



SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Livesey House, 7 St John's Hill, Shrewsbury, SY1 1JD

Please ask for:

Mrs H Ball

Tel. Direct:

01743 257650

E-mail: helen.ball@shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk

Date:

Address:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Consultation on the draft “Design of Residential Extensions & Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the draft SPD dated October 2025. We welcome the preparation of this guidance and the opportunity it provides to raise the design quality of residential extensions and alterations across Shropshire — including in our town of Shrewsbury.

General support

Shrewsbury Town Council (STC) strongly supports the objective of the SPD to provide clear, accessible and robust design guidance for residential extensions and alterations.

In particular, we commend the emphasis on:

- Appropriate siting and proportionate form and scale of extensions;
- Use of consistent or complementary materials, finishes and fenestration;
- Minimising adverse impacts on neighbouring amenity and on the character of neighbouring properties;
- Encouragement of sustainability measures such as energy efficiency, low-carbon technologies and water efficiency; and
- Recognition that high-quality design contributes to health, well-being, active travel, the built environment and sense of place.

Shrewsbury-specific comments

Given the historic, built and environmental context of Shrewsbury, we would respectfully offer the following observations, suggestions and requests for clarity:

1. Heritage and local character

Shrewsbury’s town centre, and many of its suburbs, comprise significant heritage assets (listed buildings, conservation areas, historic streetscapes). We welcome that the SPD addresses heritage assets, conservation areas and locally distinctive character.





We suggest that the SPD should include or be accompanied by more explicit guidance or case studies that reflect terraced urban housing, historic villas, former industrial housing conversions, and tightly constrained back gardens typical in Shrewsbury. Illustrative examples of good/poor practice in a Shrewsbury context would aid homeowners and applicants.

We ask for clarity on how the SPD will be applied in conservation areas and in proximity to the River Severn corridor.

We recommend that special attention be given to ensuring that higher density, smaller-plot contexts (such as in Shrewsbury) are not treated by “one-size fits all” rural extension guidance, but have nuanced treatment of impact upon neighbours (light, overlooking, overbearing) given lesser separation distances.

2. Pre-application advice and accessibility

To deliver the ambitions of the SPD, it is critical that prospective applicants (particularly homeowners) have access to pre-application advice that is prompt, affordable (where fees apply) and well-publicised. STC would encourage SC to promote and resource this service, especially targeted at smaller scale extensions in suburban contexts.

We further suggest that supplementary leaflets or web-guidance targeted at homeowners in Shrewsbury would be helpful (for example “what good looks like in Shrewsbury” for extensions).

3. Flexibility and innovation

While respecting the importance of local distinctiveness and the need to minimise harmful impact, STC believes that the SPD should retain sufficient flexibility to allow for innovative, contemporary design solutions where they are appropriate and well-executed. The document does reference this possibility (“Embrace opportunities for contemporary design solutions...”).

In particular, in Shrewsbury’s suburbs and areas of later housing stock, some contemporary extensions may be entirely appropriate and beneficial. The guidance should clearly allow for such innovation, provided that it responds to context, scale and adjacent character.

4. Parking, boundary treatments & terraced housing matters

In many parts of Shrewsbury, backland development, garages, car-parking, and changes to boundaries (e.g., fences, gates, hedges) form part of extension schemes. We ask that the SPD be explicit about how boundary treatments, trees and private amenity space should be considered in these contexts. The SPD includes relevant sections (e.g., 4.18-4.25 in the draft).

We ask for further clarity on how the SPD will deal with conversions of terraced houses or extensions in narrow plots where the separation distances are minimal and neighbour amenity is particularly sensitive.



5. Implementation and resource implications

The effectiveness of the SPD depends significantly on consistent application by planning officers, monitoring, and outreach to communities and applicants. STC would welcome confirmation from SC that adequate staffing, training and monitoring resources will be provided to ensure the SPD is applied fairly and consistently. The ESHIA notes that equality/social inclusion impacts are anticipated as neutral to low positive.

We also encourage SC to monitor the outcome of the SPD (for example via case studies of extensions in Shrewsbury) and to publish findings on how the SPD is being used and its impact on design quality.

6. Linkages with other design guidance

We note that for Shrewsbury, the draft Shrewsbury Town Centre Design Code is being developed alongside this SPD.

We therefore request that SC clarifies how the SPD will interact with the Town Centre Design Code for properties/alterations within the town centre, to avoid conflicting advice and to ensure a clear design framework for applicants.

Suggested amendments / additions

Consider adding a short section or appendix specifically titled “Urban and historic town context – Shrewsbury” (or similar) to flag typologies, typical issues and good practice within a historic market town context.

Add more illustrations of extension/alteration scenarios typical in Shrewsbury (terraced houses, semi-detached of early 20th century vintage, modern infill, back-garden extensions).

Include explicit guidance on how to deal with accessibility/adaptations within extensions (given ageing population and need for housing adaptability). The draft SPD does mention accessibility but STC would emphasise this point.

Ensure the SPD emphasises early engagement with neighbours in tight plot contexts (town/suburban) given the high density in many Shrewsbury areas.

Conclusion

Overall, Shrewsbury Town Council is supportive of the draft SPD and believes it offers a sound basis to raise design standards for residential extensions and alterations, which will benefit our town’s built environment, amenity and attractiveness. We appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to working with Shropshire Council to ensure the guidance is effectively implemented, with appropriate regard to Shrewsbury’s particular characteristics.

Yours Sincerely

Helen Ball BA Hons FSLCC
Town Clerk

