

Option Two

Re-use of Existing Buildings and
Derelict Sites

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The re-use of existing buildings and the re-development of derelict house sites in the countryside is preferred to the use of new sites. This is because the introduction of a new house to a derelict site or restoration of an existing building is often less contentious in terms of meeting the siting and locational criteria which might otherwise limit development elsewhere. Such sites tend to be self contained, have an existing access and boundary, and often contain mature trees and shrubs which can help integrate the new building with good effect. Where an existing building or derelict site does not meet the relevant definitions under L/HC2, the proposal will be considered as an application for 'new build in the open countryside' and judged under L/HC3 policies.

In respect of renovation of existing buildings in the countryside, the Council will presume in favour of applications which seek the full or at least partial restoration or renovation of traditional stone buildings particularly with properties considered to be of some architectural merit.

THE OBJECTIVES

Option 2 policies are presented in order to meet the following objectives:

1. To encourage the re-use of derelict house sites and redundant buildings in the open countryside.
2. To promote the use and maintain the appearance of traditional buildings in the countryside.
3. To make use of existing infrastructure and services (access, drainage, water supplies), to maintain new development in the countryside.



*Above and right:
An example of what can be achieved; Pindlers Croft, Califer, by The Law and Dunbar-Nasmith Partnership, Forres. An extension should be consistent with the original in form, scale and style. Pindlers Croft is part restoration and part new-build.*

Local stone in the boundary wall and the retention of existing mature trees, enhances unity, ties the building to its site and makes an attractive entrance, in character with its Califer setting.



Pindlers Croft: New wing from the rear.

The Advicefor the re-use of Existing Buildings and Derelict Sites

Applications under option 2 tend to fall into three categories:

Renovations -

Existing houses extended and modernised.

Conversions -

Domestic buildings adapted for residential use.

Replacements -

New houses built on an existing site as a replacement for a derelict building.

Renovations

The prime purpose of a renovation is to improve and modernise within the context of the restoration of an existing building. The main design advice therefore relates to the treatment of extensions.

The integrity of the original building is paramount in terms of form, scale and style. A badly designed extension may not only spoil the appearance of the existing house but may also destroy the setting of neighbouring buildings, and, whilst internally it may work successfully, externally it could actually debase the value of the property itself and its neighbours.

The existing building should not be perceived as an obstacle to be overcome at any cost in order to modernise the building. The prime objective should be to revitalise the building without materially altering its character. This is especially true for Listed Buildings and buildings within Conservation Areas. Too often, in an

effort to substantially increase the accommodation, the original house is overwhelmed by the bulk of the extension, destroying the appearance and character of the original building. The design element of the restoration and any planned extension should reflect the style of materials of the original building and the character of the location.

Good design is an investment and need not necessarily mean greater costs. The use of better materials and more appropriate forms can involve a slightly greater initial expense, but will often lead to a long-term saving for the

householder through reduced maintenance costs and increased property values. (This is particularly true of pitched roof extensions in preference to the cheaper flat roof).

It is possible that an architect will be able to provide the accommodation required with an acceptable design in a situation where the "amateur designer", so often employed for house extensions, may find it difficult to do so. As always, the services of a qualified architect are strongly advised.



The renovation and extension of an existing croft cottage at Upper Knockando by Wittets of Elgin. A sensitive design using traditional forms and materials combine to create an attractive modern dwelling comfortable in its rural surroundings. The existing stone wall has been retained to visually anchor the house in the landscape.

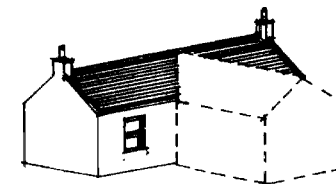
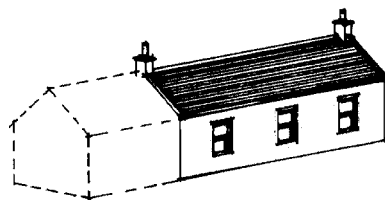
Extensions

Large extensions to the side or rear of the dwelling might have considerable effect on neighbouring properties as well as the main building: good planning and careful design could provide advantages by creating privacy, screening, or reflecting sun light and day light into existing rooms. Roofs, walls and windows should combine in such a way that the overall effect is in harmony with the existing building. For example, simply by setting back the extension wall 150 mm (6 inches) from the main building line of an older house, it is possible to make all the difference to the final appearance, allowing the character of both old and new to be expressed.

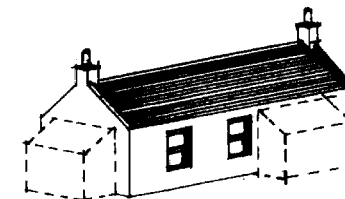
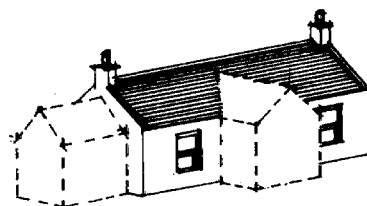
Extensions to countryside buildings can have a significant visual impact therefore it is important to observe four central principles:

- 1 Form - Maintain the existing form and shape of the building eg. do not mix flat roofs and pitched roofs.
- 2 Scale - As a general rule, keep the extension subservient to the original building.
- 3 Siting - Site the extension so as to maintain the balance of the original building (positions to the side or the rear are preferable), and don't upset the neighbours by invading privacy or creating shade.
- 4 Design - The design of the extension should complement the architecture of the original building.

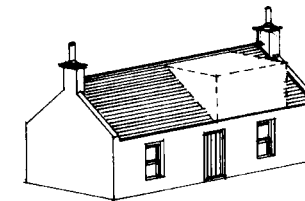
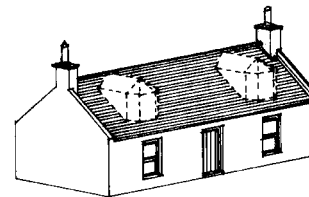
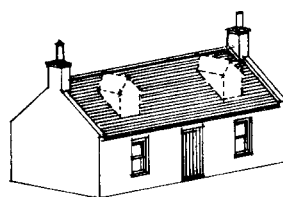
An extension should be consistent with the original building in form, scale and style.



Pitched roofs are always preferable to flat roofs when traditional cottages and farm houses are being extended. Roof pitch and gable width should generally match the existing house or be subservient.



An effective means of making a side extension subservient to the original is to set it back from the existing building line. This minimizes the problem of obtaining a good match of old and new materials and eliminates unsightly bonding. A monopitch lean-to can be successful when only a small extension is required.



Traditional dormer windows are usually quite small and neat structures designed and positioned with careful proportions.

This type of roof extension would ruin the appearance of any traditional dwelling; its size, flat roof, large window area and positioning are all alien features to local traditional buildings.

Roofs

Avoid using a flat roof when extending existing properties. Pitched roofs are a traditional and practical feature of houses in Moray which not only look better, but with felt under slate or tile, provide a double line of defence against weather penetration. To be in keeping with the main house, the roof should be of the same slope and be covered with the same, or very similar, materials: the roof edges (at eaves or verges) should also match the original details whenever possible. Unless there are unusual ground levels, the roof line of the extension should be no higher than that of the main building.

Using Existing Roof Space

If the roof space is large enough, it might be possible to use this area as part of your home extension; the addition of small roof lights or a small window in the gable end, (with appropriate structural alterations), can provide accommodation where external building space is restricted. Dormer windows may be more expensive than rooflights and more obvious, but are acceptable if they are small, neatly constructed, in proportion with the windows below, and are of a traditional style which matches the character and building materials of the building.

Windows and Daylight

Keep original windows and doors whenever possible; it could be cheaper to repair them than to replace them. If you have to replace a period window, there are local craftsmen who can make an exact replica which can include double glazing.

If you want to make a room brighter, try painting the window on its internal reveals and cill in white gloss and the room walls and ceiling in white or off white, before going to the greater expense and upheaval of enlarging the window.

Basic Rules for Renovations:

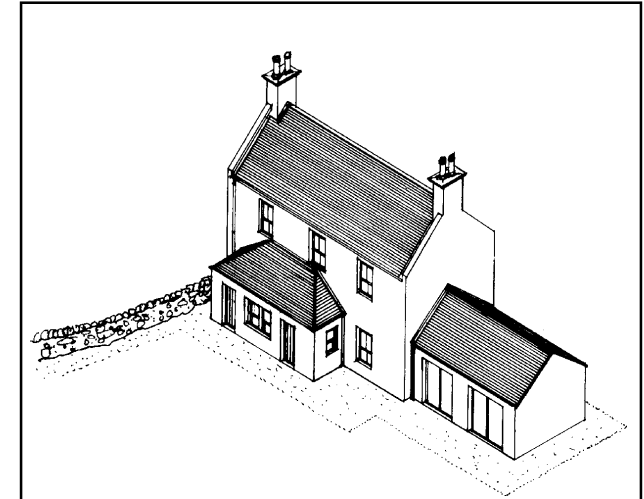
-The renovation should maintain the style of the original dwelling and the character of the location.

-Doors, windows and other openings should therefore be designed to compliment the form and proportions of the original building.

-Where the roof of the extension meets the roof of the original dwelling, the height of the extension should not exceed the height of the original building.

-Likewise, new extensions should not be of a scale which overwhelms the original house or causes an unreasonable loss of daylight, privacy, etc to neighbouring dwellings.

In planning to extend and alter your home you may wish to introduce more sunlight or daylight. If this is done by adding extra windows or enlarging existing windows in the original building it can often spoil the character and proportions of the house as well as being costly. Improvements to natural lighting should therefore be made, where at all possible, by means of the windows in the extension. Remembering that they should always be in proportion and sympathy with the size and style of the window of the original house.



Both illustrations are of extensions which contain windows/doors to provide good daylighting without detracting from the appearance of the original dwelling. These larger openings are screened from public view and do not encroach upon the privacy of neighbours, an important consideration for proposals within Rural Communities.

