

Design Advice Note 1

EXTENDING OR OTHERWISE ALTERING YOUR HOME



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INTRODUCTION

This Advice Note sets out a number of considerations that the Borough Council wishes to see reflected in alterations and extensions to existing residential properties. The principles of good design apply whether your proposal requires planning permission or not. The aim of this note is to promote a better understanding of the options available to you in proposing to alter or extend your home.

If done well, altering or extending your home can add value and character to your property, its setting and your neighbourhood. This will not only benefit yourself but also your neighbours. In contrast, a poorly designed alteration or extension may detract from the value of your property, raise objection from your neighbours and furthermore may detract from the character of the area.

The challenge in altering or extending your home is to meet your personal requirements without harming the character and appearance of your home, its setting or your neighbour's amenity. To achieve good quality design, you will need to consider and understand the individual character of your home and its setting, with the aim of enhancing this through the design of your proposed new building works.

Once you have an idea about what you want and have considered the implications, you will need to have a survey carried out and drawings prepared to show what exists at present and what you propose. You will probably need to engage the services of a good planning agent or architect. The Royal Town Planning Institute publish a list of local Planning Consultants while the Royal Institute of British Architects, produce a list of Architects working in Dorset. Both are available from the Council. Furthermore, there are many others who will carry out surveys, draw plans and submit planning applications for you. Some of these advertise their services in local newspapers or can be found in telephone directories. The best thing to do is to shop around and check on the work they have done. The personal recommendation of someone who has had work done themselves is always a fair guide. A good agent can save you time, trouble and money by anticipating problems and by preparing well thought-out development proposals.

When planning permission is required ¹, you should submit your proposal using the Council's 'Householder Application Form' and, furthermore, refer to the Council's 'Notes of Guidance' and 'Guidance on the submission of Plans, Drawings and Photographs'. This Advice Note constitutes Supplementary Planning Guidance and will be used by the Council in deciding whether planning permission should be refused or granted. The Council has also adopted the principles and guidance contained within 'BY DESIGN' prepared jointly by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE).

¹ Small alterations and extensions do not always require planning permission. However, many will require a Building Control application or Building Notice. If in doubt, check with the Council.

PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

New buildings and curtilages have a significant effect on the character and quality of an area. The appearance of new development and its relationship to its surroundings are important in determining whether to grant or refuse planning permission. Such considerations relate to both the design of buildings and the spaces around them. In consequence, the setting of any new building should be carefully considered, with particular attention being given to the new building's impact on public views, public places and neighbouring property.

In assessing the merits of your proposal, the Council has a responsibility to ensure that new development fits in with the character of the area and does not adversely affect your neighbours. The Council will have regard to national and other strategic guidance together with the policies of the Borough of Christchurch Local Plan ². Furthermore, the Council has produced a Borough-wide Character Assessment, which has also been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance ³. You and your agent are advised to consider all the guidance and policies that may be relevant. Copies of the Local Plan and Character Assessment are available from the Council. In determining your proposal, the Council will consider the visual impact and the affect your proposal will have on:-

- Your own home and the area generally.
- Neighbour's property and amenity.
- Landscape or other environmental features, e.g. open space, trees etc.
- Parking and turning provision on the site and highway safety off the site.

In broad terms: **PROPOSALS FOR ALL NEW DEVELOPMENT MUST BE DESIGNED TO RESPECT THE CHARACTER, OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS OF THE SPECIFIC SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS; THEY MUST HAVE REGARD TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA AND HELP TO CREATE A SENSE OF LOCAL IDENTITY, DISTINCTIVENESS AND PLACE. HOUSE EXTENSIONS AND ADDITIONS SHOULD BE IN HARMONY WITH AND NORMALLY SUBSIDIARY ⁴ TO THE ORIGINAL BUILDING AND SHOULD NOT LEAD TO SIGNIFICANT OVERLOOKING OR OVERSHADOWING OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES; CLOSE IMPORTANT GAPS OR MAKE TERRACES OF OTHERWISE DETACHED PROPERTIES.**

You will need to consider whether your property is situated in or near a specially designated area such as a conservation area or green belt. Furthermore, your home may be "Listed". If it is or it is within a conservation area, please refer to the Council's Conservation Advisory Notes 1 (Listed buildings) or 2 (Conservation Areas) and seek the advice of the Council's Conservation Officer. If your proposal affects a Preserved Tree or a tree within a conservation area, you should seek the advice of the Council's Landscape and Tree Officer.

In determining householder applications, the Council will have regard to whether your proposal could lead to the creation of a separate residential or business unit. If it would, permission may be refused for this reason.

² See Appendix 3 for relevant policies.

³ See Appendix 3 for relevant policies and Appendix 4 for details of Character Areas

⁴ If an addition or extension is not subsidiary to the original building you should provide a reasoned design justification as to why not and furthermore, show how the proposal fits with all other design criteria.

EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING DWELLINGS

When thinking about building an extension, ask yourself ... **what am I trying to achieve?** e.g.:-

- What do I want the extra space for (use)?
- How much and what type of space will this require?
(*area; height; amount of light; provision of services etc.*).
- What physical links are required between my home and the extension?
- Can my home be extended in line with local planning policy and guidance?

Secondly, ask yourself ... **what are my options?** e.g.:-

- Would it be better to extend my home at the front, the rear or the side?
- Do I need a single or multiple storey extension?
- Can I extend upwards into the roof-space instead of outwards?
- Can I make internal alterations (e.g. removing internal walls or split one room into two) so that an extension is not required?

and thirdly, ask ... **what are my constraints?** e.g.:-

- Will my proposal significantly reduce my garden area, result in the loss of parking or in the loss of trees or hedges?
- Does the site slope or have changing levels and, if so, how will this affect my proposal and its impact upon both the site and its surroundings?
- What will be the effect of my proposal on neighbours, i.e. upon their privacy and amenity (over-looking, over-shadowing, over-bearance) or by creating noise and disturbance?
- Which planning policies and guidance affect my proposal?
- Are there covenants affecting my property that limit further development?
- Does anyone have any rights that may affect what I want to do (e.g. rights of way / access etc.)?
- Does the character of neighbouring properties, or of the area generally, provide particular *design-cues* that should be followed?

Identifying local character

Your home does not exist in isolation. What makes it unique and special? Try to identify the various features that make up the character of your home, its setting and your neighbourhood. Understanding the character of your home within its broader context will help you reflect that character in your new extension or alteration. Remember, the space around a building can be as important as the buildings itself.

The Borough Character Assessment identifies six **Townscape Character Areas** within which, **Neighbourhood Character Areas** are identified⁵. Each Townscape Character Area is broadly described in terms of its geographical features, its history and settlement pattern, its townscape and landscape. This is followed by a general description of each Neighbourhood Character Area together with the identification of its main characteristics and its sensitivity to change. Residents who live in **Special Character Areas** should pay particular regard to those areas special qualities and interests.

Factors that help define local character

The Character Assessment provides high-level guidance that may not be helpful to every resident contemplating a small extension or other alteration to their property. In consequence, you should supplement the guidance contained within the Character Assessment with your own assessment of the factors that help define the character of your area, your site and its surroundings. You can do this by asking yourself several related questions and then seeing whether the answers offer any opportunities or constraints that you should consider in planning and designing your extension or alteration, e.g. ask yourself:-

! Is there a uniform building height in area that I should conform to? ! Are buildings well spaced or close together? ! Are there regular gaps between buildings and if so, are they important in maintaining the character of the area or the street? ! Are most residential plots of a similar size and shape or is there a mix? ! Could my proposal be considered as over-development? ! Do properties in the area look similar (e.g. age, design, size, height, massing, materials, etc.) or are there many different types of property? ! Will my proposal conform to these similarities? ! Is the orientation of buildings within the area similar or different? ! What is the orientation of my property and does it conform with that of the area? ! Are there important views or vistas that may be affected by my proposal? ! Is there much soft landscaping (e.g. trees, bushes, hedges along plot boundaries or in gardens etc.) in the area? ! Will my proposal adversely affect the quality or quantity of this? ! Are surrounding roads wide or narrow? ! Will my proposal increase the sense of enclosure of roads or other adjacent land? ! Will it affect highway sight lines or increase on-street parking? ! Are there things nearby that affect my property that I need to consider in planning and designing my extension or alteration (e.g. buildings that dominate, roads or other uses that cause noise and disturbance, etc)? ! Is the area and my plot flat and level (sloping land can cause particular planning and design problems that may need to be overcome)?

Of course, not all these questions may be relevant to your own proposal. However, the answers to these questions will help you identify the characteristics of your neighbourhood, your street and your own property and as a consequence, you and your agent will be able to plan and design your extension or alteration so that it not only fits in but enhances those characteristics.

⁵ See Appendix 4.

Once you have identified your requirements, options and constraints and considered the impact of what you propose on your neighbours and the surrounding area, you should then go on to consider:-

1. How visible will my extension be?

Issues of planning and design may be dependent upon whether your extension is visible to the public. Where it is, there is a responsibility to ensure that it enhances the character of both your own property and the surrounding area⁶. This does not mean that where an extension is not on public view care and attention to planning and design is not required. Such extensions will be seen by neighbours and may affect their amenities. Furthermore, as the environment is dynamic and continually changing what may be hidden today may become visible in the future.

2. Building Lines, Form, Height, Massing and Scale

To ensure the integration of a new building into the locality, the form, scale, height, and massing of existing buildings in and around the site should be respected.

Building Line A residential property should not normally be extended further forward than the substantive building line along the road. If you need to extend beyond the building line, you should explain why and furthermore, explain how this will not harm the street scene or the character of the area.

Form The form of an extension or alteration relates to its shape. **In most cases, the most appropriate form for a new extension will reflect that of your existing home.** If you choose a different form, then the extension or alteration is likely to stand out. In consequence, you will need to show that although it is different it nevertheless fits in with and is complementary to your property.

Height In considering the appropriate height of a new extension you will need to consider whether | You wish to emphasize its visual significance | It will adversely affect any important views or skylines | It will cause overshadowing or other loss of amenity to your own or neighbouring properties | It will prejudice the development of adjacent land | It fits in with your own and neighbouring properties.

Massing Massing relates to the bulk of the proposed building and the disposition of floor space on the site. **Normally, the extension should not dominate your own or neighbouring properties but be visually subdued and subservient to them.** If your proposal is dominating, you will need to justify it in design terms.

Scale At its simplest, scale refers to an amalgam of form, height and massing. This provides a key consideration for relating new development to the existing scale of buildings within the locality and for ensuring that new development is of a human scale at points where people frequently come into contact with it. Human scale is affected by many factors. The angle of a roof and eaves height can be particularly important. With shallow roof pitches, the wall dominates and there is less sense of enclosure. Steeper roof pitches, generous roof overhangs and low eaves increase the sense of enclosure.

⁶ While the 'legal' minimum requirement is for new development not to harm the character and amenity of an area, the Council wishes to encourage better quality buildings and spaces that enhance an area for the broader benefit of the community.

3. Detailed Design

The design of the extension or alteration should be a continuation of the design of your existing property unless there are justifiable reasons why it should not be. In such circumstances, you should submit (*as part of your planning application*) a reasoned justification why the design departs from that of the original property.

Roofs

Whether your proposal involves replacing or otherwise altering an existing roof or the construction of a new roof to an extension, **roof pitches should normally match that of your original property**; and furthermore, normally **span across the narrowest plan dimension**. Generally, **do not mix different roof forms** (*e.g. mix hips and gables*) **on the same property or propose an inappropriate roof form to an older-style property** (*e.g. a hip to an end of terrace Victorian property*).

The introduction of a flat roof as a replacement to an existing pitched roof or as a new roof to an extension will normally be considered incongruous. However, a flat roof to a single storey extension that it is not visible from a road or other public space may be considered acceptable (*but see Safety and Security below*). A flat roof is considered to be a roof with a pitch of 10 degrees or less.

Windows and Doors

There is a tendency to use window and door openings related to the functional requirements of the room without considering the resulting external appearance of the building. This can create unbalancing effects and in consequence, **randomness of window and door size and positioning should be avoided**. The simplest solution for a front elevation is a symmetrical pattern of equally sized and spaced window openings, arranged around a central axis. This works well where the elevation is narrow. In the case of wider elevations, the need for a centralised composition is less great and asymmetrical arrangements can be attractive. However, if a wide elevation contains a door opening this should form the basis of a symmetrical pattern. **If the original property is asymmetrical, this may dictate the design of any new alteration or extension.**

Normally, the total area of window and door openings should be less than the area of solid wall. Openings should be arranged to emphasise the visual strength of the elevation by allowing as wide a solid pier as possible between openings, and keeping openings as far away as possible from corners to create solid corner buttressing.

In order to achieve a visual balance, **the directional emphasis of an elevation should be counteracted by the directional emphasis of the openings within it.** A horizontally proportioned elevation should contain vertically proportioned window openings and vice versa.

Whilst the front elevation is often the most important, the same guidance applies to the composition of rear and side elevations, particularly if they are open to public view.

4. Design for safety and security

Consider the implications of what you propose with respect to reducing both the incidence and the fear of crime⁷. It is recognised that the design of buildings and spaces may act to facilitate rather than deter crime. The following design criteria are suggested to improve security and natural surveillance.

⁷ Advice on safety and security in the home may be obtained from the Crime Reduction Officer at Dorset Police; and for Fire Safety, from Community Fire Safety at Dorset Fire and Rescue Service.

Extensions These should be designed to ensure unobstructed views of the area immediately outside front and rear doors while habitable rooms should be located and orientated to overlook your garden, access points and parking areas. Any porch, garage or ground floor extension should be designed to avoid their use as platforms to gain entry to upper floors (i.e. in such circumstances, a pitched roof is better than a flat roof). Use good quality windows and doors that provide high levels of security. Fit intruder alarms and smoke detectors. Furthermore, ensure that an extension does not obscure visibility along adjacent public footpaths or other public areas.

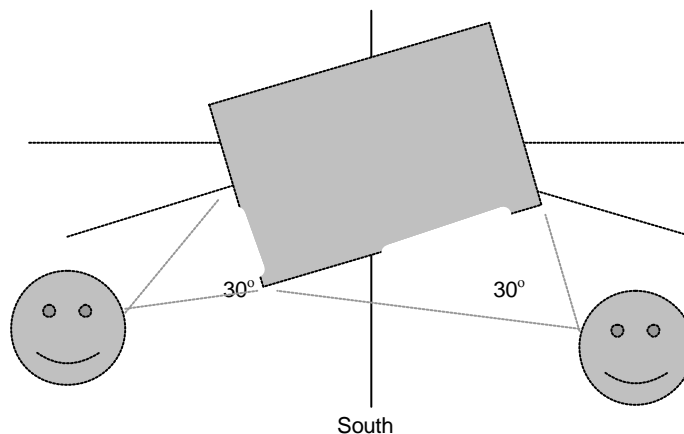
External Space Ensure your public and private external areas are clearly defined and design your landscaping to avoid the creation of heavily shaded or concealed areas. Include security lighting as part of the overall design of the scheme.

Boundaries Waist-high fences, walls or hedges⁸ should be provided to front boundaries while rear and side boundary fences should be higher⁹ and strong enough to deter intruders. Boundary screening should be positioned to ensure it does not allow access to a window ledge or roof. Alternatively, it should be of a form, type and nature to make climbing difficult (e.g. a hedge).

5. Design for energy efficiency¹⁰

New buildings sited within a domestic curtilage and extensions to existing buildings should be designed, sited and orientated so that they:-

Are responsive to the natural features of the site and its surroundings. Take account of factors such as exposure, shelter, shading and solar-gain. Maximise solar-gain to reduce the need for additional space heating and lighting (e.g. design to reduce surface areas by avoiding elongated thin building forms or spread out single storey development, i.e. compact forms are preferable subject to other design considerations – see below). Maximise the use of natural light and ventilation (cluster rooms / uses that require similar environmental conditions – see below). Make use of low-energy high-efficiency fittings and appliances. Make use of re-cycled building materials where appropriate.



While maximising solar gain is not a planning requirement it does constitute good design and will help reduce your heating costs. **Any wall containing windows orientated within 30° of South will benefit from solar gain.**

Fig. 1

⁸ There aren't any planning restrictions with respect to the height of hedges but there are with respect to walls and fences.

⁹ Normally, up to 2 metres.

¹⁰ Energy Efficiency requires consideration in construction, operations for lighting, heating and power, for demolition, recycling and disposal. However, to ensure energy efficiency, particular attention should be given to how an extension is heated, provided with hot water and lighting.

6. Design to maximise daylight and sunlight

The Building Research Establishment suggests that acceptable daylight to interiors is achieved if a 25° vertical angle from a point 2m above the floor (*at the façade*) is not obstructed.

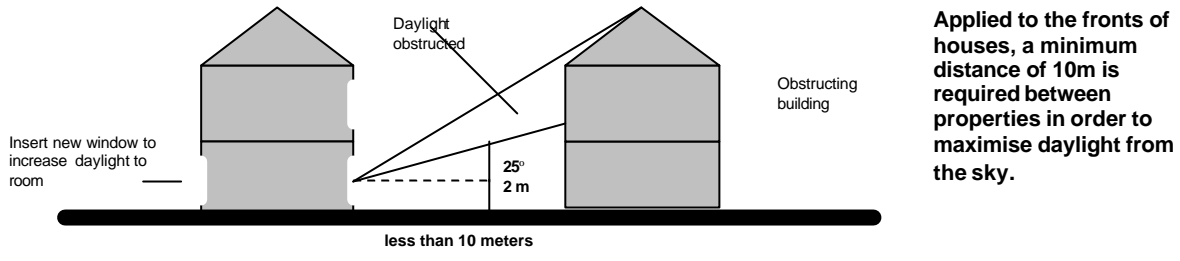


Fig. 2

In applying this guidance, other factors need to be taken into account, i.e. is the affected window the principal or only means of obtaining daylight into the room? Could new windows be inserted into the room? Is the room a principal habitable room?

The Building Research Establishment also suggest that obstruction of daylight and outlook is avoided if an extension does not result in the centre of an existing window being within a combined plan and section 45° overshadowing zone .

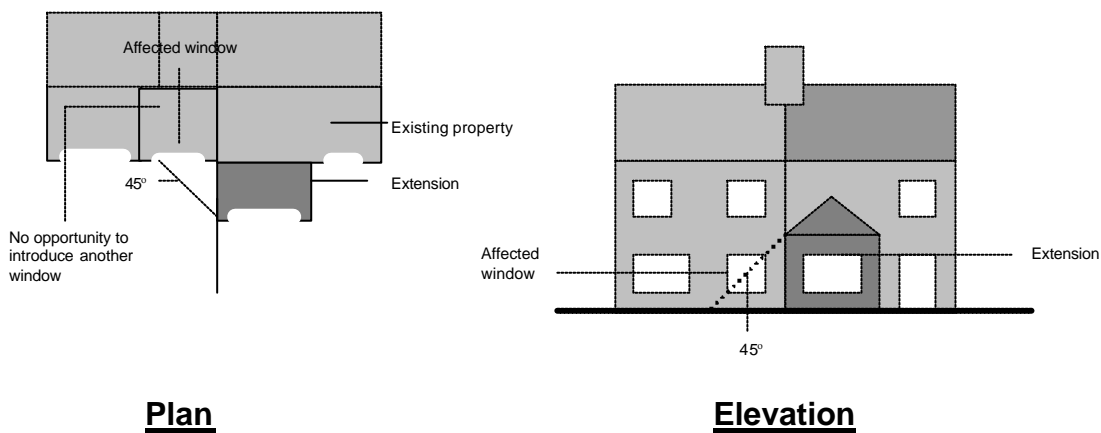


Fig. 3

Where your proposed extension may adversely affect a neighbour's daylight to a principal window of a habitable room, discuss possible remedies with them before you finalise your plans and submit a planning application.

It is not a planning requirement for dwellings to have sunlit rooms although it is preferable for at least some habitable rooms to have a view on to a sunlit external space. In terms of good design, a room will be sunlit if at least one of its main windows faces within 90 degrees of due south and is not obstructed as illustrated above.

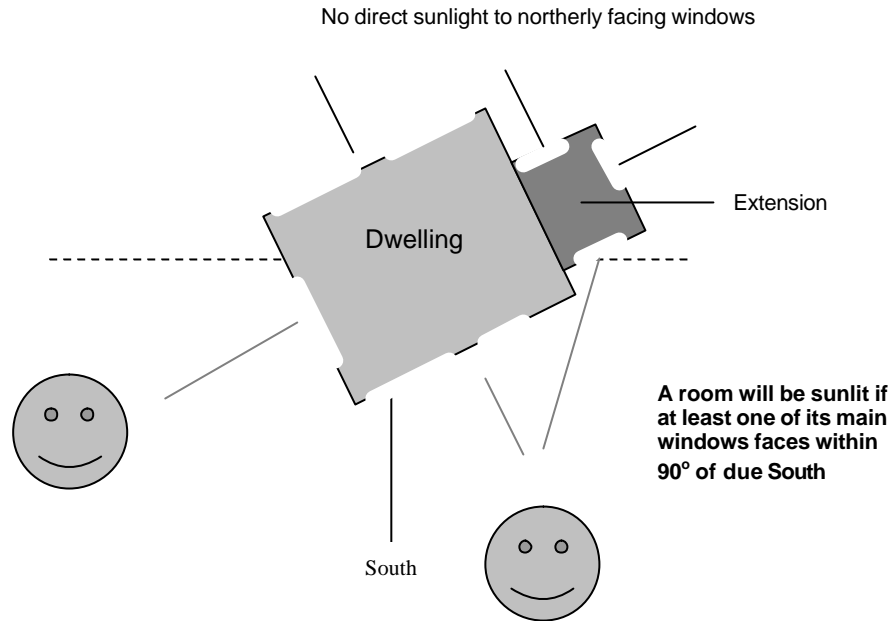


Fig. 4

7. Design for Accessibility

It is a Building Control requirement to design new domestic buildings and extensions so that they can be used by disabled people particularly with respect to gaining entry.

In order to achieve this, a flat area of 900mm² on the same level as the threshold, preferably outside the main entrance (if any) to the new building, should be provided. This area should be approached preferably by a ramp with a maximum gradient of 1 in 12 and a minimum width of 900mm. The entrance door should be a minimum width of 800mm.

8. Building Materials and Sustainability

Think about what materials have been used in the existing building. Are these replicated in other buildings within the neighbourhood or are there variations (*degree of variety*)? Is typical architectural detailing evident within the locality? Consider the type, texture, colour and pattern of bricks, stonework, render and roof coverings together with the materials to be used for boundaries (*stone, brick, timber, hedge*).

Facing and roofing materials should be the same or otherwise reflect and be sympathetic to those used in the original building. If you feel that it may be appropriate to use different materials, explain why. **Where different materials are to be used, this should occur in a logical fashion** (e.g. from one storey to another or to articulate a part of the structure or an architectural feature). **Normally the nature and colour of external woodwork, cladding and rainwater goods should harmonise with that of the materials used in elevations.**

Architectural detailing should be used to emphasise both the character of the material being used and the building. The solidity of brickwork should be expressed by inserting doors and windows within openings by at least a half brick depth. The form of the building may be emphasised by string courses, plinths and projections at eaves level. Variations in bond and colour may be used for decoration while corners and openings can be emphasised by quoins and window surrounds in a different colour or material.

Use materials that provide a best balance in meeting the following criteria: **clean and non-polluting, abundant and renewable, natural, recyclable, energy and design efficient, locally obtained** (*local materials sourced from local suppliers*) and **durable**. **Reduce the use of building materials by carefully calculating the quantities required. Use recycled materials and reclaimed components from within your home. Find ways of recycling materials and components that you don't want.**

Use natural stone sparingly (*particularly quarried limestone*). Instead **use recycled stone and bricks**. **Use cement sparingly** (*consider the use of **lime mortars** as an alternative*). **Avoid using uPVC** (*unplasticated Polyester Vinyl Chlorine*) in **cables, window frames, doors, walls, water and wastewater pipes and vinyl flooring**, among other products (*uPVC requires hazardous chemicals in production and creates toxic wastes*). Advice on alternatives to uPVC is provided by Greenpeace International (www.greenpeace.org/~toxics/). English Heritage also provides advice on window framing options including draught proofing traditional timber windows (www.english-heritage.org.uk).

Avoid using tropical hard woods unless they are sourced from a sustainable source (*Forestry Stewardship Council certified - www.fsc-uk.demon.co.uk*). **Consider using European softwoods** such as pine and birch plywood. **Reuse old or reclaimed floorboards and treat with natural oils and wax finishes**

Insulation

The latest edition of Part L of the Building Regulation deals with the conservation of fuel and power. It deals with new insulation performance standards (U-values) for walls, floors, roofs, windows and doors; together with requirements relating to heating, hot water, lighting and air conditioning systems.

In the majority of homes, the largest percentage of wasted energy is through walls. In consequence, **wall insulation is particularly important**. Furthermore, try to **ensure that your home is well draught proofed**. The Draught Proofing Advisory Association can provide further helpful advice (☎ 01428 654011). For advice on insulation, grants available for insulation and efficient heating systems, contact the Dorset Energy Advice Centre (☎ 01202 469907; email: info@padeac.org.uk; website: www.padeac.org.uk).

Water Saving

There are various measures to help save water, e.g:-

Consider recycling grey water (*i.e. using waste water from basins, baths and showers to flush toilets*); **use sensor or push taps and install spray taps** on hand basins. Furthermore, ensure washing machines, dishwashers, sinks etc. are connected to the right drainage system (*do not send polluted water to the local water course*). Ensure that polluted water goes to the foul system (you can check this by lifting the manhole cover and then running a tap, operating a machine or flushing a toilet to see if the discharge runs to the foul sewer). The run-off from roofs will indicate where the surface water discharges (*while some systems are combined, i.e. surface and waste water both go to the foul sewer, most are separated*).

Energy Saving

As well as the advice noted above, there are other means of saving energy, e.g:-

Consider using energy saving light bulbs and fittings. If buying white goods, ensure they are based on the EU labelling scheme, A – G for energy efficiency. If you need a new boiler, **consider using a condensing boiler or install a solar water heating system**. **Consider using daylight-collecting solar roof slates** (*photovoltaics*).

DORMERS AND ROOFLIGHTS

Roof extensions can be the most difficult to integrate visually with the design and character of an existing property. Because roofs are often the most prominent feature of a building, any alteration or extension to them is likely to be highly visible. In consequence, care is required to ensure that the size, position, design and use of materials are sympathetic and fit well with the design and character of your original home. New roofs should fit in with the roof-scape of the area.

Dormers that break up an unrelieved roof plane (*where this is important to the character of a building or the area*), **or roof-lights that would spoil an unbroken vista of roofs, should be avoided.** Furthermore, **box dormers are unlikely to be acceptable as their shape conflicts with most roof shapes** as will **dormers that project above the ridge of the main roof.** In most cases, **the use of two smaller dormers** (*instead of one large one*) **will be preferable, as it is important that all dormers are in proportion with the size and scale of the main roof.** Furthermore, **ensure that building materials used harmonise with those of the existing roof and building.**

PORCHES

The appearance of a street can be spoilt by badly designed porches that have little visual relationship to the main dwelling or to each other. In designing and building a porch¹¹, you should:-

Keep the size of the porch in proportion to that of the dwelling. Consider the use of open porches and hoods (*as these are often easier to assimilate within the street scene than enclosed porches*). **Use gable and lean-to roofs over the porch in preference to flat ones** and **echo the architectural style and use of building materials of the main dwelling.**

BALCONIES

Balconies are a characteristic feature of several parts of the Borough, particularly in areas adjacent to the coast. Not surprisingly, many residents wish to take the opportunity to create an 'outdoor room with a view'. In deciding whether to construct a new balcony, you will need to consider:-

Whether balconies are characteristic of the area and whether the location, size and design of the balcony fits-in with the character and appearance of your property. If not, it is unlikely that it will be granted permission. **Guidance elsewhere in this note deals with the issue of achieving a design that fits in with the character of the property and the area.**

It is also important to decide what function the balcony will perform. The function of a balcony relates to its size, i.e. the use of a large flat roof as a balcony may allow several people to use it as an 'outdoor room' while a small cantilevered platform balcony, may only be used by one or two people. Thus different sized balconies will allow different functions and different intensities of use and thus produce different visual and neighbour impacts. **Harm may be caused by creating the potential for generating noise and disturbance and by over-looking either into a neighbour's habitable room or into their private external amenity space** (*i.e. the first 3m of a neighbour's rear garden immediately behind their dwelling*). **Consider whether the use of screens will help mitigate against harmful neighbour impacts.** If the location, size and function of a balcony will harm the amenities of neighbours, it is unlikely that it will be granted permission.

¹¹ Small porches do not often require Planning or Building Regulation approval. If in doubt, check with the Council.

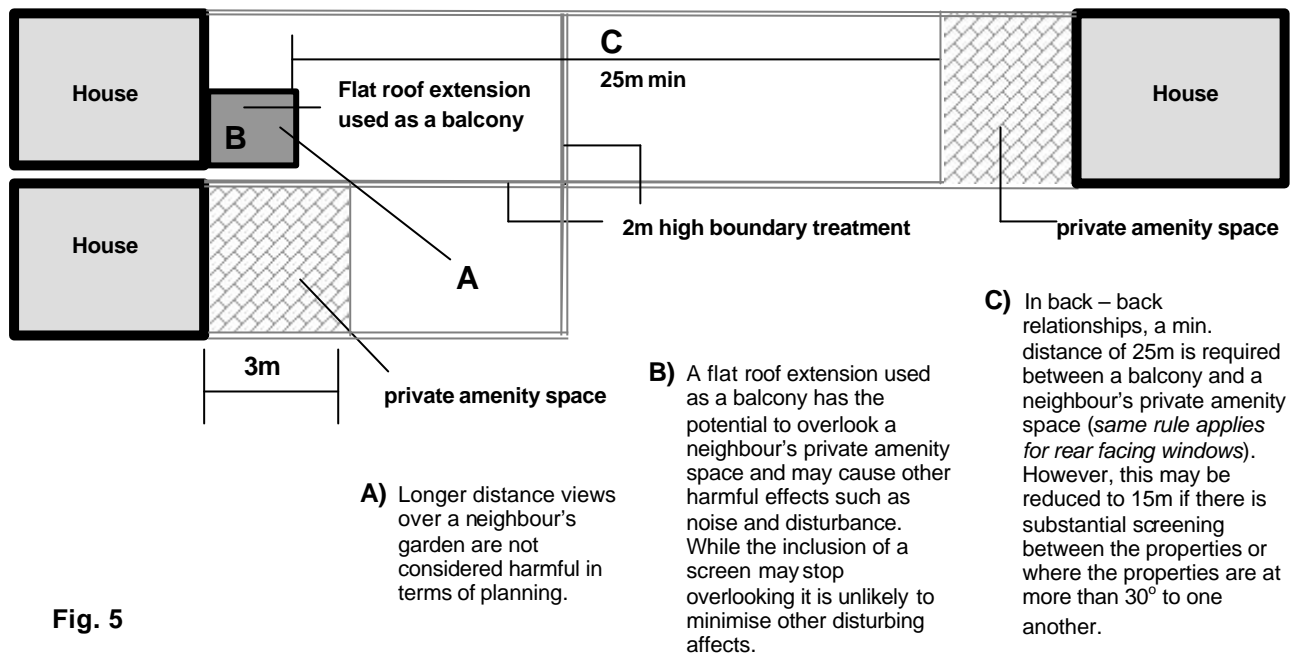


Fig. 5

CONSERVATORIES

Ready-made conservatories often require planning permission ¹². Conservatories are treated as any other extension or addition. The only time a conservatory will not require permission is if it falls within your properties permitted development rights. However, these rights diminish if your property has been extended or other free-standing structures have been erected within its curtilage. In consequence:-

It is advisable to contact the Council to establish what permitted development rights remain on your property before you go to the expense of buying and installing a conservatory. Do not rely on the advice of a retailer or contractor.

When installing or building a conservatory:-

Choose a design that **fits in with the style, character, size and form of your dwelling**. You will need to consider how the conservatory impacts upon your neighbour's amenity (*obtrusiveness, overlooking, noise etc.*) and how it may affect the street-scene. Remember, **low-level glazing should use safety glass**. A conservatory should be **fully isolated from the main building** to prevent summer overheating and winter heat loss in adjacent rooms. **Double or triple glazing and insulation** will lengthen the time in the year in which it is comfortable to use the conservatory without heating and furthermore, reduce noise disturbance.

NEW OR REPLACEMENT WINDOWS

The insertion of new window openings may require planning permission if they would materially affect the external appearance of your property. The insertion of replacement windows within existing openings will not require planning permission ¹³. However, if a building is Listed, Listed Building Consent will be required. Whether permission is required or not, new or replacement windows can have a significant

¹² A conservatory does not require Building Regulation approval if it is smaller than 30 sq. m., has a translucent roof, includes safety glass where appropriate and separation from the main dwelling is maintained.

¹³ However, all replacement glazing now comes under Building Control and must comply with new thermal performance standards.

effect on the appearance of your home. When considering inserting new openings or replacement windows, you should:-

Keep the form and design-style of the original windows and avoid the use of modern designs and materials that clash with the character and appearance of your home (e.g. avoid 'mock-heritage' designs that do not fit with the age and architectural style of your property). If possible, **do not mix different types or styles of window in the same elevation. Always try to set windows 100mm back from the external face of the wall** (this will improve the look of your property and may reduce the need and cost of maintenance).

Windows should let light in but stop heat escaping by using double or triple glazing. Ensure parts of a window are capable of being opened to allow natural ventilation (e.g. they should have secure opening fan lights or trickle vents). However, **Building Regulations require you have at least one openable window at 1st floor level of a size capable of allowing persons to escape in the event of fire.**

SATELLITE DISHES

While the erection of many satellite dishes are "permitted" and do not require permission, you should still consider the colour, size and siting of the dish, as such factors can reduce their visual intrusion. In broad terms, you should:-

Keep the size of the dish down to a minimum, avoid locations where the dish would stand out against the sky and be of a colour that blends with its background.

ACCESS, TURNING, GARAGING AND PARKING ARRANGEMENTS

The Council will seek to retain an appropriate level of existing on-site parking and garaging. You will need to keep this in mind when considering any new building works to your property.

If your property has an access on to a classified road ¹⁴, **the Highway Authority will wish to ensure that you can access and exit your property in forward gear.** In consequence, **you will need to be able to turn a vehicle around within your curtilage.**

Access and Driveways

Altering an existing vehicular access or proposing a new one onto a classified road requires planning permission. If you need to alter an access or form a new one:-

Ensure adequate visibility and sight-lines can be achieved and keep the access well away from road junctions.

Driveways serving a garage should:-

Be long enough to accommodate a car parked in front of the garage leaving enough space to open the garage door without the car projecting onto the footway (i.e. 5.5 metres minimum). However, **an additional length will be required if gates are located at the entrance of the drive to allow them to be opened inwards.** Furthermore, the drive should be **wide enough to allow access to both sides of a parked car and allow a pathway to one side** (i.e. 3.2 metres minimum). **Where the driveway does not provide a path to the dwelling, the width may be reduced to 3 metres (or 2.6 m if access is only required to one side of a parked car)** (see Fig 6). Driveways should be finished in **materials that reflect the character of your property and its surroundings.**

¹⁴ Check with the Council to see if you live on a classified road.

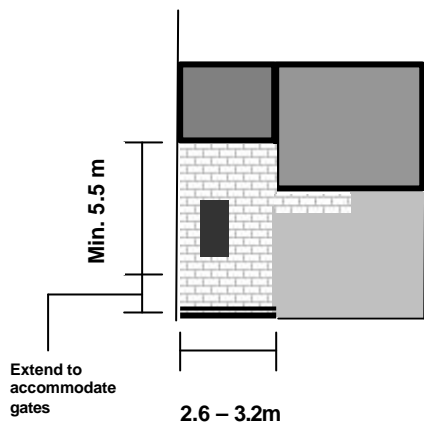


Fig. 6

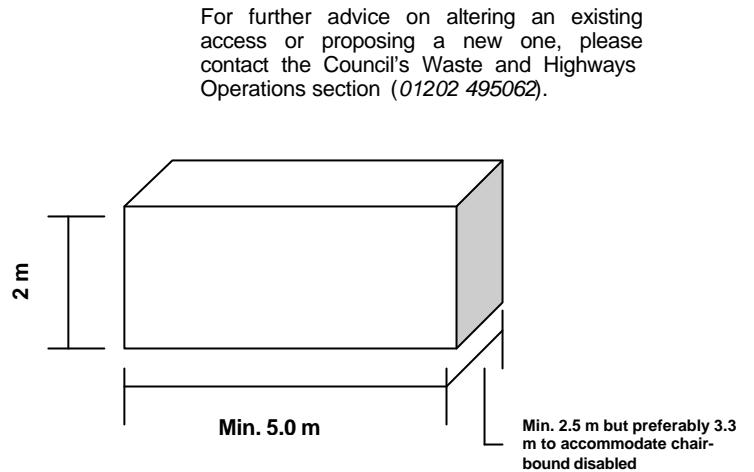


Fig. 7

Building a new Garage

A garage that is poorly designed can upset the 'balance' and overall appearance of your property while too much variety in design and use of materials along a street frontage will adversely affect the character of the area and the street-scene.

The location and design of a garage should:-

Reflect the character of your dwelling while being responsive to the character and constraints of the site (e.g. you need to consider whether it would be better to attach or detach the garage from your dwelling). If detached, consider whether it would be better to locate the garage close to the dwelling (so that it forms a single composition) or away from it. **In deciding which of these options to pursue, consider both your own requirements and the effects on neighbours.** If a new garage is to be built attached or in close proximity to your dwelling, remember that this may result in the garage door(s) dominating the front of the dwelling and compromising the importance of the front entrance and, hence, the relationship of the dwelling to the street. If your property has a narrow frontage, the effect can be quite dominant. The prominent positioning of garage doors at the end of a cul-de-sac, road junction or bend in the road may constitute a visual downgrading of the townscape. **You will need to decide whether the design of the garage should reflect the design, scale, proportions, colour and building materials of your original property** (important if the garage is to be attached or sited close to the dwelling); **or whether there are reasons why the design should be different** (perhaps it should be more related to the design and character of other neighbouring properties). **All garages should have minimum internal dimensions of 5m (L) x 2.5m (W) and 2m (H) (Fig 6).** A garage designed for someone who is chair-bound disabled, should have a minimum width of 3m (but preferably 3.3m).

Accommodation above garages

In proposing new habitable accommodation above an existing garage or building a new garage with first floor accommodation, you will need to give careful consideration as to:-

How the increased height and massing can be accommodated in an appropriate form and how it impacts upon your own and your neighbours amenity, the character of your existing property and the area in general.

The Council will have regard to whether your proposal could lead to the creation of a separate residential or business unit. If it would, permission may be refused for that reason.

Converting an existing garage into habitable accommodation

An integral garage often lends itself to a simple conversion into habitable accommodation while a detached garage can often be converted to ancillary accommodation (e.g. a games room). Both may require planning permission and Building Regulation approval. In determining such proposals, the Council will have regard to whether:-

The loss of car parking could lead to more on-street parking in the area, the accommodation could be used as a separate residential or business unit (and whether any future business use would be acceptable within a residential area) and whether the design and use of building materials fits in with those of your original building.

On-site Parking

The majority of on-site parking is located within front gardens. A front garden provides pedestrian access and acts as a setting to the home; it is not merely an empty space but a semi-private territory and transition-zone between the public highway and the private home. The design of on-site parking should be:-

Located to reduce the visual impact of parked cars on the street scene; or screened by the use of soft landscaping (e.g. shrubs and trees) or hard landscaping (e.g. walls, timber screens and fences). Located away from neighbouring properties (particularly neighbours habitable rooms) and furthermore, designed to reduce any adverse impacts on neighbours (e.g. noise and disturbance). Located and designed to allow natural surveillance of parked vehicles. Have minimum dimensions of 4.8 m x 2.4 m; spaces for chair-bound disabled drivers should have a minimum width of 3.0 m (preferably 3.3m).

GARDEN BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

A clutter of out-buildings and other garden structures can harm the character and appearance of an area. Furthermore, every family-dwelling should have a reasonably sized and shaped private garden for sitting out in private, drying clothes, children's play etc. In consequence, you should:-

Avoid sitting outbuildings, storage tanks, swimming pools etc., in locations that are prominent from your neighbours' property or public places. Avoid introducing new structures (including extensions to the main dwelling etc.) that reduce your garden space below the recommended size (i.e. at least 100 sq. m. for a larger 3 - 4 bed dwelling and at least 50 sq. m. for a smaller 1 - 2 bed dwelling; with a 10 metre minimum garden depth). Consider how the new works will affect the shape, level of privacy, orientation and remaining usable space (are you over-developing your property?). Remember to make room to store recycling boxes, rubbish bins and composting bins for garden and kitchen waste. Use the most environmentally friendly option for building structures (e.g. for decking, use wood from a sustainable source).

EXTENDING PRIVATE GARDENS

Where you require planning permission to extend your garden this is likely to be refused if it results in the loss of existing public amenity space or landscape character.

LANDSCAPING

The 'leafy' character of the Borough is a result of its extensive tree and shrub cover on both public and private land. The Council will seek to protect and enhance the part played by such planting throughout the Borough.

Landscape issues are regarded as an integral part of the design and development process. **Consideration must be given to the form and use of all external spaces at the earliest stage in the design of new development.** In considering development proposals, the quality and quantity of trees, shrubs and hedging, low-planting and grass should be such that the proposal makes a **positive contribution to the character of the area** and the **diversity of local wildlife by specifying native British species**

The Council requires new development to be appropriately landscaped to provide a suitable setting and to ensure integration with surrounding landscape and topographical features. In consequence, where significant landscape issues occur, **the Council will expect a site survey and landscape scheme to be submitted with a planning application.** The survey should include the plotting of existing significant trees (*including their height, spread and condition*), existing and proposed ground levels across the site together with the identification of any trees which will be lopped, topped or felled due to development. Retained trees must be distinguished from new planting and adequately protected throughout the construction period¹⁵.

Suitable hard (*e.g. paving*) and soft landscaping (*e.g. trees and shrubs*) can make a major contribution to the appearance and character of your property and the surrounding area. In consequence, you should:-

Replace existing trees and shrubs lost through development and **protect those that remain** during building works. **Avoid planting new trees** (*especially willows and poplars*) **close to sewers, drains and building foundations.** **Use appropriate indigenous trees and shrubs to soften and integrate new development or screen unsightly features.** **Use species that promote local wildlife.** **Reuse rain water collected from water butts.** **Allow room for a compost bin and recycle garden and organic waste.** **Incorporate wild patches to attract wildlife.** **Avoid using peat as this a finite resource** (*Use alternative mushroom composts or similar*). **Avoid plants that require pesticides.** **Reuse paving stones or other building materials from demolition or construction waste.** If building to the edge of your home, **ensure that the damp proof course and air-bricks are uncovered.** **Provide drainage to hard surfacing and or use porous materials.** **Consider energy efficient lighting** (*e.g. use solar powered lights and water fountains*).

BOUNDARY TREATMENT

The objective of having a screen (*wall, hedge, fence etc.*) along a boundary is to achieve privacy and security. While it is important that new boundary treatment is visually pleasing to yourself, your neighbours and other residents it should also fit in with those boundary treatments that are characteristic of the area. With this in mind, you should:-

¹⁵ Contact the Council's Landscape and Tree Officer to discuss your landscape proposals and or seek advice about works to / protection of trees and or the details to be submitted.

Retain or plant new hedgerows where possible or otherwise use stone or brick walls along boundaries that adjoin public areas or footways. Try to avoid ornate concrete block constructions, ranch-style post and wire fencing and inter-woven timber panel fencing, on prominent 'public' boundaries. Use soft landscaping to soften these forms of treatment if their use is absolutely necessary. Consider whether the proposed boundary treatment can be used to obtain illegal access to your property (e.g. standing on top of a boundary wall to obtain access through 1st floor windows), or by criminals to hide.

Many boundary walls and fences require planning permission before they are erected. Any wall or fence higher than 1m along a boundary that adjoins a highway and any above 2m along a boundary that adjoins a neighbour's property, will require permission. If in any doubt, contact the Council.

Appendix 1 – Summary Do’s and Don’ts

DO’S ✓	DON'TS X
<p>Consider the character of your home and its setting and design your proposal to harmonise with that character. This is often best achieved by designing your proposal as a continuation of the original design of your property.</p>	<p>Put your personal requirements above those of the public or your neighbours. Consider all three.</p>
<p>Consider the opportunities and constraints of your property and its surroundings and design a proposal that responds to these.</p>	<p>Design your proposal so that it causes direct over-looking, significant over-shadowing or is over-bearing to your neighbours.</p>
<p>Ensure that the building line, form, height, massing and scale of your proposal fits with and is subsidiary to that of your existing property and does not cause unacceptable harm to your neighbours. Give particular attention to public views.</p>	<p>Close important gaps in the street or form terracing effects unless this is characteristic of the area.</p>
<p>Design your proposal from the outside → in; not from the inside → out (<i>i.e. the external appearance is most important</i>).</p>	<p>Ignore the possibility that the design of your proposal could make crime easier.</p>
<p>Give careful consideration to the position, size and materials used with respect to windows and doors. Will a symmetrical or asymmetrical arrangement fit best?</p>	<p>Use unsympathetic, uncharacteristic or unsustainable building materials.</p>
<p>Design new roofs to fit with the prevalent roofscape of the locality. Design dormers that harmonise with the main roof.</p>	<p>Propose new roofs or dormers that are higher than the ridge of your existing main roof. Introduce large box dormers.</p>
<p>Consider hard and soft landscaping as an integral part of the design.</p>	<p>Alter your property resulting in an increase of on-road parking.</p>
<p>Give careful consideration to the design of ancillary development such as balconies, garages, drives, garden structures etc. as they can all have a significant and cumulative impact upon that character and quality of an area.</p>	<p>Introduce balconies that would unreasonably annoy neighbours through their use.</p>

Appendix 2 - Useful Contacts

Christchurch Borough Council, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Christchurch, BH23 1AZ

Web Site www.christchurch.gov.uk (📄)

General Enquiries	Main Reception	01202 495000 (☎)
Planning and Building Control Enquiries	Community Services Reception	01202 495234 (☎)
Listed Building / Conservation Enquiries	Conservation Officer	01202 495047 (☎)
Tree Work Enquiries	Landscape & Tree officer	01202 495014 (☎)
		01202 495040 (☎)
Highway Enquiries	Highways Design	01202 495083 (☎)
Planning Enforcement Enquiries	Planning Enforcement	01202 495035 (☎)
		01202 495067 (☎)

Royal Institute of British Architects, Wessex Region, 16 Narrow Quay, Bristol, BS1 4QA

Clients Advisory Service www.architecture.com (📄)
0117 934 9966 (☎)
0117 934 9391 (📄)

Royal Town Planning Institute, 41 Botolph lane, London, EC3R 8DL www.rtpi.org.uk (📄)
(Provide list of local planning consultants) 020 7929 9494 (☎)

Planning Inspectorate, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6PN

(Deals with appeals against Council planning decisions) www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk (📄)
0117 372 6372 (☎)

Dorset Fire & Rescue Service www.dorsetfire.co.uk (📄)
Community Fire Safety 01202 844691 (☎)
(Advice to householders –
Fire Safety in the home)

Dorset Police www.dorset.police.uk (📄)
Crime Reduction Officer

BRE Green Guide to Housing Specification www.bre.co.uk (📄)
(an environmental profiling system for building materials and components used in housing).

Energy Efficiency Best Practice in Housing www.est.org.uk/best (📄)
Government funded programme managed by the **Energy Saving Trust**. Information and advice to promote energy efficient technologies and techniques.

Friends of the Earth Good Wood Guide www.foe.co.uk (📄)

Advice on materials, methods and other issues, try www.constructsustainably.com (📄)

Greenpeace publications www.greenpeace.org.uk (📄)
Guide to suppliers .

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) www.fsc-uk.demon.co.uk (📄)
(FSC trademark is a label on timber and wood products which indicates that the wood comes from well-managed forest).

Appendix 3 – Local Plan and Character Assessment Policies

Local Plan¹⁶ policies that may be relevant to Householder proposals

BE 1

Within a Conservation Area, for either new development, alteration/extension or change of use, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

BE 4

Within Conservation Areas proposals for new development, alterations or extensions to buildings and for the change of use of land or buildings will be expected to meet all of the following criteria:

- 1) the siting, design, scale, form and materials respect and complement those of existing buildings and spaces.
- 2) historically significant boundaries or other features contributing to the established pattern of development in the area are retained.
- 3) open spaces important to the character or historic value of the area are protected.
- 4) important views within and out of the area are maintained.
- 5) the level of activity, traffic, parking, services or noise generated by the proposal do not detract from the character or appearance of the area.

BE 5

A proposal for a new development or alteration to a building or demolition of a building that is outside but close to the boundaries of a Conservation Area will be permitted provided it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the adjacent Conservation Area.

BE 14

The council will not permit development involving alterations or extensions to Listed Buildings which would adversely affect their architectural character or historic interest.

H 12

Proposals for private or institutional residential development, on allocated and non-allocated sites, or extensions to existing residential premises will be permitted provided that:

- 1) they are appropriate in character, scale, design and materials to the immediate locality.
- 2) the residential amenities of existing and future occupiers of dwellings are not adversely affected by noise or disturbance or by the loss of light or privacy.
- 3) they do not result in the loss of an important landscape or other environmental feature, such as open space or trees, which is part of the character of the area.
- 4) they include where appropriate an adequate provision of open space (see policy I20).
- 5) permanent accommodation for elderly persons in the form of sheltered accommodation will only be occupied by persons of age 60 years or over or in the case of occupation by couples, one occupant is over the age of 60 years and the other is over the age of 55.

H 16

Development will be expected to be designed in a manner which takes into account the need for security and crime prevention. The local planning authority will assess the need for such measures having regard to the frequency and seriousness of types of crime in the area. Any security and crime prevention measures will be expected to be designed so as to respect local circumstances and visual amenities.

¹⁶ The Local Plan can be viewed at the Civic Offices, local Libraries or through the Council website.

The following are a summary of other Local Plan policies that may be relevant:-

ENV 9

Sets out criteria for development within the identified Coastal Zone.

ENV 20

Seeks to protect the Green Belt from development which would have an adverse effect due to siting, size, materials or design.

ENV 21

Emphasizes the high priority to be given to the quality of landscaping provision when assessing schemes for new development or redevelopment.

BE 2

Sets out criteria for assessing proposals for the total or substantial demolition of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

BE 6

Resists permission or renewal of temporary/prefabricated buildings in Conservation Areas where they adversely affect the character or appearance of the area.

BE 9

Sets out criteria for assessing proposals for extensions to existing dwellings and improvements to existing, tourist/recreational and public facilities within the Mudeford Quay area.

POLICY BE 13

Sets out criteria for the rare circumstances in which the total or substantial demolition of Listed Buildings will be permitted.

BE 15

Seeks to protect and enhance the setting of Listed Buildings when considering development proposals.

BE 16

Seeks to protect existing views of important buildings and attractive vistas when considering proposals for new development.

BE 19

Sets out criteria to assess proposals for alteration or extension of buildings identified by the Borough Council as being of local interest.

BE 21

Ensures that archaeological field evaluations of relevant sites are undertaken prior to any planning decision being taken.

H 14

Sets out criteria for extensions to existing dwellings in the Green Belt.

Character Assessment policies, parts of which may be relevant to Householder Proposals

The Borough Character Assessment contains policies dealing with New Development in the Countryside and Residential Density. However, the most relevant to householder proposals are:-

Design and Quality of New Development, Local Distinctiveness and Sustainability

A High standard of design and the use of appropriate durable, indigenous and recycled building materials is expected in all new development throughout the Borough. New development will not be permitted unless:

- (a) It respects, protects and enhances the:
 - established townscape, urban grain and spatial layout, building lines, topography, landmarks, views and vistas within and around the area;
 - site coverage, density and plot sizes predominant within the area;
 - existing spaces of value around and between buildings and seeks to create new attractive spaces of identifiable character;
 - detailed design and treatment of surrounding buildings including roof-scape, scale, bulk, height, massing and hierarchy of surrounding buildings;
 - soft and hard landscaping including walls, enclosures and paving schemes found in the surrounding area and furthermore, retains and supplements important trees, shrubs and hedgerows;
 - the form, character and ecological value of parks, gardens and open spaces within the area.
- (b) Retains gardens, incidental green spaces and gaps between buildings where these are important to the established character of the area.
- (c) Uses high quality durable and where possible, indigenous and recycled building materials appropriate to the development and its setting.
- (d) New buildings and spaces at pedestrian level should provide visual interest and a sense of identity and place and furthermore, the proposed built layout should be easily understood by potential users and creates areas of identifiable character.
- (e) It avoids causing harm to the neighbourhood and adjoining properties through visual intrusion, loss of privacy, loss of light, noise and disturbance or pollution.
- (f) It provides for safe and convenient access for all, that will not cause or increase danger to pedestrians and road-users and furthermore, increases permeability through residential areas.
- (g) The traffic generated can be accommodated on surrounding roads without serious detriment to amenity, safety or traffic flow.
- (h) It provides sufficient parking and space for servicing.
- (i) Adopts design-measures to reduce the opportunity for anti-social behaviour, crime and fear of crime.
- (j) Incorporates appropriately designed and positioned security measures on, in and around buildings and surrounding spaces, so as to minimize their visual impact.
- (k) Maintains a clear distinction between private and public spaces around buildings and ensures informal surveillance of public space.
- (l) It retains, does not adversely affect and where appropriate enhances important landscape, natural, ecological, historical or architectural features.
- (m) Existing local services and utilities have sufficient capacity, or may be programmed to have that capacity.
- (n) It includes where appropriate an adequate provision of open space.

Development within Conservation Areas, Special Character Areas, Streetscape Areas and Areas of Good Quality Public Townscape

The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas, Streetscape Areas and Areas of Good Quality Public Townscape and will refuse development proposals within, adjacent or affecting such areas that are considered to be detrimental to the appearance, character or setting of that area. In consequence, the Council will:

- Refuse applications that involve the demolition, or partial demolition, of buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a 'special' area and which help define its identity, unless it can be shown beyond reasonable doubt, that the building or structure is unsafe, dangerous or beyond beneficial use. The Council will seek to introduce Article 4 designations in 'special' areas that do not have Conservation Area status.
- Seek high quality design in new development that respects and is sympathetic to the particular character and appearance of the area. New development should have regard to the contribution to local character by (1) historic property plot sizes and boundaries (2) historic layouts and patterns of development (3) open spaces of historic value (4) traditional uses or mix of uses (5) characteristic materials, scale of buildings and detailing (6) the sitting and composition of buildings and the spaces they create (7) local vistas and views (8) the extent to which traffic intrudes or reduces the enjoyment of the area by pedestrians (9) the intensity of development in the locality. New development should respect the character, appearance and grain of the area. It should respect the predominant building style, but where a uniform style does not prevail, contemporary designs of a high quality will be encouraged.
- In predominantly residential areas where the designations apply, replacement dwellings should only be permitted on the basis of one-for-one, unless otherwise justified. A replacement dwelling or an extension to a dwelling will be permitted if its design blends in form, scale, mass, height. Use of materials and architectural detailing of the vernacular character of the area. Furthermore, changes of use and or the sub-division of a dwelling into smaller units may be resisted.
- Resist the loss of individual and groups of trees of public amenity value together with open space that contribute towards the character of the area.
- Insist that where changes of use are acceptable, they respect and enhance the local historic as well as visual character of the area.
- Protect vistas, views, landmarks and topographical features either within or affecting the setting of an area.

Appendix 4 – Borough Character Assessment – Character Areas.

Townscape and Neighbourhood Character Areas

Townscape Character Area	Neighbourhood Character Area
Fairmile and Jumpers Common	Barrack Road / Christchurch Cemetery. Canberra Road. The Grove. St Catherine's Hill / Hillside Drive. Marsh Lane.
Town Centre	Priory Quarter and Castle Street. High Street, Church Street, Castle Street and Bridge Street. Millhams Street / Ducking Stool Lane. Whitehall, Church Lane and Quay Road. Christchurch Quay, the Quomps, Priory Quay and Convent Meadows. Saxon Square and Fountain Way. Druitt Gardens, the Creedy and Barrack Road.
Purewell, Stanpit, Mudeford and Friars Cliff	Purewell. Stanpit. Mudeford. Friar's Cliff.
Somerford	South of Somerford Road. North of Somerford Road and East of Burton Road. North of Somerford Road and West of Burton Road.
Highcliffe and Walkford	Lymington Road / Highcliffe High Street. Steamer Point / Highcliffe Castle. Chewton Common / Walkford. Hinton Wood Avenue. Breamar Drive / Greenways. Hoburne Lane / Hurstbourne Avenue. Wharncliffe / Walkford brook. Saffron Way.
Burton	Salisbury Road Conservation Area. The expanded village area north of Footners Lane. The expanded village area south of Footners Lane.

Residents of Hurn should refer to Hurn Bridge and Hurn Court Character Areas.

Residents who live on the coast (i.e. around the Harbour, Mudeford Quay and Christchurch Bay) should refer to Inter-tidal and Coastal Areas.

Special Character Areas

Areas in and around :

The Grove; Bargates and Avon Buildings; Town Centre; Purewell, Stanpit and Mudeford; Highcliffe Castle and Highcliffe Castle Golf Club; Highcliffe Cliff-Top; Seaway Avenue and East Cliff Way; Hinton Wood Avenue; Chewton Common; and, Burton.

Areas of Streetscape / Townscape Importance

High Street, Bridge Street and Castle Street; Stanpit and Mudeford; and, Lymington Road.

Conservation Areas (Local Plan)

Avon Buildings; Bramble Lane; Town Centre; Christchurch Hospital; Holdenhurst Village; Hurn; Mudeford Quay; Purewell; Salisbury Road; Stanpit and Fisherman's bank; Verno Lane; and, Winkton.