

ADOPTION STATEMENT for the DESIGN GUIDE TO HOUSE EXTENSIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Date

15th March 2021

Relevant legislation

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Adoption details

Reading Borough Council formally adopted the Design Guide to House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document on 15th March 2021.

This document is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It provides supplementary information to support policies in the Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted in November 2019. It relates to the policies of the Local Plan that refer to proposals for extending houses or other householder development, in particular policy H9. It replaces the previous Design Guide to House Extensions, adopted in March 2003.

Any person with sufficient interest in the decision to adopt the SPD may apply to the High Court for permission to apply for judicial review of that decision. Such an application must be made promptly and in any event not later than Tuesday 15th June 2021.

The SPD is available for inspection on the [planning policy pages of Reading Borough Council's website](#). A Statement of Consultation, summarising the consultation undertaken, comments received and responses to those comments, can also be viewed on that page. Due to restrictions related to Covid-19, no hard copies are currently available for inspection.

Changes made to the Draft version (published July 2020) can be seen in the following pages of this document.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the Planning Section, Reading Borough Council [by e-mail](#) or by telephone on 01189373337.

Further information on planning policy documents can be found on the [planning policy pages of Reading Borough Council's website](#).

Changes

This section lists the changes that have been made to the July 2020 consultation draft of the Design Guide to House Extensions SPD to form the adopted version. Changes have been made for a variety of reasons, including to address points raised during consultation, update the document as a result of new information, correct errors, and make clarifications.

Paragraph references in the table below refer to the adopted version, and may have changed from the draft version. Consequential changes as a result of the changes

below (i.e. to paragraph or page numbering) are not listed unless they form part of a wider change.

Paragraph 1.0.4

Delete the following:

“This SPD was adopted on [date to be added on adoption]. It followed a period of public consultation between [dates to be added], the responses to which were taken into account in preparing this final version. As an adopted SPD which supplements policies in the Local Plan, this document is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. This guidance replaces the previous Design Guide to House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document adopted on 17th March 2003.”

And replace with the following:

“This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted on 15th March 2021. It followed a period of public consultation between 31st July and 25th September 2020, the responses to which were taken into account in preparing this final version. As an adopted SPD which supplements policies in the Local Plan, this document is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. This guidance replaces the previous Design Guide to House Extensions SPD adopted on 17th March 2003.”

Paragraph 2.0.3

Add the following sentence at the end of the paragraph:

“Applications risk being refused if they do not comply with policies, including this SPD.”

Paragraph 2.0.5

Delete the following:

“Conservation areas and listed buildings

2.0.5 Extension proposals within a conservation area need to refer to the following Reading Borough Local Plan policies for guidance regarding area specific design requirements:

- *EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment*
- *EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas*
- *EN6: New Development in a Historic Context”*

And replace with the following:

“2.0.5 Extension proposals affecting a heritage asset or its setting need to refer to the relevant Reading Borough Local Plan policies for guidance regarding specific design requirements. This includes proposals in a conservation area or affecting a listed or locally-listed building. Relevant policies are:

- *EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment*
- *EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas*
- *EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets*
- *EN6: New Development in a Historic Context”*

Paragraphs 3.0.1 to 3.0.4

Delete the following sentence at the end of paragraph 3.0.1:

“You can inform Reading Borough Council of proposed permitted development via a “Prior Approval: Larger Home Extension” application. Prior Approval applications are not subject to a neighbour consultation scheme.”

And insert the following paragraphs:

“3.0.2 Please note that, in some cases, permitted development rights may have been removed. This could be the case for instance where an Article 4 Direction is applied to a building or area. This is a legal direction that removes some or all permitted development rights. A number of Article 4 Directions are in place in Reading, and more information can be found on the Council’s website. Permitted development rights may also have been restricted when planning permission was given for a property, and this will be set out on the decision notice. Please contact the Council if you are unsure.

3.0.3 For confirmation that a proposal forms permitted development, you can apply to the Council for a Lawful Development Certificate for a proposed use. More information can be found on the Lawful Development Certificate part of the Planning Portal website. For single-storey rear extensions, extending beyond the rear wall of the original house by 4-8 metres (detached houses) or 3-6 metres (all other houses), a Prior Approval: Larger Home Extension application is required. More detail is also on the Householder Prior Approval part of the Planning Portal website.

3.0.4 Please note that permitted development rights can change, and this document only reflects the latest position when it was adopted in 2021. It is always worth checking the Planning Portal website for the latest situation.”

Paragraph 4.0.2

Delete the following:

“The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 is currently under consultation with a view to the strategy being formally adopted in 2020. The document highlights the importance development that adapts to the climate change.”

And replace with the following:

“The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 was launched in November 2020. The document highlights the importance of development that adapts to the climate change.”

Paragraph 5.0.1

Delete the following:

“To demonstrate that your proposal complies with criteria outlined in the context of planning policy try to:

- *Prepare a Design and Access Statement*
To accompany the application giving the results of your own site appraisal. Include in it the reason for the extension, the basis for the proposed design and choice of materials and why you consider that it will be acceptable in the context of the character and appearance of the existing house and general area.
- *Calculate how much shadow would be created using daylight indicators and plot this onto your block plan.*
- *Carry out an accurate site survey*

Plot the location of existing trees and structures and show ground levels on the block plan. Do not rely on the Ordnance Survey being accurate or up to date.

- *Think about your neighbours! Show on the block plan, and elevation drawings if necessary, where the neighbours' windows are and indicate which rooms they serve. Talk to the neighbours about the scheme (before submitting the application) to iron out potential difficulties."*

And replace with the following:

"To demonstrate that your proposal complies with criteria outlined in the context of planning policy try to:

- *Prepare a Planning Statement*

Whilst not an absolute requirement, a Planning Statement to accompany the application is useful in explaining the reason for the extension, the basis for the proposed design and choice of materials and why you consider that it will be acceptable in the context of the character and appearance of the existing house and general area and will accord with policies.

- *Check the Council's Validation Checklist*

The Council publishes a Validation Checklist which sets out the information needed for your application to be registered as valid. For householder planning applications, this is usually the correct form and certificates, fees and necessary plans (location plan, existing and proposed block plan and existing and proposed floor plans and elevations). However, depending on the case, the planning officer may ask for additional information to determine an application, such as tree surveys, materials details, site survey, daylight and sunlight assessment and vehicle parking. The Validation Checklist gives more detail on when these may be required.

- *Please consider your neighbours. Show on the block plan, and elevation drawings if necessary, where the neighbours' windows are and indicate which rooms they serve. Consider whether your extension will affect daylight to your neighbour's habitable rooms. Talk to the neighbours about the scheme (before submitting the application) to iron out potential difficulties."*

Paragraph 6.1.2

Delete the following:

"Outdoor amenity

Applications for extensions will be assessed against the loss of on-site outdoor space. A useful guide is to have the outdoor space no less than the Gross Floor Area (GFA) of the dwelling to which it serves. In many instances rear gardens in historic areas are already less than that of the internal floor space, and as such will be assessed on a case by case basis. Usable outdoor space is considered to consist of rear gardens and side access. Outdoor space does not include areas that are allocated for car parking spaces, garages or front gardens."

And replace with the following:

"Outdoor amenity

*Applications for extensions will be assessed against the loss of on-site outdoor space. A useful guide is **that useable** outdoor space **should be** no less than the Gross **Internal Area (GIA)** of the dwelling which it serves. In many instances rear gardens in historic areas are already less than that of the internal floor space, and as such will be assessed on a case by case basis. Usable outdoor space is considered to consist of rear gardens and side access, **and, where it is genuinely useable for amenity***

purposes, front gardens. Outdoor space does not include areas that are allocated for car parking spaces or garages.”

Paragraph 6.2.1

Add the following sentences at the end of the paragraph:

“Please note that the entirety of the extension should be within the red line boundary shown on the site location plan. This includes eaves or other features above ground level. If these are to extend beyond the property boundary, the site location plan will need to reflect that, and any other landowners will need to be notified and Certificate B of the application form completed.”

Paragraph 6.3.1

Delete the following:

“At the scale of householder planning applications; development should not result in a loss of biodiversity within gardens. This applies to all gardens, inside or outside the Green Network. Proposals that include the planting of trees are generally encouraged. The planting of trees contributes positively towards improved air quality, particularly within an urban Borough such as Reading.”

And replace with the following:

“At the scale of householder planning applications development should not result in a loss of biodiversity within gardens. This applies to all gardens, inside or outside the Green Network. Proposals that include the planting of trees are generally encouraged. The planting of trees contributes positively towards improved air quality, particularly within an urban borough such as Reading.”

Paragraph 6.4.1

Delete the following:

“This serves the purpose for preserving the character and appearance of the street scene and horizontal rhythm.”

And replace with the following:

“This serves the purpose of preserving the character and appearance of the street scene and horizontal rhythm.”

Paragraph 6.4.2

Delete the following:

“Reading Borough Local Plan policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of The Historic Environment supports proposals that protect and where possible enhance their historic environment setting.”

And replace with the following:

“Reading Borough Local Plan policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment supports proposals that protect and where possible enhance their historic environment setting.”

Paragraph 6.4.3

Delete the following:

“Development proposed within a Conservation Area will be expected to protect or enhance the character and appearance of the historic environment. Specific information on each Conservation Area can be found within Conservation Area

Appraisals. In line with policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan; proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.”

And replace with the following:

*“Development proposed within a **conservation area** will be expected to protect or enhance the character and appearance of the historic environment. Specific information on each **conservation area** can be found within Conservation Area Appraisals, **including priorities for enhancement, and further guidance may be produced.** In line with policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset, **which will also include listed buildings and locally listed buildings and their settings,** should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.”*

Paragraph 7.3.1

Add the following new paragraph and renumber subsequent paragraphs:

“Dormer extensions generally need planning permission where they are on the front of a house. Rear dormers, subject to certain caveats which can be seen in more detail on the Planning Portal, are usually permitted development unless within a conservation area, on a listed building or in an area where an Article 4 direction applies.”

Paragraph 7.3.2

Delete the following:

“Dormer extension proposals need to demonstrate compliance with policies CC7: Design and the Public Realm, CC8: Safeguarding Amenity and H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation relating to the character of the original house and adjacent properties and the protection of privacy.”

And replace with the following:

“Where permission is required, dormer extension proposals need to demonstrate compliance with policies CC7: Design and the Public Realm, CC8: Safeguarding Amenity and H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation relating to the character of the original house and adjacent properties and the protection of privacy.”

Paragraph 7.3.3

Delete the following:

“It is important that dormers and rooflights reflect the pattern of existing window openings by being positioned to line through vertically with the window openings below.”

And replace with the following:

“It is important that dormers and rooflights reflect the pattern of existing window openings by being positioned to line through vertically with the window openings below, whilst avoiding building to the edge of a neighbour’s roof to avoid party wall issues.”

Section 7.3 ‘Unacceptable solutions’ diagram

Replace diagram with a new version showing dormers on the front only.

Section 7.5

Add the following new section and renumber subsequent sections:

“7.5 Upwards extensions

7.5.1 A new permitted development right was introduced in August 2020 to allow up to two additional storeys on two-storey houses and one additional storey on one-storey houses, applying to houses built between 1948 and 2018. There are a significant number of important caveats and conditions to this permitted development right, and these are set out in more detail on the Planning Portal website. A householder who wishes to make use of this right must apply for prior approval from the Council, and the Council must consider matters such as the amenity of neighbouring properties and the external appearance of the building when considering the application, as it would for a planning application.

7.5.2 In considering applications for prior approval for upwards extensions, policy H9 will be applied as for any other extension application. Upwards extensions are particularly likely to affect neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking or overshadowing, present an overbearing impact, or detract from the character of the house or street. It is not possible to set general guidelines on when an upwards extension may be appropriate as it will depend very much on the individual case, but it is recommended that further advice is sought via the pre-application route (see section 8.0).”

Paragraph 7.6.1

Delete the following:

“Ancillary accommodation that complies with these principles is largely acceptable, so long as it does not have the capability of operating as a separate dwelling that could be let or sold separately (Reading Borough Local Plan policy H9). Ancillary accommodation can be considered to have the capacity to operate as a separate dwelling where it:

- Is self-sufficient in terms of facilities, this includes a kitchen and a bathroom.*
- Has its own front door, without internal links to the original dwelling.*
- Has its own external facilities such as parking provision, access, private outdoor space. If these facilities are not already in place”*

Section 7.7

Add the following new section and renumber subsequent sections:

“7.7 Ancillary accommodation

7.7.1 Ancillary accommodation in this case refers to provision of more self-contained accommodation such as a granny annexe. Ancillary accommodation that complies with the principles in this SPD and with other planning policies is largely acceptable, so long as it does not have the capability of operating as a separate dwelling that could be let or sold separately (Reading Borough Local Plan policy H9). The Council will place controls on a planning permission for ancillary accommodation to ensure that it does not form a separate dwelling, either through planning conditions or legal agreements. Ancillary accommodation can be considered to have the capacity to operate as a separate dwelling where it:

- Is self-sufficient in terms of facilities, this includes a kitchen and a bathroom.*
- Has its own front door, without internal links to the original dwelling.*

- *Has its own external facilities such as parking provision, access, private outdoor space, or these facilities could be easily created.”*

Section 7.10

Add the following new section:

“7.10 Hard surfaces in gardens

7.10.1 Laying a hard surface in the garden of a house does not usually need planning permission, as long as it is associated with the use as a house. In the case of front gardens, where more than 5 square metres are to be covered, the material used must be porous, or water running off the surface must be directed to a porous area elsewhere on the property, otherwise permission will be required. Porous materials can include gravel, permeable block paving, porous asphalt and porous concrete. Please note that demolition of all or part of a front wall in a conservation area to gain access to a parking area will need planning permission, as will a dropped kerb on a classified road.

7.10.2 In those unusual cases where permission is required, the design should avoid a detrimental effect on the character of the building and street. Any loss of vegetation and existing features such as walls or railings should be minimised and materials used should complement the existing house. Car parking should not extend onto the footpath or highway, and the risk of surface water flooding should not be worsened. Even where permission is not required, these are still useful principles to follow.”

Section 9.0, ‘45° rule of thumb’ definition

Delete the following:

“A 45° angle taken from the window of a neighbouring property to assess the impact of proposals in regard to loss of light to a habitable room. Unacceptable proposals will cast a shadow that infringes the 45° angle. This rule is discussed in 6.2.2 (Overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing).”

And replace with the following:

“A 45° angle taken from the window of a neighbouring property to assess the impact of two-storey proposals in regard to loss of light to a habitable room. Unacceptable proposals will cast a shadow that infringes the 45° angle. This rule is discussed in 6.2.2 and 7.1.1.”

Section 9.0, ‘60° rule of thumb’ definition

Add new definition as follows:

“A 60° angle taken from the window of a neighbouring property to assess the impact of single storey proposals in regard to loss of light to a habitable room. Unacceptable proposals will cast a shadow that infringes the 60° angle. This rule is discussed in 7.1.1.”

Section 9.0, ‘Daylight’ definition

Delete the following:

“The volume of natural light that enters a building to provide a satisfactory illumination of internal accommodation between sunrise and sunset.”

And replace with the following:

“The amount of natural light that enters a building to provide a satisfactory illumination of internal accommodation between sunrise and sunset.”

Section 9.0, 'Gross Internal Area' definition

Add new definition as follows:

“The whole enclosed area of a building within the external walls taking each floor into account and excluding the thickness of the external walls. This is defined in more detail in the RICS Code of Measuring Practice (6th edition, 2015)”

Section 9.0, 'Local plan' definition

Delete the following:

“The main document setting out planning policies for a District or Borough.”

And replace with the following:

“The main document setting out planning policies for a district or borough.”

Section 9.0, 'Proposals map' definition

Delete the following:

“A map of an Ordnance Survey base which shows the sites and locations to which policies apply.”

And replace with the following:

“A map on an Ordnance Survey base which shows the sites and locations to which policies apply.”

Section 9.0, 'Supplementary Planning Document' definition

Add new definition as follows:

“A planning document which provides more detailed information than development plans, but do not have the same weight.”

Section 10.0

Update all weblinks and add weblink to the Validation Checklist