

**Figure 13: MAIN FRONTAGE GABLE - creating a balanced elevation**

## 2.5 Elevational Composition

The placing, grouping and proportioning of window and door openings are important to the design of any extension elevation.

### Placing and Grouping

The apex shaped gable and the rectangular front below the main ridge line are the elevational components of the traditional building form. Different principles of composition apply i.e.

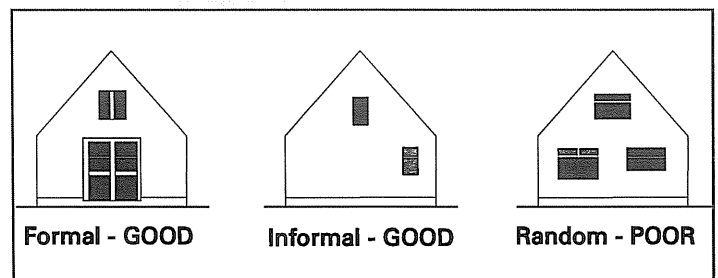
### GABLE ELEVATIONS (Figure 13 & Figure 14)

Any openings should be set comfortably within the "frame" of the gable. There are differing approaches to the composition of the formal frontage gable and the informal end gable as follows:

**Frontage Gable:** A main gable on a street façade should be formally composed with the large openings centred and any other smaller ones positioned to reinforce the symmetry. Where an extension is proposed which continues the street elevation, an existing main frontage gable should remain the focal point, preferably at the centre of the façade. This principle should determine at which end of the existing house the extension could best be attached. If the land available for development does not allow this, the extension should be sufficiently set back and understated in character to ensure that the original house frontage retains its visual integrity and dominance.

(see Main Frontage Gable above)

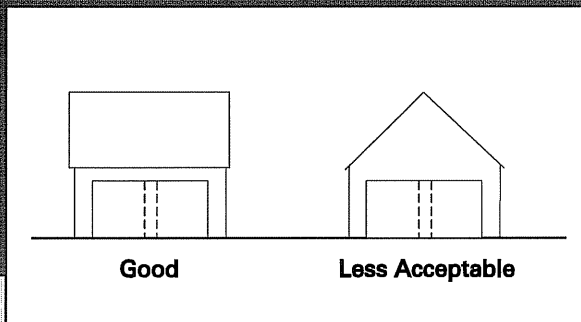
**End Gable:** The compositional arrangement described above should also apply wherever a formal gable is proposed with extensive window areas. However on standard end gables a less formal solution of one or two smaller openings in a balanced arrangement would be more appropriate. Such gables are often exposed to public view on street corners and may only be blank or windowless gables where essential for reasons of privacy/overlooking. Even here smaller non-habitable room windows should be inserted to give a more vital appearance.



**Figure 14: GABLE FORMALITY**

## Design Guidance

### Elevational Composition



**Figure 15** DOUBLE GARAGE ELEVATION -  
2 Doors preferred

#### FRONTAGE ELEVATION (Figure 15 & Figure 16)

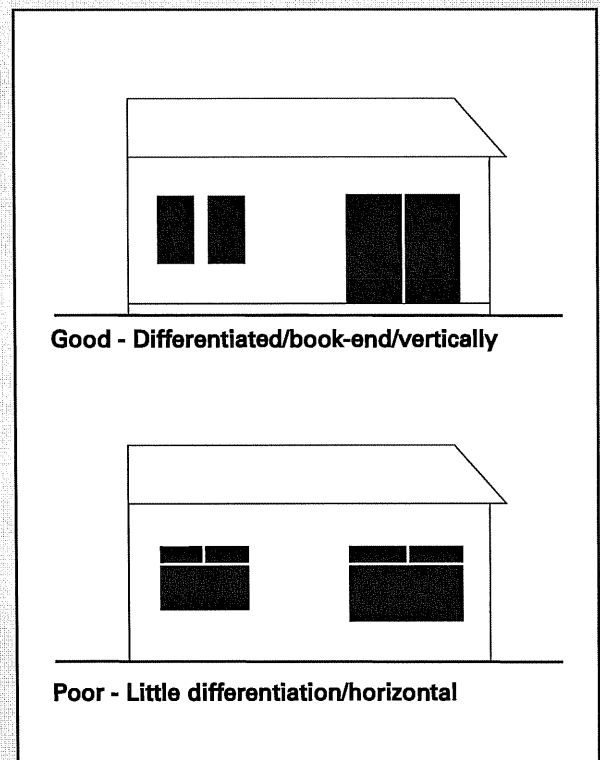
Generally speaking the rectangular shaped wall surface below the parallel roof ridge offers greater flexibility for inserting a variety of opening sizes and is a more natural location for wide areas of glazing and entrance doors. Vertical sub-divisions give contrast and balance. An elevation should be terminated by an opening rather than a blank area of wall and this should be more dominant than any adjacent opening. These principles will also apply to a hipped roof gable.

A double garage will appear more visually comfortable on a frontage rather than on a gable elevation, preferably with 2 separate doors.

#### Proportion

The traditional building elevation was wider than it was high and due to structural limitations contained tall, narrow windows. Despite the flexibility granted by technical advances these proportions should continue to inform building design i.e. a pattern of smaller vertically proportioned openings within dominant areas of solid wall in combination with larger areas of glazing. The larger openings are more appropriate on the street frontage where they have traditionally been formally composed to give visual focus and improve surveillance (see **Main Frontage Gable above**) but are increasingly popular to the rear as a means of better linking the house to its garden.

Modern daylight standards have encouraged wider, less well proportioned windows. Where these are characteristic of the main house, they may continue in the extension. However vertical proportions generally give a more handsome appearance.



**Figure 16** WINDOW PROPORTION/PATTERN

## 2.6 External Finishes and Detailing

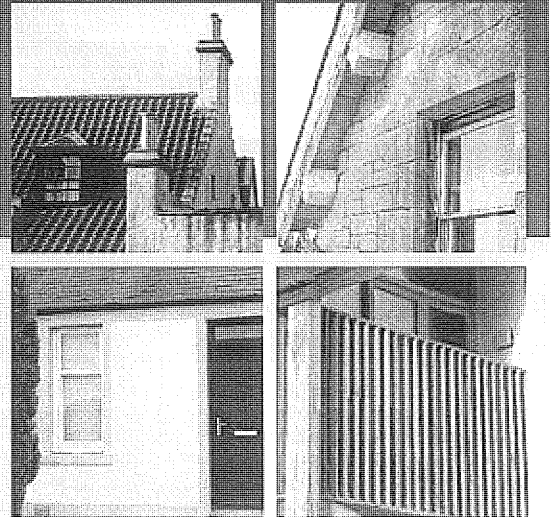
### Walling

External materials on an extension should match those on the main house or be simplified to reflect a lesser element.

Where the original house is stone faced an extension should generally be in stone or painted wet dash or smooth render, traditionally used in concealed areas to the rear. Replica stone may be acceptable where it closely matches natural stone, having a smooth ashlar rather than a split block appearance. Stone or replica stone should not be used on an extension to an original rendered or brick house. Facing brick may be used to match an original brick clad house or as a limited feature in a muted colour, in stone block-like panels or as a base course.

The external finish should be generally uniform on all faces. Fussy corner "quoins" or different materials cladding ground and first floor levels will be discouraged.

The use of other facing materials, e.g. vertically lined timber or metal may be appropriate for understated rear extensions within building forms which continue the scale and pattern of the original.

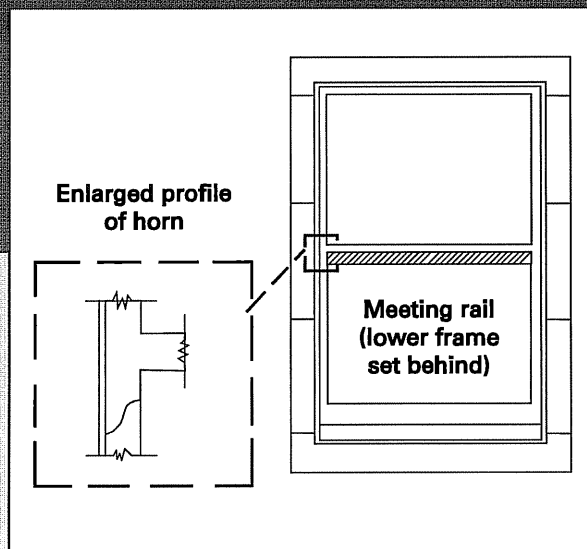


### Roofing

Roofing materials and colours should generally match the original although sympathetic contrasts may also be acceptable for the lesser extension. A smooth slate or tile may be appropriate in an extension to a pan-tiled roof but not vice-versa.

Roof ridges and eaves details should generally have a slender elegance and match the original house. Features such as chimneys or skew gables, which give character to the roofscape, should be retained or added to any extension where appropriate.

The design of new rainwater goods should respect the character of those existing on the original house.



**Figure 17 SASH AND CASE WINDOW**

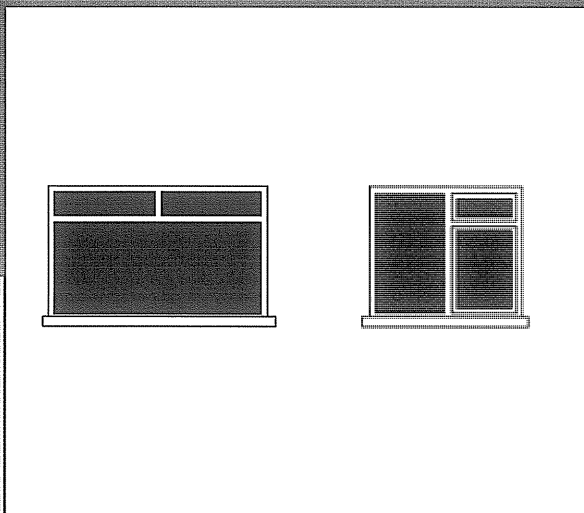
### Windows and Doors

On Listed Buildings and within Conservation Areas the most common window type has been the sash and case type and this may also be required in any extension to a house covered by these designations. Elsewhere window design should continue the pattern of sub-divisions and materials existing in the main house. (Figure 17)

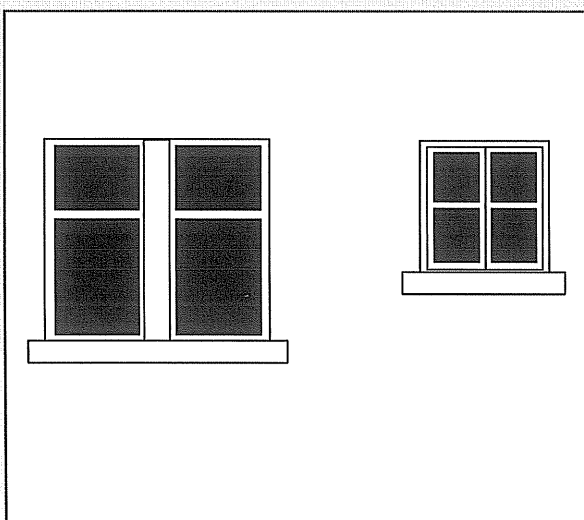
Timber windows and doors will be almost always preferred to UPVC, especially in the context of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, for reasons of long term maintenance and recycling. Fussy, fake period styling or wood grain "effect" for windows and doors is to be generally avoided especially in the context of simpler modern house designs.

## Design Guidance

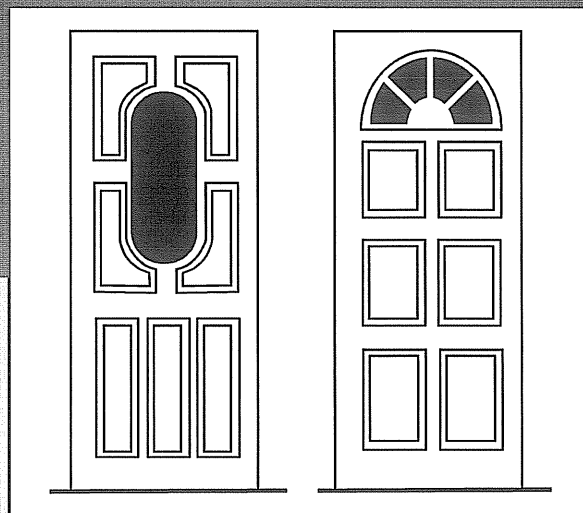
### External Finishes and Detailing



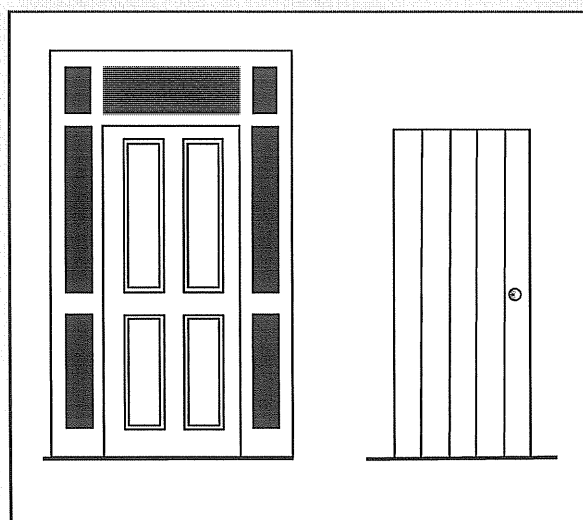
**Figure 18a: WINDOWS - Poor**  
modern horizontal patterns accepted  
where matching main house



**Figure 18b: WINDOWS - Good**  
vertically and simplicity encouraged  
traditional patterns preferred



**Figure 18c: DOORS - Poor**  
fussy period designs discouraged



**Figure 18d: DOORS - Good**  
verticality and simplicity encouraged  
traditional patterns preferred

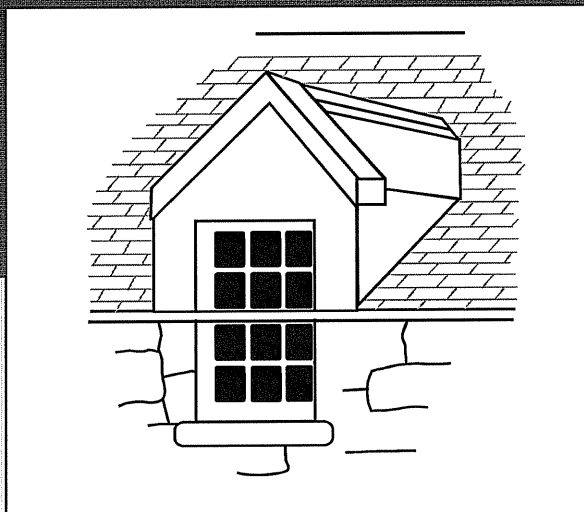
#### Replacement and Removals

Outwith the context of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas "permitted development" will allow most minor works to be carried out without Planning Permission. However whether or not permission is required householders should recognise the value of repairing and replacing in sympathy with the original window and door designs to retain the character of an area with the benefits outlined above (see Introduction). Removing central mullions between two vertically proportioned windows to create picture windows is especially to be avoided.

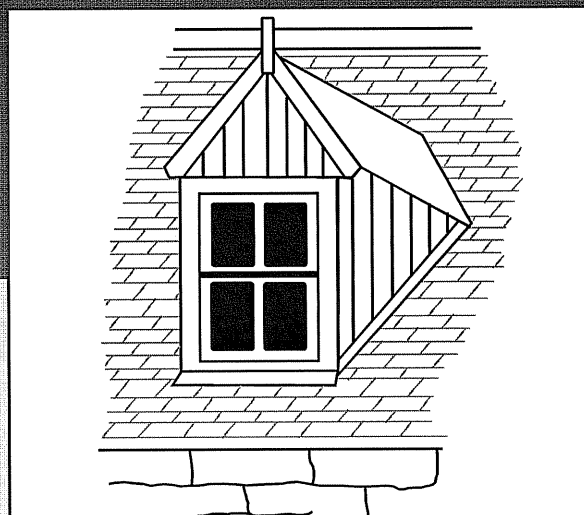
(Figure 18a, 18b, 18c & 18d)

## Design Guidance

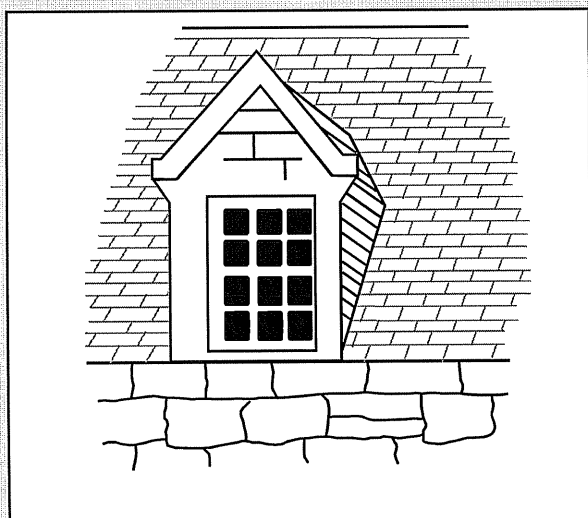
### Roof Extensions and Dormer Windows



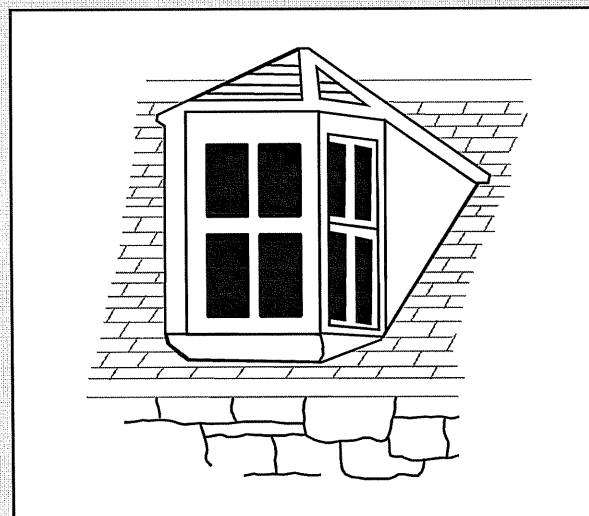
**Figure 19a DORMER WINDOW TYPES**  
Wall Head/ 1<sup>3/4</sup> Storey



**Figure 19c DORMER WINDOW TYPES**  
Straight Gable



**Figure 19b DORMER WINDOW TYPES**  
Wall Head



**Figure 19d DORMER WINDOW TYPES**  
Angled Bay/Hipped Roof

## 2.7 Roof Extensions and Dormer Windows

### Dormers

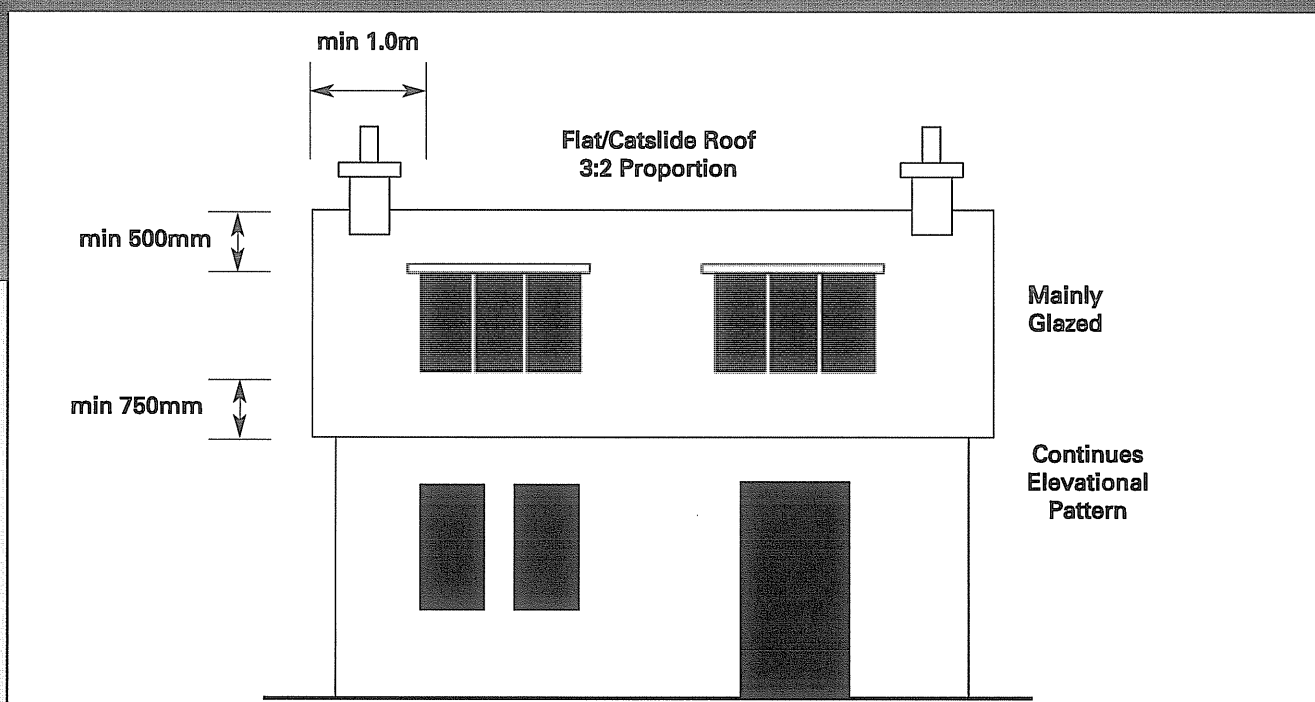
An additional bedroom upstairs is a popular householder aspiration. Habitable roof space with dormer windows is a therefore a fairly common feature in the area. It maximises use of the house, is less costly than a rear extension and avoids loss of garden ground.



The traditional dormer window sought only to marginally extend the floor area of the roof space and was positioned and proportioned as an integral component of the overall elevation. Although, within the Falkirk area, there is a predominance of angled bay dormers set within the roof plane with hipped roofs, there are also examples of square bays with gabled fronts and some dormers continue straight from the wall head. Cat-slide roofs and neat flat roofs are also occasionally in evidence as are windows set half below the eaves creating a 1<sup>3/4</sup> storey house. The traditional dormer is mainly glazed under a slate roof. (Figure 19)

## Design Guidance

### Roof Extensions and Dormer Windows



**Figure 20 BOX DORMERS - Dimensional/elevational constraints where applicable**

The problem with many modern roof/ dormer extensions is that too much accommodation has been sought, contained within overlarge boxes which are too bulky or out of proportion and spoil the character of the original house.

Where a dormer extension is proposed, therefore, the following standards will apply:

- ◆ Roof lights ("conservation" type to the front) and gable/ end hip windows should be considered first.
- ◆ No new units will be permitted on a uniform frontage presently without dormers.
- ◆ Proposals for the design of new or replacement dormers will be considered in relation to the house itself and to the streetscape. Where this varies a traditional-type dormer will be permitted on the frontage.

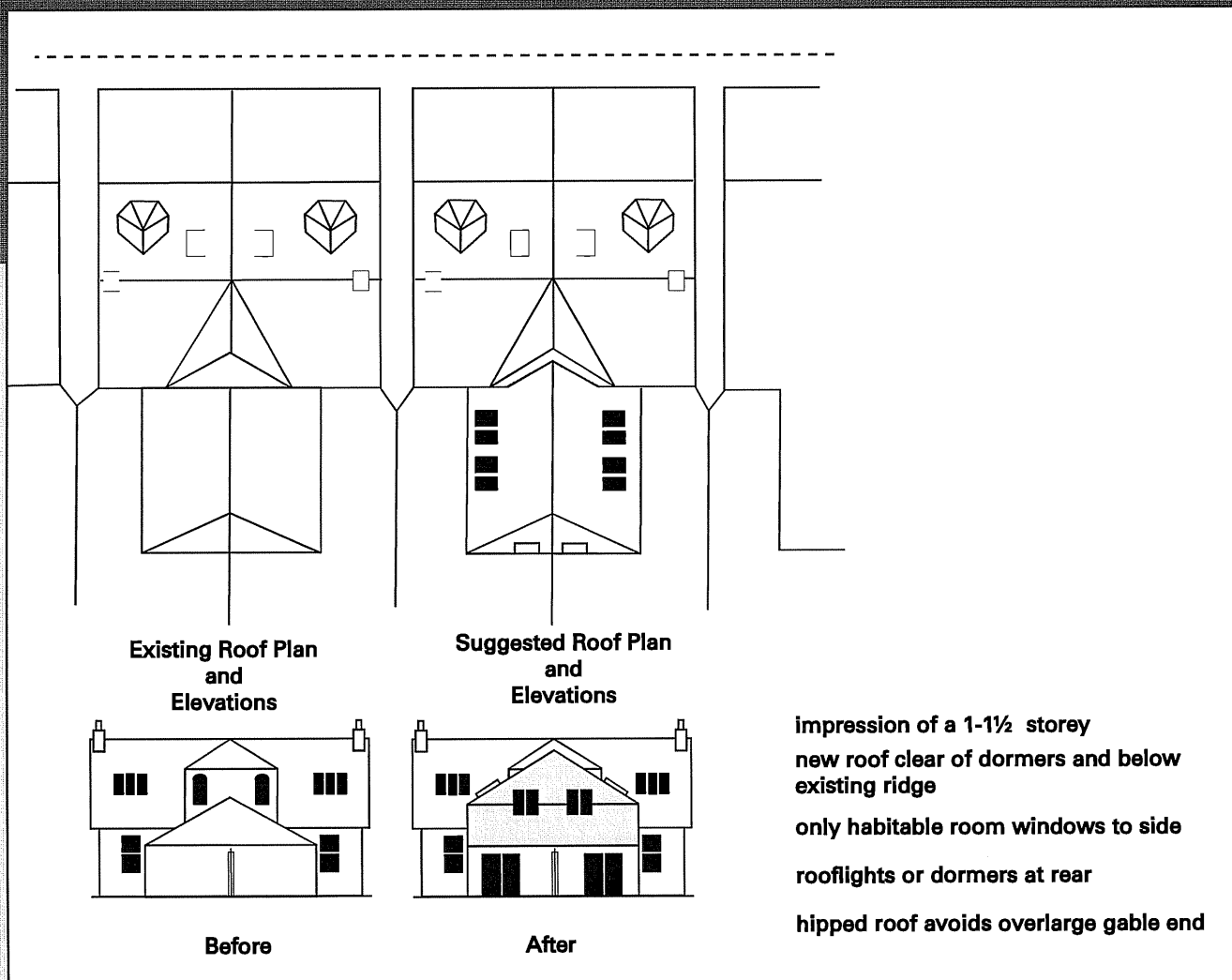
◆ Box-dormers will be permitted at the rear of a property and on a frontage where over 50% of the houses have them already, subject to the following :

- a position no less than 500 mm. below the roof ridge, 1.00 m. from the gable or party wall and 750 mm. above the eaves
- a proportion no greater than 3 wide:2 high
- a lightness of appearance, mainly glazed
- concealed rainwater goods
- vertically proportioned windows immediately over or related to the pattern of openings
- a tidy flat or cat-slide roof (Figure 20)

On a hipped roof the box dormer should be set 1.00m. from the hip slope on both faces (i.e. on the end hip if no overlooking).

Where box dormers are permitted, the option to create recessed infills between existing traditional dormers may also be considered as the less preferred option.





**Figure 21** "HALF-COTTAGE" - Advice : adding upper floor to original single storey portion at rear where executed jointly with neighbour

### "Half-Cottage"

A traditional house type found commonly in the Falkirk area is the semi-detached sandstone "half cottage" where the original single storey extension to the rear is twinned with its neighbour under a hipped roof. It is common practice to add an upper floor to this element which will be acceptable subject to the following conventions in combination :

- ◆ an integrated design, perhaps a mansard roof, avoiding the image of a box landed on the roof
- ◆ adequate clearance of any dormer window on the rear of existing house
- ◆ the impression of a 1-1½ storey building
- ◆ a hipped end to minimise any effect of a shallow, over wide gable
- ◆ non- habitable room windows, perhaps opaque, on upper side elevation
- ◆ a strong vertical emphasis to any openings

Householders should consider advantages of a joint upper extension with neighbours.  
(Figure 21)

## Further Information

### Permissions/Requirements

### Further Reading

### Useful Contacts

### Checklist



## 3.1 Permissions and Requirements

Various permissions may be required for a house extension or alteration as follows :

### Planning Permission

Required as a general rule for any new building or for a change of use, extension or external alteration of an existing building. Certain minor extensions may not require planning permission because they are deemed to be "permitted development" under planning legislation. However this concession would be removed in Conservation Areas, where an Article 4 Direction is in force.

Planning applicants require to notify neighbours in adjoining properties of a proposed development as part of any planning application.

### Listed Building Consent

Required where a building is listed by Historic Scotland as of special architectural or historic interest.

### Building Warrant

Required for most building works to ensure that they conform to the Building Regulations in terms of structural stability, weather resistance sound and thermal insulation, fire protection, daylighting, drainage etc. A building warrant is no guarantee that planning permission will be granted.

### Tree Consent

Required where it is intended to remove or prune a tree located in a Conservation Area or an area protected by a special Tree Preservation Order.

### Roads Construction Consent

Required when a development affects existing provisions for vehicular access, turning and parking provision or where the road or footpath has to be physically adapted to meet standards.

## 3.2 Further Reading

LITTLEFAIR P.J. (1991) Site Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide for Good Practice. (Building Research Establishment)

## 3.3 Useful Contacts

Information on Planning Permission, Building Warrant Permitted Development, Listed Buildings and Conservation Area control, Road Design/Warrants and Neighbour Notification can be obtained from:

**Development Control Unit  
Development Services  
Falkirk Council  
Abbotsford House  
David's Loan  
Falkirk FK2 7YZ  
Tel: 01324 504950**

A list of architects can be obtained from:

**RIAS (Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland)  
15 Rutland Square  
Edinburgh EH1 2BE  
Tel: 0131 229 7205  
[www.rias.org.uk](http://www.rias.org.uk)**

The RIAS offers a Client Advisory Service and maintains a list of Conservation Accredited Architects

## 3.4 Checklist

- Will my extension affect the street pattern outside my house?
- Will my extension affect the neighbouring property?
- Is my house a Listed Building or located within a Conservation Area?
- Will my extension affect any protected trees?
- Would a ground extension be better than a roof extension?
- Will my extension affect vehicle access, turning and parking?
- Do I have an appropriate professional to design and manage the work?