

## House Extensions and Alterations

### ■ OBJECTIVE

All house extensions - including dormers, conservatories and decking - should be well designed, and of high quality. They should enhance the parent building, maintain the quality and character of the surrounding area, whilst respecting the amenity of adjacent neighbours.

### ■ SCOPE OF GUIDANCE

These supplementary guidelines shall apply, on a city wide basis, to extensions, dormers, conservatories and decking proposals to houses, flats and properties originally designed as residential. They clarify where these proposals require planning permission and/or listed building consent.

### ■ POLICY CONTEXT

#### NATIONAL GUIDANCE

Designing Places - A policy statement for Scotland - outlines Scottish Executive aspirations for improving design of the built environment at macro and micro level.

National Planning Policy Guideline: NPPG18 "Planning and the Historic Environment" sets out the Government's planning policies in relation to Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas with a view to their protection, conservation and enhancement. The need to secure preservation, whilst accommodating and remaining responsive to present day needs is acknowledged.

Planning Advice Note: PAN 68 "Design Statements" advocates that developers should submit design statements with planning applications, outlining the rationale for their chosen design

#### LOCAL PLANS

Local Plan Policies promote new development of the highest quality and seek to protect character, amenity, and visual appearance throughout the City. For example, Policy CD19 of the Central Edinburgh Local Plan states:

"The Council will permit alterations and extensions to buildings which in their design and form, choice of materials and positioning are compatible with the character of the original building, will not result in an unreasonable

loss of privacy or natural light to neighbouring properties and are not detrimental to neighbourhood amenity and character. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring that such works to listed buildings and non - listed buildings in conservation areas do not damage their special architectural character.”

Policies E5 in the North West Edinburgh Local Plan, E4 in the South East Edinburgh Local Plan and E25 in the North East Edinburgh Local Plan are similar to that quoted above.

## ■ STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Not all extensions or alterations will require planning permission. However:

- a) Planning permission will always be required for extensions, dormers and conservatories to flatted properties.
- b) On unlisted single dwellings, planning permission may be required for the erection of an extension or conservatory, depending on the location, the type of building and the size and height of the extension.
- c) New dormers to roofs on all properties will require planning permission. New rooflights may require planning permission
- d) Listed building consent will always be required for the erection of an extension, dormers, rooflights, on exposed prominent pitches, or conservatory to a listed building. In certain circumstances, an application for planning permission will also be required.
- e) Planning permission may be required for the erection of decking depending on the location and type of property, and the positioning, design and height of the decking. Decking which is attached to a listed building will require listed building consent.
- f) An initial check with a planning officer is desirable due to the complex nature of the requirements. If planning permission or listed building consent is not considered to be required, it is advisable to seek confirmation of this in writing.

# POLICYGUIDANCE

## ■ GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- a) Proposals for house extensions and additions will be considered against the relevant local plan policies and the design principles set out below, as well as the individual circumstances of the application. Compliance with other guidelines and policies of the Council will equally need to be met, such as Daylighting and Privacy etc.
- b) Extensions, conservatories, dormers, or other additions to houses should be architecturally compatible in design, scale and materials with the original house and its surrounding area. Extensions should not overwhelm or, dominate the original form, or appearance, of the house. No extension should detract from the integrity of the original building or character of the area. Within this context high quality, innovative modern design will be encouraged.
- c) Where there is an existing extension/conservatory of historic or architectural quality attached to a listed building, or a building within a conservation area, then the presumption will be in favour of restoration, repairing or adapting rather than replacement.
- d) Proposals for a new conservatory either affecting a listed building, or within a conservation area shall ensure that the original stonework of a listed building, inside a conservatory shall remain unpainted and the colour of the conservatory shall respect the character of the area.
- e) In general, only ground floor conservatories will be permitted, except where underbuilding is required to achieve an appropriate height. Original abutting walls should be kept and form part of the structure. Where dwarf walls are proposed they should be constructed with the same materials and finish as the house.
- f) The position and design of an extension should not prejudice the ability of neighbours to add similar or equivalent extensions.
- g) Extensions or dormers in the surrounding area that were granted permission prior to the introduction of these amended guidelines and which do not comply with these guidelines, shall not be taken as having any form of precedence over them.
- h) All extensions and alterations will be required to meet the provisions of Daylighting, Privacy and Sunlight Guidelines. Any screening should be acceptable in itself in terms of visual impact as well as daylighting and overshadowing of the neighbouring property.

## ■ EXTENSIONS

- a) Where there is a traditional development pattern, such as villas with single storey outbuildings, this may determine the form and size of any addition.
- b) Any extension should retain a reasonable proportion of private amenity open space.
- c) Where a new floor is proposed which requires the raising of the roof, this will be considered in relation to the prevailing character and townscape of the area.
- d) Consent will not normally be granted for a conservatory on a principal, or other conspicuous, elevation. Exception may be justified for appropriately designed conservatories where this is part of the traditional character of the area.

### ■ **SIDE EXTENSIONS**

- a) In achieving an extension that will integrate with the original building and respect its neighbours, the extension should be set behind the front line of the existing dwelling to give a clear definition between the new design and the existing building.
- b) Where a side extension, of a similar height and/or massing as the original building, could visually connect separate houses into a continuous terrace, planning permission will only be permitted if characteristic of the area.
- c) Where corner gardens contribute to the character of the area, their openness will be protected by resisting any significant intrusion into the corner ground.

### ■ **FRONT EXTENSIONS**

- a) There will be a general presumption against extensions that project beyond the front building line. Modest porches may be acceptable where they do not detract from the design of the original building or the character of the street.

### ■ **REAR EXTENSIONS**

- a) Rear extensions should not occupy more than one third of the applicant's original rear garden area.
- b) For flats, including 4 in a block, the opportunity for extending, if any, will be limited.

### ■ **MATERIALS**

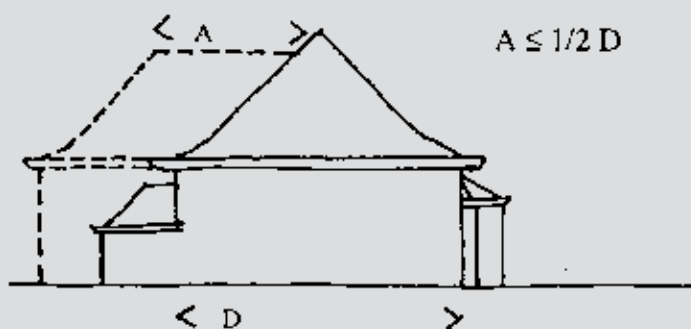
- a) The materials to be used on an extension should normally match exactly those of the existing building. Where the existing building is constructed of stone, natural stone should be used for the extension.
- b) Alternatively, a new extension may be designed to contrast with the existing building using a modern design and materials. In this instance the materials should be of the highest quality and relate well to the existing building.
- c) The use of sustainably sourced, long lasting materials, being locally sourced, with the potential for later recycling will be encouraged.
- d) The use of materials that are reclaimed or recycled will be encouraged and where buildings are demolished the storage and re-use of construction materials will be encouraged.
- e) In listed buildings and conservation areas the use of uPVC will not generally be acceptable

### ■ **ROOF DESIGN**

- a) In general the pitch and form of an extension roof should match that of the existing roof.
- b) Flat roofs may be appropriate on modest, single storey extensions.
- c) Otherwise flat and mansard roofs on extensions will not normally be allowed unless

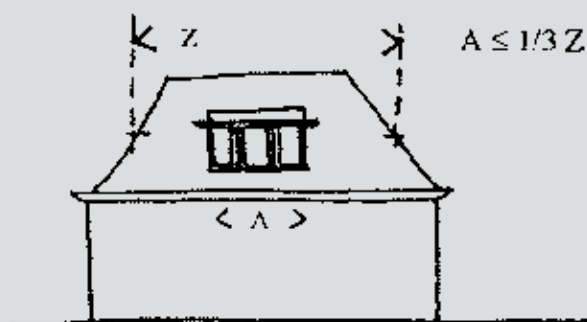
these are complementary to the existing roof, or in the case of flat roofs they are part of a high quality, contemporary design.

- d) New eaves heights should either match or be lower than existing eaves, to avoid extensions being greater in storey height than the original building.
- e) Development above the existing roof ridge will be resisted.
- f) A rear roof terminating at a similar or equivalent height as the existing roof should be no greater in length than 50% of the depth of the original building. This will ensure that the extension remains visually subservient to the original house.

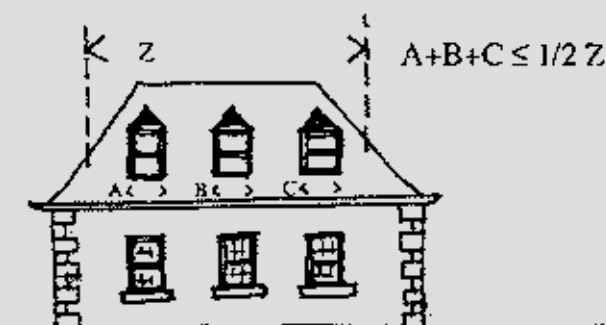


## ■ DORMERS

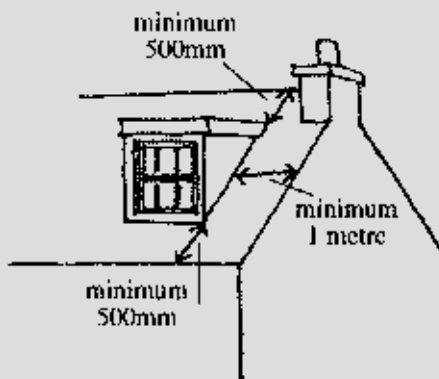
- a) Dormers should be of such a size that they do not dominate the form of the roof. There is a general presumption against side dormers and large single box like dormers.
- b) A single dormer should be no greater in width than one third of the average roof length.



- c) There is a presumption against two or more dormers where their combined width is more than 50% of the average length of the single roof pitch on which they are located.



- d) The relationship between a dormer and its roof elements is particularly important. Dormers should normally be a minimum of 500mm clear of the ridge, hip and eaves and a minimum of 1 metre from the gable. If this cannot be achieved rooflights should be used.



- e) An exception to d) above may be made where an appropriate traditional dormer is proposed on a traditional dwelling.
- f) Where a number of dormers are proposed on a single roof plane, they should normally follow the proportions and alignment of the existing windows below.
- g) Where a dwelling has a number of existing dormers, then infilling between these dormers will not normally be allowed.
- h) The front face of any dormer should consist of window framing and glazing. Cladding on the front face of any dormer should be minimal.

## ■ GARAGES AND ANCILLARY BUILDINGS

The design of any proposed garage should reflect the principles laid out in this guideline

## ■ DECKING

- a) Decking located on, or near ground level, will generally be considered acceptable.
- b) Decking, including barriers and steps, should be of a simple design using good quality materials and should not be visually intrusive or detract from the appearance of the house.
- c) Elevated decking should be restricted in height to ensure it is subservient to the related building.
- d) Within the Edinburgh World Heritage Site, decking is not considered to be in keeping with the special character of the area and is unlikely to be acceptable

## ■ SOLAR PANELS

The provision of solar panels can contribute to sustainability, however the following constraints will apply:

- a) On listed buildings solar panels will not normally be permitted.
- b) Within conservation areas, solar panels will not normally be permitted on any conspicuous elevations.

In other cases, where solar panels would be visible from public streets and areas, they must be designed and laid out as part of an overall architectural treatment.

## ■ SATELLITE DISH AERIALS

Dishes will not normally be acceptable on the front or street elevation of any building. However, they may be acceptable in the following situations:

- a) Sited on the ground to the rear of the building.
- b) Sited on a modern extension to the rear of the building providing that no part of the dish is higher than the main building.
- c) Sited in the internal valley of roof provided that no part of the dish projects above the ridge.
- d) Sited behind a parapet provided that no part of the dish projects above it.

## ■ OTHER RELEVANT GUIDELINES

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with other guidelines in the Development Quality handbook. The following guidelines are of particular relevance:

- Daylighting, Privacy and Sunlight
- Villa Areas and the Grounds of Villas
- Replacement windows and doors
- Colonies
- Site Planning for Sustainable Development
- Alterations to Listed Buildings.
- Satellite dishes

## ■ REASONED JUSTIFICATION

The Council has operated a guideline on house extensions since 1976. These revised guidelines include dormers and decking. However, the original aim remains the same. It aims to reconcile the need to maintain the townscape features of neighbourhoods, the architectural character of buildings and amenity with the frequent requirement of owners to maximise their accommodation, and to ensure a fair and consistent standard throughout the city. Above all the objective of the guideline is to avoid over development. It is also important to ensure that the private amenity spaces associated with houses and flats are sufficient to ensure that an adequate standard of residential amenity is achieved.

The application of sizes, distances and ratios throughout this policy are based on good urban design practice which should give guidance on the basic principles to be adopted by applicants to achieve a high quality and overcome the cumulative adverse impact of poorly designed alterations.

The appointment of an architect is strongly encouraged in all cases and The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland can provide a list.

A Building Warrant may be required for any addition, for which an application should be made to The City of Edinburgh Council, City Development, Property Management, 329 High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1PN

Applicants are advised that there may be limitations on development in their title deeds: for example separate feu superiors' consent may be required and legal advice may be necessary. The Council is unable to provide legal advice on these matters.

For further details contact:

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