties.

3.8.3.3 Raised decking will not normally be permitted where it can be seen from a variety of public viewpoints, nor where it has a detrimental impact upon neighbouring properties.

### 3.9 Guidance Note 9 - Resource Efficiency

3.9.1 Buildings in the UK are responsible for half of the CO<sub>2</sub> 'greenhouse gas' pollution. Resource efficiency means minimising the energy your house needs for heating, lighting and other energy uses. It also means using materials and construction methods that do not require a lot of energy to either produce or build.

3.9.2 The minimum requirements to achieve resource efficiency in new construction are set out in the Building Regulations. The Council's Building Control Service can provide you with information of the Building Regulation requirements to meet.

3.9.3 Proposals for alterations and extensions which achieve high levels of resource efficiency, are encouraged by the Council, subject to design and amenity considerations.

Key principles:

- Use high levels of insulation. In general 250mm of loft insulation and around 100mm of cavity wall insulation and 100mm of insulation under a solid ground floor is recommended depending on manufacturers specifications

- Glazing should be sealed double-glazing with a 12mm air space and 'low E glass' to reduce heat loss.
- Wherever possible use materials that are produced locally and which come from a source that can be renewed without harm to the environment. High quality reclaimed materials can save resources and may also provide a better match with the existing building;
- Avoid the use of tropical hardwood and look for timber which is certified as coming from sustainable sources;
- In designing your alteration or extension consider whether there are opportunities to build-in features to produce energy. This may include solar panels or domestic wind turbines. Solar water heating panels can provide 50% of your hot water requirements, while photovoltaic panels and wind turbines can produce some of your electricity. Whilst energy saving features are encouraged, if poorly located they can detract from the character of your house or neighbourhood, especially if the building is listed or within a sensitive area such as a Conservation Area. If you are planning to incorporate any of these features you should check whether they need planning permission;
- You can also save energy and heat your home by making the most of heat from the sun, if your extension faces southeast to southwest. Generally windows on the south side of the building should be larger than those on the north side;

- Arrange the internal layout of the extension so that the main habitable rooms are on the southerly side of the building where this does not cause overlooking problems;
- In the summer you can avoid the need for cooling or air conditioning by ensuring that south facing windows are shaded, e.g. by roof overhangs or trees or reflective blinds;
- Although conservatories can provide an additional light room in the winter months, they can be very expensive to heat in the winter and can waste energy. Conservatories should be separated from the main house by an insulated wall and closeable doors and windows so that you can avoid having to heat them when it is cold;
- In very heavy rain, water run-off from hard surfacing can overwhelm drains and cause flooding and pollution. You can avoid this by using a 'green' roof, which has turf or plants sitting on a waterproof membrane and must have a low pitch of less than 15 degrees. Such a roof may increase its weight, and the structure must be able to cope with any extra load. Permeable paving surfaces such as blocks or bricks set in the ground, allow rain rainwater to drain away gradually. Rainwater butts can provide a useful source of water for garden watering or car washing in drier periods;
- If your proposals involve demolition, re-use as much of the demolition waste as possible on-site:

- Provide house entrances away from prevailing winds and protect with a porch or lobby.

3.9.4 A number of contacts for information on renewable energy are given at the end of this document.

### **3.9.5 Solar Panels**

3.9.5.1 Solar Panels may require planning permission and it is recommended that advice be sought from the Council, before their installation, on both the need for planning permission and the requirement for building regulations approval.

3.9.5.2 Although the Council is supportive of energy efficiency measures, highly visible solar panels are unlikely to be acceptable in sensitive or very visually prominent areas such as Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings or on the front elevation of older and traditional dwellings.

3.9.5.3 Care should be taken to position solar panels on the least visible roof slopes and to install them flush with the roof plane, away from the eaves, verges, and ridge. The use of photovoltaic roof tiles should be considered in more sensitive areas, or if and when a roof needs replacing.

### **3.9.6 Domestic Wind Turbines**

3.9.6.1 Building-mounted and small freestanding wind turbines for domestic energy production often require planning permission and advice should be sought from the Council prior to their installation. Advice should also be sought on the requirements to satisfy the Building Regulations.

3.9.6.2 Due to the contemporary appearance of these structures, they are unlikely to be acceptable in sensitive or very prominent locations such as Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings or the front elevation of traditional cottages.

3.9.6.3 Care should be taken in the siting of wind turbines to minimise their visibility, such as siting on building elevations that are not visible from public roads and footpaths, and below the highest part of the roof and chimney. A balance needs to be sought between the visual impact of the turbine and its performance.

### 3.10 Guidance Note 10 - Crime Prevention

3.10.1 The Council is obliged to encourage design that reduces crime under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act. The Council would therefore ask that you consider the following simple and often inexpensive measures to reduce your chances of becoming a victim of crime.

- Put yourself in the position of a burglar. Is your house an easy target? What can you do to make your home more secure?
- If a burglar or thief thinks they can be seen they are less likely to commit a crime so provide good natural surveillance from your home onto the street, your gardens and driveways. This can be achieved by the careful positioning of windows;
- Where possible ensure that you can view your parking area from your house;

- Low boundaries at the front give maximum visibility but high walls and fences of 1.8m provide good security at the rear whilst side entrances should be lockable;
- Dusk to dawn operated lighting surrounding your property will deter burglars;
- You should ensure that all locks are securely fitted and meet British Security Standards for locks (BS3621), windows (BS7950) and Doors (PAS 24-1).
- Consider fitting a good quality burglar alarm, a proven deterrent.
- Particular care is needed when installing security devices on listed buildings, and listed building consent may be required.

3.10.2 The Home Office has published the comprehensive documents, "A guide to home security" [www.crimereduction.gov.uk/cpghs.htm](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/cpghs.htm) and "An introduction to domestic surveying" [www.crimereduction.gov.uk/learningzone/homesurvey.htm?fp](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/learningzone/homesurvey.htm?fp) available at the Home Office website.

3.10.3 Key security considerations: reducing visibility of rear garden from street, surveillance of drive and street; clear views to street frontage; secure rear fence.

## 4. Conclusion

4.1 The Council strives to achieve better-designed householder development across the County Borough. This document is intended to help home-owners, their agents and Planning Officers alike in developing and assessing proposals.

4.2 National planning policy and guidance requires that all new development, including householder development, is well designed and is appropriately 'future proof'. Unfortunately, like most areas, parts of the County Borough have suffered from a culmination of inappropriate householder development, which is considered to have a negative impact on the appearance of the area. It is the mistakes of the past that this document seeks to avoid.

## 5. Appendices

### 5.1 Submitting your application

5.1.1 The Council will have standard requirements for submitting a planning application and you should check what drawings, plans and illustrations will be needed. Typical requirements are set out in this section. Your planning application should be accompanied by a short written statement, which summarises how you have responded to the guidance provided by this guide.

### 5.2 Types of permissions which may be required

5.2.1 **Listed Buildings:** If your property has a special historic or architectural character it may be a listed

building, which gives it statutory protection under planning laws. This means that before undertaking any works you will need to get listed building consent from the Council for most alterations, extensions and other works that affect the character of the listed building both externally and internally.

5.2.2 **Conservation Areas:** If your property is within a conservation area your permitted development rights may be restricted. In certain conservation areas even minor alterations to the exterior of a property may require planning permission. Trees in conservation areas are protected and ensuring an extension will not impact on trees is therefore likely to have greater importance. You must notify the Council if you wish to fell, chop or lop trees in Conservation Areas. Some demolition works in conservation areas will require conservation area consent and you should contact the Council for advice if you intend to carry out such work.

5.2.3 **Tree Preservation Orders:** Some trees, which are important to the local area, are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) made by the Council. If your works affect a tree covered by a TPO you may need special permission from the Council.

5.2.4 All works must comply with **Building Regulations**. This is a separate requirement to planning permission and the Building Control Service and independent Approved Inspectors can provide advice.

5.2.5 **Protected Species:** Some houses may hold roosts of bats, which are protected by law. The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) must be notified of any proposed action, which is likely to disturb bats or their

roosts. If you think your property may be used as a roost for bats you should contact the Council and CCW to get advice on how to proceed. Contact details for CCW are given in appendix 5.5. Note also that all birds are protected whilst they are nesting and should not be disturbed during this period.

### **5.3 Typical requirements for a householder planning application**

#### **5.3.1 Location plan**

- Scale 1:1250 preferably and no smaller than 1:2500
- Including a North point
- Outline the application site in red line, and indicate any adjoining land owned or controlled by the applicant with a blue line
- Show the application property in relation to all adjoining properties and the immediate surrounding area, including roads.
- Show vehicular access to a highway if the site does not adjoin a highway

#### **5.3.2 Details of existing site layout - block plan**

- Scale, typically 1:200 or appropriate scale to ascertain required level of detail
- North point, date and number on plans
- Show the whole property, including all buildings, gardens, open spaces and car parking
- Where appropriate: Tree survey, ecological surveys, drainage details
- Indicate all boundaries and the position of nearest buildings.

#### **5.3.3 Details of proposed site layout**

- Scale, typically 1:200
- North point, date and number on plans
- Show the siting of any new building or extension, vehicular/pedestrian access, changes in levels, landscape proposals, including trees to be removed, new planting, new or altered boundary walls and fences, and new hard surfaced open spaces
- Show proposals in the context of adjacent buildings, so distances between the proposed development and existing surrounding buildings can be accurately measured.

#### **5.3.4 Floor plans**

- Scale 1:50 or 1:100
- In the case of an extension, show the floor layout of the existing building to indicate the relationship between the two, clearly indicating new work
- Show floor plans in the context of adjacent buildings, where appropriate
- In the case of minor applications it may be appropriate to combine the layout and floor plan (unless any demolition is involved)
- Include a roof plan where necessary to show a complex roof or alteration to one

#### **5.3.5 Elevations**

- Scale 1:50 or 1:100 (consistent with floor plans)
- Show every elevation of a new building or extension
- For an extension or alteration, clearly distinguish existing and proposed elevations

- Include details of material and external appearance
- Show elevations in the context of adjacent buildings, where appropriate

### 5.3.6 Cross Sections

- Scale 1:50 / 1:100 (consistent with floor plans), where appropriate.

### 5.3.7 Supporting Information

- Use of photomontages, artist's impressions and / or CAD visualisations to illustrate schemes.

## 5.4 Further reading

5.4.1 The following are available from the Welsh Assembly Government or Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)

Welsh Assembly Government 2002, Planning Policy Wales

Welsh Assembly Government 2002, TAN 8 Planning for Renewable Energy

Welsh Assembly Government 2009, TAN 12 Design

Welsh Assembly Government 2003, Householder Guide

Welsh Assembly Government 2004, Sustainable Development Action Plan

Building Regulations - Explanatory booklet

Planning Permission - A Guide for Business

A Householder's Planning Guide for the Installation of Satellite Television Dishes

Local Plans and Unitary Development Plans

Outdoor Advertisements and Signs - A Guide for Advertisers

The Party Wall Etc Act 1996: explanatory booklet

Protected Trees - A Guide to Tree Preservation Procedures

**These more detailed publications may be helpful to some readers:**

BRE 2000, The Green Guide to Housing Specification

Building Research Establishment "Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight" 1991

BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method), [www.breeam.org](http://www.breeam.org)

British Standards Institute BS8300, 'Access for Disabled People'

CABE/DCfW 2004, Creating Excellent Buildings

Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Section 17

Considerate Constructors Scheme, [www.ccscheme.org.uk](http://www.ccscheme.org.uk)

DETR 2000, By Design

DETR GPG287, The Design Team's Guide to Environmentally Smart Buildings

Disability Rights Commission [www.drc.org.uk](http://www.drc.org.uk), Designing for Accessibility,

Centre for Accessible Environments [www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk)

DoE/Countryside Commission, "Lighting in the Countryside: Towards good practice"

DTLR/CABE, 2001, Better Places to Live

Evans et al November 1998 - The Long Term Costs of Owning and Using Buildings,

The Royal Academy of Engineering

ODPM 2004, Safer Places - The Planning System and Crime Prevention

Sustainable Buildings: Benefits for occupiers, BRE Information paper

Welsh Office Circular 16/94, 'Planning Out Crime'

## 5.5 Contacts

### **Architecture Centre Network**

The Architecture Centre Network (ACN) coordinates, supports and advances the work of architecture and related centres. ACN seek to secure greater knowledge, access, participation and influence, at all levels, in the

creation of an excellent built environment for all:  
<http://www.architecturecentre.net/>

### **Association of Building Engineers**

The Association of Building Engineers is the professional body for those specialising in the technology of building  
[www.abe.org.uk](http://www.abe.org.uk)

### **Building for Life**

Building for Life brings together the best designers and creative thinkers to champion quality design of new homes.

[www.buildingforlife.org](http://www.buildingforlife.org)

### **Cadw**

Cadw is the historic environment agency within the Welsh Assembly Government with responsibility for protecting, conserving, and promoting an appreciation of the historic environment of Wales.

Plas Carew

Unit 5/7, Cefn Coed, Parc Nantgarw, Cardiff, CF15 7QQ

Tel: 01443 33 6000

Fax: 01443 33 6001

E-mail: [Cadw@Wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Cadw@Wales.gsi.gov.uk):

[www.cadw.wales.gov.uk](http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk)

### **Centre for Alternative Technology**

An environmental charity aiming to 'inspire, inform, and enable' people to live more sustainably. Key areas of work are renewable energy, environmental building, energy efficiency, organic growing and alternative sewage systems.

Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth, Powys, SY20 9AZ, UK +44 (0)1654 705950: [www.cat.org.uk](http://www.cat.org.uk)

### **CIAT**

#### **Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists**

397 City Road  
London  
EC1V 1NH

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7278 2206

Fax: +44 (0)20 7837 3194

Email: [info@ciat.org.uk](mailto:info@ciat.org.uk)

### **Civic Trust Wales / Ymddiriedolaeth Ddinesig Cymru**

The Civic Trust for Wales promotes civic pride as a means to improving the quality of life for all in the places where they live and work, and encourages community action, good design, sustainable development and respect for the built environment amongst people of all ages.

3rd Floor Empire House, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff  
CF10 5FN

Tel 02920 484606

Fax 02920 464239: <http://www.civictrustwales.org>

### **The Coal Authority**

The Coal Authority works to protect the public and the environment in coal mining areas. The Coal Authority manages the effects of past coal mining in order to promote public safety and safeguard the landscape – now and for future generations.

200 Lichfield Lane, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG18 4RG.

Tel: 01623 637 000

E-mail: [thecoalauthority@coal.gov.uk](mailto:thecoalauthority@coal.gov.uk),

[www.coal.gov.uk](http://www.coal.gov.uk)

### **Countryside Council for Wales**

The Countryside Council for Wales is the Government's statutory adviser on sustaining natural beauty, wildlife and the opportunity for outdoor enjoyment in Wales and its inshore waters.

Countryside Council for Wales, Maes-y-Ffynnon,  
Penrhosgarnedd, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2DW

For all general enquiries contact CCW Enquiry line 0845 1306229 or email: [Enquiries@ccw.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries@ccw.gov.uk)

<http://www.ccw.gov.uk/>

### **Design Commission for Wales**

DCFw's mission is to champion high standards of architecture, landscape and urban design in Wales, promoting wider understanding of the importance of good quality in the built environment, supporting skill building, encouraging social inclusion and sustainable development.

DCFw, 4th Floor, Building Two, Caspian Point, Caspian Way, Cardiff Bay CF10 4DQ: [www.dcfw.org](http://www.dcfw.org)

### **Energy Savings Trust**

A non-profit organisation, funded by government and the private sector. Set up after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the organization has aims to achieve the sustainable use of energy and cut carbon dioxide emissions.

Energy Saving Trust Wales, Wales Albion House, Oxford Street, Nantgarw, Cardiff CF15 7TR

Tel: 01443 845930

Fax: 01443 845940

### **Energy Efficiency information for homeowners**

0845 727 7200

### **Faculty of Party Wall Surveyors**

The Faculty of Party Wall Surveyors is an educational, non-profit making body concerned with party wall matters. It provides a list of accredited surveyors across the country.

**[www.fpws.org.uk](http://www.fpws.org.uk)**

### **Solar PV grants**

0800 298 3978: **[www.est.co.uk/solar](http://www.est.co.uk/solar)**

### **Landscape Institute**

The Landscape Institute is the Chartered Institute in the UK for Landscape Architects, incorporating designers, managers and scientists, concerned with enhancing and conserving the environment.

33 Great Portland Street, London W1W 8QG

Tel: 020 7299 4500

Fax: 020 7299 4501

email: [mail@l-i.org.uk](mailto:mail@l-i.org.uk): **<http://www.l-i.org.uk>**

### **National Assembly for Wales**

Official information on the Welsh Assembly, its members and functions including planning and design.

**[www.wales.gov.uk/](http://www.wales.gov.uk/)**

### **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister**

Useful website for UK Government planning information:

**<http://www.opdm.gov.uk>**

### **Planning Portal**

Government gateway to planning information throughout the UK. Provides information on plans, appeals, applications, contact details, research areas:

**[www.planningportal.gov.uk/](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/)**

### **RSAW**

The Royal Society of Architects in Wales (RSAW) is constituted as the regional organisation of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in Wales.

Bute Building, King Edward VII Avenue, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NB

Tel: 029 2087 4753

Fax: 029 2087 4926

**[http://www.riba.org/go/RIBA/About/RSAW\\_265.html](http://www.riba.org/go/RIBA/About/RSAW_265.html)**

### **RICS Wales**

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors

Tel: + 44 (0)870 333 1600 or email

[contactrics@rics.org.uk](mailto:contactrics@rics.org.uk): <http://www.rics.org/Wales>

### **RTPI**

**The Royal Town Planning Institute**

41 Botolph Lane

London EC3R 8DL

Telephone: 020 7929 9494

Fax: 020 7929 9490

[www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)