

## EXTENDING A HERITAGE HOME

*Traditional solutions are a good guide for extensions to cottages. This design guide is about how to extend a heritage home while retaining some of its historical character. It tries to address the two most important aspects of retaining historical character - building bulk and roof form.*

### Tips for Designers:

- ❖ Use historically accurate shapes and styles. It is historically confusing to install aluminium multi-paned “French colonial” glazing into a 1950s cottage that originally had double-hung windows.
- ❖ Extensions should be “in character”, rather than attempt to exactly mimic the original cottage.
- ❖ Avoid “blending” the roof of the extension with the original. There should be a visual break between the original cottage roof and new roofs. There are ways of providing a clear break in plan and elevation too.
- ❖ Extensions should have subtle differences in detail from the original, so that a visual inspection would reveal the evolution of the building.
- ❖ If the block is large enough, say a double-length block, then rear additions are a separate building, joined by a link to the original cottage.
- ❖ If the block is small, say a bungalow on a minimum-sized cottage block, then the rear additions are joined to the cottage, covered by a separate pitched roof. It has to be detailed and carefully constructed to ensure good drainage.
- ❖ Historic building elements (e.g. carved verandah posts) are used as templates for new replacements. In such cases, the replica is usually date stamped with the year of manufacture, for future identification.
- ❖ Garages and sheds are important elements on a cottage block. They should be carefully designed to complement, but not dominate, the original cottage.
- ❖ Use the heritage adviser’s guide notes for colours, roofing and garages.
- ❖ Other design items are best discussed with the heritage adviser at the preliminary design stage, not after the DA has been completed.

### Typical notes to use on drawings:

- ❖ Window and door frames to match exist in timber.
- ❖ Brickwork to match existing in colour, texture and bond.
- ❖ Timber fascias.
- ❖ Verandah extended using exact templates of the existing verandah timbers.
- ❖ Drain box gutter to rainwater head and 90 diam gal downpipe, over a grated sump.
- ❖ New eave detail to match existing. Refer 1:10 detail.
- ❖ Verandah framing hollow section steel in typical timber sizes. Refer 1:10 detail.
- ❖ Custom orb profile galvanised finish roof, pitch 27 deg.
- ❖ Gutters ogee profile galv (quad if modern, half-round if early colonial).
- ❖ Roll ridge and roll fascia cap.
- ❖ Windows to match original in size and proportion. Refer window list.
- ❖ Post stirrups not to be exposed. Refer 1:10 detail.
- ❖ Garage door tilt-type with treated timber vertical boarding.
- ❖ Cover movement joint with new rainwater head and downpipe.
- ❖ Replace rotted weatherboards in matching profile treated timber boards.
- ❖ Colour scheme. *Hayme’s* range as follows. Fascias: *Indian Red*, low sheen. Etc.
- ❖ Remove paint from brick wall with methods outlined in the manual.

### How cottages were traditionally extended

Most Australian cottages were constructed as one or two-roomed houses and grew through the addition of extra rooms as they were needed. The sequential, additive nature of this evolution is quite obvious

externally. Rooms have simply been added under new individual roofs butted up against the old; or as separate pavilions connected by covered ways to the existing house. None of the individual new forms is so large as to dominate the others or disjoint the whole group. The later rooms have usually been added to the rear, so as not to challenge the prominence of the front entry section of the house. The hierarchy of spaces is clear, and their detailing reflects this.

When these houses that have grown incrementally are looked at more closely, subtle differences often show the staged nature of their construction. Windows and doors, though similar in overall form and proportion, are often different in minor detail. The use of a range of traditional building materials can also reinforce the illustration of the process of growth, without reducing overall harmony of the extended structure.

### **Using tradition as a guide**

Simple, but important lessons can be drawn from these observations regarding the relative importance of form, details and materials. Additions to a small building need not destroy its essential “smallness”. It is in this area of scale that most of today’s cottage extensions fail. Guidance for new work can be readily drawn from traditional solutions, offering a broad range of potential approaches to our contemporary space problems with cottages. However, there also has to be recognition of the circumstances where too much is being asked and the owner should move to a larger, more suitable house, rather than ruin a good cottage.

Some worst failures of cottage extensions are those where new additions dominate or overwhelm the original building (whose qualities presumably attracted its owner in the first instance). As community heritage and sensitivity to amenity increases, planning regulations are more frequently structured to preclude inappropriately scaled alterations. After all, the scale and intactness of a cottage are often among the reasons for its local recognition.

It is nearly always possible to provide reasonable additional space for a cottage by employing extensions of a traditional form: an extra room or rooms under individual hip or gabled roofs or a separate detached “pavilion” structure of carefully considered scale and form related to the original building. These modifications need not entail dramatic domination, alteration or loss of important fabric in the building. The roof is an especially important design element. Traditional roof forms should be used, together with historically accurate roof pitches, eave overhangs and veranda roofs.

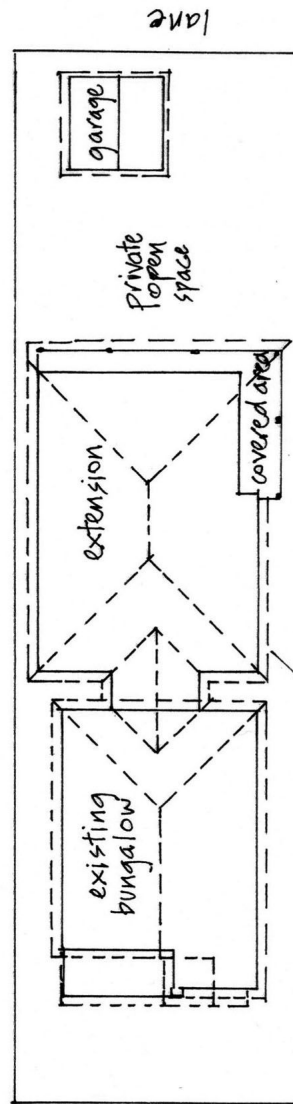
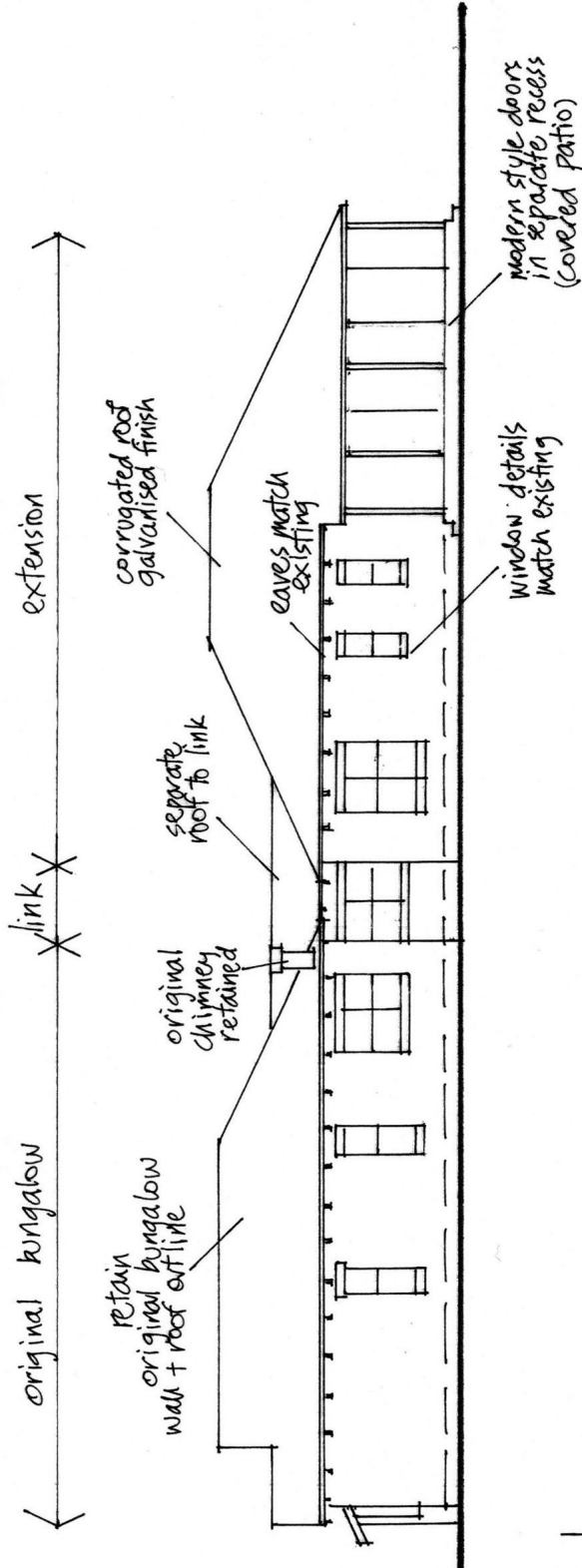
### **Garages and sheds**

The importance of the car in modern life and its increasing value as evidence of (real or affected) affluence sees more emphasis placed on stabling it. Whereas service structures like sheds for buggies and the early “motor-houses” for cars were once discreetly placed to the rear, the front garden in many cottages today is taken over by a carport or garage. A poorly designed garage can challenge the scale of the principal building on the site.

Some attempts to “blend” the garage by adopting decorative features from the house will over-emphasise the garage. In situations where two or more cars must be accommodated, the cottage behind can become completely obscured. In a street of cottages with similar setbacks from the footpath and garden frontages, the intrusion of new garaging can be disastrous for its overall appearance. Traditionally, garages did not challenge the dominance of the house and should be separate, secondary structures. Garaging under the main house roof is unacceptable. Carports should not extend further forward than 1.5m behind the main wall (not porch wall) of the house.

### **Exceptions and Contemporary Style Extensions**

Contemporary style extensions should only be considered if they: do not negatively impact on the views and spatial character of the Conservation Area or heritage item, AND are of exceptional quality of design, finish and landscape detailing of open space.



sum of all roofed areas + any upper floor areas, less than 50% of area of the block.

Maximum-sized extension in a Conservation Area.

