

one else is involved in the business, planning permission is unlikely to be needed. But please check with the Planning Office.

It Sounds like a Lot of Work to prepare a Design Statement !

Some extra work will be needed to present the **Design Statement** with the planning application, but it can be done in a simple way and may save time and money by avoiding the need for requests for more information or later amendments. It can also be used as a negotiating tool with the Borough Council, during the design process and help to minimise any potential delays in processing your application.

Above all, a clear explanation of your planning application will help Councillors, Parish and Town Councils, neighbours and consultees understand what is proposed. It will also help the Council make a prompt and good decision.

Please contact the Planning Office if you have any questions.

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Visit the Council's website www.ambervalley.gov.uk for further information about planning issues for properties in the Borough



This page brings together publicly available information (including planning) that the Council holds about a particular property.



Advice Note 5

Planning Applications

Householder Development

Design Statements



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The Borough Council is committed to improving the standard of design of new development within the Borough. The production of a **Design Statement** as part of a planning application can help those involved in the design process resolve issues of character and design set required by the Borough's Local Plan.

A Design Statement can also help those who have to decide whether the application is acceptable neighbours, the Town and Parish Councils and consultees such as the Highway Authority.

The Council believes that the additional information submitted with a planning application will not just ensure that the proposals are well thought through but will enable a quicker decision.

What is a Design Statement ?

The Government has advised all planning authorities that a Design Statement should be submitted with planning applications - see Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1). This approach is also recommended in 'By Design - Urban Design In the Planning System : Towards Better Practice'.

However, most minor domestic developments such as house extensions, garages, fences or walls, and accesses do not need a full design statement but it would always help **to describe in a letter** how a proposal has, for instance, taken account of the character of the area, how questions of the privacy and amenities of neighbours have been addressed and the safety of any access to the highway.

This is important, as these are the issues that the Council will consider in making a decision about any householder application. They cover the criteria set out in Policy H13 of the Council's Local Plan, which is the basis for any decision.

Where Do I Start ?

First, you need to check whether what you want to do actually requires planning permission. Many types of extensions to houses - conservatories and garages, porches and garden building, walls and fences, vehicle accesses - do not require permission and can be built as 'Permitted Development'.

You can check whether you need planning permission by contacting the Planning Department or visiting the Council's website www.ambervalley.gov.uk for 'Permitted Development' information and a questionnaire which you can complete and send to the Council. The questionnaire (which is free) will also help the Council to confirm whether you need approval under the Building Regulations, Listed Building or Conservation Area Consent for your proposals.

Even if you do not need any form of permission, it is useful to have the Council's confirmation that you did not need permission when you sell your house.

If you find you do need planning permission, a good starting point is to carry out your own research on the feasibility of your proposals before you arrange to meet a planning officer or submit an application.

- Find out if your site has any planning history in terms of previous planning applications or appeal decisions.
- Study the Council's Local Plan, which will give an indication of the type of development that may be acceptable. It will also tell you if the site is within a special area, such as a Conservation Area or Green Belt where stricter policies apply. The Local Plan is available for inspection at the Council's planning reception desk or on the web site – www.ambervalley.gov.uk. The web site also includes a 'My Property' page, which has planning and other information about every property in the Borough.
- Discuss your proposals with your neighbours. The Council will always inform neighbours it considers may be affected by your proposals but it will always help if you have spoken to them first.
- Once you have assessed all the available information, and you consider your scheme is still feasible, you may wish to arrange an informal meeting with a planning officer. Contact details are below.

What do you need to consider

The **character** of the area and your house and what your extension or building will look like. These points also apply to buildings put up in your garden if they need planning permission.

- Look at how old your house and the area around it is.
- What are the proportions of your house and those in the area – the relative height of walls and roofs, the angle or pitch of the roof and the size of any gable walls on the ends of houses,
- Are there any particular design features in the house itself or in the area – windows, doors, chimneys, eaves – that you can see are special to the area ?
- Will the bricks and tiles look the same ?,
- Are the windows and doors of a similar design ?,

Remember that the more natural and comfortable an extension or building looks, the more it will add to the value of your property.

Privacy

Everybody wants privacy in their own home but at the same time everyone has the right to carry out reasonable extensions to where they live. Your planning application should take account of privacy and as a guide, the basic approach the Council will take is as follows :

- Where main or habitable room windows face each other there should be at least 21 metres between them.
- Where main windows face a gable wall there should be at least 12 metres between them.

(By way of explanation, main windows are to lounges, dining room, studies, kitchens, bedrooms but not windows with obscure glazing such as bathrooms, toilets, en-suite, utility rooms or windows that light stairs, landings or halls. High-level windows or roof lights with cills above eye level are not seen as habitable room windows.)

The 21m / 12m distances are easy to use where adjoining houses are on or about the same level. Where there is a significant difference in levels, the distance between windows should be

increased. It is important therefore that your plans show details of ground levels for your house and those next to it.

With a single storey extension, fences or walls around a garden will usually provide enough privacy for both houses to allow the 21m / 12m distances to be reduced.

Remember also, that your extension should not include windows that directly overlook the main part of a neighbour's garden, and that includes balconies.

Sunlight and daylight

Just as with privacy everyone expects to have a reasonable amount of light in their house and garden. One important guide the Council uses, particularly in looking at extensions to the rear of houses, is to see whether an extension goes beyond a 45-degree line drawn from the side of the nearest ground or first floor window on the adjoining house(s). If it does, the extension will be likely to take away an unreasonable amount of light from the adjoining house and may not be acceptable.

Trees

Your proposals should take account of any trees within the site to ensure that they do not need to be felled and can be protected from damage by building works. If there are trees within your site the application drawings should show their location and type, the spread of the canopy and include proposals for their protection while work takes place. More detailed information is available from Landscape Services Department on 01773 570222 ext 2545

Access and parking

Where your proposal involves a new access to the highway you will need to show that its design is safe. Different roads – 'A' roads or estate culs-de-sac, for example - have different requirements for 'visibility' - the distance up and down the road where approaching traffic can be seen. For example, you need to imagine sitting in your car with the front bumper at the edge of your property and then deciding whether you can clearly see at least 70m to the right for a 30 mph road.

Walls and fences

You can build a wall or fence up to 2 metres high where it is not next to a highway (which includes footpaths) without planning permission as 'Permitted Development'. If the wall or fence is next to a highway it can only be 1 metre high if it is not to need permission. All these measurements are taken from **your** side even if the ground is sloping.

Your planning application should therefore show the height and design of any wall or fence and information about the level of the land.

Business and working from home

Planning law does allow a business to be run from a house provided it does not change the character of the property. If your business relies on other people working there, extensive deliveries and causes noise or disturbance etc, you will need planning permission as there will have been a change from the ordinary use of the property as a house. If this is the case please contact the Planning Office for further advice.

If however, it is the householder, working in a study or spare room, there are no deliveries and no