

# EXTENSIONS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS:

## A Design Guide

Many planning applications for house extensions are rejected because the proposals are too large and pay insufficient attention to their neighbours or the character of the street.

Sometimes it is impossible to extend a narrow-fronted house with a tiny garden or to put an attic in a shallow pitched roof without spoiling its appearance.

Although some of the items referred to may, in certain circumstances be permitted development, remember that unsympathetic alterations can de-value your house. You can avoid expensive planning applications and time consuming re-submissions by taking account of the advice below.

The guide is based on Policy 72 of the St Albans District Plan Review and the appropriate clauses are under each main heading.

### SCALE, CHARACTER & COMPATIBILITY

- (i) The extension shall relate to the domestic scale, character & appearance of the street.
- (ii) The architectural style, roof form, windows, detailing & materials shall normally be appropriate to the original building, particularly in the conservation area.

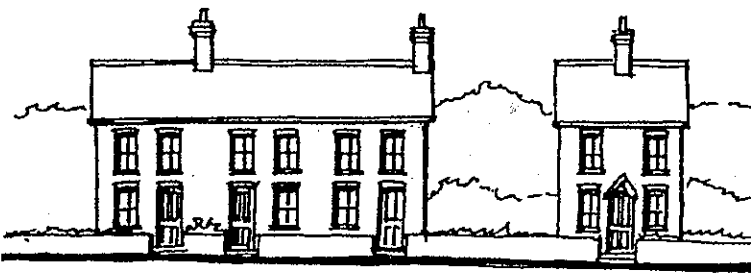


FIG A EXISTING STREET

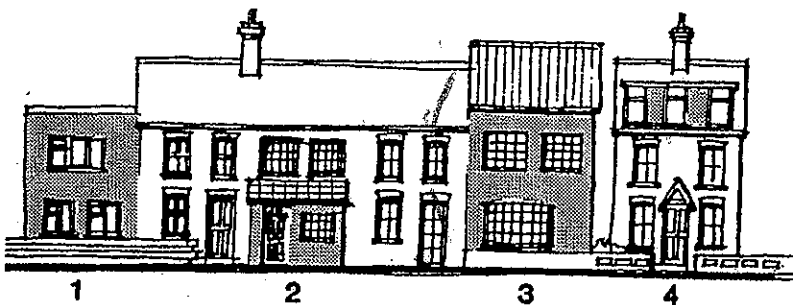


FIG B POOR EXTENSIONS

#### FIG B

Shows how the character of a street could be spoilt.

#### Windows & Doors

The fussy multi-paned windows and doors and the wide "modern" casement windows at ①, ② and ③ are out of character with the original simple vertical sash windows and four panelled doors.

#### Roof Form

The flat roofed extension at ① is not in keeping with the original pitched roofs. The wide roof extension at ④ completely dominates the original roof, giving the appearance of a three storey house.

#### Scale & Character

The extension at ③ is too high and out of scale, completely blocking off the gap between buildings and resulting in a cramped appearance. The porch at ② interrupts the plain, regular pattern of windows and doors.

#### Materials

The heavy concrete tiled roof at ③ and the rendered walls are out of character with the original plain clay tiles or slates and brickwork.



FIG C BETTER EXTENSIONS

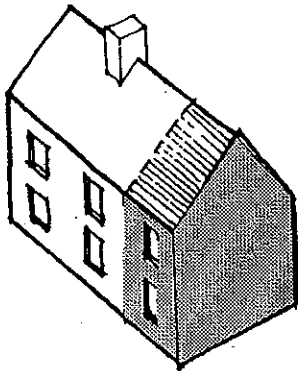
#### FIG C

Shows how more sympathetic extensions could relate to the character of the street. The extension at ① has a pitched roof and at ③, the scale & bulk has been reduced, giving a less cramped appearance. The dormer windows at ④ are in scale with windows below & all windows match the existing.

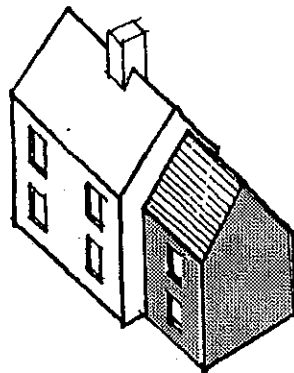
## SCALE, CHARACTER AND COMPATIBILITY, *Continued*

### POOR EXTENSIONS

### BETTER EXTENSIONS



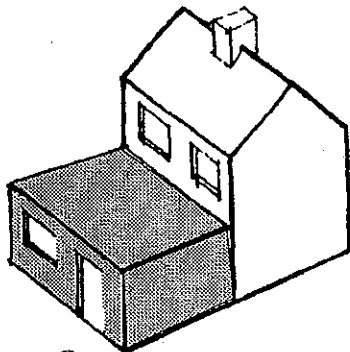
①



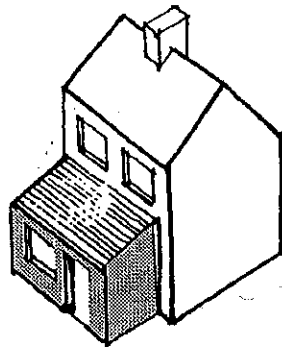
②

**FIG D**

The large side extension ① unbalances the original pair of semi-detached houses. A single storey extension or a smaller two storey extension ② would retain the outline and character of the original houses.



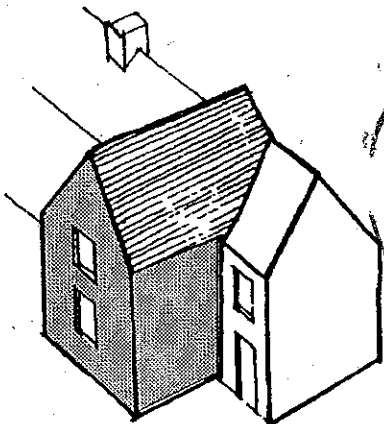
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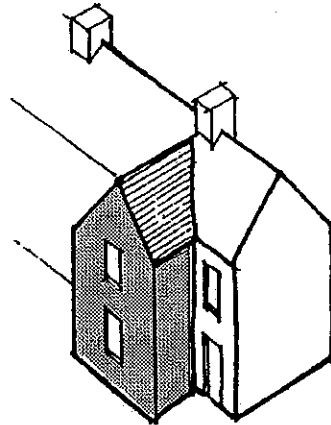
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**FIG E**

The very deep rear extension ① results in a flat roof which is out of character with the original building and will provide dark internal ground floor rooms. A shallower ② or narrower extension could have a pitched roof without obstructing the bedroom windows.



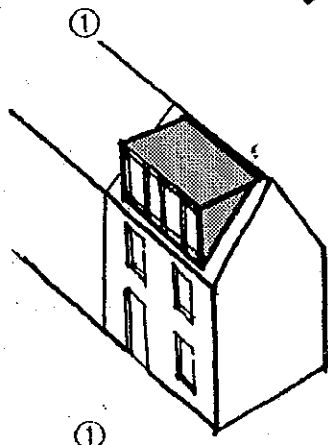
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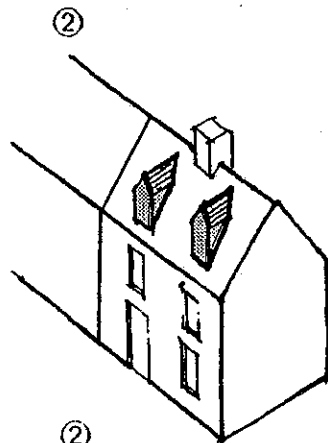
②

**FIG F**

The wide two storey extension ① dominates the existing house and its neighbours. The narrower extension is less dominating, allows a lower roof and is well below the original ridge level.



①



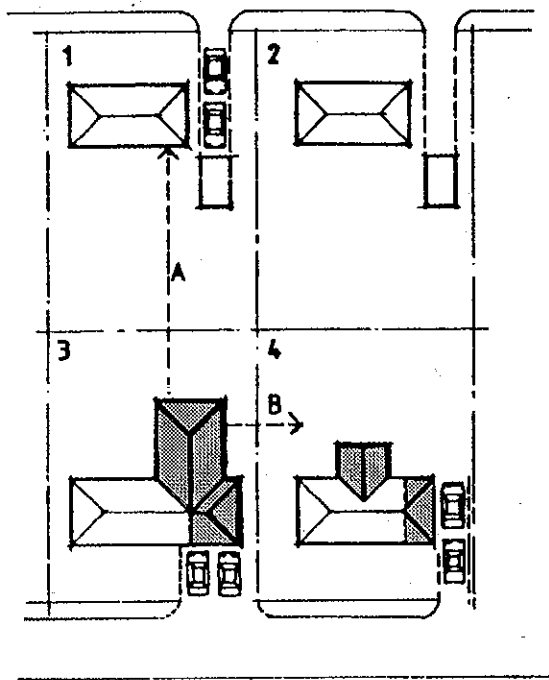
②

**FIG G**

The very wide roof extension ① dominates the roof and effectively creates a flat-roofed second storey. The dormer windows ② have been kept in proportion with the existing windows, are not too large for the roof, maintain the eaves line and are well below ridge level. However, dormers may not always be acceptable, particularly in a pair or terrace.

## SPACE AROUND BUILDING AND AFFECT ON NEIGHBOURS

- (iii) Space around the building - The extension shall not be so large as to seriously diminish the private space, including car parking/garaging around the original building.
- (iv) Car parking/garaging - if potential additional bedroom accommodation is proposed, permission will not normally be granted unless parking provision is made in accordance with policy 40 criterion (iv).



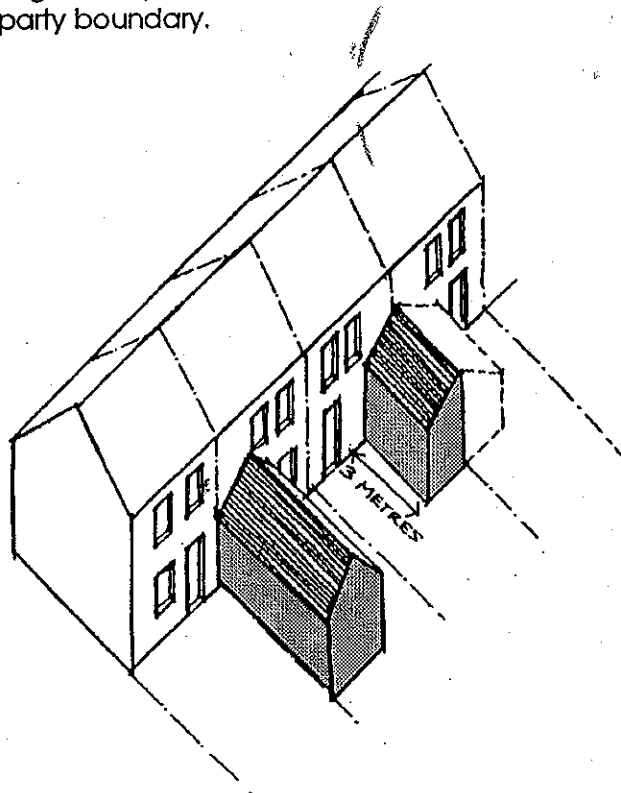
**FIG H**

The houses on plots 1 and 2 are in their original form and have not been extended. There is sufficient space for garages and parking at the side and adequate gardens for the size of house. (see Policy 70 ix).

Plot 3 has very large two storey extensions which would overshadow and probably overlook (see Policy 70 vi) adjoining properties A & B. Space around the house is drastically reduced and cars are forced to park in the front garden where they may spoil the street picture and outlook from the house.

Plot 4 has extensions of more reasonable size. Parking can still be easily accommodated. Overshadowing and over-looking are avoided.

- (v) Affect on adjoining property - the light, privacy or amenity of adjoining properties shall not be unacceptably harmed. Balconies and first floor conservatories are not normally permitted.
- (vi) Single storey rear extensions - shall not normally extend more than 3 metres rearward along the party boundary.



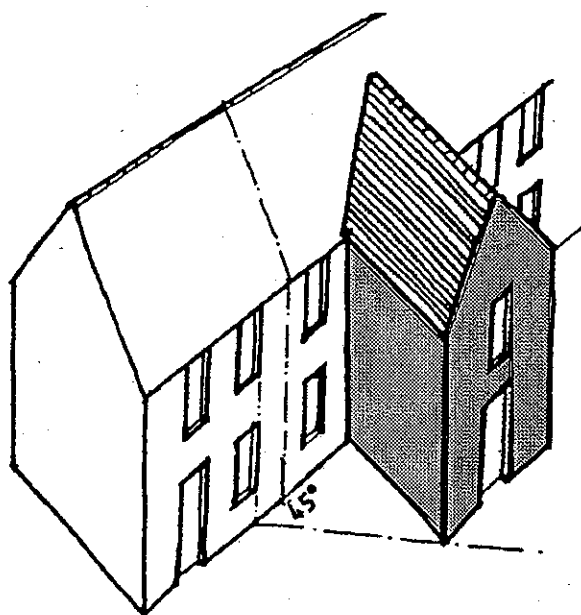
**FIG J**

Shows single storey rear extensions. On the left the deep extension on the boundary overshadows the neighbour's windows and garden. On the right the extension has been limited to a depth of 3m which reduces the worst effects.

## SPACE AROUND BUILDINGS AND AFFECT ON NEIGHBOURS, *Continued*

(vii) Two storey rear extensions;

- a) shall not normally intrude into a 45° visibility zone of a neighbour's ground floor windows.
- b) shall comply with policy 70 (vi) in terms of privacy.



**FIG J**

Two storey extensions can cause severe loss of light. To limit this extensions should not normally project into a "zone of light" measured at 45° from the edge of ground floor windows in the adjoining property.

## THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT

- (viii) In areas of specific and repetitive character, applications that might lead to an adverse cumulative effect will be refused.
- (ix) Where the cumulative effect would lead to terracing of detached or semi-detached houses, extensions other than at ground floor level shall normally be a minimum of 1 metre from the party boundary.



**FIG K**

Shows a street of semi-detached houses with regular gaps and a spacious layout with views to trees beyond.



**FIG L**

Two storey extensions right up to the boundaries could lead to loss of the spacious semi-detached character and create a "terraced" effect.



**FIG M**

By using the rules of policy (ix) and setting back extensions, the spacious character of the street is not completely lost.