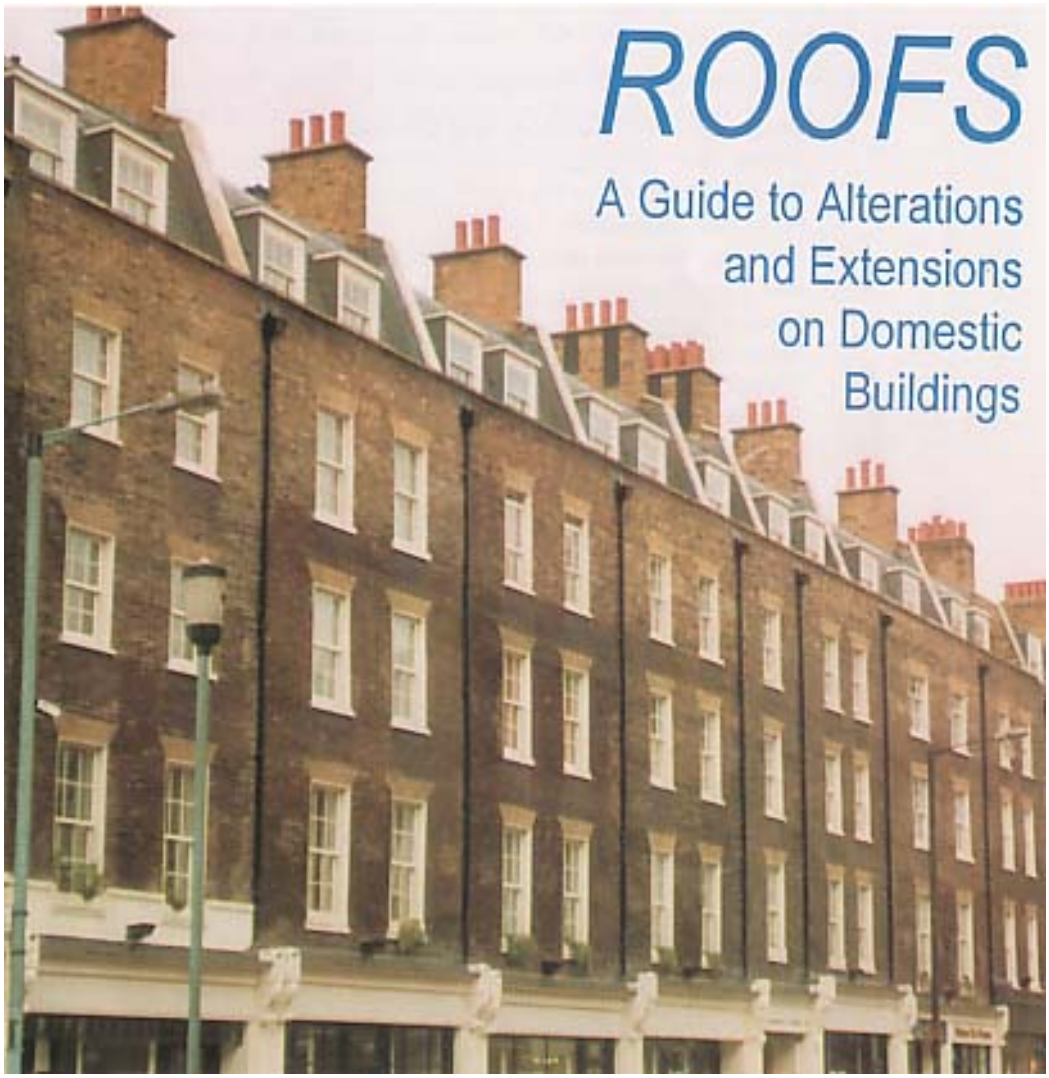
City of Westminster

PLEASE NOTE

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies and planning, building control and other legislation and regulations referred to in the text of this guide were current at the time of publication. Because this guidance is an electronic version of the printed guidance as approved and adopted, these references have NOT been changed. For ease of contact; names, telephone numbers and locations have been regarded as non-material editorial changes and have been updated.

As UDP policies and government legislation may have changed over time, before carrying out any work, it is recommended that you consult the current UDP http://www.westminster.gov.uk/planningandlicensing/udp/index.cfm for policy revisions and you may wish to check with planning and/or building control officers about your proposals.

ROOFS
A Guide to Alterations and Extensions on Domestic Buildings



CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

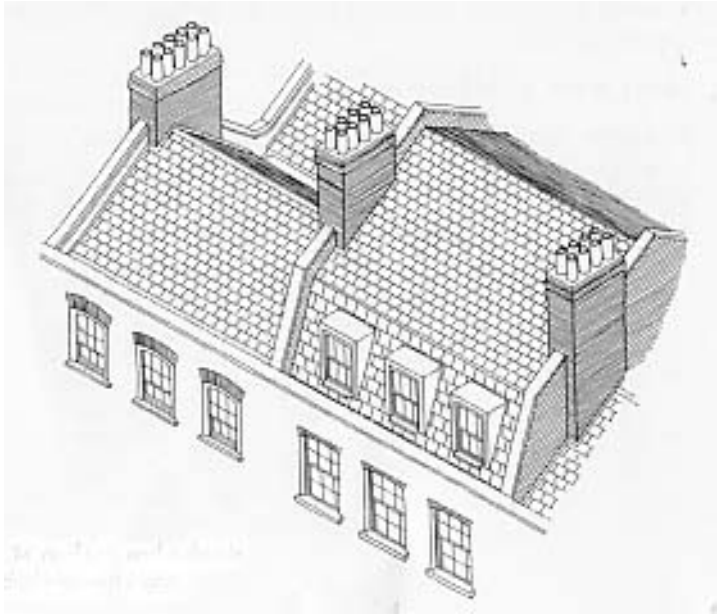
Alterations and extensions are often necessary to modernise, adapt, enlarge or extend the life of a building. Roof extensions can be a practical way of creating extra floorspace, especially in the terraced houses which dominate large areas of the City. The City Council considers that roof alterations and extensions should be designed to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of buildings and areas in the City.

This guide expands upon the conservation and urban design policies set out in Chapter 9 of the Unitary Development Plan.

Central Government advice on historic buildings and conservation areas is also relevant. This is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15. Specific guidance with respect to historic roofs is included in Annex C.

This guideline deals primarily with the extension and alteration of domestic buildings. It outlines the type of roof extensions which are appropriate in many cases, especially 18th and 19th century houses. However, much of the advice is applicable to some commercial buildings, especially those of 'classical' design.

The advice of the City Council's Urban Design and Conservation Officers should be sought in individual situations. Contact details are given at the end of this leaflet.



An 'M' roof (left) and a double pitched mansard (right).

2. LEGISLATION

PLANNING PERMISSION

Roof alterations and extensions will usually require planning permission. Examples of work likely to require permission include new roof forms, dormer windows, rooflights and replacement roof coverings in different materials.

In the case of single family dwellings some work may be 'permitted development', under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. You are advised to discuss these issues with a planning officer if you are in any doubt about the need for planning permission.

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

If a building is listed, then listed building consent will also be required for any alteration which will affect the special architectural and/or historic interest of the building.

CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT

Demolition, including partial demolition, of unlisted buildings within a conservation area, e.g. removal of chimney stacks or roof structures will normally require conservation area consent.

BUILDING REGULATIONS APPROVAL
Any structural alterations or fire safety measures will need Building Regulations Approval from the City Council's District Surveyors Services.

PARTY WALL AGREEMENTS
If building works affect a party wall with an adjoining building, the owner of that building must be notified at an early stage. The procedure for giving Party Wall Notices is set out in Part 6 of the London Building Act 1939.

UNAUTHORISED WORKS
If work is carried out without the necessary approvals having been obtained, then enforcement action can be taken to ensure that the building is reinstated to its former condition or works are carried out in accordance with any permissions/consents granted. Any unauthorised works to a listed building constitutes a criminal offence and can result in prosecution and enforcement action. It is therefore important to check the need for permission or consents before starting any work.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS
It is very important that the submitted drawings show all the works proposed. Drawings should show clearly the existing fabric to be retained, parts to be demolished and the extent of new work.

The following drawings must be included with an application.
'As existing' and 'As proposed' drawings, including:-
Plans, including a roof plan
Elevations
Sections

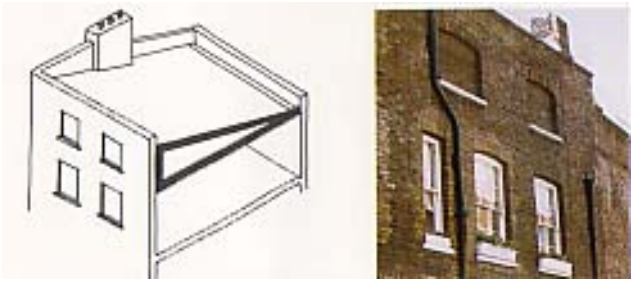
These should normally be at scale 1:50. Further detailed drawings of items such as dormer windows, may be necessary, at scales 1:20 and/or 1:5.

The drawings should be annotated clearly to show the proposed materials.

Remember to include details of all alterations to the parapets, party walls and chimney stacks, location of water tanks and other equipment, external fire escapes and so on.

3. HISTORY
Much of the City of Westminster was developed in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The variety of roof forms developed over several centuries is represented in today's city. Its wide range extends from the simple, functional mono-pitched roofs of some mews buildings, to the highly sophisticated and elaborate roofs of the mid/late 19th century Historical Revivals.

MONO-PITCHED ROOFS
These are often referred to also as 'lean-to' roofs, as their main use is on small secondary structures attached to buildings. Mono-pitched roofs of a less simple construction (i.e. using triangular timber trusses) were also used to cover small independent or terraced buildings.



Wilton Row, SW1

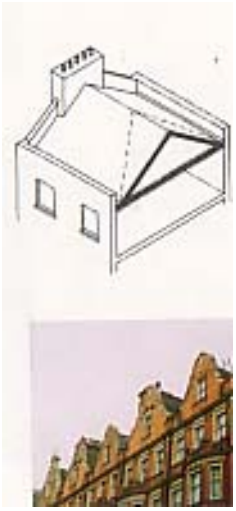
One of the few examples in Westminster are the mews buildings in Wilton Row and Old Barrack Yard. The effect of mono-pitched roofs on the design of these small-scale buildings and the appearance of the street is significant. The single-slope roofs rest on the front and the rear walls of these two-storey

buildings, with their lower end resting on the rear wall. This requires an additional half-storey height to be added to the height of the front façade, in order to provide sufficient slope for the roof to be covered with tiles or slates. As a result, the front facades appear to be of a height disproportionate to these small domestic-scale buildings. The extra half-storey height is usually decorated with blind window panels.

PITCHED ROOFS

A pitched roof consists of triangular trusses able to span distances considerably larger than those normally spanned with ordinary linear joist, and at the same time to provide the ridge height for the two slopes on either side to throw off the rainwater or snow. A roof which has pitched ends rather than gable ends is called a 'hipped' roof.

Before the 18th century, pitched roofs were usually constructed with their ridge running at right angles to the main façade of the building. This formed the gabled façade which characterises Medieval and Tudor buildings. Roofs of this type can be seen also on 19th century buildings of the Gothic Revival, inspired by the work of Pugin and Ruskin, and later, the Queen Anne Revival, lead by Norman Shaw. Examples can be found in Mayfair, Maida Vale and other areas. These tall roofs often house attic rooms.



Gables, Mayfair, W1

In the late 17th century many buildings featured eaves cornices. These were outlawed in the Cities of Westminster and London by the 1707 Building Act. They were considered to be a fire risk. The Act required the use of an 18 inch brick parapet, with the roof set behind. This reduced the amount of timber on the façade. It also required party walls to be raised at roof level, to inhibit the spread of fire between properties.

Eaves cornices and parapets.
Queen Anne's Gate, SW1

Before the 1760's when slates were not widely used, roofs were commonly covered with clay tiles. Tiles require a steep pitch in order to keep the weather out, and steep pitches forced architects and builders to construct roofs of a large volume and height.

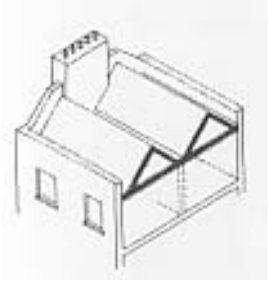
The use of tiles, and the resulting steep pitches produced roofs which were often out of proportion with the size of smaller houses. This was avoided in the early 18th century by dividing a high pitched roof in two parts and thus to halve its height, without reducing its slope. The result was the 'M' shaped roof and the double pitched roof.

In the 18th century, with the Georgian desire for classical proportions, the gable end was replaced by hipped roofs set behind a parapet, concealing much of the roof from view and minimising its impact on the scale and proportions of the façade. In Westminster, examples of this type of roof can be seen in Mayfair, Soho, Covent Garden and St. James's.

High pitched roofs, Queen Anne's Gate, SW1

Roofs hidden behind balustrades, Henrietta Street, WC2.

THE 'M' ROOF AND DOUBLE-PITCHED ROOF



These two roofs looked similar but are structurally different:-

A double-pitched roof rests on three walls; the front and rear walls, and the load bearing spin separating the front and back rooms. The three walls run parallel to the two ridges of the roo

An 'M' roof rests on two bearing walls only, which support the two 'feet' of the 'M', with the gut resting on the spanning beam between these two walls. The ridges of the roof are at right-ar the buildings facades.

Neither roof form provides habitable space because of their low ridge height.

'M' roofs in Soho, W1

THE 'BUTTERFLY' OR 'V' ROOF

This is a relatively simple roof form, and one of the most extensively used on 19th century terraces in Pimlico, Bayswater and Westbourne. The narrow houses of a terrace are spanned with single joist-beams from one party wall to the other, with a central beam running parallel to the party walls, supporting the valley gutter. The roof had no top ridges, as the party walls protrude above the highest line of the roof, forming the upstands and incorporating the chimney stacks.

Butterfly roofs were usually concealed on the front façade of the building, by a parapet which blocked the two half gables and the gutter. On the rear façade, 'butterfly' roofs were often left visible, with the wall following the 'V' shape of the roof forming an interesting pattern crowning the back of the terrace.

THE MANSARD ROOF

The mansard roof takes its name from the French Classicist architect, Francois Mansart. It emerged in the 18th century in Britain, when it was also referred to as a 'kirb' roof. It allowed extra accommodation at roof level, partially hidden behind a parapet wall, without having a great impact on the appearance of the classical façade below.

Early mansard roofs comprise a steep pitched roof, normally 70 degrees or greater, with a shallower secondary pitch above. In the first half of the eighteenth century these slopes were clad in clay tiles. Later, when slates were used, slopes could be lower and with the use of lead, the top of the roof could be almost flat.

Normally dormer windows are small and of simple construction and appearance. However, variations exist, including the wide dormers designed to allow light into weaver's rooms. Sometimes these special mansards and dormers were added to an existing building. Sometimes they were designed as an integral part of the building. They are very rare in Westminster but can be found in other areas such as Spitalfields.

Small, simple dormers in Mayfair, W1

The mansard roof became popular in the mid - 19th century, with the Victorian fashion for French Second Empire architecture. Examples of this fashion can be seen in Grosvenor Gardens, SW1, built by Thomas Cundy III in the 1860's.

Grosvenor Gardens, SW1

4. UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

The City Council's policies which relate to roof extensions and alterations on listed and unlisted buildings are as follows:-

DES 6(I)

Where appropriate to the building, attic floors may be an acceptable form of extension providing they do not harm the proportions or architectural integrity of the building and are carried out in a manner suitable for the building in question.

ROOF EXTENSIONS: DETAILING

DES 6(ii)

Mansard roof extensions will often be the most discreet form of roof extension, although the form will depend on the period and character of the building and its surrounding area:

(a) They should be carried out in a traditional manner, using traditional roofing materials to match the existing or original design;

(b) Where plant is necessary it should be contained within them;

(c) Windows within a mansard roof should be traditional dormers and these should, where appropriate, usually align with windows in lower storeys.

(d) Roof terraces will not be acceptable where they would have an adverse effect upon the architectural integrity of the building and its setting, the character and appearance of the area or the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

(e) Fire escapes, where needed, should be included within the initial planning application and should preferably be within the building or if that is impracticable, where they have least visual impact.

(f) Care should be taken to preserve the characteristic features of the roof such as chimneys, chimney pots, the external expression of party and rear walls (including prominent unbroken runs of butterfly roofs), and variations of roof line and pitch, even where interior alterations would appear to make them redundant. Where necessary chimney stacks should be extended in height to relate to the roof extensions, and chimney pots replaced.

IN SOME CASES ROOF EXTENSIONS WILL BE UNACCEPTABLE:-

DES 6(iii)

In some cases where additional floors in any form will harm the architectural integrity of a building or the unity of a group, these will not be accepted. Roof extensions will not be acceptable in the case of:

(a) Complete terraces or groups of houses where the existing roof line is largely unimpaired by any extensions or alterations, and where it is considered to be important to retain the integrity of the group as a whole. In exceptional cases where proposals are forthcoming to add appropriate roof extensions to a complete group as part of a co-ordinated design, greater flexibility may be given.

Manchester Street, W1

Belgrave Mews South, SW1

(b) Buildings which are significantly higher than their neighbours, especially those which have been extended in the past.

Manchester Square, W1

(c) Buildings and terraces which are completed compositions and which have existing mansards or roof storeys, or where the provision of a roof extension would throw the proportion of the building into imbalance.

Horse Guards, SW1

(d) Where there is an unbroken run of butterfly roofs, roof extensions will not normally be acceptable.

Vincent Square, SW1

(e) Buildings where there is serious doubt that the building is structurally capable of carrying an extra storey.

Adding a new storey to a building, extending the party walls and chimney stacks will impose additional loads on the existing building. It is important to assess what the implications of such alterations are likely to be at the earliest stage possible. In some cases, especially some historic buildings it may not be possible to impose additional loading without causing damage or requiring major structural works to the existing building.

(f) Buildings or terraces where the roofline or party walls are exposed to long views from public spaces and where a roof extension in any form would have an obtrusive impact on that view.

STRUCTURES ON ROOFS

DES 6(iv)

(a) Structures on roofs such as satellite dishes and other telecommunications equipment, should always be designed and sited where they will have the least detrimental visual impact. Permission may be refused for structures which are seen as prominent skyline features from street level or other sensitive viewpoints.

(b) Roof level conservatories and gardens will not normally be acceptable where they will have a detrimental effect upon the character of a building or an area. The City Council will seek to resist roof-level clutter where it would be seen from the street or adversely affect the visual amenity of adjoining properties.

ALTERATIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS

DES 8(vii)

Extensions to listed buildings will only be acceptable where they relate sensitively to the original building. Where the existing original roof structure is of specific architectural or historic interest, it should be preserved.

Historic composite Mansard/M roof. Mayfair, W1.

Many of the historic roof forms described earlier, such as the Double pitched and M roofs are important features of historic buildings and these should be preserved. Proposals for the demolition of such roofs and their replacement with new roofs, such as Mansard roofs, may be unacceptable in principle.

AMENITY
In addition to design policies, there may be amenity considerations which may make roof extensions unacceptable. For example an extension may cause a loss of light to adjacent residential properties or cause overlooking/loss of privacy problems.

Policies H6 and SC14 relate to the loss of light to an adjoining properties, especially if they are in residential use. Policy SC13 relates to loss of privacy.

These are the policies included in the UDP (as placed on deposit) 1991, as amended by the Planning and Environment Committee in 1992. These represent the City Council's views on planning policy at the time of going to print. The final policies set out in the UDP when adopted may vary slightly from the above.

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5. THE DESIGN OF ROOF ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS
Some roofs can be adapted to provide accommodation without major alterations and extensions. Tall pitched roofs may only need internal changes and/or the addition of a rooflight or dormer window. However, other roofs, such as the 'M' roof may need substantial alteration or demolition and replacement of the existing roof structure to provide additional accommodation. The form of roof extension that is most common in the City is the mansard roof.

THE MANSARD ROOF
The principal aim of this guidance is to assist in the design of mansard roofs which will be appropriate extensions on a large number of buildings in the City, where the principle of a roof extension is considered acceptable (see policies DES 6 iii and DES 8 vii).

The guidance is general because it can not deal with every circumstance that exists across the City but it sets out the fundamental rules which need to be followed. It is important to produce a roof form that is appropriate to the building and, if it is a terraced property, to the terrace of which it is part. In some cases it may be appropriate to deviate slightly from the guidance in order to preserve the uniformity that exists in a terrace, so long as the existing pattern of roof extensions is one which is appropriate and one which should be perpetuated.

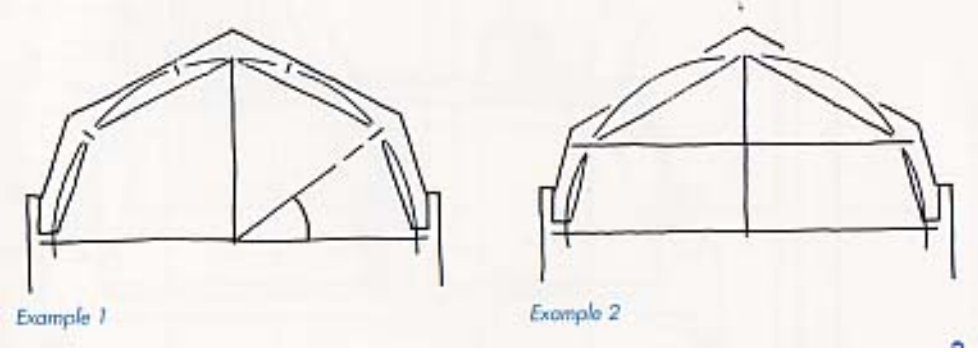
The mansard roof is not only appropriate for many 18th and 19th century houses but also some classically designed commercial buildings of the 19th and 20th century. It may be inappropriate for many other building types. It is always important to consider carefully the architectural style and character of a building before designing any extension or alteration to it.

DESIGNING A MANSARD ROOF
There are two types of mansard roof:-
a. The flat topped mansard
b. The double pitched mansard

In many cases the double pitched mansard may be the most appropriate. This is especially so on listed buildings because this form has been used from the early 18th century onwards and because it has a number of advantages, such as providing space for water tanks and other plant, within the roof space.

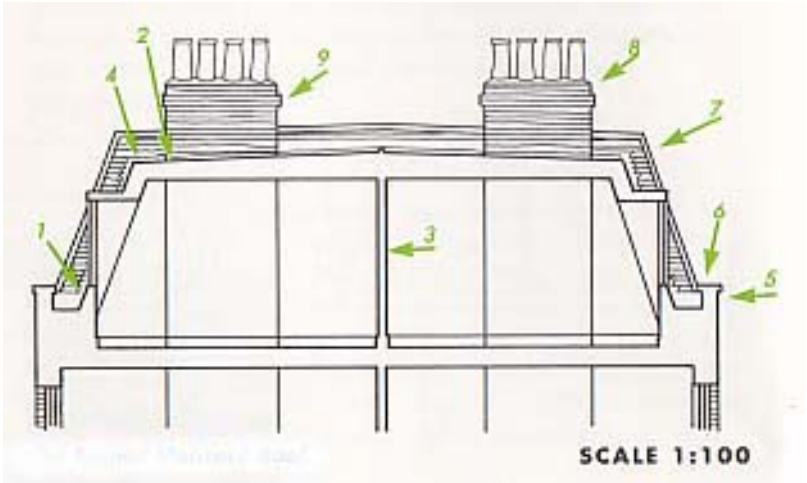
SETTING OUT
There are several ways of setting out a mansard roof. Two solutions are illustrated here. Both are based on semi-circles with the span of the roof as the diameter.

EXAMPLE 1
The circumference of the semi-circle is divided into five equal parts. The junction of the two roof slopes (the knee) is located between the lower two parts.

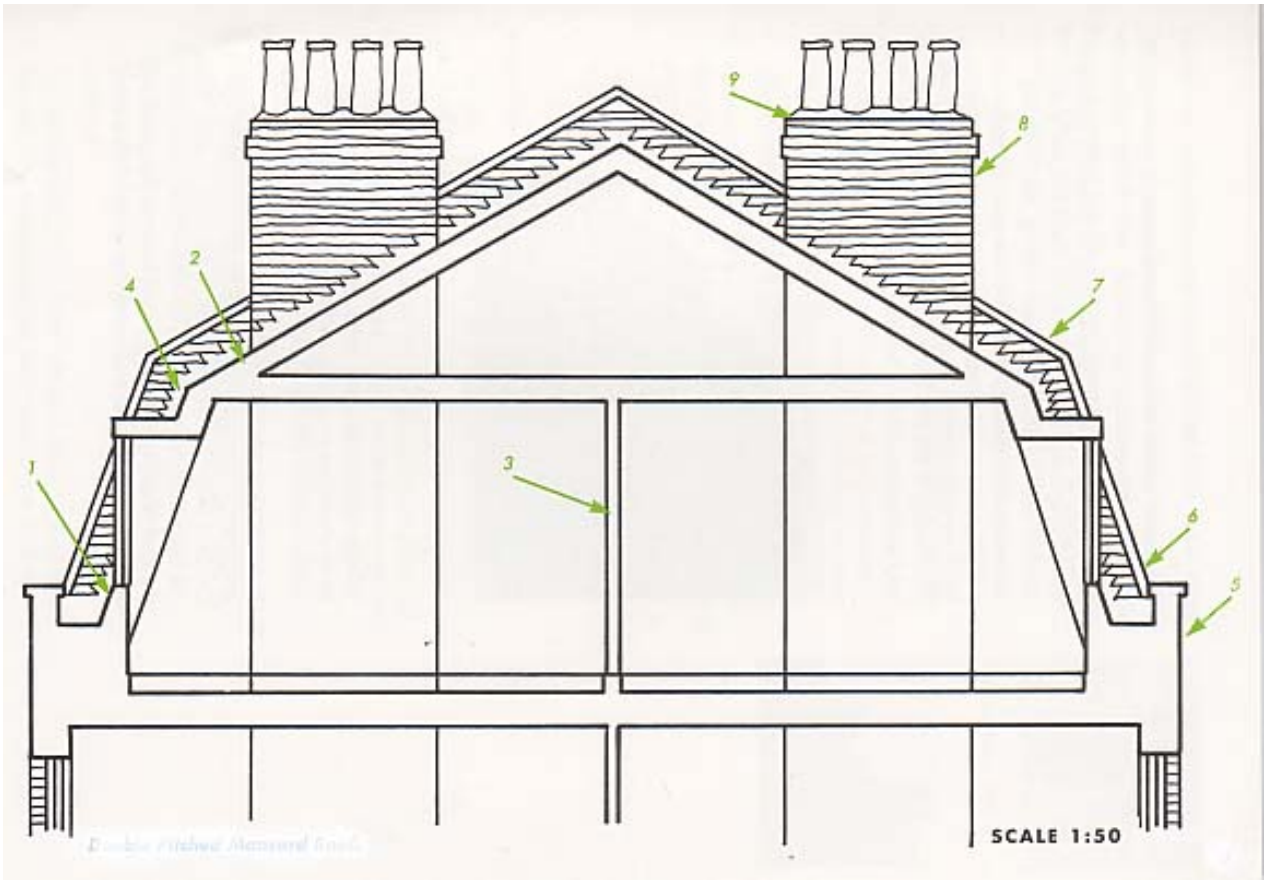


EXAMPLE 2
The height from the diameter to the ridge is divided in half. The knee is located on the circumference at this level.

GENERAL RULES (see diagrams below)
1. The principle slope should be pitched no greater than 70 degrees.
2. The upper slope should not normally be greater than 30 degrees.
3. The floor-to-ceiling height should be kept to a minimum. The normal maximum will be 2.3m (in domestic buildings).
4. The intermediate ridge, between the principal and upper slopes (the knee), should be kept as low as possible.
5. The roof should be set back behind a parapet gutter at the front and the rear.
6. The party wall slope should start behind the back line of the parapet coping.
7. The party wall profile should be parallel to the roof slopes, at the minimum upstand permitted under the Building Regulations (1991) of 375 mm.
8. Where a roof is extended the chimney stacks should be raised to retain the same height relationship with the roof.
9. Chimney stacks containing active flues must be raised to at least 1000 mm above the level of the adjoining roof covering to accord with Building Regulations (1991).



Flat Topped Mansard Roof



Double Pitched Mansard Roof

PARTY WALL UPSTANDS

Where a roof extension is added it will normally be necessary to raise the party walls.

The party walls should be raised up in materials to match the existing original work. In many cases this will mean London stock bricks with a stone coping. Reconstituted stone may be an acceptable alternative on unlisted buildings but concrete copings will not be acceptable. Brick-on-edge copings may be acceptable in some cases, particularly if this has been used on the majority of other roof extensions within a terrace.

Craven Street, WC2

Where appropriate, new brick walls should be toned down by sootwashing or similar methods to match the weathered appearance of adjacent brickwork.

In some cases where a double pitched mansard is proposed, it may be undesirable to raise the party wall and chimney stacks to the full height of the roof. In such cases, the height can be kept down by hipping the upper part of the roof (the 30 degree slopes). Therefore, the party wall need not be higher than it would be for a flat topped mansard.

CORNICES, PARAPETS AND BALUSTRADES

Original cornice, parapet and balustrade details should be retained or rebuilt when deteriorated or removed, and should be incorporated into the design of new extensions. Repairs to existing fabric should match the original work in terms of the materials used, detailed design and finished appearance.

Belgrave Place,SW1

Lowering of parapets to increase lighting to dormer windows will not normally be acceptable.

Raising existing parapets will not normally be acceptable either.

If parapets have been raised in the past to a consistent level in a terrace, then it may be appropriate to continue this level to ensure uniformity within the terrace.

The parapet coping should always fall towards the gutter.

In some terraces there is an existing eaves gutter detail at the rear of the roof. In these cases it may be appropriate to give a mansard roof an eaves gutter detail, rather than building up the parapet wall, especially if this has been done to other buildings in the terrace. In all other cases an eaves gutter detail will normally be unacceptable.

Savile Row, W1

ROOF COVERINGS

All roof coverings should be of high quality and be laid in a traditional manner.

Roof slates should normally be traditional Welsh slates, or in some cases, Westmoreland slates, either new or second-hand, in conservation areas and on listed buildings.

Natural slates from other sources will be considered on their own merits.

Modern alternatives which resemble the colour, texture and pattern of natural slate, e.g. reconstituted slates, may be acceptable on unlisted buildings.

Slates should be used on the 70 and 30 degree roof slopes. On shallower pitches lead is the most appropriate material.

On some buildings e.g. late 17th and early 18th century houses, clay tiles may be the most appropriate roofing material.

The traditional material for lining parapet gutters is lead. This will be appropriate for listed buildings. On unlisted buildings modern alternatives may be acceptable.

CHIMNEY STACKS AND POTS

Chimney stacks and pots are important features of a building's roofline and contribute to the character and appearance of conservation areas. Therefore it is important to retain them, even if they are no longer in use.

Chimney pots of a traditional style should be retained or reinstated on the raised stacks and the original detailing to the top of the stack replicated.

If flues are used for gas boiler or natural ventilation, any adaptation to the existing chimney should not adversely affect its appearance.

If modern flues and ducts are necessary then these should be run through existing flues wherever possible. If this is not possible, it is important to ensure that such equipment is located carefully and painted or finished to minimise its visual impact.

Blandford Street, W1

DORMER WINDOWS: NUMBER AND POSITIONING
In most cases a mansard roof will have the same number of (or fewer) windows as the storey below.

Windows should be in the principal (70 degree) slopes only. (Refer to general rules above).

They should project from the roof slopes and be set behind the parapet wall, so that the full height of the window is not visible from the street.

The cill of the window should not normally spring from any point higher than the coping of the parapet, so that no roof slope is visible below the dormer.

The top of the dormer windows should be lower than the junction of the upper and lower slopes (the knee).

They should normally line up with windows on floor below. However, in some cases, for example houses which are three bays wide, it may be appropriate to line the dormers over the brick piers rather than the window openings of the floor below.

At the end of terrace, where the mansard is hipped on its return, one wide dormer may be more appropriate, as it may not be possible to include two dormers successfully. An appropriate design might include a central slash window with two small lights either side (see end of terrace details below).

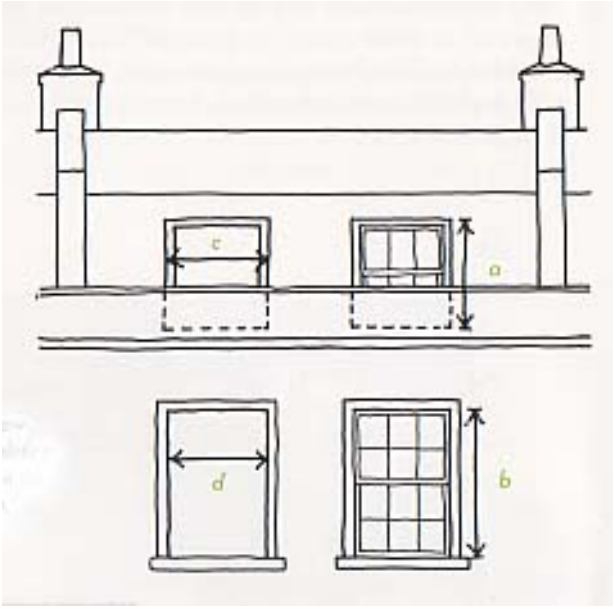
Double pitched mansard. Dormers lined up over piers.

DORMER DESIGN
Dormer windows should normally be modest in size and of simple construction and design.

They should be constructed in painted timber. Modern materials such as aluminium or UPVC will rarely be acceptable for dormer windows.

The height of the dormers should normally be less than the height of the window openings on the storey below. See drawing below (a < b).

The total window width, including cheeks, should be no greater than window openings on the façade below (c < d). It is important to ensure that the cheeks are not too wide as this can give the dormer a very heavy appearance.



Dormer window dimensions relation to windows on the façade below.

The roof of the dormer should normally be flat. However, in some cases it may be acceptable to use a shallow curved roof to reflect the design of window openings on the façade.

Clifford Street, W1

Gutters are not necessary on dormer windows. They are not traditional details and will not be acceptable.

Simple eaves mouldings can be used to cover the leadwork at the front of the dormer. A simple architrave can be used to over the frame and the cheek.

There are historical precedents for both side-hung casements and sliding sash windows in mansard roofs. However, traditional vertical sliding timber sash windows are normally the most appropriate for the majority of buildings in Westminster. Other alternative designs will not normally be acceptable on C18 and C19 domestic buildings.

Window proportions should have an emphasis, normally vertical, consistent with existing window on the facades below. Care should be taken to choose a historically appropriate style of window, with special attention paid to the thickness and profile of the frames and glazing bars.

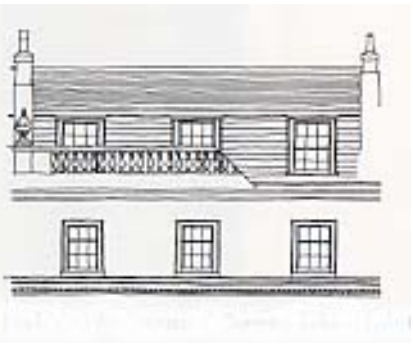
The cheeks and sides should normally be lead clad. Zinc is not a traditional or appropriate material and it will not be acceptable in most cases.

In some cases louvres or grilles may be required to vent the roof space, particularly if it is used for plant. These can be accommodated with a dormer, but these should normally be placed on the rear roof slopes.

Dormer windows close to site boundaries or party walls may require special treatment. Dormers parallel to and within 1000mm of the boundary need to comply with Building Regulations (1991) and should have a fire resistance usually of one hour. The fire resistance normally relates only to the cheek and its supports which face the boundary or party wall.

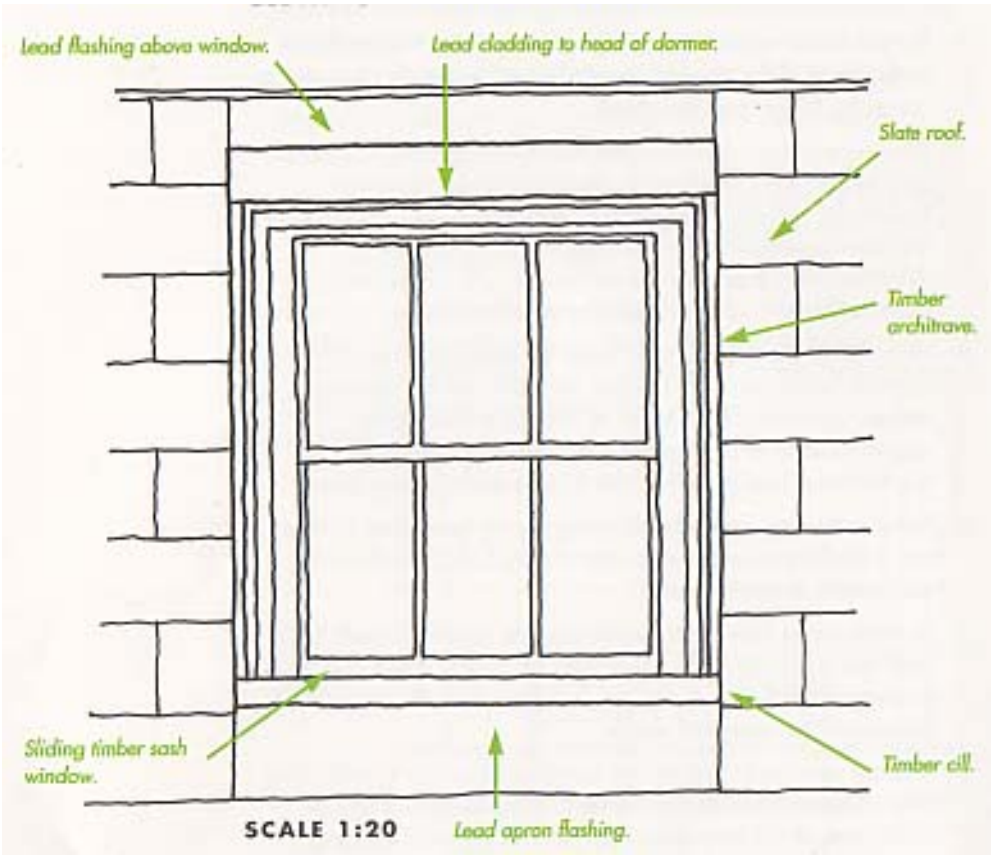
These guidelines for windows apply to the backs as well as the fronts of houses.

Flat top mansard

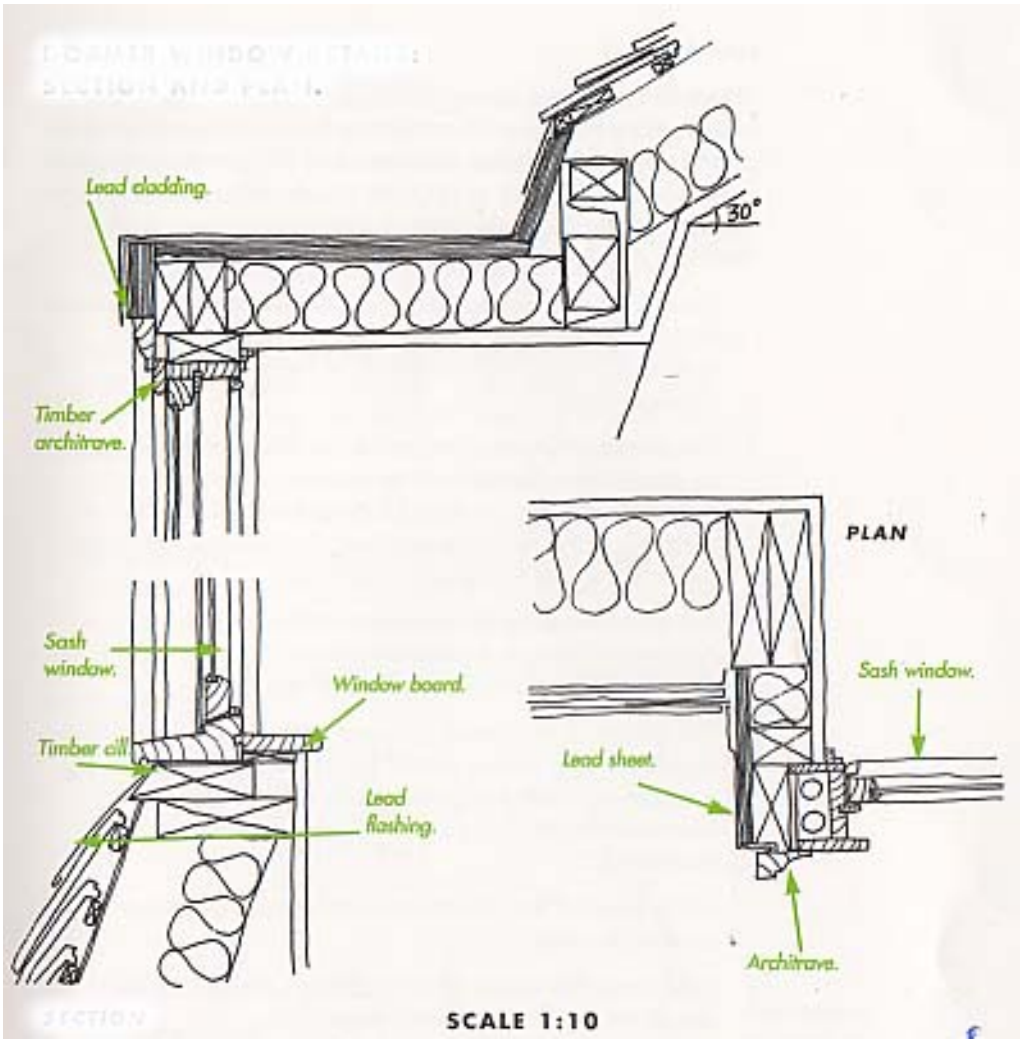


Double pitched mansard. Dormers behind balustrade.

DORMER WINDOW DETAILS: ELEVATION



DORMER WINDOW DETAILS: SECTION AND PLAN



ROOFLIGHTS
Rooflights are not normally acceptable in the principal (70 degree) roof slopes, except perhaps at the rear of unlisted buildings.

They should normally be flush with the roof covering.

In listed buildings they should normally be limited to the secondary (30 degree) slopes at the rear of the building.

Where the mansard has a flat roof, roof lights should be small and of minimum projection above the roof and should be located either towards the centre or the rear of the roof, in order to minimise their visual impact.

FIRE ESCAPES
When an additional storey is to be added to a building it may be necessary to provide a secondary means of escape (in case of fire) under the Building Regulations (1991). In some cases it may only be necessary to upgrade internal doors and the enclosure to the main staircase and provide modern smoke detection and fire alarm systems.

The design of escapes should be considered from the outset and any planning application for roof alterations or extensions should include details of the escape arrangements.

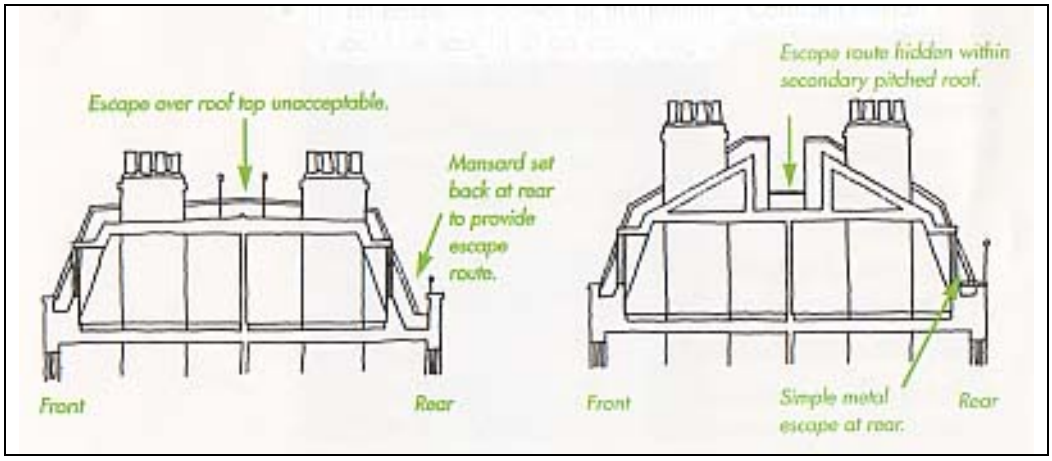
Fire escape routes at the front of buildings will not normally be acceptable. They should preferably be within the building envelope, or depending on the layout of the building, at the rear between roof and parapet, allowing protected access to adjacent properties.

Escape routes over the roof top are not normally acceptable because associated access structures and railings will be obtrusive features on the skyline.

The design of any guard rail must comply with the Building Regulations. Its deign should be as simple as possible e.g. a simple horizontal rail 900 mm to 1.1m high, with an intermediate rail. The number of vertical posts should be minimised.

Large external fire escape structures should be avoided by careful planning.

In all cases the advice of the District Surveyors Service should be sought at an early stage.



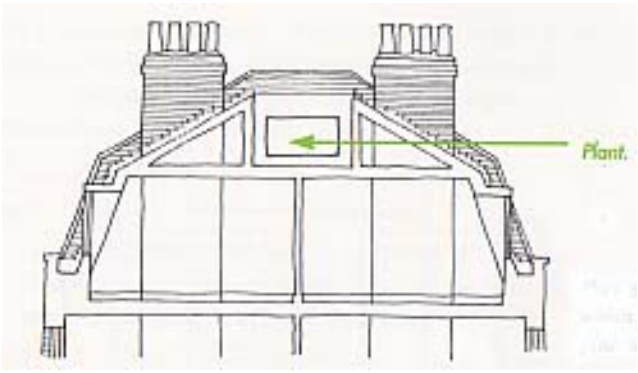
ROOF LEVEL PLANT

Alteration and upgrading of buildings can lead to additional demands for new tanks, heating, ventilation, air conditioning plant, lift motor rooms and over-runs, telecommunications equipment at roof level.

If a roof extension is proposed, plant should be contained within this. The provision of plant outside the building envelope will not normally be acceptable.

In some cases e.g. flat topped mansards on deep plan buildings, it may be possible to locate plant within small screened enclosures, set well back from the front or rear facades and clad in lead or slate, so that they do not adversely affect the character and appearance of the building or townscape.

Telecommunications equipment should be located where it will have minimum visual impact. It should not be visible from street level, either in close or long views.



Plant contained within a double pitched mansard.

PIPEWORK

Down pipes should not normally be of metal and painted and maintained in black. This is particularly important on listed buildings.

New pipe work should be kept to a minimum and confined to rear facades.

If it is necessary to raise the height of soil vent pipes then these should be carried up within the roof and terminated at roof level, in a position that minimises their visual impact.

ROOF TERRACES
In many situations a roof level terrace may be visually disruptive, particularly on front elevations, and cause amenity problems (e.g. overlooking, loss of privacy, disturbance) to adjoining properties.

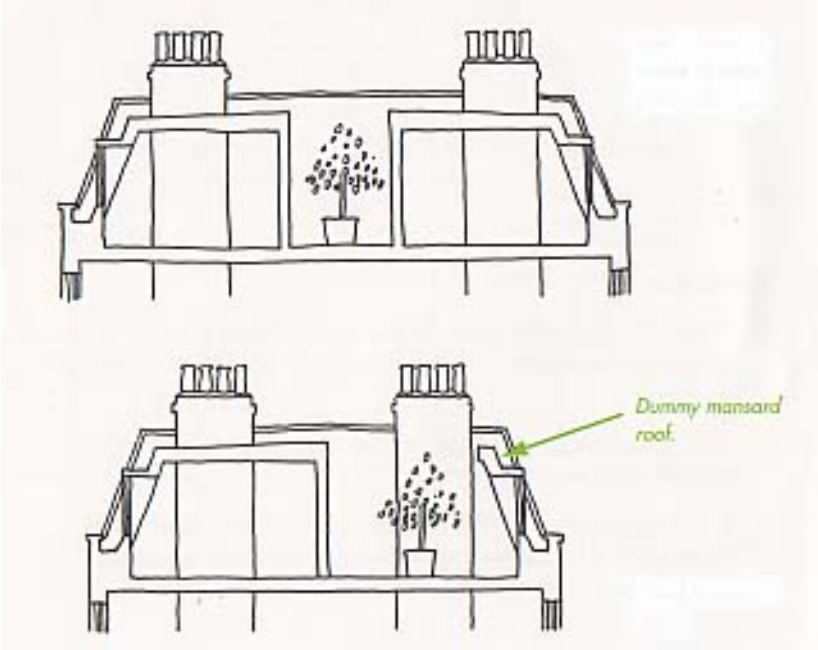
Terraces at roof level are often considered unacceptable, in principle, especially on listed buildings. They may only be considered favourably where there is a clear consistent pattern established within a terrace.

Where a roof terrace is acceptable it must have a simple balustrade or rail at a height of 900 mm for safety purposes.

Alternative solutions may include setting back the front of the terrace from the existing parapet and containing it behind a dummy mansard roof or locating it within the middle of the roof.

When planning permission is granted it will normally be conditional to ensure that other structures are not added to the terrace, or to restrict its use.

If screening is required to prevent overlooking problems, this may be unacceptable in design terms. In such cases the principle of a terrace may be unacceptable.



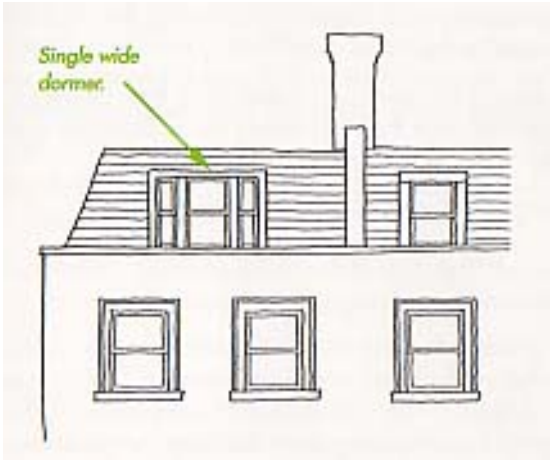
Roof terrace in centre of deep plan building.

Roof terrace at rear.

END OF TERRACE
At the end of a terrace it is normally necessary to pitch the roof on its return, to match the other facades.

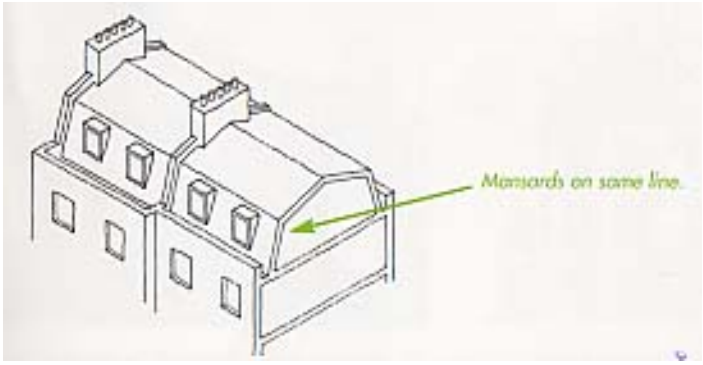
Ending the terrace with a gable wall at roof level will not normally be acceptable as this gives rise to a large expanse of brickwork which adds unnecessary bulk to the roof line of a terrace and is intrusive in the street scene.

Mansard hipped at end of terrace.



PROJECTIONS FROM THE BUILDING LINE
In some terraces the building line may vary, with some buildings set forward.

In such cases, roof extensions should be set back along the same line as the rest of the terrace i.e. so that there is a wider gutter behind the parapet on the projecting building than there is on the rest of the terrace.



Building set forward from main line of terrace.

6. SPECIAL CASES

SEMI-DETACHED HOUSES WITH PARAPETS
Roof extensions will not normally be unacceptable where it is only proposed to alter one of the pair, as this would create an unbalanced roof line.

A preferred solution would be to add dormers to the sides of the existing roof, thereby maintaining the roof slopes unaltered at the front.

However, if the principle of extending both houses is acceptable, then the roof should be incorporate mansard slopes on all four sides.

Existing parapets should not be altered.

OVERHANGING AND GABLED ROOFS
In some parts of the City there are buildings with overhanging and gabled roofs. Many are in Italianate or Gothic styles popular in the C.19 th. These roofs are important to the character of these buildings and the areas in which they lie.

There is a strong presumption in favour of retaining these roofs in their original form. Roof extensions and alterations will not normally be acceptable.

However, if it is possible to create space within the existing roof, without affecting the apparent form of the roof, it may be acceptable to insert small dormer windows or rooflights, provided these are at the rear or the sides.

Mansard roof on semi-detached pair.

Overhanging eaves, Bloomfield Terrace, SW1

GAPS BETWEEN BUILDINGS

In some areas of the City, e.g. Pimlico, there are gaps in the townscape which were created to provide a break between the larger, grander terraced houses on the principal streets and the smaller terraced houses on the side streets.

These gaps are often occupied by single storey buildings. They are important features of these areas and there is a presumption for their retention.

The City Council considers that in some cases one additional, second storey, above street level may be acceptable, depending on the heights of the adjoining terraces.

Proposals for more than one additional storey, infilling the gap, are unlikely to be acceptable.

It will normally be more appropriate to extend the building with a sheer storey rather than a mansard roof.

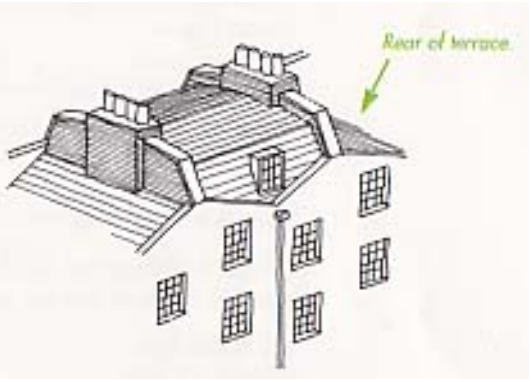
BUTTERFLY ROOFS

In some terraces the historic butterfly roof pattern survives unaltered.

In such cases, roof extensions will normally be unacceptable.

However, if the terrace has been altered and includes other roof extensions, a mansard extension may be acceptable but the "V" shaped parapet wall should be retained.

Gap between two terraces.



Mansard with butterfly parapet retained at rear.

7. CONTACTS

Advice on roof alterations and extensions, or other design issues, can be sought from the design officers in the Area Teams of Development Planning Services, Department of Planning and City Development. Click below for details.

CLICK HERE FOR LINK TO WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL CONTACTS LIST

English Heritage
Where buildings are listed the advice of English Heritage can be sought.

English Heritage
London Region
23 Savile Row,
London W1X 1AB

Tel**: (020) 7973 3000**

8. OTHER GUIDANCE
The Council's Department of Planning and City Development have produced a number of advisory publications, dealing with various design and conservation matters, as well as with other matters of development and associated planning procedures.

The following design guides deal with, or are relevant to, roof extensions and alterations.
Conservation Areas: A Guide to Property Owners
The Listing of Historic Buildings
Mews: A Guide to Alterations
Molyneux Street Conservation Area: A Guide to Roof Extensions
The Pimlico Design Guide
Relton Mews, A Guide to Alterations
Ennismore Gardens Mews
Conservatories: A Guide to Design and Planning Procedures
Wilton Row and Old Barrack Yard: Design Guidelines for Alterations
The Planning Enforcement System in Westminster
Strategic Views in Westminster
The Protection of Historic Buildings in Westminster
A Guide to the Siting of Satellite Dishes and other Telecommunications Equipment
Plant and Air -conditioning Equipment

These can be obtained from the One-Stop-Services and other Council offices (See 'Contacts' above). (A charge of £2.00 may be made for some of these publications, to cover their printing cost).

Department of Planning and City Development, Development Planning Services, March 1995