

Part 2 **Extensions and Alterations**



PLANNING TO BUILD? THINK ABOUT DESIGN

With imagination, skill and perception, a good designer can creatively interpret these guidelines, rather than mechanically apply blanket principles, to create a comfortable, affordable extension, conservatory or roof space conversion in harmony with the existing house and its setting.

Extensions and Conservatories

An extension or conservatory should not dominate the main building in scale and the design/materials should reflect the existing character.

In most cases the best position for the extension will be at the rear or end of the house as this will cause least interference with original form of the building. Ideally, there should be a slight setback between the extension and the house.

For conservatories, the best position will depend on the orientation of the house in relation to the sun and attractive views around.

Flat roofs should be avoided. They are not traditional and tend to have a shorter lifespan.

Most houses will have a pitched roof and the extension or conservatory should take a similar form with a pitch and slate/tiles/glazing as appropriate to match or complement the house.

The size and type of windows in an extension should reflect those used on the house.

Other details such as the colour of roughcast, type of rainwater goods and even the use of features such as skews should take account of the existing house design.

Where original attractive features may have been lost through insensitive past alterations or extensions, restoration will be encouraged.



An inappropriate extension which dominates the existing house.



Appropriate forms for extensions or conservatories



A successful, modern extension which acts as a conservatory, letting plenty of light into the property.



An older building which has grown organically.



A recent building demonstrating how traditional buildings may be sympathetically extended.



A modern extension using complementary and matching materials.



Rooflights offer the least expensive and least disruptive solution to providing light for rooms in the roofspace.

Raising the wallhead to create a two storey building may be possible.



Storm windows



Triangular storm windows



Full width box dormers with flat roofs will normally be costly to maintain.



If the only possible solution is a 'box dormer' it should have tiles or a slate roof and the lowest part should be constructed clear of the wallhead.

Rooms in Roof Space

The use of space within the roof to provide additional accommodation is normally cheaper than building an extension to the house.

If there might be a need to create more rooms in future, extending into the roofspace should be borne in mind when building a new house - most kit houses with their low pitch roofs and use of factory-made trusses do not lend themselves to future use of the roof space. Several manufactures have, however, indicated that there is sufficient flexibility to allow for changes to standard kit specifications.

More space can be created by raising the wallhead but this should only be done where the proportions of the existing building can be maintained and where the end result will not tower over neighbouring properties.

Where roof lights are not an option, the preferred solution is the use of traditional storm windows located either within the original roof area, below the ridgeline and clear of the wallhead, or else directly off the wallhead.

In the Uists and Barra the traditional triangular storm window off the wallhead is attractive but simple in form and effective against the elements.

Large flat 'box dormers' should be avoided for several reasons; the flat roof has a relatively short lifespan, may have problems with water penetration and structural stability, and is generally unattractive to look at.

Principles regarding location, siting, design, materials, colour, house elements, boundaries and fitness of purpose as set out in Part 1 also apply to the building of extensions and alterations.



Good example of roof space conversion, extension and alterations.



Bad example of roof space conversion, extension and alterations.

Porches

Porches are a useful and potentially attractive means of protecting the front or back door from the weather, thereby reducing heat loss. They should normally be small scale as they are usually positioned on the main elevation of the house and should be finished in materials to match or complement the house.

The additional of a porch will add to the construction costs but the house will be more weather resistant and heating bills can be expected to be less.

Doors and Windows

Traditionally windows had a vertical emphasis (i.e. they were consistently narrower in width than in height) while modern windows tend to have a horizontal emphasis (i.e. their width is larger than their height) which tends to create too much void in what should be a predominantly solid façade. However, breaking up large windows with narrow verticals it is possible to gain plenty of light while retaining a traditional pattern.

A uniform style but not necessarily size of window should be used throughout the house. Traditional sash and casement windows work well in modern buildings provided the house makes reference to other traditional details.

The best style will be dictated by the form and design of the house and the size and position of the voids in the facades.

Visually and environmentally, wooden windows are preferable or UPVC or aluminium; UPV is a non-biodegradable material and cannot be recycled. Double glazed sash and case windows in hard or soft wood are available and comply with current building regulations.

Traditional window margins or reveals, with deep sills give better weather protection.

Doors should be of timber construction with minimal or no glazing and be simple in design.



Two different approaches to porch design on modern buildings.



Traditional windows with a vertical emphasis.



A long, modern window, broken up by vertical divisions to retain a vertical pattern.



A simple door with a welcoming outdoor light.