

## 4 Housing in the Countryside

### Policy C 6

#### Extension of Existing Dwellings within the Countryside

There is a presumption in favour of proposals for the extension of existing permanent dwellings. An extension or alteration will be permitted providing that:

- i. the scale of the enlargement is subservient to the original dwelling and is designed to be in character with the existing dwelling; and
- ii. it has no adverse impact on: the setting, the space occupied within the plot boundary, on local rural character, the historic interest of the building and its setting within the wider landscape; and
- iii. the use of materials is appropriate within the local architectural context; and
- iv. there is no significant harm on the living conditions currently enjoyed by residents of neighbouring properties.

### Supporting Text

**4.47** Overall, there is a general policy of restraint in the countryside but it is recognised that there are many existing dwellings in the rural area and over time, proposals will come forward for extensions or alterations to these. The Council may permit these changes where it does not undermine the general policy of restraint or have an adverse impact on the rural character of the countryside. When considering proposals in or within the setting of the AONB, particular regard will be had to the impact on its natural beauty and special qualities.

**4.48** The size and design of an extension or alteration is a key consideration of achieving sustainable development. The design of any development should be sympathetic to the existing dwelling, the area adjacent to the site and its wider setting. Proposed changes, either individually or cumulatively should not over dominate the existing dwelling.

**4.49** The relationship with the existing dwelling is key. The scale, height and massing of an alteration or extension should appear subservient to the existing dwelling. There are no 'rules' that can be applied to an acceptable size of an extension as each application has to be considered on the basis of the impacts on the particular property in that location.

**4.50** Regard will be given to previous extensions on the site, either allowed through Permitted Development Rights or through planning approvals. The original character of a house can be lost if the property is extended in an unsympathetic way through the addition of numerous extensions. The Council will take into account the original proportions of the building, prior to extensions being added. In some circumstances, it may be more appropriate to provide one new extension as a replacement for several existing extensions, especially where these are in poor condition or do not reflect the original character of the building.

**4.51** Where successive alterations or extensions are proposed, including those permitted under Permitted Development Rights, the Council will have regard to the cumulative effect on the existing dwelling, the immediate setting and its wider surroundings. All applications will need to consider the impact of the cumulative extensions on the original dwelling as it was built or as it was on 1 July 1948.

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**4.52** The enlargement of a small rural dwelling to become a substantial house can have a significant impact. An assessment will be needed of the impact of the development, individually and/or cumulatively, on the local architectural and visual context, and the capacity of the wider landscape to accommodate such development, especially within the AONB and its setting. The enlarged dwelling should be capable of being accommodated into the existing landscape, without undermining or having an adverse effect on the character of the area.

**4.53** Extensions should be constructed in materials that harmonise with the character of the house being extended. An extension that may be considered of an acceptable size may still be refused, due to the use of unsuitable materials.

**4.54** Care will be exercised to ensure that a proposed extension will not give rise to increased over-looking, loss of light, be of an overbearing nature or have a serious adverse impact on habitable rooms of adjacent or adjoining properties. For example, a two-storey extension sited to the rear of a terraced or semi-detached property requires careful design to ensure that the amenities of the neighbours are not seriously affected.

**4.55** There are extensive Permitted Development Rights enabling the enlargement or alteration of a house without requiring a formal planning application. These rights come with standard conditions and both the rights and conditions may be changed through Government legislation. It is essential to establish what rights currently exist in the particular location. Rights may be removed or restricted by the Council in some exceptional circumstances and the presence of such a restriction must be checked prior to commencing any development thought to be permitted.