

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – HOME EXTENSIONS

ADOPTED NOVEMBER 2005

INTRODUCTION

This Supplementary Planning Document is one in a series of guidance notes prepared in support of the Uttlesford Local Plan adopted in January 2005. The guidance has been prepared following consultation and a sustainability appraisal has been carried out to make sure that all relevant social and environmental issues have been taken into account.

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDANCE

Uttlesford is an attractive place to live and work with many historic buildings which help to give the towns and villages their special character. The Council tries to make sure that new development is of the highest standard of design so that this character is protected. In relation to extensions this means only allowing those that have been designed to take into account the application site, neighbours and the character of the area. The Council will use this guidance when considering planning applications for extensions.

This guidance is intended to offer advice to applicants about the sorts of designs which are most likely to be approved. There may be other ways of building your extension which does not cause harm to neighbours or the streetscene and you should discuss your ideas with a planning officer as soon as possible. The guidance will apply to all forms of extensions including conservatories. If the extension involves substantial demolition and rebuilding it may be considered to be a replacement dwelling. The Council is producing separate guidance for this and you should contact the planning department for further advice.

Listed Buildings

This guidance does not apply to listed buildings - if your house is listed and you want to extend it you should contact the council's Conservation Officer on 01799 510462 for advice.

POLICY CONTEXT

A Supplementary Planning Document must relate to a policy in a development plan. The main relevant policy in the Uttlesford Local Plan adopted in January 2005 is Policy H8 – Home Extensions. This policy says:

Extensions will be permitted if all the following criteria apply:

- a) Their scale, design and external materials respect those of the original building;
- b) There would be no material overlooking or overshadowing of nearby properties;
- c) Development would not have an overbearing effect on neighbouring properties;

There may be other policies in the Local Plan, which are relevant to your proposal. The Council may also refer to policies in the Essex Structure Plan and national policy documents when considering your application, so you should check that your proposals meet the requirements of any relevant policies. There is a list of relevant policies in Appendix 1. The documents are available on the internet or from the council offices. .

GENERAL ADVICE

In the policy and other guidance where it refers to the original building this means the building as it was on 1 July 1948 when the Town and Country Planning Act came into force. If the house was built after this date the original building means as it was first built.

There are some forms of small extension that are 'Permitted Development' and do not need planning permission. The Council has a separate guidance leaflet for this. Even if you do not need to make a planning application you should follow good design principles.

In the local plan development limits are drawn around certain settlements and a different view may be taken of your proposal depending whether your house is within or outside the development limit. In the countryside, the same principles will apply but development will only be allowed if the Council is satisfied that the extension will protect or enhance the particular character of the part of the countryside where the extension is being proposed. This will include any historic landscape features in the area.

In the green belt, an extension will only be allowed if it is limited in size and proportionate to the size of the original building.

The three main issues that the Council will look at when dealing with proposals for extending existing homes, are:

- the appearance of the proposal and the impact on the original building - this will be even more important if your property is in a Conservation Area or is near a Listed Building.
- the effect on neighbouring properties
- the highest quality design

APPEARANCE

The size, scale, form and materials of your extension will all contribute to its overall appearance.

Size

All extensions should respect the scale, height and proportions of the original house. The extension should not be higher or larger than the original house and you should leave enough garden area to allow for leisure activities. More than one extension may be allowed but where the house has been extended a number of times it may reach a point where new extensions will exceed what is reasonable.

Scale

This will involve consideration of the size of the extension itself and the relative size of individual features compared to those in the original building. For example, overlarge window openings or large areas of roofslope may not be

appropriate where they differ from, or have a dominant visual impact over the original building.

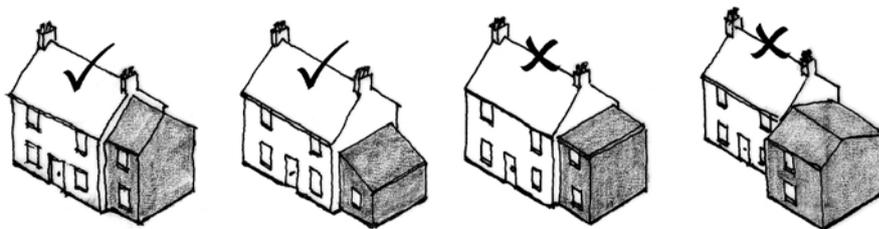
Form

The form or shape of an extension is often dictated by the original building and where possible you should design your extension in the same style as the existing house. A simple test of a suitable extension is to see whether it appears “natural”. If a domestic extension is noticeable in the street, it is usually unsympathetic but a good extension will generally go unnoticed. Issues which arise with the three most common forms of extension are listed below.

- **Side Extensions**

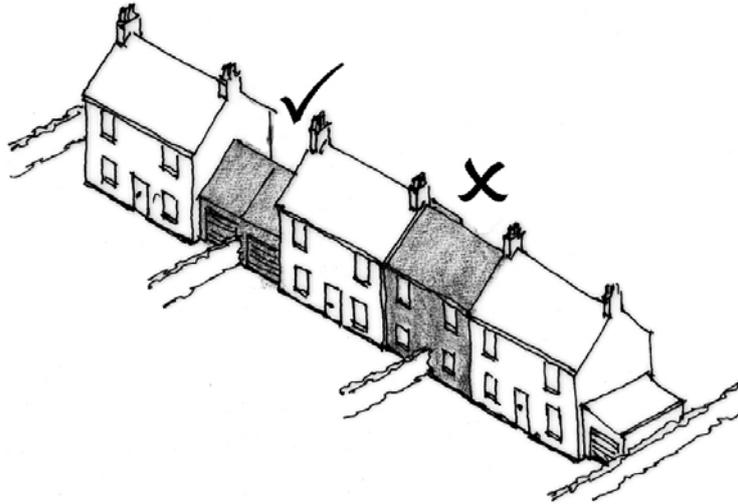
Side extensions are generally seen as a natural method of extending a property. If the general principles outlined in this guidance are followed and the scale of the extension is in keeping with the original building a side extension should not materially affect the character and appearance of the streetscene.

Where your property is small, in a terrace or has symmetrical elevations you should make sure that the characteristics of that building or group of buildings are not affected. With a side extension you should always aim to leave the principal elevation of the building undisturbed. You will normally get a better result if you set back the front wall of the extension from the front wall of the dwelling and set the ridge height of the extension lower than the existing. If the property is detached you may be able to extend the building in a line with the front elevation.



The space that is left around the building is important as this contributes to the overall impact of the extension. Generally you should leave a distance of 1m between the side wall of the extension and the boundary but you should seek advice from the council about your particular site before you make an application.

Where a row of detached or semi-detached houses are separated by regular gaps, infilling at the side of houses can eventually transform the appearance of the street from semi detached or detached to terraced. The design of your extension should not contribute to this change in the character of the street particularly if this would result in the loss of access to the rear of the property



Some proposals include a side extension with a garage on the ground floor. It may sometimes be possible to incorporate a single width garage door in the extension, but double width garage doors should be avoided as these are disruptive to the architecture of the front elevation.

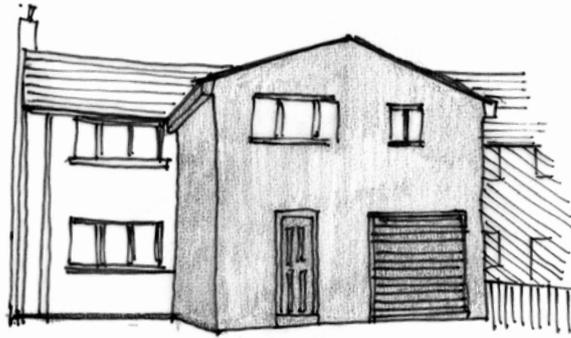


- **Front Extensions**

Porches and small extensions on the front of the house are normally acceptable.

Some large extensions may not be appropriate because of their impact on the character and appearance of an established streetscene. The drawing

shows a front extension which is too large, causing overshadowing of the neighbours property.



If your house is in a terrace the addition of a front extension will have a greater impact on the character and appearance of the street because it will affect a group of buildings rather than just your property and it should be designed with this in mind.

Modern estates are often designed to create an attractive streetscene that has a particularly style and identity. Adding front extensions to houses within the estate can disrupt this design unless the extension is carefully designed and well related to the surroundings.

- **Rear Extensions**

Rear extensions generally have less impact on the character and appearance of the streetscene. An exception to this might be if the house is on a corner and the back of the house can be seen from a public place.

The scale and form still needs careful consideration because rear extensions are the most likely to affect neighbouring properties, particularly if they are two storey. Rear extensions should reflect the guidance in this document and be in proportion to the scale of the existing dwelling. The projecting length of any rear extension is important because of the need to protect the day/sun light and outlook to neighbouring properties. See paragraph 18 for more information.

Two storey rear extensions against the boundary on a terraced or semi-detached property should be avoided because they can result in the loss of day/sunlight to neighbouring properties and cause overshadowing.

Materials

The choice of brick, roof tile and other materials is a very important part of the design. Usually the best thing to do is to find as good a match as possible, but sometimes it might be right to build an extension in a different material, to show that it is an addition and not part of the main house, for example, timber board cladding a small extension to a brick building. The materials should be identified as part of the application. Recycled materials and materials from sustainable sources should be used where possible.

Details such as windows, doors, tiles, brick bond pattern etc. define the scale of an extension and can affect its appearance as much as its overall size. The appropriate choice of materials, windows, doors and other details contribute to the external appearance of a property, which impacts upon the appearance of the local street scene. In all cases the architectural detailing from the main dwelling should be carried through to the extension. The drawing below shows the same materials and style of windows being used on the extension and the main house. This helps the extension appear in proportion.



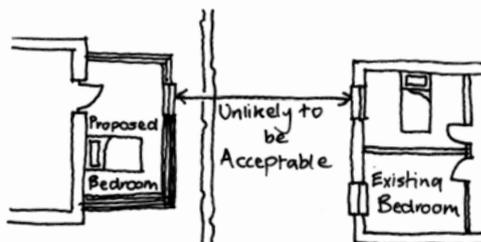
EFFECT ON NEIGHBOURS

The Council will notify near neighbours about your application so you may find it useful to talk to them before you apply.

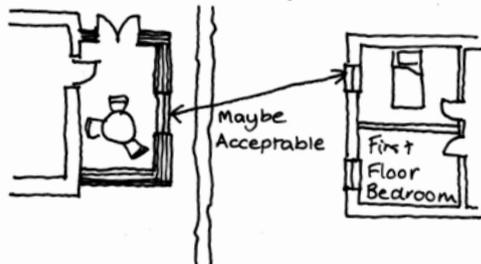
Overlooking

You should carefully position any windows to avoid directly looking into your neighbours rooms or overlooking the garden in such a way that you have a direct view of their main sitting out area or patio.

First Floor Extension



Ground Floor Extension

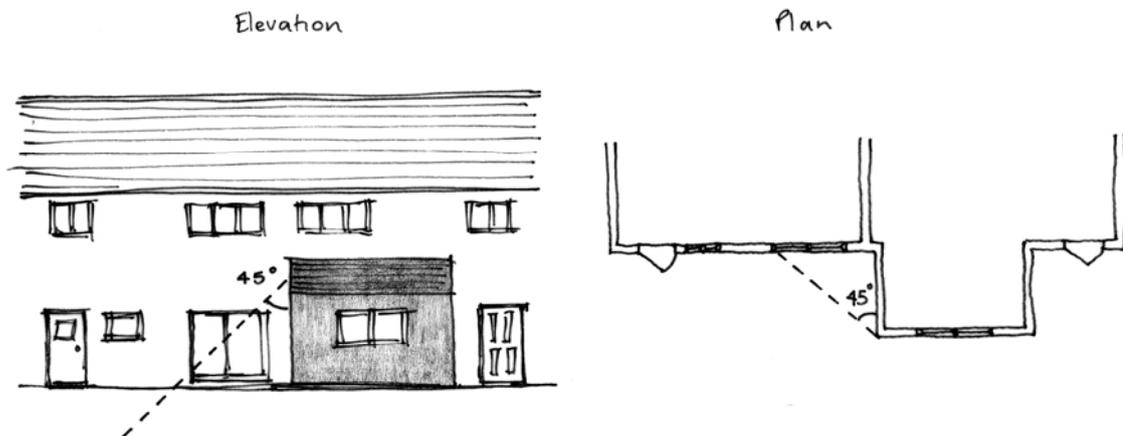


Daylight and Outlook

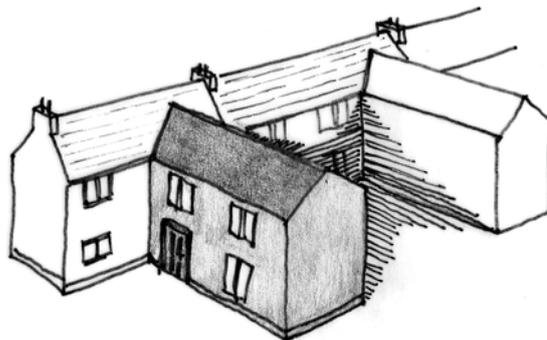
An extension should not unduly restrict daylight to adjoining properties. You can do the following checks to see whether your extension is likely to block out light from a neighbouring window:

- On the elevation drawing draw a line with a 45 degree angle from the top corner of the extension.
- On the plan draw a line with a 45 degree angle back towards the window wall from the end of the extension.

If the centre of a main window lies on the extension side of both these lines there is likely to be a significant reduction in light to these windows as shown in the diagrams below.



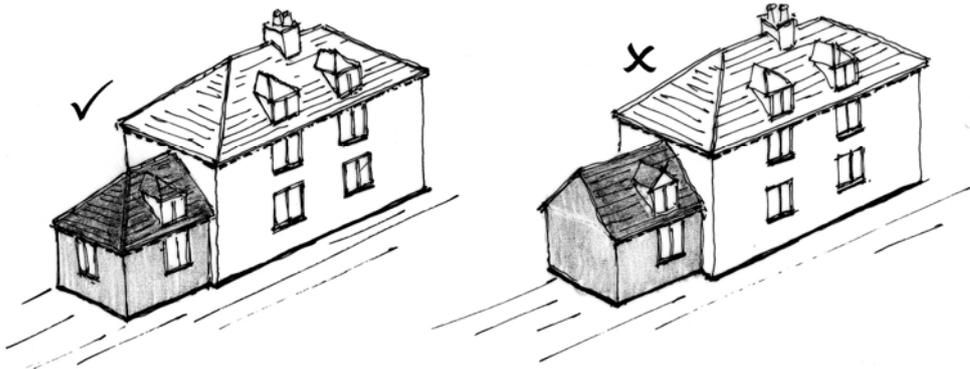
You should also consider whether your extension will cause a sense of enclosure or “tunnelling” effect for your neighbour as shown in the drawing below. This can result when extensions are built right up to the boundaries on both sides of mid terrace or closely grouped semi detached properties. The council will consider this impact when determining your application.



OTHER ISSUES

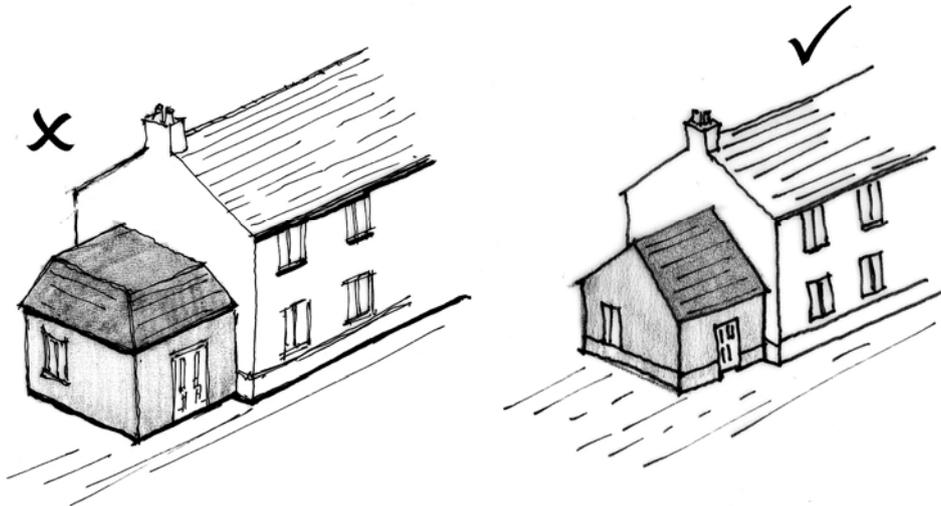
Roofs

Pitched roofs mainly come in two families; 'Hipped' and 'Gabled'. As a general rule you should use the same roof type as the main house, and not mix roofs of different types.



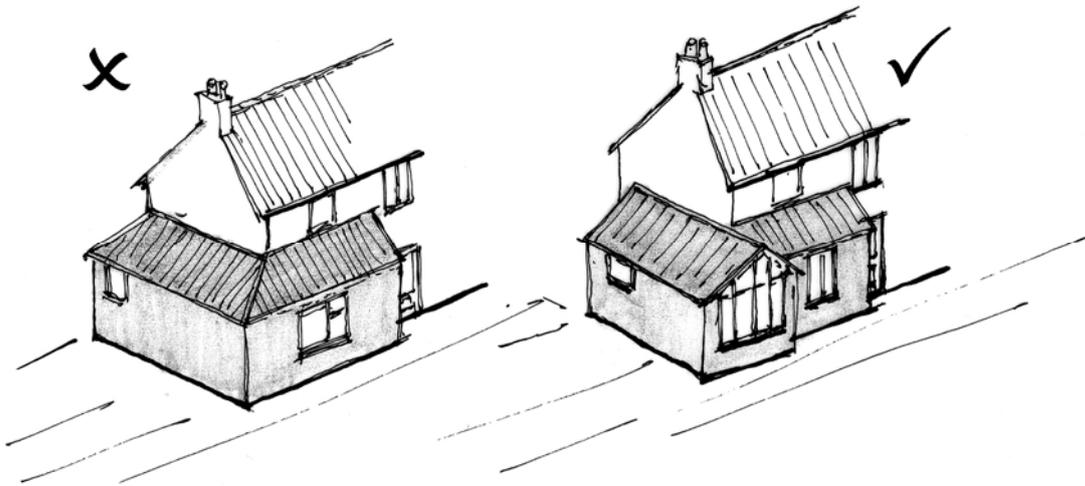
False or Crown roofs

Wide, flat roofed extensions are sometimes disguised by a false pitched roof around their perimeter. This looks so obviously false that it should be avoided, and a suitable full roof design should be used.



Wrap around roofs

If you are proposing a combination of a side and rear or side and front you may be tempted to wrap the roof around two (or more) sides of the building. This can end up making the house look like a pyramid and it is better to roof the extensions separately and leave out the new corner extension.

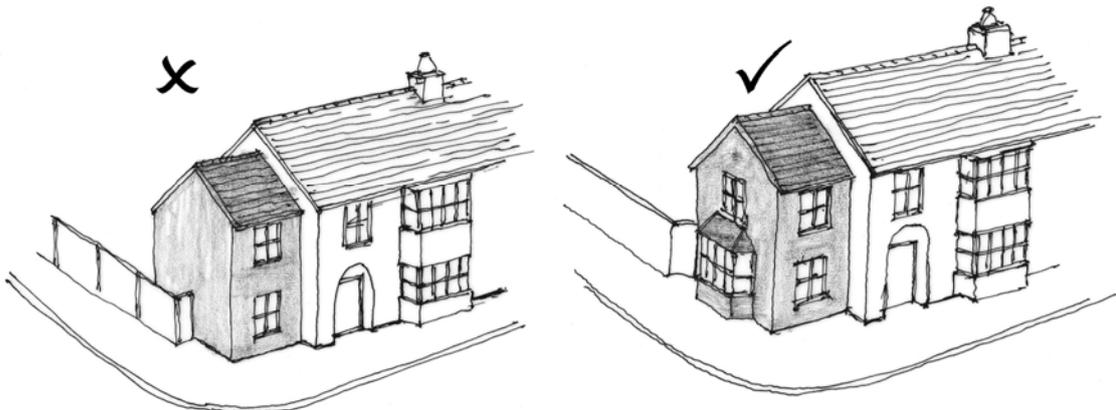


Dormer Windows

If you are considering a dormer window as part of a loft conversion it should only be used to light the roofspace and not to provide extra headroom across the width of the roof. The dormer will look more in keeping with traditional building in this area if it is not too close to the ridge or the gable end of the existing roof and if it has a gabled, catslide or flat lead roof. If you are thinking of using rooflights it is better to use them only on the rear elevation and it's better to use one or the other rather than having a mixture of dormers and rooflights on the same roof.

Exposed ends and side windows

If an extension is on the exposed end of a house, for example in a street corner location, the end wall should not be left blank, but you should treat it as a front and put windows in it. This type of extension should not project beyond the building line in the next street.



Pillars

Upper floor extensions supported on pillars look visually and structurally weak and you should avoid this type of extension if possible.

Car Parking

Proposals to extend should not result in inadequate parking space at the property and if you are adding bedrooms the Council may ask you to provide extra car parking. The current parking standard for a 3 bedroom property is a maximum of 2 spaces and for 4 bedrooms or more it is 3 spaces.

Residential Annexes for Dependent Relatives

If you are planning this type of extension it should normally be single storey with one bedroom and be fully accessible to someone in wheelchair. The annexe should be joined to the main house and share the same garden and access.

Energy Efficiency

When designing your extension use best practice standards for energy efficiency in the design and specification of the extension. This can help reduce your running costs and also reduce carbon dioxide emissions, which contribute to global warming. This will involve consideration of the shape, insulation, glazing, air-tightness, ventilation, heating system and lighting of the extension. The Energy Saving Trust leaflet Energy Efficient Domestic Extensions (CE122) gives further details and is available free of charge from the planning department or from www.est.org.uk/bestpractice tel: 0845 727 7200. If you want to consider introducing some form of renewable energy as part of your proposal the Clear Skies website gives information on grants and sources of advice www.clear-skies.org tel:08702 430 930

The Council will require simple, cost effective energy efficiency measures to be carried out on the existing house if possible and practical. These measures could include upgrading loft insulation, insulating cavity walls, improving draft proofing, improving heating controls, installation of reflective panels behind radiators, installation of low energy lighting or upgrading the boiler. There are grants available for some of these measures. As part of your application you will be expected to complete and submit a home energy assessment form. This will be provided with your application form. The Council will notify you of the cost-effective measures that may reasonably be included as conditions of your planning permission (if it is granted) and provide information on where to go to get the work carried out. The Council will consider exemptions in special circumstances, such as practical barriers to installation or prohibitive up-front cost. For free independent advice on home energy efficiency call the Essex Energy Efficiency Advice Centre Tel: 0800 512 012

Resources

You can also take the opportunity to conserve resources where possible. During the construction stages you can reduce waste by recycling leftover building materials. If the extension includes a bathroom or kitchen you can use appliances which save water and energy e.g spray taps, dual flush toilets, low energy lighting. Advice on saving water can be found on the Environment Agency website www.environment-agency.gov.uk tel:08708 506 506 You may also be able to provide additional storage space for your items for recycling.

Security

You may be able to improve security when designing your extension by using doors windows etc from the police preferred specification list at www.securedbydesign.com tel. 0207 227 3423 Take care that a single storey extension does not give easy access to first floor windows and during the building work keep ladders/scaffolding secure to prevent access to upper floors.

Wildlife

There are two issues to consider;

- Your property may already be home to a protected species like bats or great crested newts. In cases where protected species are known to be present in, or near a building, an ecological survey should be submitted with the the application. If your proposal involves the conversion or extension of a rural building you will be asked to submit a bat survey with the application. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act it is illegal to disturb nesting birds. If your building plans will involve disturbing nesting sites you should plan the work to avoid the nesting season.
- Can you include extra features in the development, which will provide a benefit for wildlife? For example, a nest box for birds, either on the house or in the garden, or pipe the rainfall from the roof to feed a garden pond. There are further tips on www.wildaboutgardens.org

Contact Details

For more information please contact the duty planning officer on 01799 510617 or e.mail planning@uttlesford.gov.uk. For advice on finding an architect contact the Royal Institute of British Architects www.riba.org tel:020 7307 3700. The Federation of Master Builders is a trade organisation which holds details of building firms which meet certain standards in terms of their skills and customer service. Further information is available from www.findabuilder.co.uk tel: 0207 242 7483

If you require copies of this guidance in Braille, large print or another language please contact the Customer Care Manager on 01799 510467.

APPENDIX 1

The following list of policies may also be relevant. For example if your house is in the green belt the Council may refer to Structure Plan policy C2 and advice in PPG2 when considering your application.

UTTLESFORD LOCAL PLAN	
Policy S7	The Countryside
Policy GEN2	Design
Policy ENV1	Design of Development within Conservation Areas
Policy ENV2	Development affecting Listed Buildings
Available from Uttlesford District Council Offices or Uttlesford District Council website www.uttlesford.gov.uk .	

ESSEX AND SOUTHEND ON SEA REPLACEMENT STRUCTURE PLAN	
Policy CS2	Protecting the Natural and Built Environment
Policy C2	Development within the Metropolitan Green Belt
Policy C5	Rural Areas not in the Green Belt
Policy HC2	Conservation Areas
Policy HC3	Protection of Listed Buildings
OTHER GUIDANCE	
The Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas	
Available from Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford Tel:01245 492211 or Essex County Council website www.essexcc.gov.uk	

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE (PPG) and PLANNING POLICY STATEMENTS (PPS)	
PPG2	Green Belts
PPS1	Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS22	Renewable Energy
Available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister website www.odpm.gov.uk	