



WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

HOUSEHOLDER DEVELOPMENT

JUNE 2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance in relation to policies contained in an adopted local plan. SPDs cannot introduce new planning policies, nor can they add unnecessary financial burdens on development. SPDs are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the Development Plan. The requirements for producing SPDs are set out, at the current time, in Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 1.2 This SPD sits alongside the Wirral Local Plan 2022-2040, adopted in March 2025. The SPD sets out guidance in relation to householder development proposals, including extensions and alterations to an existing single dwelling and works within the curtilage of an existing dwelling. The SPD also sits alongside additional guidance and information including the validation checklist which can be found on the Council's planning webpage at: [Planning application forms and checklists | wirral.gov.uk](https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning/application-forms-and-checklists/)
- 1.3 The Supplementary Planning Document supplements the following policies within the Wirral Local Plan (adopted 31st March 2025):
- WS 1 – The Development and Regeneration Strategy for Wirral 2022–2040
 - WS 6 – Placemaking for Wirral
 - WS 7 – Principles for Design
 - WD 1 – Landscaping
 - WD 5 – Residential Extensions
 - WD 23 – Design Details

2. General Principles

- Extensions and alterations to dwellings should be of a high-quality design and should reflect the character, scale and design of the existing property
- Extensions and other householder development should not harm the appearance of the existing property or the character of the surrounding area
- External materials should match or complement those of the existing property
- Extensions and other householder development should not result in a significant loss of privacy, light or outlook to neighbouring properties, nor

be visually overbearing or dominant when viewed from adjoining properties

- Sufficient useable private amenity space shall be retained for occupiers of the dwelling

3. **Detailed Guidance**

Definitions
Habitable Rooms • Kitchens (where the kitchen contains a dining area where residents will likely spend substantial time) • Living Rooms • Dining Rooms • Bedrooms • Study (where the room size, as a minimum, meets Nationally Described Space Standards for a single bedroom) • Conservatories (note: consideration will be given to whether a conservatory will retain adequate natural light from other elevations)
Non-Habitable Rooms • Bathrooms • Toilets • Stairways • Hallways • Landings • Porches • Utility Rooms • Garages
Primary Window A primary window is the main or only window through which light illuminates the room and provides the main outlook for the room
Secondary Window A secondary window is usually a smaller, subordinate window which serves the same room as a primary window
Principal Elevation For the purposes of this document, Principal Elevation will normally refer to the front and rear elevation of a property, where the majority of primary windows will be located

Original Dwelling

The 'original dwelling' is defined as the building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after, as it was originally built

Separation Distances

- 3.1 In the interests of protecting the amenities of neighbouring residents and providing sufficient outlook, light and privacy for occupiers of the dwelling itself, proposals should normally comply with the following:
- Where Primary Windows serving Habitable Rooms on Principal Elevations in neighbouring dwellings directly face one another then windows should be a minimum of 21 metres apart
 - Where a Primary Window serving a Habitable Room on a Principal Elevation of a neighbouring property will face a blank wall (or wall containing Habitable Room windows which can be obscurely glazed) they should be a minimum of 14 metres apart
 - Where a Primary Window serving a Habitable Room on a Principal Elevation of the host dwelling faces a blank wall or other feature such as high boundary walls, fencing or steep embankments they should be a minimum of 10 metres apart
 - Consideration will be given to the impact of proposals on Primary Windows serving Habitable Rooms on non-Principal Elevations
 - All Primary Windows in Habitable Rooms should have reasonable outlook and not be served solely by roof lights
 - Obscure glazing should not be installed in Primary Windows of Habitable Rooms
- 3.2 These are minimum distances and greater distances will be required where there are differences in land levels or where development adjoins dwellings of different heights. As a guide an increased Separation Distance will normally be required so that for every metre difference in ground floor level between the proposed development and a neighbouring dwelling, the required Separation Distance shall be increased by 1 metre. Additional distance may also be required where there is a difference in the number of storeys between the proposed dwelling and a neighbouring dwelling; for every additional storey, the Separation Distances shall be increased by 2 metres.

- 3.3 Consideration will be given to the proximity of buildings to the private gardens of neighbouring properties to prevent development which appears excessively oppressive and results in overshadowing of neighbouring properties.
- 3.4 To prevent unacceptable levels of overlooking into neighbouring gardens, new first-floor (or above) windows which are opposite a boundary with the private garden of a neighbouring property should be at least 10 metres away from the boundary.
- 3.5 Secondary Windows or windows serving non-Habitable Rooms which fall below this distance may be acceptable subject to the window being obscurely glazed or at a high level.

Fenestration

- 3.6 New windows and doors, in particular those visible on the street scene, should reflect or complement the character and appearance of the existing dwelling in terms of size, type, placement and materials.

Side Extensions

- 3.7 To maintain the balance and symmetry of semi-detached properties and to ensure that extensions remain subordinate on all dwellings, side extensions should be no more than half the width of the original dwelling. Consideration will be given where the character of the original dwelling and surrounding area may be able to support an extension greater in width.
- 3.8 For all semi-detached and terraced properties, and detached properties where a proposed extension would be within 1 metre of a neighbouring dwelling or is located in a line of similar dwellings, in order to maintain a visual break and to ensure the extension remains subordinate and respects the character and scale of the original house, the following criteria should be met for two-storey and first-floor side extensions:
- The first floor of the extension should be set back from the main front elevation of the host dwelling by 1 metre (the main front elevation will normally be the wall where the majority of the frontage of the dwelling sits)
 - The extension should have a visibly lower ridge height than the existing dwelling
 - The roof form of the extension should replicate that of the host dwelling

- The extension should not normally be more than half the width of the host dwelling

Corner Plots

3.9 Corner plots often provide an open appearance and greenery which can contribute positively to the character of an area. Therefore, side extensions to properties on corner plots, which project closer to the street, should comply with the following:

- The width of the extension should be no more than half the width of the original property
- The width of the extension should be no more than half the width of the side garden / plot between the side elevation of the original property and the adjacent highway
- Where the plot is tapered then the width of the side garden will normally be measured at the centre point between the main front and rear elevations of the Original Dwelling

Rear Extensions

3.10 Rear extensions should not significantly alter the existing levels of light, outlook and privacy to neighbouring properties or have an unacceptable overbearing impact on them. On terraced and semi-detached properties, and on detached dwellings which are within 1 metre of adjacent dwellings, the following criteria for rear extensions should be met:

- Single-storey rear extensions within 1 metre of the party boundary should not project more than 3 metres from the original rear wall of the property
- Two-storey rear extensions should not normally project more than 3 metres from the rear wall of the Original Dwelling and should not be closer than 2.5 metres to a boundary that forms a party wall between terraced and semi-detached properties and no closer than 1 metre to any other boundary

3.11 Consideration will be given to a larger projection if the adjoining property has an extension or built form along the party boundary or if the layout and siting

of neighbouring properties indicate this would not cause significant amenity issues.

Front Extensions and Porches

- 3.12 Front extensions usually have an impact on the street scene and will therefore not normally be acceptable on properties in a row which are of a similar design and appearance or where a front extension would have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the host property or the character of the street scene.
- 3.13 Front porches should be restricted in size and scale and should meet the following criteria:
- Porches should not project forward more than one-fifth of the front garden depth or 1.5 metres, whichever is lesser
 - The design and materials should match or complement the character and design of the existing property
 - Porches should not exceed the sill height of the first-floor windows

Dormer and Roof Extensions

- 3.14 Roof and dormer extensions should be sensitively designed to have appropriate visual impact on the appearance of the host property and the character of the surrounding area. Proposals that unacceptably dominate the existing dwelling or appear out of character in the street scene will not be allowed.
- 3.15 Front dormers will not be allowed where they are not an established feature of the street scene, would have an adverse impact on the appearance of the original dwelling or the character of the area, or would result in unbalancing a pair of semi-detached properties or a row of terraced dwellings.
- 3.16 Side dormers on all properties, or proposals to create gable end roofs on one side of a pair of semi-detached properties where the adjoining property retains a hipped roof, will not normally be allowed.
- 3.17 Dormers should be constructed in materials which match or complement the host property.
- 3.18 Dormer extensions which are located at the rear of the property, would not appear obtrusive in the street scene and will not have a significant impact on

the amenities of neighbouring properties will normally be acceptable subject to the following criteria:

- Dormers should be set in by at least 0.5 metres from the gable wall(s) of the property and from party boundaries
 - Dormers should be set back from the original rear wall by at least 0.5 metres
 - Dormers should not exceed the ridge height of the dwelling
 - In cases of a rear dormer on a house with a hipped roof, the dormer shall not extend beyond the roof plane of the hip (or 'wrap around' the roof)
 - Windows should normally vertically correspond with existing windows and match their style and proportions
- 3.19 Dormers should not result in a significant increase in overlooking of neighbouring properties. Proposals resulting in a significant adverse impact on existing levels of privacy will not be allowed.

Boundary Treatments

- 3.20 Boundary treatments can have a significant impact on the character of an area. All new and replacement boundary treatments should therefore have consideration for the character and appearance of the surrounding area, in particular the following:
- Existing boundary treatment which makes a positive contribution to the street scene should normally be retained
 - New boundary treatment should not result in a closed-off effect which has a harmful impact on the street scene. This is particularly important for dwellings on corner plots or within prominent locations within the street scene
 - Front boundary treatments which are taller than those within the established street scene and which have a harmful impact on the street scene will not be allowed
 - Boundary treatments which are visible in the street scene should be of a good design and should utilise materials that are in keeping with the established character of the area

- Unless they are an established and positive feature within the street scene then close-boarded wooden fences are unlikely to be acceptable where they will be highly visible or prominent
- Boundary treatments within open plan settings will not normally be allowed.
- Boundary treatments should consider highway safety in terms of sight lines and access
- The use of natural boundary treatments, such as hedges, is encouraged

Outbuildings (including detached garages)

- 3.21 Outbuildings should be designed to respect the character of the host property and surrounding area and should utilise materials which match or complement the host property.
- 3.22 Outbuildings should not be overly large and should be proportionate in scale to the original dwelling, the size of the plot and the surrounding area.
- 3.23 Outbuildings should not be built in front of the host dwelling or established building lines – unless the site is well screened from the street scene, or the building is appropriate to the size of the plot, the design of the dwelling and the prevailing character of the area.
- 3.24 Outbuildings should not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties.
- 3.25 Outbuildings should not result in an unacceptable reduction in useable private amenity space or off-street parking for the host property.

Balconies (including Raised Patios, Roof Terraces and similar structures)

- 3.26 Balconies will not be acceptable where they would increase direct overlooking into neighbouring properties to an unacceptable degree or would create an unacceptable perception of being overlooked from a higher level. For this reason, balconies on semi-detached and terraced properties will not normally be supported.
- 3.27 Separation Distances set out in this document will be taken into consideration when assessing whether the impact of a balcony is acceptable. This includes

a requirement for the rear of balconies to be at least 10 metres from any boundary opposite where it is shared with the private garden of a neighbouring property.

- 3.28 Where the side of a balcony is within 10 metres of any boundary with the private garden of a neighbouring dwelling then appropriate screening may be sufficient to overcome overlooking concerns provided the screening is sufficiently opaque and provided any views into neighbouring gardens are sufficiently screened. Any screening should not have an overbearing impact on neighbouring properties.
- 3.29 Balconies (and any screening required) should be appropriate in terms of design, materials and scale to the host dwelling and the character of the area.

Development Within the Green Belt

- 3.30 Within the Green Belt any extension, alteration or outbuilding should not be disproportionate to the size of the original dwelling and should not have a harmful impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 3.31 Disproportionate additions will be considered those that exceed 50% of the floorspace of the Original Dwelling. This allowance will include all previous additions to the Original Dwelling including outbuildings. Floorspace includes all floorspace that is internal to the dwelling and includes all rooms, internal walls and hall, stairs and landing areas of a dwelling. It excludes the external walls of a dwelling.
- 3.32 Floorspace in a roof is only included in the original floorspace calculations if it was designed for such use when built and only includes floorspace with a head height greater than 1.5 metres. Whilst loft conversions do not create new floorspace, the impact of any additions to the roof will still be considered when assessing whether this results in a disproportionate addition to the dwelling.
- 3.33 Outbuildings which are original, incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling and within 5 metres of the original dwelling will be considered as original floorspace.
- 3.34 Outbuildings which are original and are more than 5 metres from the original dwelling will not be taken into consideration when assessing whether a proposal is disproportionate.
- 3.35 Outbuildings more than 5 metres from the original dwelling can often have a greater impact on the Green Belt by introducing new development away from the established built form of the dwelling. Therefore, proposed outbuildings

more than 5 metres away from the Original Dwelling will normally be considered inappropriate development and will not be acceptable.

Ancillary Accommodation

- 3.36 Ancillary accommodation, usually for family members, should retain a clear relationship with the host dwelling in order to be considered ancillary. This should be done by complying with the following:
- For ancillary accommodation which directly adjoins the dwelling, at least one internal link must be provided
 - For ancillary accommodation within an outbuilding, the building should be located in reasonable proximity to the dwelling and should only be accessed from the street via the main entrance to the property
- 3.37 Ancillary accommodation within outbuildings on properties on corner plots, where separate access could be created from the highway, will not normally be allowed, especially where the ancillary accommodation includes all basic amenities (toilet; personal washing facilities; cooking facilities) to function as a separate dwelling.

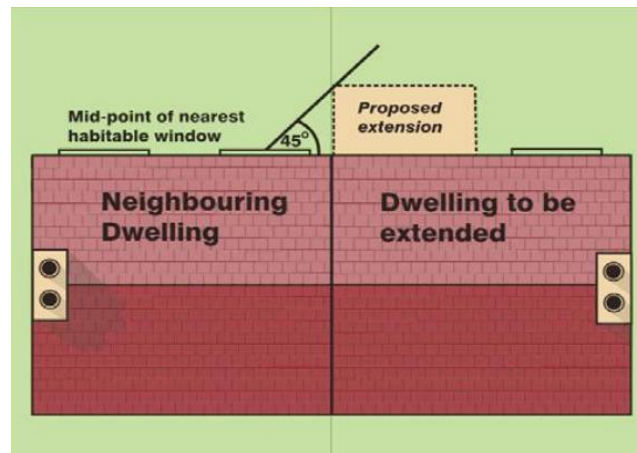
Landscaping and Trees

- 3.38 Development proposals should be designed to retain and protect existing trees and areas of landscaping, where possible. Where trees are to be removed then replacement planting should normally be provided. Landscaping proposals should aim to include native species and other wildlife-friendly planting, including those which support invertebrates such as pollinators.
- 3.39 Development which involves the creation of off-street parking or alters existing front garden arrangements should retain areas of soft landscaping. This landscaping should be substantial enough to provide visual benefit and, where appropriate, to act as a soakaway for surface water runoff from any proposed hardstanding.

45-Degree Rule

- 3.40 Development which complies with the guidance set out in this document will normally be considered acceptable. However, in some instances it may be relevant to apply the 45-degree rule to further assess the amenity implications of a proposal.

- 3.41 The 45-degree rule involves drawing a line from the mid-point of a Primary Window for a Habitable Room which is potentially affected by a neighbour's extension, at an angle of 45 degree towards the extension. If the proposed extension crosses that line, it is unlikely to be acceptable.



4. Additional Information

Pre-Application Discussions

- 4.1 In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Local Planning Authority encourages pre-application discussions to ensure that proposals for householder development are suitable. Further details can be found on the Wirral Borough Council website at:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-permission/applying-planning-permission/pre-application-advice>

Information to be Submitted with Applications

- 4.2 The National Validation requirements and Wirral's Local Validation Checklist set out the level of information required with all new planning applications can be accessed at:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning/planning-application-forms-and-checklists>

- 4.3 The Council encourages all applicant and agents to review the local validation requirements prior to submitting any application to prevent unnecessary delays.