

Camden Planning Guidance

# Design

London Borough of Camden

CPG **1**



July 2015



# CPG1 Design

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# 1 Introduction

## What is Camden Planning Guidance?

- 1.1 We have prepared this Camden Planning Guidance to support the policies in our Local Development Framework (LDF). This guidance is therefore consistent with the Core Strategy and the Development Policies, and forms a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which is an additional “material consideration” in planning decisions. The Council adopted CPG1 Design on 6 April 2011 following statutory consultation. This document was updated in 2013 to include Section 12 on artworks, statues and memorials, and updated in 2015 to revise the guidance for recycling and waste storage. Details on these updates and the consultation process are available at [camden.gov.uk/cpg](http://camden.gov.uk/cpg).
- 1.2 The Camden Planning Guidance covers a range of topics (such as housing, sustainability, amenity and planning obligations) and so all of the sections should be read in conjunction, and within the context of Camden’s LDF.

## Design in Camden

- 1.3 Camden has many attractive and historic neighbourhoods as well as both traditional and modern buildings of the highest quality. These are a significant reason that the borough is such a popular place to live, work and visit. As well as conserving our rich heritage we should also contribute towards it by ensuring that we create equally high quality buildings and spaces which will be appreciated by future generations.
- 1.4 This objective of achieving high quality design does not just concern new development or large-scale schemes, but also includes the replacement, extension or conversion of existing buildings. The detailed guidance contained within this section therefore considers a range of design-related issues for both residential and commercial property and the spaces around them.



## What does this guidance cover?

1.5 This guidance provides information on all types of detailed design issues within the borough and includes the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Design excellence
3. Heritage
4. Extensions, alterations and conservatories
5. Roofs, terraces and balconies
6. Landscape design and trees
7. Shopfronts
8. Advertisements, signs and hoardings
9. Designing safer environments
10. Waste recyclables storage
11. Building services equipment
12. Artworks, statues and memorials

1.6 This guidance supports the following Local Development Framework policies:

### Core Strategy

- CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
- CS15 Protecting and improving our parks and open spaces & encouraging biodiversity
- CS17 Making Camden a safer place
- CS18 Dealing with our waste and encouraging recycling

### Development Policies

- DP24 Securing high quality design
- DP25 Conserving Camden's heritage
- DP27 Basements and lightwells
- DP29 Improving access
- DP30 Shopfronts

1.7 It should be noted that the guidance covered in this section only forms part of the range of considerations that you should address when proposing new development. In addition to these specific design matters you should also consider wider issues such as cycle storage, residential space standards, wheelchair housing, designing in sustainability measures and impacts on neighbours. Further guidance on these, and other issues, is contained within the Local Development Framework documents and the Camden Planning Guidance.





## 2 Design excellence

### KEY MESSAGES

Camden is committed to excellence in design and schemes should consider:

- The context of a development and its surrounding area;
- The design of the building itself;
- The use of the building;
- The materials used; and
- Public spaces.

- 2.1 High quality design makes a significant contribution to the success of a development and the community in which it is located. Design of the built environment affects many things about the way we use spaces and interact with each other, comfort and enjoyment, safety and security and our sense of inclusion.
- 2.2 The purpose of this guidance is to promote design excellence and to outline the ways in which you can achieve high quality design within your development.
- 2.3 This guidance primarily relates to Core Strategy Policy CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage and Development Policies DP24 Securing high quality design.



### When does this apply?

- 2.4 This guidance applies equally to all development, whether new build, converted, refurbished, extended and altered development. However, the implications for a proposal will vary greatly depending on the nature of the site, the proposed use, the scale of development, its interaction with surrounding sites, and existing buildings and structures on the site.

- 2.5 Other sections in this Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) relate to specific types of developments and relevant design matters, for example advertisements, signs and hoardings, designing safer environments, extensions, alterations and conversions, heritage and shopfronts.

### **General guidance on design**

- 2.6 Camden is committed to excellence in design. The borough contains many special and unique places, many of which are protected by conservation area status. In accordance with draft London Plan policies 7.1–7.7, Core Strategy policy CS14 requires development schemes to improve the quality of buildings, landscaping and public spaces and we will not approve design which is inappropriate to its context or fails to improve the character of an area.
- 2.7 We are working with our partners to promote design excellence and improve public buildings, landscaping and the street environment. We have established the Camden Design Initiative which seeks to encourage involvement, awareness and understanding of good design and this is promoted through the bi-annual Camden Design Awards which acknowledge high quality and innovative design. We are also a promoter of the national Civic Trust Awards which are awarded to buildings judged to have made a positive cultural, social or economic contribution to the local community.
- 2.8 In order to achieve high quality design in the borough we require applicants to consider buildings in terms of context, height, accessibility, orientation, siting, detailing and materials. These issues apply to all aspects of the development, including buildings and other structures (e.g. substations, refuse or cycle storage), outdoor spaces, landscaping and access points and should be considered at an early stage in the design of a development, as these elements are often difficult to change in later stages.



## **Context**

### 2.9 Good design should:

- positively enhance the character, history, archaeology and nature of existing buildings on the site and other buildings immediately adjacent and in the surrounding area, and any strategic or local views. This is particularly important in conservation areas;
- respect, and be sensitive to, natural and physical features, both on and off the site. Features to be considered include, but are not limited to: slope and topography, vegetation, biodiversity, habitats, waterways and drainage, wind, sunlight and shade, and local pollutant sources. Movement of earth to, from and around the site should be minimised to prevent flood risk, land instability and unnecessary transport of aggregates, especially by road; and
- consider connectivity to, from, around and through the site for people using all modes of transport, including pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair users, those with visual impairments, people with pushchairs, and motorised vehicles.

## **Building design**

### 2.10 Good design should:

- ensure buildings do not significantly overshadow existing/proposed outdoor spaces (especially designated open spaces), amenity areas or existing or approved renewable energy facilities (such as solar panels). For further information, refer to CPG3 Sustainability Renewable energy (A shadowing exercise may be required for tall buildings or where they are near open spaces);
- consider the extent to which developments may overlook the windows or private garden area of another dwelling;
- consider views, both local and London wide, and particularly where the site is within a recognised strategic viewing corridor (as shown on the policy Proposals Map);
- consider the degree of openness of an area and of open spaces, including gardens including views in and out of these spaces
- contributions to the character of certain parts of the borough;
- provide visual interest for onlookers, from all aspects and distances. This will involve attention to be given to both form and detail;
- consider opportunities for overlooking of the street and, where appropriate, provide windows, doors and other 'active' features at ground floor; and
- incorporate external facilities such as renewable energy installations, access ramps, plant and machinery, waste storage facilities and shading devices into the design of the development. Careful consideration must be given to ensure that the facility does not harm the built environment.

### **Land use**

- 2.11 The use of a building should:
- take into account the proposed use, and the needs of the expected occupants of the buildings and other users of the site and development; and
  - provide clear indication of the use of the building. It is noted, however, that reuse of existing buildings, as well as the accommodation of possible future changes of use, can make this difficult.

### **Materials**

- 2.12 Materials should form an integral part of the design process and should relate to the character and appearance of the area, particularly in conservation areas or within the setting of listed buildings. The durability of materials and understanding of how they will weather should be taken into consideration. The quality of a well designed building can be easily reduced by the use of poor quality or an unsympathetic palette of materials. We will encourage re-used and recycled materials, however these should be laid to ensure a suitable level accessible surface is provided. Further guidance is contained within CPG3 Sustainability (Sustainable use of materials).

### **Tall buildings**

- 2.13 Tall buildings in Camden (i.e. those which are substantially taller than their neighbours and/or which significantly change the skyline) will be assessed against a range of design issues, including:
- how the building relates to its surroundings, both in terms of how the base of the building fits in with the streetscape, and how the top of a tall building affects the skyline;
  - the contribution a building makes to pedestrian permeability and improved public accessibility;
  - the relationship between the building and hills and views;
  - the degree to which the building overshadows public spaces, especially open spaces and watercourses; and
  - the historic context of the building's surroundings.
- 2.14 In addition to these design considerations tall buildings will be assessed against a range of other relevant policies concerning amenity, mixed use and sustainability. Reference should be made to this CPG (Heritage chapter), CPG3 Sustainability (Climate change adaptation chapter) and CPG6 Protecting and improving quality of life (Overlooking and privacy and Wind/microclimate chapters).
- 2.15 Where a proposal includes a development that creates a landmark or visual statement, particular care must be taken to ensure that the location is appropriate (such as a particular destination within a townscape, or a particular functional node) and that the development is sensitive to its wider context. This will be especially important where the

development is likely to impact upon heritage assets and their settings (including protected views).

- 2.16 Design should consider safety and access. Guidance on these issues is contained within this CPG (Designing safer environments chapter) and CPG4 Protecting and improving quality of life (Access for all chapter). Schemes over 90m should be referred to the Civil Aviation Authority.

### **Design of public space**

- 2.17 The design of public spaces, and the materials used, is very important. The size, layout and materials used in the spaces around buildings will influence how people use them, and help to create spaces that are welcoming, attractive, accessible, safe and useful. They can also contribute to other objectives such as reducing the impact of climate change (e.g. the use of trees and planters to reduce run-off and provide shading), biodiversity, local food production and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs), and provide useful amenity space. In Conservation Areas there may be particular traditional approaches to landscaping/boundary treatments that should be respected in new designs.
- 2.18 The spaces around new developments should be considered at the same time as the developments themselves and hard / soft landscaping and boundary treatments should be considered as part of wider cohesive design. The landscaping and trees chapter in this CPG, and individual Conservation Area Appraisals, provide further guidance on this issue.
- 2.19 Public art can be a catalyst for improved environmental quality by upgrading and animating public space and enhancing local character and identity through helping create a sense of place. The Council will therefore encourage the provision of art and decorative features as an integral part of public spaces, where they are appropriate to their location and enhance the character and environment.
- 2.20 It is important that public spaces and streets are maintained to a high standard and so, in line with the Local Implementation Plan, the Council will continue to undertake public space enhancement works through specifically targeted programmes. The Designing safer environments chapter in this CPG provides more detailed guidance on the incorporation of safety and security considerations in public spaces.

### **Design and access statements**

- 2.21 Design and Access Statements are documents that explain the design ideas and rationale behind a scheme. They should show that you have thought carefully about how everyone, including disabled people, older people and children, will be able to use the places you want to build.
- 2.22 Design and Access Statements should include a written description and justification of the planning application and sometimes photos, maps and drawings may be useful to further illustrate the points made. The length

and detail of a Design and Access Statement should be related to the related to the size and complexity of the scheme. A statement for a major development is likely to be much longer than one for a small scheme.

- 2.23 Design and Access Statements are required to accompany all planning, conservation and listed building applications, except in certain circumstances as set out on our website [www.camden.gov.uk/planning](http://www.camden.gov.uk/planning). Our website also provides a template for Design and Access Statements and lists the information that each statement should contain. Further guidance on Access Statements is provided in CPG4 Protecting and improving quality of life (Access for all chapter).

### Further information

General	By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System – Towards Better Practice, DETR/CABE, 2000 Design and Access Statements; how to read, write and use them, CABE, 2007
Tall Buildings	Guidance on tall buildings, English Heritage/CABE, 2007
Historic Environment	Understanding Place: conservation areas designation, appraisal and management (2011) Building in Context, English Heritage/CABE, 2002. Seeing History in the View (2011) Good Practice Advice 3- Settings and Views (2015)
Other	Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS); and Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

## 4 Extensions, alterations and conservatories

### KEY MESSAGES

- Alterations should always take into account the character and design of the property and its surroundings.
- Windows, doors and materials should complement the existing building.
- Rear extensions should be secondary to the building being extended.
- You can make certain types of minor alterations without planning permission (see below) external alterations.

4.1 This guidance provides advice to those seeking to alter or extend a residential property, including the erection of conservatories. The principles of this guidance also apply to extensions and alterations to other types of property. It expects high quality design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of a property and its surroundings, and also covers matters such as outlook, privacy and overlooking.

4.2 This guidance relates to Core Strategy Policy CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage and Development Policies DP24 Securing high quality design.

### When does this apply?

4.3 This guidance applies to all proposals for alterations and extensions to residential properties, although some aspects will be relevant to alterations and extensions to other types of buildings.

4.4 You can make certain types of minor changes to your property without needing to apply for planning permission. These are called "permitted development rights", and further details can be found on the planning portal website [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk) or by contacting the Council. In some conservation areas, Article 4 directions have been introduced which have removed certain permitted development rights. Details of Article 4 Directions, including where they apply in Camden can be found in the Conservation and Urban Design section of our website [www.camden.gov.uk](http://www.camden.gov.uk).

4.5 In addition to this guidance, you should also make reference to chapters on Heritage, Design excellence and Roofs, Terraces and balconies, in this CPG. If your property is situated within a conservation area then you should also refer to the relevant Conservation Area Statement, Appraisal or Management Plan, which sets out detailed guidelines for development in a particular area. Many of these are available on our website.

## Guidance for all extensions and alterations

### External alterations

- 4.6 The good practice principles set out below and the general design considerations for residential façades shown in Figure 1 – ‘Alterations to Residential Façades’ should be followed when undertaking external alterations. A façade is the front or face of a building.

### Good practice principles for external alterations

- 4.7 Alterations should always take into account the character and design of the property and its surroundings. A harmonious contrast with the existing property and surroundings may be appropriate for some new work to distinguish it from the existing building; in other cases closely matching materials and design details are more appropriate so as to ensure the new work blends with the old.

### Windows

- Where it is necessary to alter or replace windows that are original or in the style of the originals, they should be replaced like with like wherever possible in order to preserve the character of the property and the surrounding area. New windows should match the originals as closely as possible in terms of type, glazing patterns and proportions (including the shape, size and placement of glazing bars), opening method, materials and finishes, detailing and the overall size of the window opening.
- Where timber is the traditional window material, replacements should also be in timber frames. uPVC windows are not acceptable both aesthetically and for environmental reasons, including their relatively short lifespan and inability to biodegrade. Similarly, where steel is the traditional window material, steel replacements will be sought wherever possible, see also CPG3 Sustainability (Sustainable use of materials chapter), which gives guidance on the use of sustainable materials).
- Reference should be made to the Building Research Establishment’s (BRE) Green Guide to Specification when sourcing replacement window frames.
- Where the original glazing bars are highly detailed and intricate, or contain stained glass or leaded panes these should be retained and repaired. See also the Camden leaflet *A Guide to Windows (2006)*, which is available on our website, for advice on secondary glazing and other ways to improve energy efficiency while retaining attractive original features.
- Where windows are replaced they should have the lowest ‘U-value’ feasible.
- Listed building consent will be required for replacement windows, secondary glazing and double-glazing in listed buildings.
- In conservation areas original single-glazed windows often contribute to the character and appearance of the area, and should be retained



and upgraded. There may however be some instances where double-glazing can be installed in a design that matches the original, for instance sash windows or casements with large individual pane sizes, or in secondary glazing. In such cases, the window frame and glazing bars of the replacement windows should match the existing.

- Further guidance on window alterations and the effect that this can have on energy efficiency and protecting heritage assets can be found on English Heritage's 'Climate Change and your Home' website: [www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk](http://www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk)

### Doors

- Where you are looking to replace doors their design should match the dimensions, proportions, joinery details, panelling and glazing of the original. Where timber replacement doors are proposed the timber should be sustainably sourced.
- Characteristic doorway features, such as porches, such be retained where they make a positive contribution to the character of groups of buildings.

### Materials

- Wherever possible you should use materials that complement the colour and texture of the materials in the existing building, see also CPG3 Sustainability (Sustainable use of materials chapter). In historic areas traditional materials such as brick, stone, timber and render will usually be the most appropriate complement to the existing historic fabric; modern materials such as steel and glass may be appropriate but should be used sensitively and not dominate the existing property.
- Materials for alterations should weather well, so their ageing process contributes positively to the character of the building, and the site's wider context.
- Original surface finishes should be retained or replicated wherever possible, as they are usually central to the architectural design / character treatment of a building. These may cover the entire building or façade (such as stucco facing), the roof elements (such as roof tiles and roof ridges), highlight specific features (such as windows or doors) or act as decorative elements (such as ironwork or terracotta panels).
- When repairing existing wall finishes, the composition of the original material (such as plaster, stucco or render) should be determined, the defective area cut out and a replacement material of identical chemical composition applied and properly bonded. Concrete repairs are generally non-original and unsympathetic to historic buildings, and can damage bricks, and should be replaced with a more traditional lime-based finish.
- The insulating quality of materials should be considered, along with their embodied energy (the energy used in manufacture) and the potential for re-use and recycling.

- Alterations or repairs to brickwork or stonework should match the original in all respects while satisfying the needs of durability and maintenance. This should include matching the original bond, mortar colour and texture. Retention of any existing pointing is encouraged wherever possible.
- Samples of brick type and mortar colour will normally be required to be submitted to the Council as part of any application.
- Painting, rendering or cladding of brickwork will normally be resisted, as it is often unsightly and can damage the appearance of a building by obscuring the texture and original colour of the façade. Painting, rendering or cladding may also trap moisture, which can cause major damp problems in the masonry.

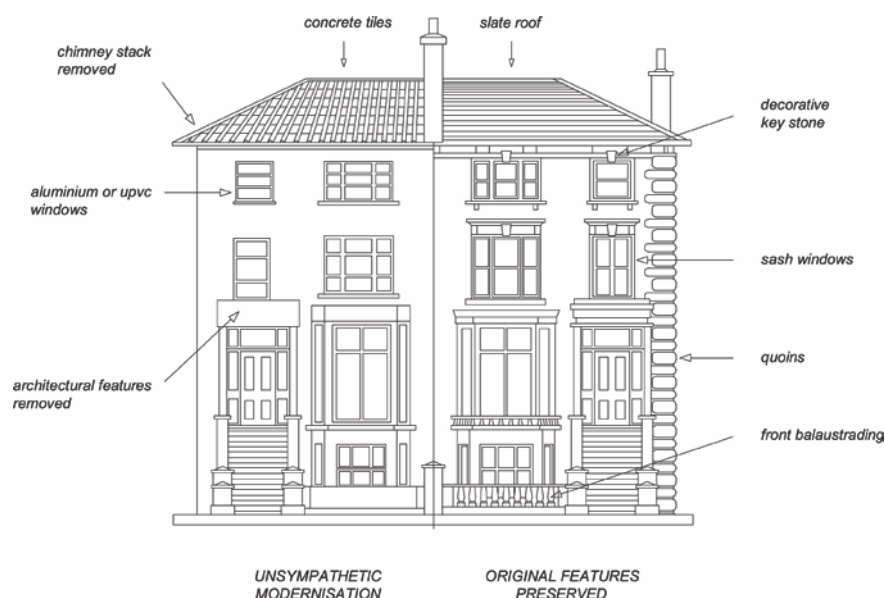
### External pipework

- Original external pipework and guttering should be repaired or reinstated in a like-for-like manner, where possible. In the case of historic buildings, cast iron replicas of original pipework are preferable to uPVC pipes. New pipework should be restricted to the side and rear elevations of buildings to avoid spoiling the appearance of the principal façade and should be grouped together and located in a discrete position.

### Scale

- 4.8 Extensions should be subordinate to the original building in terms of scale and situation unless the specific circumstances of the site, such as the context of the property or its particular design, would enable an exception to this approach. More detailed guidance on design considerations is contained within CPG1 Design (Design excellence chapter).

**Figure 2. Alterations to residential facades**



## Rear extensions

- 4.9 A rear extension is often the most appropriate way to extend a house or property. However, rear extensions that are insensitively or inappropriately designed can spoil the appearance of a property or group of properties and harm the amenity of neighbouring properties, for example in terms of outlook and access to daylight and sunlight.

### General principles

- 4.10 Rear extensions should be designed to:
- be secondary to the building being extended, in terms of location, form, scale, proportions, dimensions and detailing;
  - respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the building, including its architectural period and style;
  - respect and preserve existing architectural features, such as projecting bays, decorative balconies or chimney stacks;
  - respect and preserve the historic pattern and established townscape of the surrounding area, including the ratio of built to unbuilt space;
  - not cause a loss of amenity to adjacent properties with regard to sunlight, daylight, outlook, overshadowing, light pollution/spillage, privacy/overlooking, and sense of enclosure;
  - allow for the retention of a reasonable sized garden; and
  - retain the open character of existing natural landscaping and garden amenity, including that of neighbouring properties, proportionate to that of the surrounding area.
- 4.11 Materials should be chosen that are sympathetic to the existing building wherever possible (see also CPG3 Sustainability on Sustainable use of materials).

### Height of rear extensions

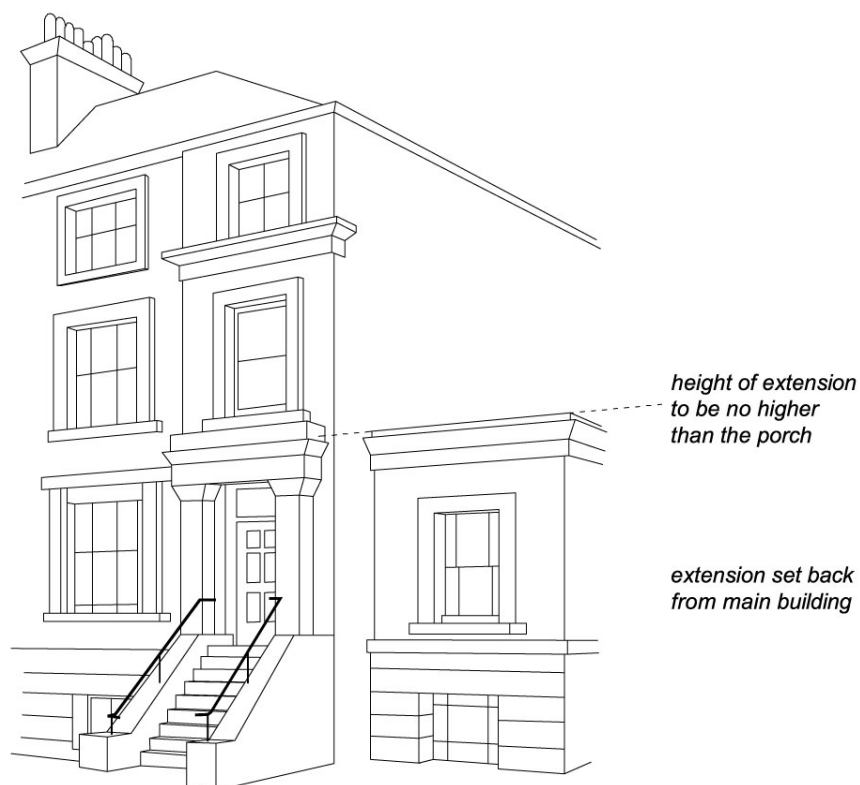
- 4.12 In order for new extensions to be subordinate to the original building, their heights should respect the existing pattern of rear extensions, where they exist. Ground floor extensions are generally considered preferable to those at higher levels. The maximum acceptable height of an extension should be determined in relation to the points outlined in paragraph 4.10 above. In cases where a higher extension is appropriate, a smaller footprint will generally be preferable to compensate for any increase in visual mass and bulk, overshadowing and overlooking that would be caused by the additional height.
- 4.13 In most cases, extensions that are higher than one full storey below roof eaves/parapet level, or that rise above the general height of neighbouring projections and nearby extensions, will be strongly discouraged.

### **Width of rear extensions**

- 4.14 The width of rear extensions should be designed so that they are not visible from the street and should respect the rhythm of existing rear extensions.
- 4.15 In addition, the rear of some buildings may be architecturally distinguished, either forming a harmonious composition, or visually contributing to the townscape. The Council will seek to preserve these where appropriate. Some of the Borough's important rear elevations are identified in conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans.

### **Side extensions**

- 4.16 Certain building forms may lend themselves to side extensions. Such extensions should be designed in accordance with the general considerations set out above in paragraph 4.10. Side extensions should also:
- be no taller than the porch; and
  - set back from the main building.
- 4.17 In many streets in the north of the Borough houses have mature rear gardens that can often be seen through gaps between buildings, softening the urban scene and providing visual interest. The infilling of gaps will not be considered acceptable where:
- significant views or gaps are compromised or blocked;
  - the established front building line is compromised;
  - the architectural symmetry or integrity of a composition is impaired;
  - the original architectural features on a side wall are obscured; or
  - access to the rear of a property is lost.
- 4.18 Where a property is located in a conservation area, reference should be made to the relevant conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans, which often identify important gaps and vistas where infilling would be inappropriate.

**Figure 3. Side extensions**

## Conservatories

4.19 Conservatories should normally:

- be located adjacent to the side and rear elevations of the building;
- be subordinate to the building being extended in terms of height, mass, bulk, plan form and detailing;
- respect and preserve existing architectural features, e.g. brick arches, windows etc;
- be located at ground or basement level. Only in exceptional circumstances will conservatories be allowed on upper levels;
- not extend the full width of a building. If a conservatory fills a gap beside a solid extension, it must be set back from the building line of the solid extension; and
- be of a high quality in both materials and design.

4.20 Conservatories should not overlook or cause light pollution to neighbouring properties, including to those in flats above. In order to minimise overlooking, opaque lightweight materials such as obscured glass may be necessary on façades abutting neighbouring properties. Also, in order to minimise light pollution, solid lightweight materials, one-way glass or obscured glass may be required.

- 4.21 Further guidance is contained within CPG4 Protecting and improving quality of life (Light Pollution chapter).

#### **Development in rear gardens and other open land**

- 4.22 The construction of garden buildings, including sheds, stand-alone green houses and other structures in rear gardens and other undeveloped areas, can often have a significant impact upon the amenity, biodiversity and character of an area. They may detract from the generally soft and green nature of gardens and other open space, contributing to the loss of amenity for existing and future residents of the property.
- 4.23 Large garden buildings may also affect the amenity value of neighbours' gardens, and if used for purposes other than storage or gardening, may intensify the use of garden spaces.
- 4.24 Development in rear gardens should:
- ensure the siting, location, scale and design of the proposed development has a minimal visual impact on, and is visually subordinate to, the host garden
  - not detract from the open character and garden amenity of the neighbouring gardens and the wider surrounding area
  - use suitable soft landscaping to reduce the impact of the proposed development
  - ensure building heights will retain visibility over garden walls and fences
  - use materials which complement the host property and the overall character of the surrounding area. The construction method should minimise any impact on trees (also see Landscape design and trees chapter in this CPG), or adjacent structures
  - address any impacts of extensions and alterations upon water run-off and groundwater flows, both independently or cumulatively with other extensions, and demonstrate that the impact of the new development on water run-off and groundwater flows will be negated by the measures proposed. Reference should be made to CPG3 Sustainability (Flooding chapter).
- 4.25 Pockets of privately owned land make important contributions to the character of certain parts of the borough, both in established neighbourhoods and areas of new development, creating village greens, informal verges, set backs for established structures or settings for listed buildings. Building on such areas will generally be discouraged.
- 4.26 Where any type of development, either in a rear garden or on private land that forms part of a public space, may be appropriate in principle, a full assessment should be made prior to the commencement of the development to avoid any potential impact upon trees or other vegetation in the surrounding area. This assessment may be required as part of an application for planning permission.

### **Further information**

- 4.27 The following professional bodies provide further guidance and advice on buildings and design matters:
- Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS); and
  - Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

