

5 Roofs, terraces and balconies

KEY MESSAGES

Roof extensions fall into two categories:

- Alterations to the overall roof form; or
- Smaller alterations within the existing roof form, such as balconies and terraces.

When proposing roof alterations and extensions, the main considerations should be:

- The scale and visual prominence;
- The effect on the established townscape and architectural style;
- The effect on neighbouring properties

- 5.1 This guidance provides advice on roof alterations and extensions and on proposals for balconies and terraces. The Council will seek to ensure that roof alterations are sympathetic and do not harm the character and appearance of buildings or the wider townscape in the borough.
- 5.2 This guidance replates primarily to Development Policies DP24 Securing high quality design and DP25 Conserving Camden's Heritage.

When does this apply?

- 5.3 This guidance applies to all planning applications involving roof alterations, roof extensions, balconies and terraces, and is particularly relevant to residential properties.
- 5.4 For properties in conservation areas, reference should also be made to the relevant conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans. These describe the area and its special character and contain specific area-based advice.
- 5.5 Where buildings are listed, reference should also be made to planning guidance on Heritage.

Roof alterations and extensions – general principles

- 5.6 Proposals to alter and extend roofs fall into two categories: those that are accommodated within the existing roof form, such as dormer windows and roof lights, and those which alter the overall roof form, such as the construction of mansard roofs.
- 5.7 Additional storeys and roof alterations are likely to be **acceptable** where:
- There is an established form of roof addition or alteration to a terrace or group of similar buildings and where continuing the pattern of development would help to re-unite a group of buildings and townscape;
 - Alterations are architecturally sympathetic to the age and character of the building and retain the overall integrity of the roof form;

- There are a variety of additions or alterations to roofs which create an established pattern and where further development of a similar form would not cause additional harm.

5.8 A roof alteration or addition is likely to be **unacceptable** in the following circumstances where there is likely to be an adverse affect on the skyline, the appearance of the building or the surrounding street scene:

- There is an unbroken run of valley roofs;
- Complete terraces or groups of buildings have a roof line that is largely unimpaired by alterations or extensions, even when a proposal involves adding to the whole terrace or group as a coordinated design;
- Buildings or terraces which already have an additional storey or mansard;
- Buildings already higher than neighbouring properties where an additional storey would add significantly to the bulk or unbalance the architectural composition;
- Buildings or terraces which have a roof line that is exposed to important London-wide and local views from public spaces;
- Buildings whose roof construction or form are unsuitable for roof additions such as shallow pitched roofs with eaves;
- The building is designed as a complete composition where its architectural style would be undermined by any addition at roof level;
- Buildings are part of a group where differing heights add visual interest and where a roof extension would detract from this variety of form;
- Where the scale and proportions of the building would be overwhelmed by additional extension.

5.9 Materials, such as clay tiles, slate, lead or copper, that visually blend with existing materials, are preferred for roof alterations and repairs. Where roofs are being refurbished, original materials such as keyhole ridge tiles or decorative chimney stacks and chimney pots should be reused. Replacement by inappropriate substitutes erodes the character and appearance of buildings and areas.

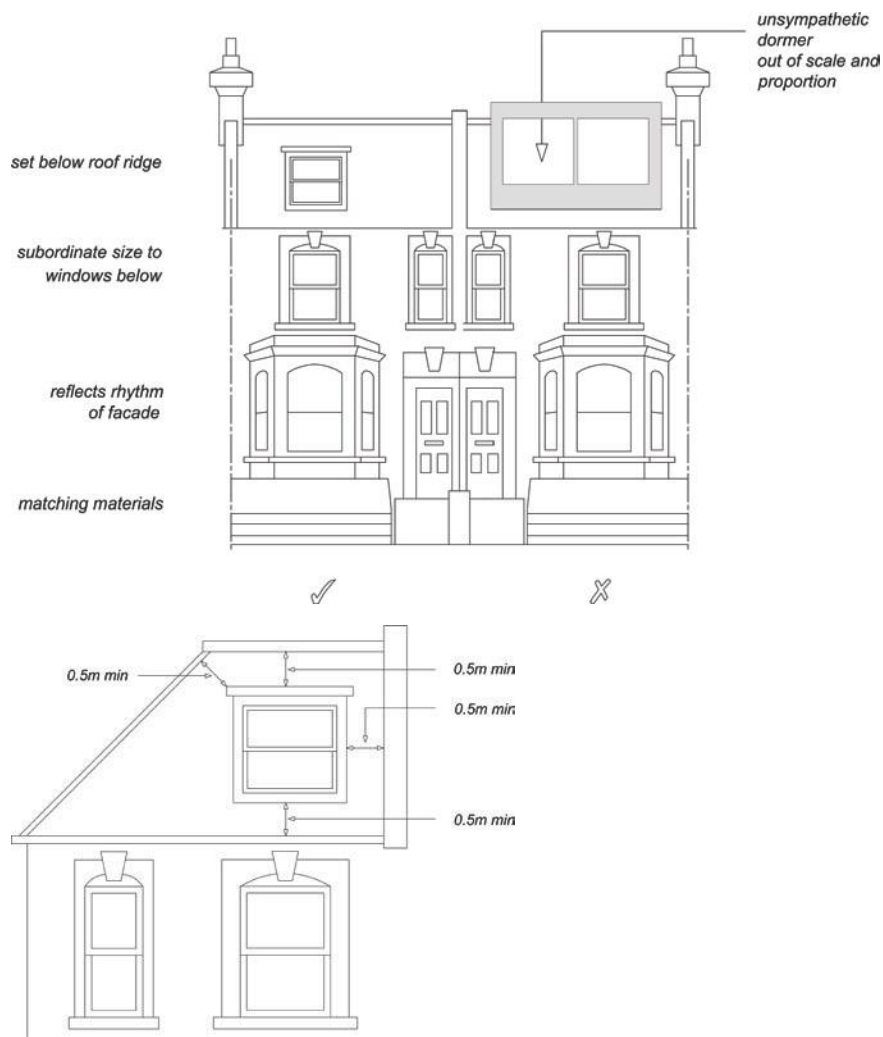
5.10 Where the principle of an additional storey is acceptable, the more specific guidance set out below will apply. This advice is supplemented by more specific area-based advice as set out in the Council's conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans which set out our approach to preserving and enhancing such areas. Many of these appraisals and management plans are available for download on our website, or are available as hard copies from our Planning reception.

Roof dormers

5.11 Alterations to, or the addition of, roof dormers should be sensitive changes which maintain the overall structure of the existing roof form. Proposals that achieve this will be generally considered acceptable, providing that the following circumstances are met:

- a) The pitch of the existing roof is sufficient to allow adequate habitable space without the creation of disproportionately large dormers or raising the roof ridge. Dormers should not be introduced to shallow-pitched roofs.
- b) Dormers should not be introduced where they cut through the roof ridge or the sloped edge of a hipped roof. They should also be sufficiently below the ridge of the roof in order to avoid projecting into the roofline when viewed from a distance. Usually a 500mm gap is required between the dormer and the ridge or hip to maintain this separation (see Figure 4). Full-length dormers, on both the front and rear of the property, will be discouraged to minimise the prominence of these structures.
- c) Dormers should not be introduced where they interrupt an unbroken roofscape.
- d) In number, form, scale and pane size, the dormer and window should relate to the façade below and the surface area of the roof. They should appear as separate small projections on the roof surface. They should generally be aligned with windows on the lower floors and be of a size that is clearly subordinate to the windows below. In some very narrow frontage houses, a single dormer placed centrally may be preferable (see Figure 4). It is important to ensure the dormer sides (“cheeks”) are no wider than the structure requires as this can give an overly dominant appearance. Deep fascias and eaves gutters should be avoided.
- e) Where buildings have a parapet the lower edge of the dormer should be located below the parapet line (see Figure 4).
- f) Materials should complement the main building and the wider townscape and the use of traditional materials such as timber, lead and hanging tiles are preferred.

Figure 4. Dormer windows

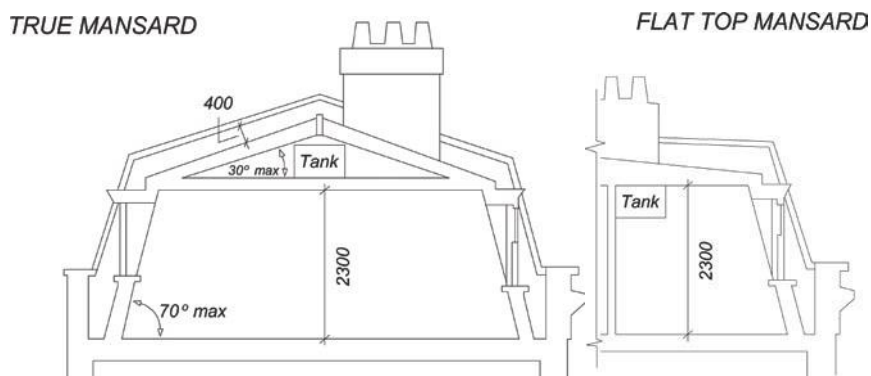


- 5.12 See CPG2 Housing (Residential development standards chapter) for further information, particularly the section on ceiling heights.
- 5.13 The presence of unsuitably designed new or altered dormers on neighbouring properties will not serve as a precedent for further development of the same kind.

Mansard Roofs

- 5.14 Mansard roofs are a traditional means of terminating a building without adding a highly visible roof. This form is acceptable where it is the established roof form in a group of buildings or townscape.

Figure 5. Mansard Roofs

**True Mansard****Flat topped Mansard**

Lower slope is at a steeper angle than Upper slope of a pitch below the upper, and the upper slope is visible 5° or totally flat

- 5.15 Mansard roofs are often the most appropriate form of extension for a Georgian or Victorian dwelling with a raised parapet wall and low roof structure behind. Mansard roofs should not exceed the height stated in Figure 5 so as to avoid excessive additional height to the host building. They are often a historically appropriate solution for traditional townscapes. It should be noted that other forms of roof extensions may also be appropriate in situations where there is a strong continuous parapet and the extension is sufficiently set back or where they would match other existing sympathetic roof extension already in the terrace.

Parapet wall

A low wall or railing that is built along the edge of a roof, balcony or terrace for protection purposes.

Cornice

The topmost architectural element of a building, projecting forward from the main walls, originally used as a means of directing rainwater away from the building's walls.

- 5.16 The three main aspects to consider when designing a mansard roof extension are its:
- pitches and profile;
 - external covering; and
 - windows.
- 5.17 The lower slope (usually 60-70°) should rise from behind and not on top of the parapet wall, separated from the wall by a substantial gutter. Original cornice, parapet and railing details should be retained and where deteriorated or lost, should be incorporated into the design of new roof extensions. Visible chimney stacks should be retained and increased in height, where necessary. Only party walls with their chimney stacks and windows should break the plane of the roof slope, and should be accommodated in a sensitive way and be hidden as far

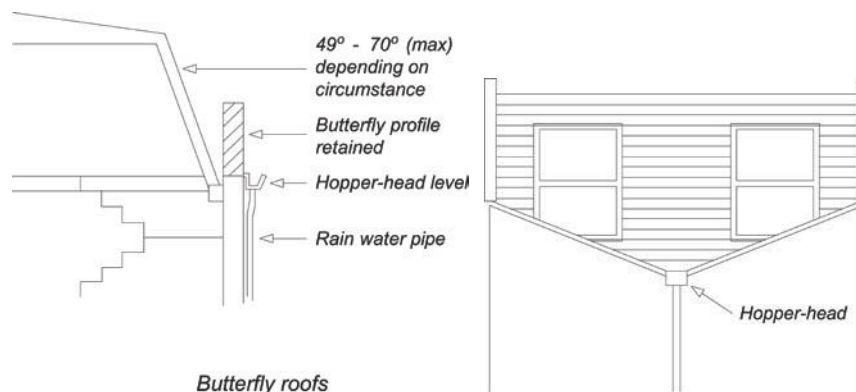
as is possible. (See also guidance on dormer windows and roof lights). Dormer windows or roof lights should be confined to the lower slope.

- 5.18 Roofing materials should be of the highest quality because of their significant visual impact on the appearance of a building and townscape and the need to be weather-tight. Natural slate is the most common covering and this should be laid with a traditional overlap pattern. Artificial slate or felt are not acceptable roof coverings in conservation areas. Where a roof in a conservation area is being re-covered, the choice of covering should replicate the original, usually natural slate or clay tile.

Valley or Butterfly roofs

- 5.19 On buildings with a 'valley' or 'butterfly' roof if a mansard extension is considered acceptable in terms of the guidance in paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8 of this chapter, then the parapet should be retained. The new roof should start from behind the parapet at existing hopper-head level, forming a continuous slope of up to a maximum of 70° (see Figure 6). In this context, it is usually more appropriate to introduce conservationstyle roof lights, which are flush with the roof slope, rather than dormers. Terraces and additional railings will not usually be acceptable.

Figure 6. Butterfly roofs



Hopper head level

The level at which the 'hopper head' (a square or funnel shaped receptacle to connect rainwater or waste pipes to a down-pipe) is positioned.

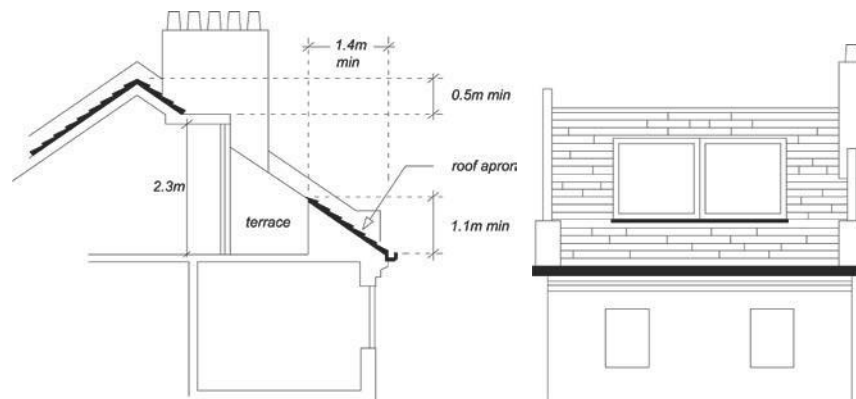
Other roof additions

- 5.20 On some contemporary buildings a less traditional form of roof addition may be more appropriate. In such cases, proposals should still have regard for the following general principles:
- The visual prominence, scale and bulk of the extension;
 - Use of high quality materials and details;
 - Impact on adjoining properties both in terms of bulk and design and amenity of neighbours, e.g. loss of light due to additional height;
 - Sympathetic design and relationship to the main building. **Roof lights**

- 5.21 Roof lights can have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of buildings and streetscapes. This occurs where they are raised above the roof slope rather than being flush with the roof profile, or where they are an incompatible introduction into an otherwise uncluttered roofscape, or where they conflict with other architectural roof elements, e.g. gables and turrets.
- 5.22 Roof lights should be proportioned to be significantly subordinate both in size and number and should be fitted flush with the roof surface. Some properties, particularly listed buildings and those within conservation areas with prominent roof slopes may be so sensitive to changes that even the installation of roof lights may not be acceptable. **Balconies and terraces**
- 5.23 Balconies and terraces can provide valuable amenity space for flats that would otherwise have little or no private exterior space. However, they can also cause nuisance to neighbours. Potential problems include overlooking and privacy, daylight, noise, light spillage and security.
- 5.24 Balconies and terraces should form an integral element in the design of elevations. The key to whether a design is acceptable is the degree to which the balcony or terrace complements the elevation upon which it is to be located. Consideration should therefore be given to the following:
- detailed design to reduce the impact on the existing elevation;
 - careful choice of materials and colour to match the existing elevation;
 - possible use of setbacks to minimise overlooking – a balcony need not necessarily cover the entire available roof space;
 - possible use of screens or planting to prevent overlooking of habitable rooms or nearby gardens, without reducing daylight and sunlight or outlook; and
 - need to avoid creating climbing opportunities for burglars. **Roof Level**
- 5.25 A terrace provided at roof level should be set back behind the slope of a pitched roof in accordance with Figure 7, or behind a parapet on a flat roof. A terrace should normally comply with the following criteria:
- The dimensions of the roof should be sufficient to accommodate a terrace without adversely affecting the appearance of the roof or the elevation of the property.
 - A terrace will only normally be acceptable on the rear of properties. It is normally inappropriate to set back a mansard to provide a terrace.
 - It should not result in the parapet height being altered, or, in the case of valley/butterfly roofs, the infilling of the rear valley parapet by brickwork or railings.
 - Any handrails required should be well set back behind the line of the roof slope, and be invisible from the ground.
 - It should not result in overlooking of habitable rooms of adjacent properties.
- 5.26 When a terrace is provided within the slope of a pitch as in Figure 7, the adjacent tiles or slates should be kept unbroken above the eaves. The width of the terrace should be no wider than a dormer opening. A terrace may be

acceptable behind an existing parapet. Where the height of the parapet is less than 1.1m, a railing will be required to fulfil Building Regulations.

Figure 7. Roof terraces



Building services equipment

5.27 New building services equipment and water tanks should be accommodated within the envelope of the building and its siting should be considered as part of the overall design (see chapter on Building services equipment in this CPG). Building services equipment includes, but is not limited to, heating and cooling systems, ventilation and extraction systems and associated ducting for electricity, communications and plumbing. **Green roofs**

5.28 We encourage the incorporation of green roofs into schemes where appropriate in design terms (see chapter on Green roofs and walls in CPG3 Sustainability). You should contact the Council to confirm whether planning permission is required for green roofs. Planning permission is not required on flat roofs which are concealed by a parapet.

Solar panels

5.29 We encourage the installation of solar panels into schemes and for some properties these will not need planning permission. You should contact the Council and visit the Planning Portal website www.planningportal.gov.uk to confirm whether planning permission is required for solar panels. Solar panels should be sited so as to maximise efficiency but minimise their visual impact and glare, for example utilising valley roofs and concealed roof slopes. Reference should be made to CPG3 Sustainability (Energy Efficiency: existing buildings and Energy Efficiency: new buildings chapters).