

APPENDIX 18

Ancillary Residential Accommodation



1.0 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 section 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.

1.1 General Design Principles

It is acknowledged that the development of residential extensions plays an important role in promoting a compact city in line with the core strategy as well as providing for sustainable neighbourhoods and areas where a wide range of families can live.

The design of residential extensions should have regard to the amenities of adjoining properties and in particular, the need for light and privacy. In addition, the form of the existing building should be respected, and the development should integrate with the existing building through the use of similar or contrasting materials and finishes.

Innovative, contemporary design will be encouraged. A contemporary or modern approach, providing unique designs, can offer a more imaginative solution. However, such proposals are still required to take account of the design issues outlined in this document.

Applications for extensions to existing residential units should:

- Not have an adverse impact on the scale and character of the existing dwelling
- Not adversely affect amenities enjoyed by the occupants of adjacent buildings in terms of privacy, outlook and access to daylight and sunlight
- Achieve a high quality of design
- Make a positive contribution to the streetscape (front extensions)

There is a general presumption against front extensions that significantly break the building line, unless it can be justified in design terms and demonstrated that such a proposal would have no adverse impact on the character of the area or the visual/ residential amenities of directly adjoining dwellings.

1.2 Extensions to Rear

Ground floor rear extensions will be considered in terms of their length, height, proximity to mutual boundaries and quantum of usable rear private open space remaining. The extension should match or complement the main house.

First floor rear extensions will be considered on their merits, noting that they can have potential for negative impacts on the amenities of adjacent properties, and will only be permitted where the planning authority is satisfied that there will be no significant negative impacts on surrounding residential or visual amenities. In determining applications for first floor extensions the following factors will be considered:

- Overshadowing, overbearing, and overlooking - along with proximity, height, and length along mutual boundaries
- Remaining rear private open space, its orientation and usability
- Degree of set-back from mutual side boundaries
- External finishes and design, which shall generally be in harmony with existing

1.3 Extension to Side

Ground floor side extensions will be evaluated against proximity to boundaries, size, and visual harmony with existing (especially front elevation) and impacts on adjoining residential amenity. First floor side extensions built over existing structures and matching existing dwelling design and height will generally be acceptable. However, in certain cases a set-back of an extension's front façade and its roof profile and ridge may be sought to protect amenities, integrate into the streetscape, and avoid a 'terracing' effect. External finishes shall normally be in harmony with existing.

Any planning application submitted in relation to extensions, basements or new first/ upper floor level within the envelope of the existing building, shall clearly indicate on all drawings the extent of demolition/ wall removal required to facilitate the proposed development and

a structural report, prepared by a competent and suitably qualified engineer, may be required to determine the integrity of walls/ structures to be retained and outline potential impacts on adjoining properties. This requirement should be ascertained at pre-planning stage. Side gable, protruding parapet walls at eaves/ gutter level of hip-roofs are not encouraged.

The proposed construction of new building structures directly onto the boundary with the public realm (including footpaths/ open space/ roads etc.), is not acceptable and it will be required that the development is set within the existing boundary on site and shall not form the boundary wall. The provision of windows (particularly at first floor level) within the side elevation of extensions adjacent to public open space will be encouraged in order to promote passive surveillance, and to break up the bulk/ extent of the side gable as viewed from the public realm.

1.4 Privacy and Amenity

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. Bedrooms in general should not be lit by obscure glazed windows as a means to prevent undue overlooking of adjacent properties.

There will be a general presumption against the development of rear balconies and roof terraces. However, in inner urban areas, where there are limited opportunities for ground floor amenity provision, innovative design solutions for private amenity space will be considered on a case-by-case basis where it can be demonstrated that provision of same would not have a significant adverse impact on the residential amenities of adjacent properties.

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 proposals with neighbours prior to submitting a planning application.

1.5 Separation Distances

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 22m separation in such cases may no longer be applicable in certain 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 unduly overbearing when viewed from adjoining properties.

1.6 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. On the other hand, it is also recognised that the city is an urban context and some degree of overshadowing is inevitable and unavoidable. 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.

1.7 Appearance and Materials

The extension should not dominate the existing building and should normally be of an overall scale and size to harmonise with the existing house and adjoining buildings; the appearance of the existing structure should be the reference point for any consideration of change that may be proposed. The materials used should complement 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 and use of materials.

2.0 Detached Habitable Rooms

Detached habitable rooms refer to backland development within the curtilage of an existing dwelling that does not contain a separate vehicular access point. In this respect, access to the individual room to the rear of the existing dwelling will be provided by way of side passage/ access but with shared entranceway.

The purpose of these rooms is to provide for additional space within the rear garden of an existing dwelling for study/ home office use or additional living/ children's play room. These rooms shall only be used as ancillary residential accommodation.

All planning applications for detached habitable rooms will be subject to a condition to restrict the use of the room as ancillary living space to the main dwelling. The room may not be sold or rented separately from the main dwelling unit.

3.0 Porches

Porches will be considered where the design complements the existing building and provides for simple proportions and materials. 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. If existing car parking is provided in curtilage, it is important to ensure that there is adequate depth remaining for safe parking of vehicles.

4.0 Alterations at Roof Level/ Attics/ Dormers/ Additional Floors

The roofline of a building is one of its most dominant features and it is important that any proposal to change the shape, pitch or cladding of a roof is carefully considered. Alterations at roof level can include the conversion of an attic space and inclusion of dormer windows or the provision of an additional storey modifying the roof profile entirely.

The following criteria will be considered in assessing alterations at roof level:

- Careful consideration and special regard to the character and size of the structure, its position on the streetscape and proximity to adjacent structures
- Existing roof variations on the streetscape

- Distance/ contrast/ visibility of proposed roof end
- Harmony with the rest of the structure, adjacent structures, and prominence

5.0 Attic Conversions / Dormer Windows

The conversion of attic spaces is common practice in many residential homes. The use of an attic space for human habitation must be compliant with all of the relevant design standards, as well as building and fire regulations. Dormer windows, where proposed should complement the existing roof profile and be sympathetic to the overall design of the dwelling. The use of roof lights to serve attic bedrooms will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Where it is proposed to extend the ridge height to accommodate an increased floor-to-ceiling height, the design should avoid an overly dominant roof structure. The proposed scale of the roof should retain similar proportions to the building where possible.

Dormer windows may be provided to the front, side or rear of a dwelling. Guidelines for attic conversions and the provision of dormer windows is set out as follows:

Table 18.1: Dormer Window Guidance

✓	✗
Use materials to complement the existing wall or roof materials of the main house.	Do not obscure the main ridge and eaves features of the roof, particularly in the case of an extension to the side of a hipped roof.
Meet building regulation requirements.	Avoid extending the full width of the roof or right up to the gable ends.
Be visually subordinate to the roof slope, enabling a large proportion of the original roof to remain visible.	Avoid dormer windows that are over dominant in appearance or give the impression of a flat roof.
Relate to the shape, size, position and design of the existing doors and windows on the lower floors.	Avoid extending above the main ridge line of the house.
Be set back from the eaves level to minimise their visual impact and reduce the potential for overlooking of adjoining properties.	Side dormer windows shall not be located directly on the boundary of adjoining/ adjacent property.

In the case of a dormer window extension to a hipped/ gable roof, ensure it sits below the ridgeline of the existing roof.	
Where a side dormer is proposed, appropriate separation from the adjoining property should be maintained.	
Side dormers should be set back from the boundary.	

Figure 1: Good Examples of Dormer Extensions



Figure 2: Poor Examples of Dormer Extensions



5.1 Additional Floors

It is acknowledged that converting an attic as a full floor to the elevation of a dwelling can often be successfully achieved without effecting or impacting the overall character of the area or the residential amenity.

Dublin City Council will support innovative design responses to the densification of suburban housing to consolidate existing built up areas. Converting existing attic space to provide a full additional floor will be considered in this context, where it can be demonstrated that such a proposal makes a positive contribution to the streetscape and has no adverse impact on the residential amenities of adjacent properties.

The provision of such densification solutions are often more suitable at the end of terrace or corner house sites where a feature/ bookend design can be facilitated. Each proposal will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Applications for an additional storey must ensure that all of the relevant internal residential standards are complied with as set out in this Appendix. Additional requirements such as demonstrating safe and secure access will also be required as part of any planning application.

6.0 Subdivision of Dwellings

Subdivision of a property can allow for the creation of additional residential units within the space occupied by the existing individual dwelling. The subdivision of homes can be utilised to densify the existing urban area and utilise the existing housing stock in a more effective way to cater for additional population and for the demographic changes occurring in the city.

Dublin City Council will consider the subdivision of larger homes in the city subject to compliance with the relevant standards for apartment units (see guidance on apartment developments – Chapter 15, Section 15.9). Where subdivision is being considered, factors such as minimum floor space, the extent of open space within the site boundaries, landscaping including the retention and planting of trees, the provision of on-site parking, the retention of existing railings and gates and screened refuse storage areas will be evaluated as part of the assessment.

When subdivisions are permitted, they should be compatible with the architectural character of the building. An appropriate mix of accommodation in particular areas will be determined by Dublin City Council, taking account of the mix of residential accommodation in an area.

The subdivision of the typical 2 storey, semi-detached/ terraced home in suburban areas will also be considered in certain circumstances to utilise homes in a more effective way in accordance with Objective QHSNO4 to encourage the densification of the suburbs.

Dublin City Council will encourage models by approved housing bodies. These models are an early intervention housing solution for older people leading towards retirement. The concept seeks to retrofit an existing family home into multi-occupancy unit, typically dividing the home into a ground floor and first floor unit. An additional 2nd floor may also be converted if applicable. The breakup of the unit allows for older people to remain in the family home while also providing much needed additional accommodation within the city, generating additional income and a sense of security throughout retirement age.

Dublin City Council will encourage such subdivision of residential units in certain circumstances where the proposal is carried out by an approved housing body and subject to the necessary consent.

7.0 Ancillary Family Accommodation

Ancillary family accommodation refers to a subdivision or extension of a single family dwelling unit to accommodate an immediate family member for a temporary period (e.g. elderly parent) or where an immediate relative with a disability or illness may need to live in close proximity to their family.

Generally, the purpose of ancillary family accommodation is to provide an amenable living area offering privacy, manoeuvrability and independence while maintaining a direct connection to the main dwelling. Usually, there is no exterior difference in appearance between an extension and ancillary family accommodation and is still considered a single residential unit.

Ancillary family accommodation should:

- Be contained within the existing unit or provided as an extension to the main dwelling (exempted development principles for residential extensions can apply where applicable. Where an extension is not exempt, planning permission is required)
- Preferably have a direct connection to the main home
- Not be let separately for the purpose of rental accommodation
- Not be a separate detached dwelling unit

- Be reintegrated back into the original unit when no longer occupied by a member of the family

Conditions will be attached to the permission limiting the use of the accommodation for ancillary family use only on a temporary basis.

8.0 Home Based Economic Activities

Home-based economic activity is defined as small scale commercial activity carried out by residents of a house, being subordinate to the use of the house as a single dwelling unit and including working from home.

The planning authority recognises that such working arrangements can benefit individuals, families and the local community in addition to contributing to more sustainable land use patterns by reducing the need for commuting.

In determining applications for developments involving home based economic activity, the planning authority will have regard to the following considerations:

- The nature and extent of the work
- The effects on the amenities of adjoining occupiers, particularly in relation to hours of work, noise and general disturbance
- Anticipated levels of traffic generated by the proposed development
- Arrangements for the storage of refuse and collection of waste

9.0 Demolition and Replacement Dwellings

The demolition and replacement of dwellings will be discouraged for sustainability reasons. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Dublin City Council will encourage deep retro-fit of structurally sound, habitable dwellings in good condition as opposed to demolition and replacement unless a strong justification in respect of the latter has been put forward by the applicant such as that the dwelling is uninhabitable and unsuitable for reuse or that its demolition is necessary to facilitate the comprehensive redevelopment of a site.

Demolition of an existing house in single occupancy and replacement with multiple new build units will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that a high level of amenity is provided and that there is a strong justification to alter the setting and character of the area.

See Chapter 3 - Climate Action, Chapter 15 - Development Standards, Section 15.7.1 for more details.