APPENDIX 17

GUIDELINES FOR RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS

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17.1 Introduction

These guidelines contain general advice and design principles for residential extensions. The Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, (as amended) give exemptions for the construction of extensions to residential dwellings and there is a wide range of works which will fall within these exempted development provisions. The applicant's architect or agent should be able to advise on the extent of these exemptions and whether proposed works would require planning permission to be obtained.

Given the wide variety of house types and styles within Dublin city, it is not possible to deal with every type of addition. Rather, this document sets out a number of general principles that should be addressed in all cases and which will be applied by the planning authority in assessing applications for permission.

The guidelines should be interpreted in the context of the Development Plan Core Strategy, which promotes a compact city, sustainable neighbourhoods and areas where a wide range of families can live.

17.2 General Principles

New extensions, whether they are single or two-storey, have an effect on their immediate environment and accordingly the following general principles should be addressed in all proposals for extension. Proposals should:

- Not have an adverse impact on the scale and character of the dwelling.
- Have no unacceptable effect on the amenities enjoyed by the occupants of adjacent buildings in terms of privacy and access to daylight and sunlight.
- Achieve a high quality of design.

The following sections of this guidance document feature these principles in greater detail.

17.3 Residential Amenity Issues

It is important to make sure that any extension does not unacceptably affect the amenities of neighbouring properties. This includes privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight. It is advisable to discuss your proposal with your neighbours prior to submitting a planning application.

17.4 Privacy

Extensions should not result in any significant loss of privacy to the residents of adjoining properties. Generally, windows overlooking adjoining properties (such as in a side wall) should be avoided. Where essential, the size of such windows should be kept as small as possible and consideration should be given to the use of high-level windows and/or the use of obscure glazing where the window serves a bathroom or landing.

Balconies will only be allowed where they are well screened and do not adversely overlook adjoining properties. The use of the roofs of flat-roof extensions as balconies can often lead to problems of overlooking.

17.5 Relationship Between Dwellings and Extensions

In cases where the backs of dwellings face each other or where the side of one dwelling faces the rear of a neighbouring property, a certain degree of separation is required to avoid any overbearing effect of one dwelling upon the other. With the emphasis on increased residential densities and the consequent incorporation of a variety of unit types and sizes in schemes, the requirement for 22-m separation in such cases may no longer be applicable in all instances.

The acceptable reduction of such distances, however, requires a high standard of building design and layout particularly having regard to the height and inter-relationship between buildings, the use and aspect of rooms and relative floor levels. The exact distances applicable in such cases will be determined on a case-by-case basis having regard to the above criteria and other relevant development plan standards.

The planning system does not give neighbours ‘a right to a view’ and does not always prevent people’s view from being blocked. However, extensions should be designed so as not to dominate or appear overbearing when viewed from adjoining properties.

17.6 Daylight and Sunlight

Large single or two-storey rear extensions to semi-detached or terraced dwellings can, if they project too far from the main rear elevation, result in a loss of daylight to neighbouring houses. Furthermore, depending on orientation, such extensions can have a serious impact on the amount of sunlight received by adjoining properties.

Consideration should be given to the proportion of extensions, height and design of roofs as well as taking account of the position of windows including rooms they serve to adjacent or adjoining dwellings.

17.7 Appearance

Most houses were originally designed and built as completed entities and did not take account of any need to incorporate future extensions. It is therefore necessary when considering the design of an extension to take account of the following criteria:

- The extension should not dominate the existing building and should normally be of an overall shape and size to harmonise with the existing house and adjoining buildings; the original appearance should be the reference point for any consideration of change that may be desired.
- The materials used should ideally be the same as those used on the existing building; features such as windows and doors on the new extension should relate to those on the original building in terms of proportion.
- Extensions to the front, which significantly break the building line, should be resisted.

17.8 Subordinate Approach

The subordinate approach means that the extension plays more of a ‘supporting role’ to the original dwelling. In general, the extension should be no larger or higher than the existing.

17.9 Materials

Care should be taken in all extensions to ensure that the new extensions integrate with the original building as far as possible. In addition to appropriate form and scale, the maximum use of matching materials between old and new will greatly assist this integration. Considerable care and thought should be given to materials, which harmonise with the existing building and consideration should be given to the changes which occur in their appearances due to age and weathering. The illustrations shown below give an example of how to integrate a new extension successfully with the original building.

Figure 1

Example of an acceptable use of materials:

A. Rendering to extension matching that of the original house
B. Brickwork matches
C. Roof material
D. Window form and design matches original

Figure 2

Example of an unacceptable use of materials:

A. Rendering to extension matching that of the original house
B. Brickwork matches
C. Roof materials
D. Window form and design matches original

Figure 3

A minimalist contemporary box style may be acceptable.

17.10 Contemporary Extensions

Although the general advice in this document is to match the existing building and to fit in with the neighbourhood, Dublin City Council also supports good contemporary designs. A contemporary or modern approach, providing unique designs, can offer a more imaginative solution to an unusual dwelling type or a contrast to a traditional building and are still required to take account of the design issues outlined in this document. Contemporary solutions should not detract from the character of an area and undeniably, if well designed, can make a positive contribution to the streetscape and the character of the area.

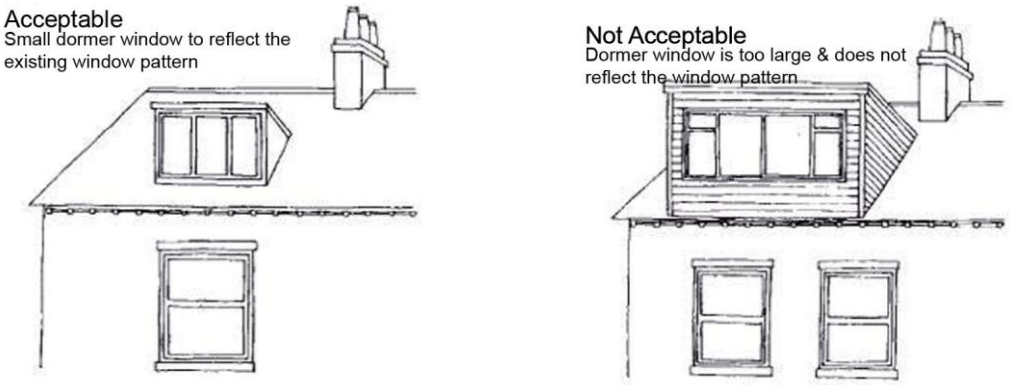
17.11 Roof Extensions

The roofline of a building is one of its most dominant features and it is important that any proposal to change the shape, pitch, cladding or ornament of a roof is carefully considered. If not treated sympathetically, dormer extensions can cause problems for immediate neighbours and in the way a street is viewed as a whole.

When extending in the roof, the following principles should be observed:

- The design of the dormer should reflect the character of the area, the surrounding buildings and the age and appearance of the existing building.
- Dormer windows should be visually subordinate to the roof slope, enabling a large proportion of the original roof to remain visible.
- Any new window should relate to the shape, size, position and design of the existing doors and windows on the lower floors.
- Roof materials should be covered in materials that match or complement the main building.
- Dormer windows should be set back from the eaves level to minimise their visual impact and reduce the potential for overlooking of adjoining properties.

Figure 4



17.12 Porches

It is important to try to avoid abutting porches close to existing windows, and where front doors are paired, a joint scheme with the neighbouring owner should be considered. The design should complement the main house.

Figure 5

Figure 6

17.13 Sustainable Design

Dublin City Council encourages and supports a sustainable approach to new build, alterations and extensions. Extending your home provides an ample opportunity to incorporate sustainability into your scheme. Practices such as the re-use of building materials, e.g. roof tiles/slates and bricks, increased insulation and rainwater harvesting techniques, to name but a few, will improve the environmental performance of a property.

17.14 Solar Panels

An increasing number of homeowners are using solar thermal panels that produce hot water and photovoltaic panels that produce electricity. Solar systems can be installed in the roof space of a dwelling similar to roof lights. Any solar thermal panels that are installed on or in roofs should not unduly dominate the roof and should be sensitive to the character, colour and style of the existing roof. The Planning and Development Regulations 2007 (S.1 No. 83 of 2007) set out planning exemptions for micro-renewable energy technologies for domestic houses including solar panels, heating systems and wind turbines.

17.15 Green Roofs

A green roof is a roof of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation and soil, or a growing medium, planted over a waterproofing membrane. Green roofs benefit our environment by enhancing biodiversity, reducing flood risk (by absorbing heavy rainfall and reducing or slowing down run-off) and also provides insulation.

Useful Websites

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
www.seai.ie

Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
www.environ.ie