

## Householder Design Guide: Supplementary Planning Advice



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## **1 Introduction**

The Council aims to allow people to extend their homes, but believes that is in everybody's interest to maintain and improve Stroud District's high quality environment. It is the Planning Department's job to consider how proposed extensions will affect neighbours and the appearance of the area as a whole. This guide has been produced to help anyone who wishes to extend their property.

## 2 General Information

### Permitted Development

Many extensions can be built without the need for planning permission because they are deemed to be classed as "permitted development", this will however depend on the size, position and location of the proposed extension and any previous extensions constructed since July 1, 1948.

We can give basic advice on permitted development rules over the telephone (01453 754442), but if you are going to go ahead it is important to get advice about your particular case in writing. We strongly recommend that you fill out a Householder Development Enquiry form and post or email it to the Council. You can download these forms from our website (<http://www.stroud.gov.uk>) and email them to [planning@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:planning@stroud.gov.uk), or pick them up from our offices. We will then advise you in writing whether you need planning permission for your proposal. Alternatively, you can informally discuss a proposal with the Duty Planner, see below for more details.

We can only give formal confirmation that a proposal is permitted development through an application for a Certificate of Lawful Proposed Development. Please contact us on 01453 754442 if you want to submit an application for this type of certificate. The current fee (2007) for this type of application is usually £67.50 for domestic proposals.

### Pre-application advice

We are happy to provide advice on your proposal before you submit an application, there are two main options; via the Duty Planner and in writing.

Firstly, for written enquiries, which include, permitted development rights or pre application advice, enquires should be sent to Planning Technician, Planning Department, Ebley Mill, Westward Road, Stroud, Glos, GL5 4UB. We aim to answer all written enquiries within 10 working days.

Secondly, at the Planning Enquiry Desk, this is situated in the main reception. Between 10am and 4pm weekdays a Planning Officer and an Admin Assistant are on duty. Please refer to the Duty Planner Service Guide (at the back of this document) for more information.

### Talking to your neighbours

The planning department will formally consult your neighbours on any planning application. It is often worthwhile discussing any extension with your neighbours beforehand. This can help to prevent misunderstanding about land ownership and the proposal.

### Building Regulations

Building Regulations approval is usually required for extensions and alterations. You can apply for Building Regulations approval at the same time as you apply for Planning Permission, or you can wait and apply later once you have received Planning Permission. For more information, see

our website or ring our Building Control section on 01453 754518. A Building Control Surveyor, is also available for informal discussions on the Duty Planner Desk between the hours of 10am and 4pm.

## Party Wall Act

If you are extending near your boundary or need access through your neighbour's property in order to build the extension, you will need to check your rights and responsibilities under the Party Wall Act 1996. Leaflets explaining the Act are available from the Council (01453 754518) or from the Government via <http://www.communities.gov.uk>.

## Submitting an application

If your proposal is not permitted development and you need to make a planning application, the relevant forms are available to download from the website (<http://www.stroud.gov.uk>). These forms explain the information needed when submitting a planning application. To make your application valid the current fee must also be received. Once an application is registered it usually takes 6-8 weeks before a decision is made.

## Other types of application

You may also need to make an application for:

**Listed Building Consent** - If you intend to carry out external or internal alterations to a Listed Building or building contained within its curtilage, or any works which would affect the character of the building. Repairs and like for like replacements are normally exempt, but advice should be sought from the Conservation Team.

**Conservation Area Consent** - If you intend to demolish a building or, such as a wall in a Conservation Area. This normally only applies to buildings of more than 115 cubic metres volume or the demolition of more than 50% of a boundary wall, but advice can be sought from the Conservation Team.

Forms are available online at <http://www.stroud.gov.uk>. There is no fee for Listed Building and Conservation Area Consent applications.

## Demolition

As detailed above you will need Listed Building Consent to demolish any Listed structure and may in certain circumstances need Conservation Area Consent to demolish a building or wall in a Conservation Area. Most other demolitions are permitted development.

Prior to the commencement of any demolition work, notice should be given to the Council in accordance with Section 80 of The Building Act 1984. For further details please contact the Council's Building Control team on (01453) 754518

## 3 Design Guidance for Extensions

### General Principles

If a planning application is required, the Council will assess your proposed extension using the relevant policies of the Local Plan of which the principles are reflected in this guidance as well as any other local guidance such as Parish Plans. This section aims to provide general guidance on the design of householder extensions. Further information regarding the design of the building is contained within the adopted 'Residential Design Guide' produced by the Council. This is available from the website at <http://www.stroud.gov.uk>

Your extension should normally be acceptable if it does not:

- Harm the character or appearance of the area;
- Harm the character of the existing dwelling;
- Unreasonably affect your neighbours by causing overlooking or overshadowing of their property, or by having an overbearing effect on them;
- Cause problems with highway safety, such as by making access to your property dangerous or by the loss of on-site parking in an area where on street parking would be dangerous;
- Conflict with adopted policies of the Local Plan

In considering planning applications, the Council cannot take into account:

- The effect on the value of neighbouring properties;
- Private boundary disputes and private rights of way;
- Private legal covenants;
- Private views.

These guidelines are not exhaustive and each case must be considered on its individual merits. In some cases there may be good reasons why they should not be followed. There may be imaginative design solutions which can help to overcome any problems encountered. However, it is important that planning decisions are made on a consistent basis, and therefore the guidelines will only be interpreted flexibly where there are clear reasons for making an exception.

### Ensuring that extensions do not harm the appearance of the area

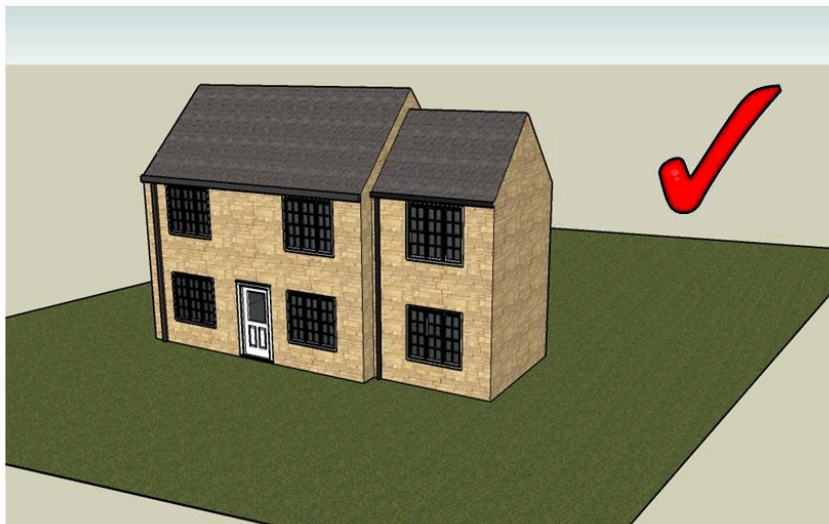
Extensions should not harm the general appearance of the area. Particular care will be needed with designs for Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and other protected areas. The general guidelines will be followed when assessing the appearance of proposed extensions.

Unless there is a good reason, the proposal should harmonise with the house and other properties in the immediate vicinity, in terms of its size, design and its spacing within the plot.

Often it looks best for extensions to follow a slope rather than excessive cutting into a slope to create a uniform floor level. The extension needs to be subservient in terms of being smaller in size and have 1 or less windows.

The ridgeline should not project above that of the host dwelling but often a more harmonious design can be achieved with an extension having a lower ridgeline. The size of the extension should be smaller than the host dwelling.

Design examples are provided in the following pictures:





## Protecting neighbours

### Protecting neighbours from overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing extensions

Most extensions will have some effect on neighbours. In order to assess whether these effects are unacceptable, the 45/25 degree guideline is used.

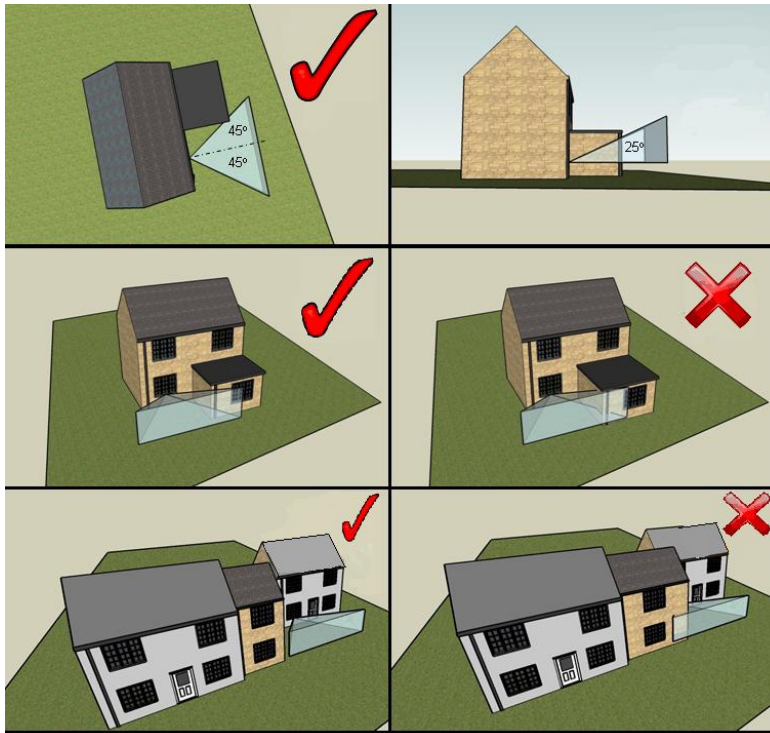
Extensions should not normally cross the line of a 45 degree angle drawn (in the horizontal plane) from the mid point of the nearest ground floor habitable room window in the adjoining property.

A habitable room is defined here as living rooms, bedrooms and in certain circumstances kitchens and dining rooms.

Just because an extension crosses the 45 degree line, it does not mean that it is unacceptable. In these cases, a second test is used to check whether the extension would be so tall in relation to the neighbours' window that it would be overly intrusive. This time 25 degree line from the habitable room window is drawn in the vertical plane. If the top of the extension would cross the line of a 25 degree angle above horizontal the extension will normally be unacceptable.

When applying the 45/25 degree guidelines, the following factors should be taken into account:

- The design and character of the property and nearby properties;
- Other buildings or features in the area which may, for example, already cause overshadowing;
- The orientation of the building;
- Whether the room affected is a 'habitable' room;
- The size of gardens.



**Separation Distances Between Neighbours**

The following separation distances will normally be required where the extension is higher than one storey:

Relationship of extension to neighbouring property.	Minimum separation 1.5 or 2 storey extension*
Back to Back/ Back to Front with clear glazing	25 metres
Windows looking towards neighbour's garden (near to their house)	10 metres unless obscurely glazed

**Notes:**

\*Separation distances are between habitable room windows.

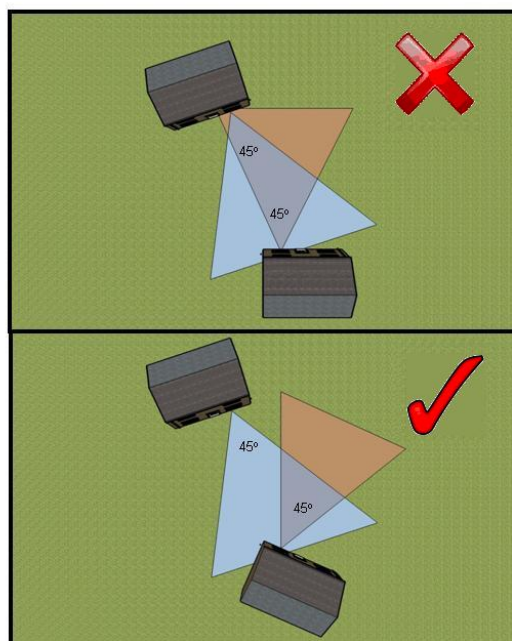
Windows are "facing" if they both fall within a pair of 45 degree cones drawn from the middle of the 2 windows. Where there is a significant change in levels, the minimum separation distance increases by 2 metres for every 1 metre that the floor level of the extension would be above that of the neighbouring property.

Care should also be taken to protect the privacy of garden areas, particularly the area immediately outside to the rear of the house, which is usually used as private space.

House fronts normally face onto public routes so there is less need to protect privacy and therefore separation distances can be reduced.

### Neighbours' side facing windows

For both the 45/25 degree guideline and separation distances, neighbours' side facing windows on adjoining properties which get their light across another property will not normally be given the same protection as front and rear facing windows as these windows tend not to be habitable rooms. These cases will be judged on their individual circumstances.



## Highway safety

Proposals for new or widened accesses may need a planning application. An application will always be required if the access would lead onto a classified road (A,B or some C class). If you are in doubt, contact Gloucestershire County Council on 08000 514 514 who can advise you if your road is classified.

Planning permission is not required to create a hard surface within the curtilage of the property and then to construct an access onto an unclassified road unless significant changes in land levels and/or retaining walls are required.

New accesses will need to have adequate visibility to the road and to any footway. Visibility standards are available from the County Council or the District Council Planning Service. Before commencing works on the public highway, you must serve at least 14 days notice under the provisions of Section 184 of the Highways Act 1980 on the Highway Authority's Area Team. The Divisional Offices at Stroudwater may be contacted by telephone: 08000 514 514.

On-site turning space, sufficient for a 3 point turn, may be required where the access is onto a busy or fast road and/or where visibility is poor. Contact Gloucestershire County Council Highway Department for further advice.

Sufficient parking space should be retained on site. Proposals that result in on-street parking are unlikely to be viewed favourably.

## Front extensions

The predominant form of housing in the District is plain fronted, with only modest porch or bay window front extensions. Therefore it may be difficult to design large front extensions to some houses without harming the character and appearance of the area. Front extensions may also affect your car parking arrangements.



## Side extensions

### The terracing effect

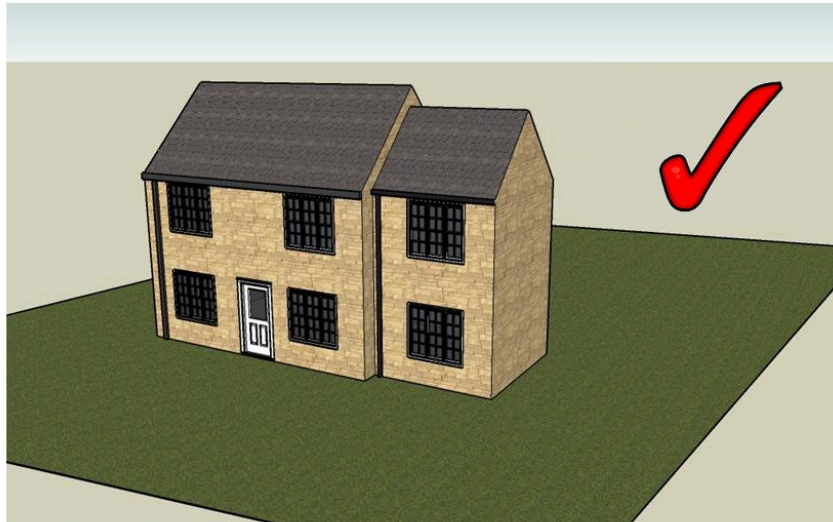
Side extensions can also affect the street scene (the general character and appearance of the street) if they close down the gap between properties. Rows of detached or semi-detached houses can start to look like terraced housing if the gaps between houses are overly narrowed. In order to avoid this ‘terracing effect’, the following should be taken into account:

- Side extensions at first floor level or higher should normally be kept back at least 1 metre from the boundary
- If space is limited, or if it is otherwise not practical to keep the first floor extension back from the boundary, it may be possible to build up to the boundary at first floor, but this depends on the relationship to neighbouring properties;
- If there is no building of more than 1 storey in height within 2 metres of the boundary on the neighbours' side, it will normally be acceptable to build up to the boundary at first floor level.

### Subservience (Set back from the main front wall of the house)

In order to harmonise with the main house, side extensions should normally be:

- Set back at least 225mm (one brick length) from the adjacent front wall of the house
- The roof height of extension should be less than the roof height of the main house.



## Rear extensions

Rear extensions which comply with the advice in the 'Design' and 'Overlooking, Overshadowing and Overbearing' sections and other parts of this guidance which include an appropriate design and scale in relation to the main house and the wider setting will normally be acceptable.

Generally extensions are best recessed to break up the overall form and the width of the extension should normally be narrower than the main house. Rear extensions should take note of the design principles referred to above in relation to the size, scale and design of a proposal. Consideration must also be given to the number of previous extensions and the size of the garden space remaining.

## Corner plots

Extensions to properties on corner plots should normally follow the building lines of neighbouring buildings. However, corner plots can be an opportunity for more creativity and variations, possibly creating feature buildings. If the plot contributes to the character of the area by providing an open aspect, then this should be respected in planning your extension.

## Conservatories

Conservatories are treated the same in planning law as any other extension. However, as with small extensions, they are often classed as permitted development. Further advice on permitted development is contained within Section 2.

Standard conservatories will not normally be acceptable on Listed Buildings and barn conversions.

Care will also need to be taken with design in a Conservation Area and the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. To ensure that the size, shape and design will harmonise with the building especially where it is important to the character of the area.

Conservatories should not normally have opening windows near to shared boundaries, as these can cause problems with privacy.

Insulation, ventilation and sun screening should be considered carefully as conservatories can be highly energy inefficient.

## Roof extensions

Some dormer windows, dependant on their size and position, particularly those on the back of houses, are permitted development, however, this is dependant on the number of previous extensions permitted and whether the house is within a Conservation Area or the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in which case permission will be required.

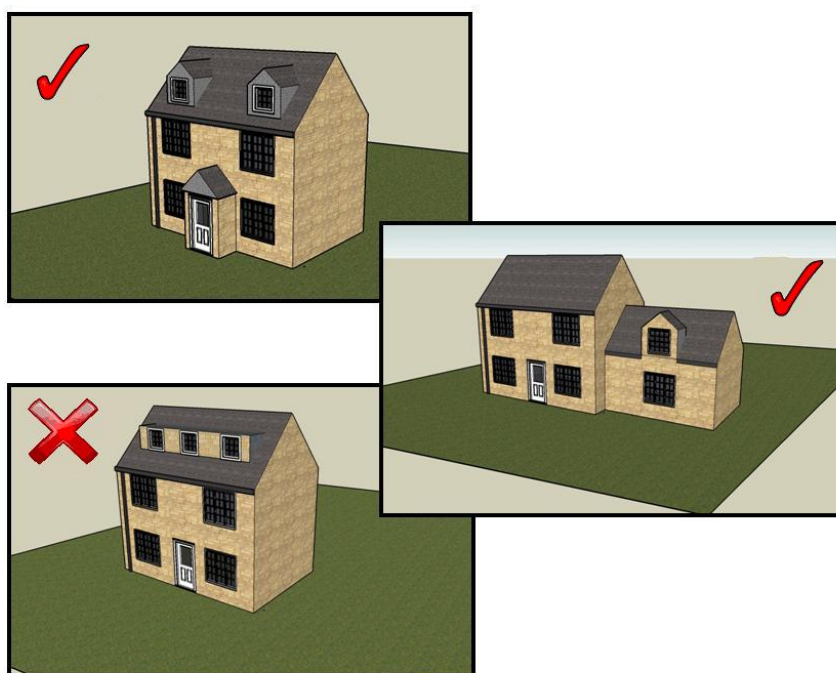
Traditionally designed, small scale dormer windows are normally preferred. Dormers should line up with any windows below and should not be larger than any existing windows.

Large dormer windows, particularly large flat roof dormers, may only be acceptable where out of public views on rear roof slopes or outside of Conservation Areas or other sensitive areas.

Dormer windows should be well below the ridge of the roof.

### Other roof extensions

Other roof extensions should normally fit in with existing roof lines. A bat survey will usually be required if the proposal involves substantial work to roof spaces (see the Ecology section below)



### Balconies and roof terraces

Balconies and roof terraces should be carefully designed to avoid unreasonable overlooking of neighbours properties. Strategically placed solid screens may sometimes help where it is not otherwise possible to avoid overlooking. In densely populated areas it will often be difficult to construct these features without causing problems regarding privacy to others in the locality.

## Garages and outbuildings

Some garages and outbuildings are permitted development, though this is seldom the case where the building would be to the front of the house.

Whether attached or detached, garages and other outbuildings should normally be set back from the front of the house. Garages set forward of the house often become the dominant feature and can also block views from the street to the house, increasing the risk of crime.

Garages should normally be simple in form and should be kept as low as possible. While flat roofs are discouraged, low pitch roofs can often be acceptable, even when the house has a steeper roof pitch. Low roof pitches keep heights down so that garages and outbuildings do not become intrusive.

## 4 Other Issues to Consider

### Conservation of the historic environment

Stroud District has a rich heritage with many notable Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. Large parts of the District are part of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and part of a Special Landscape Areas. Extensions to Listed Buildings and to other houses in these protected areas will need to be carefully designed to preserve or enhance the special qualities or the setting of the buildings or the landscape. The form and detailing of an extension will need to respect the house's [particular architectural style, for example Cotswold style is different to Severn Vale

We recommend that you employ a suitably qualified architect or other professional for such cases, particularly for Listed Buildings.

Remember you may need Listed Building Consent or Conservation Area Consent (see above).

### Barn conversions

Extensions to barn conversions will be treated particularly carefully to ensure that the building retains its rural, agricultural character. Many barn conversion properties have their "permitted development rights" removed by a planning condition, so that a planning application is required for any extension to the building. It will often not be possible to extend a barn conversion.

In order to be potentially acceptable, extensions should:

- Fit in with the form of the building;
- Be simple and robust in their form and detailing; and
- Be small in scale.

Domestic style features such as dormer windows, chimneys and standard conservatories will rarely, if ever be acceptable.

Many barns are Listed Buildings, sometimes because the barn was part of a historic farmyard of a Listed farmhouse and in these cases Listed Building Consent will also be required.

### Annexes for dependant relatives

The District Council generally supports annexe type accommodation, i.e semi-independent accommodation for family members or other people living as part of the main household. This type of accommodation can be a new build or created by converting an existing space such as a garage, when attached to the existing dwelling

Annexes should not be self contained which means that annexes should not be used or capable of being used as entirely separate dwellings. They should be:-

- Designed to be an integral part of the main house;
- Should not have a full range of facilities unless internally linked; and

- Should not have their own separate drive or garden;
- Should be attached to the main house with a door linking the house to the annexe.

A planning condition or legal agreement will often be imposed to prevent the use of annexe type accommodation as a separate residence.

## Fences and walls

Good quality boundary fences and walls are of great importance to the character and appearance of the area. Your choice of boundary should take into account the typical styles and materials found locally. Planning permission is required for all walls/fences etc over 1 metre in height next which are next to a road (including the verge and footway) or 2 metres elsewhere. Any wall/fence etc within the grounds of a Listed Building is more than likely to require planning permission.

Fences and walls are important for security and to separate private spaces. However, care should be taken to ensure that the fence or wall is not overbearing and does not prevent observation of public and semi-public spaces such as footpaths and car parking areas.

Tall close board or feather edge fencing should only be used for side and rear boundaries which are next to other gardens. Picket, pale, hit and miss, post and rail fencing or planting a hedge are preferred where the boundary is next to a public space or the countryside. Brick or stone walls will be appropriate in areas where they are typical boundary features.

Defensive, high gates, wall and fences will not normally be acceptable on high street frontages, or rural areas.

The planting of a hedge will not require Planning Permission.

## Energy conservation

Local Plan Policie BE21 and adopted guidance promotes the use of energy saving and renewable energy features. We suggest you can consider these issues when designing your extension. Proposals for extensions or outbuildings which incorporate significant energy saving or renewable energy features will be looked upon more favourably by the District Council. Solar panels and some other renewable energy systems will often be permitted development, although Listed Building Consent will be required for Listed Buildings and advice should always be sought. Naturally the other considerations outlined in this document will also have to be taken into account when considering any proposal.

Current, virtually all wind turbines will require planning permission. Listed Building Consent may also be required if attached to any part of a Listed structure.

Care will be required to find acceptable ways of siting renewable energy features such as solar panels and wind turbines and other such features especially in sensitive areas such as on Listed Buildings, in Conservation Areas and in the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Care must also be taken to ensure the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers in terms of noise and disturbance.

## Trees

You need to notify the Council if you want to prune or do other work to trees in Conservation Areas and all trees that are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Contact us on 01453 754442 if you need advice.

When planning an extension or building works consideration should be taken to decide whether trees will be affected by your extension, either by the trenching and walls or by disturbance caused by the building works. Even storing materials under a tree can cause serious damage.

## Ecology

Extensions must avoid harming protected species, such as bats and nesting birds, as this is an offence. Bats roost in a surprisingly high percentage of house roof spaces, so there is more likelihood of bats in your house than you might think. Where an extension would affect a roof space, a bat survey will normally be needed before the application is submitted. The Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records provide records of protected species nearby and a fee may be payable for this service (01453 822761). If bats are present, a DEFRA license will be required before you start work.

## Archaeology

The District Council may require an archaeological investigation of the site before you can build your extension if you live in an area of archaeological interest. Gloucestershire County Council Archeological Unit can give further advice (01452 425669).

## Crime prevention

The design of your extension can contribute to the safety and security of both your own property and that of the local neighbourhood, this can be by ensuring that your property and surrounding areas can be observed from within your home. Further advice is given in the Council's booklet "Planning and Community Safety: Design and Crime Reduction". The Police Architectural Liaison Officer (01789414111) can also give detailed advice about designing out crime and the Polices' Secured by Design initiative

## A Local Plan and other Policies

The Local Plan and its supporting plans and documents can be viewed in full online at the Council's website.

### **Other important documents include;**

- Stroud District Residential Design Guide;
- Advice Notes on the website;
- Planning and Community Safety: Design and Crime Reduction;
- Village and Town Plans or Design Statements (check on [www.stroud.gov.uk](http://www.stroud.gov.uk) to see if your village or town has produced its own design guidance);
- Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Advice
- Guide to Planning in Conservation Areas
- Guide to Tree Preservation Orders and Protection
- Planning Policy Guidance 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment.'

## B Contacts and web-sites

Help with applications; Permitted development; Identifying constraints that apply to your property.	SDC Planning Technician	(01453)754442	<a href="mailto:Planning@stroud.gov.uk">Planning@stroud.gov.uk</a>
Listed Buildings, Conservation Area's or trees (General Information)	SDC Planning Technician	(01453) 754442	<a href="mailto:Planning@stroud.gov.uk">Planning@stroud.gov.uk</a>
Building Regulations; Energy Efficiency	SDC Building Control Officer	(01453) 754518	<a href="mailto:BC@stroud.gov.uk">BC@stroud.gov.uk</a>
Archaeology	Archaeological Officer, Gloucestershire County Council	(01452) 425669	
Ecology	Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust	(01453) 822761 (01452) 389952	<a href="mailto:gcer@gloswild.co.uk">gcer@gloswild.co.uk</a>

### Useful Website Links

<http://www.stroud.gov.uk/planning> - District Council planning information

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1144635> - Planning: A Guide for Householders

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1144585> - Householder's Planning Guide: Antennas and Satellite Dishes

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/planningpolicyguidance>

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk> Government planning information; Submission of applications via internet

<http://www.planning-applications.co.uk> RICS - planning information

<http://www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk> Free professional planning help in case you need planning help and cannot afford it

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/planningpolicyguidances>

## C Information on small scale renewable energy

### Building-mounted wind turbines

The largest turbines designed for building mounting are rated at 1.5kW and are typically up to 1.75m in diameter. They are mounted on poles which will be up to 3m above the roofline. Most systems are designed to feed electricity into the national grid, so they reduce your annual bills but do not give you an independent supply.

Wind power only works well where there are high average wind speeds and low turbulence. Turbulence is generated by buildings, trees and other obstructions, so wind power works best away from built up areas.

The efficiency of building mounted wind systems is always lower than equivalent systems mounted freestanding on a mast or pole because the proximity of the building reduces the energy in the wind.

Ensure that your building is structurally capable of accommodating the wind turbine.

### Free-standing wind turbines

All sizes of wind turbines can be mounted freestanding on a pole or mast. A system sufficient to supply the main electrical needs of a single house or farm will typically be rated at between 2.5kW and 6kW. These turbines will have rotor diameters between 3m and 6m and are usually mounted on poles between 9m and 15m high

### Solar photovoltaic (PV)

Solar systems to generate electricity are available as modules that look like polished flat panels and can be mounted on top of existing roofs or separately in frames. You can also buy tiles and laminated glass panels that act as building materials. These are less efficient but easier to blend into building architecture.

### Solar thermal

Solar thermal systems generate hot water and are much simpler and cheaper than solar photovoltaic systems. They consist of a matrix of pipes or tubes, often in a frame, through which water is pumped to be warmed by the sun. Some variants use evacuated tubes to insulate the water and these work slightly better on colder days.

The optimal mounting angle for both types of solar systems is around 37 degrees from the horizontal facing due south. Mounting in different orientations reduces efficiency, although the effects are gradual provided the system doesn't face North of East/West.

All types of solar systems work on cloudy days. They are however, affected significantly by shadows. Hard shading can reduce efficiencies by 80% or more, so systems need to be mounted to avoid shadows from trees and buildings wherever possible.

### Biomass

Many sizes of biomass system are available to provide heat (like a traditional boiler) or electricity and heat (combined heat and power). Biomass systems can use wood or other crops as fuel. The main issue with biomass tends to be fuel storage, which will require silos, hoppers or special facilities for larger systems. Most modern biomass systems are fed automatically from the storage system.

### **Ground source heating**

Ground source heat pumps draw solar energy from the ground and use it to heat and/or cool buildings more efficiently. They work by pumping fluid through a network of pipes typically buried 1.5-2m underground (or sometimes bored vertically down 100m or more). This fluid warms up and the heat is extracted using a heat exchanger which supplies hot water to the central heating system. Heat pumps are similar in size to boilers, but run on electricity so have no flue or exhaust gases. The ground loops are invisible once installed. Heat pumps are often used in conjunction with under floor heating but this is not essential.

### **Air source heating**

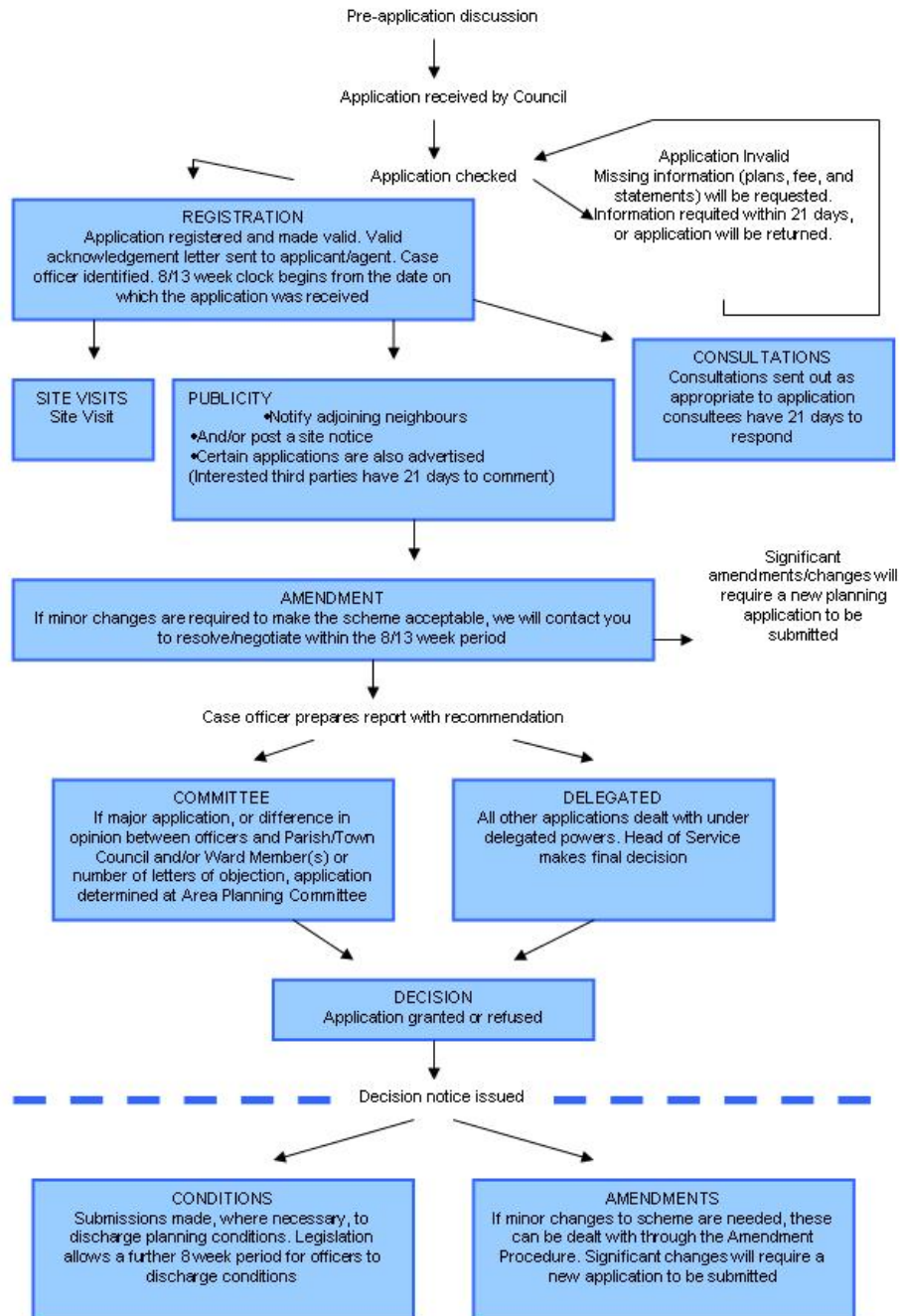
Air source heat pumps operate in a similar way to ground source heat pumps except they use energy stored in external air as the heat source instead of the ground. This makes them less efficient on cold days. They are cheaper than ground source heat pumps because they do not need ground loops. The systems look like air conditioning units and generally fit on the outside of buildings.

### **Hydroelectric turbines**

Small scale hydropower is the most efficient of renewable generation technologies and generally works on rivers or streams where there is a drop (or head) of 1.5m or more across the turbine. Output will depend on the flow and head, so bigger rivers generate more power. The most suitable sites tend to be old mills or weirs, where a lot of the water management required is already in place. Larger schemes can require significant (and expensive) civil engineering, but once the systems are installed they can be relatively unobtrusive, require minimum attention and may last many decades if well-maintained.

The majority of these proposals will require planning permission and/or Listed Building Consent as detailed above, and advice should be sought.

## D Planning application process diagram



For more information please contact a member of the Planning Team on 01453 754442

## E Duty Planner Service

### The Duty Planner Service

If you have a general and straightforward question about a planning matter (including Listed Buildings, Trees and Conservation Areas) you can contact the Duty Planner for advice between 10.00am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday. The service is provided to personal callers without an appointment.

The role of the Duty Planner is to give general technical advice on planning matters to customers but as the Duty Planner may not be aware of the specific site the advice given will be general. This includes the following:

- Whether or not your development proposal will require permission;
- The main planning policies of the Local Plan or other legislation that will be taken into account in considering your proposal;
- The main Local Plan constraints or issues that may arise from your proposal;
- The kind of information that you will need to submit your application;
- Basic interpretation of plans submitted with a current application.

If your issue relates to a Listed Building or a Conservation Area, then a Conservation Officer will be available during the same times.

You may call at our offices to view the plans of a current application on which we have consulted you. However, the Duty Planner will only be able to give you limited information and advice. If you want to discuss the application in detail you are advised to make an appointment to see the planning officer or conservation officer dealing with the application as this officer will be better able to help and advise you.

If your enquiry is complex and is likely to need a consultation of more than 10 minutes then it would be more appropriate for you to make an appointment to see a planning officer or other relevant officer who can consider your proposal in advance of a meeting.

### Advice the Duty Planner will not be able to give you

Whilst many enquiries can be answered immediately, questions about planning frequently raise more complex issues which cannot easily be answered without more detailed research or reference to other staff or sources of information.

In order that we can provide the appropriate standard of advice the Duty Planner will therefore not be able to:

- Have a detailed discussion about with you about a development you are proposing or comment in any detail on plans and drawings you have prepared;
- Respond fully to your question where another officer needs to be contacted for advice and information;
- Where access is needed to the case file or other information that is not immediately accessible.

If you call at our offices without an appointment with plans of a proposal for us to comment on the Duty Planner may ask you to leave the plans with us for comment if you are willing to accept written comments. It is our aim to send our written comments within 10 working days of your visit to our offices.

If you wish to have a meeting to discuss your proposal the Duty Planner will provide the details of the relevant officer so that a meeting can be arranged. You will be required to leave a set of your plans and drawings with us in readiness for consideration at the meeting.

### **If your questions cannot be answered immediately by the Duty Planner**

If the Duty Planner is not able to answer your question there and then you will be told so. The Duty Planner will take your name and contact details and will get back to you, or arrange for someone else to call you. If it is not possible to provide you with the information you will be given the name and contact details of someone who will be able to help you.

### **Advice and help other staff can give you**

Please note that many frequently asked questions can be just as easily answered by Administrative Team or Planning Technician. Please speak to them first to see if they can help you before asking to speak to the Duty Planner. The information they can give you includes the following:

- How to complete a planning application form;
- Information about planning applications fees;
- Request for planning application forms;
- The planning history relating to specific sites and properties;
- Copies of decision notices and other information from the Statutory Register of current and decided planning applications;
- Dates of Development Control Committee meetings;
- Whether a decision has been made on a recent planning application;
- Whether a building is Listed or situated in a Conservation Area;
- Contact names and telephone numbers of planning officers;
- Address and telephone number of other Council services;
- General Building Control enquiries such as forms and fees or request a Building Control Officer for more technical enquiries.

If you need to make an appointment to see a planning officer you can make an appointment between 8.45am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.45am to 4.30pm on Fridays.

### **What reliance can you put on the advice you will be given by the Duty Planner?**

We will do our best to ensure that the advice and information given to you is correct but you should remember that the advice and guidance from the Duty Planner is given in good faith and is dependent upon the information immediately available and also the information given by you.

However, no member of staff can give you a formal opinion at this stage as to whether or not a proposal would be granted. The advice from the Duty Planner Service does not bind the Council in anyway as to any future decision or action that the Council might make in respect of your enquiry.

If you require a formal and binding decision as to whether or not your proposal requires planning permission, perhaps to satisfy a solicitor, freeholder or lender in a property transaction, then you are advised to submit an application for a Certificate of Lawful Use or Development. The Duty Planner can advise you further about this process.