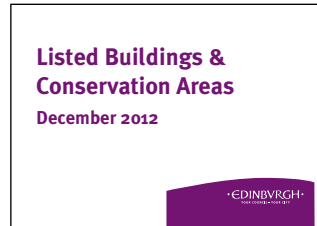
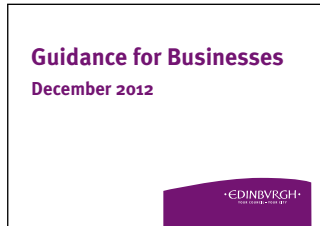


# Guidance for Householders

December 2012

• EDINBURGH •  
YOUR COUNCIL - YOUR CITY

# Guidance for Householders



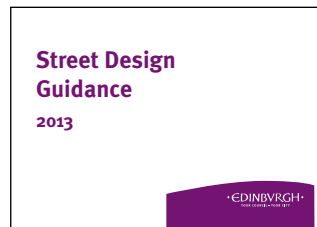
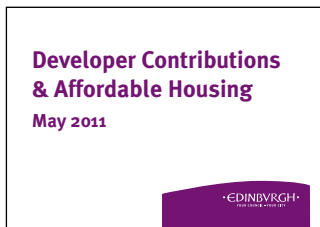
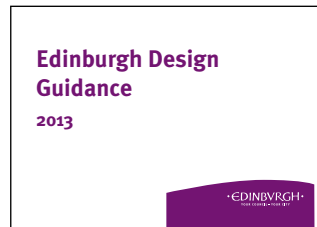
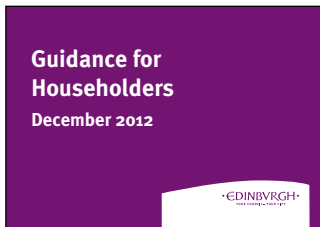
## Introduction

This document sets out guidance for people considering altering or extending their house. It does not cover new houses even if built in the gardens of existing properties – these should meet the requirements set out in *Edinburgh Design Guidance*.

All house extensions and alterations – including dormers, conservatories, decking, energy devices and replacement doors and windows - should be well designed and of high quality. In particular, they must meet three key requirements. They should

- complement the existing house, leaving it as the dominant element;
- maintain the quality and character of the surrounding area; and
- respect the amenity of adjacent neighbours.

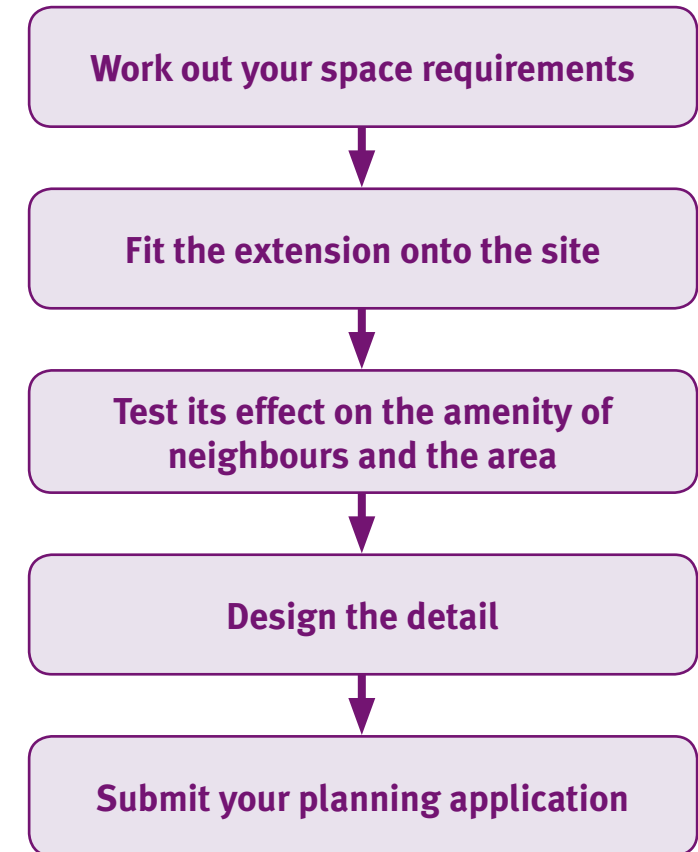
**The appointment of an architect is strongly encouraged in all cases.**



Misc: Student Housing, Radio Telecommunications, Open Space Strategy etc.

This document is part of a suite of Edinburgh Planning Guidance. Others in the series which may be relevant to your proposals include the *Listed Building*, *Business* and *Edinburgh Design guidance*.

This document follows the step-by-step sequence from your initial ideas through to obtaining consent:



	Page
<b>Policy context</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Other consents</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Step 1: Planning your extension</b>	<b>6</b>
What needs planning consent?	6
Listed buildings	6
What space do you need?	7
Working out a plan	7
Changes of use	7
<b>Step 2: Fitting it on the site</b>	<b>8</b>
Front extensions and building lines	8
Side extensions	9
Rear extensions, conservatories	9
Daylight and sunlight	9
Privacy and outlook	10
Side windows, decking and balconies	11
Gardens and trees	11
Garages and outbuildings	12

	Page
<b>Step 3: Design matters</b>	<b>13</b>
Roofs and dormers	13
Materials	14
Doors and windows	14
Boundary walls	15
Access and parking	15
Sustainability	16
Secured by design	17
Considerations checklist	17
<b>Step 4: Submitting your Application</b>	<b>18</b>
Do I need Permission?	18
Permitted Development	18
Application procedure	21

# Policy Context

This document gives guidance on the following policy in the Edinburgh City Local Plan (2010):

## **Policy Des 11** Alterations and Extensions

Planning permission will be granted for alterations and extensions to existing buildings which:

- in their design and form, choice of materials and positioning are compatible with the character of the existing building;
- will not result in an unreasonable loss of privacy or natural light to neighbouring properties;
- will not be detrimental to neighbourhood amenity and character.

Alterations and extensions to existing buildings generally raise similar design issues to those of new development. Every change to a building, a street or a space has the potential to enrich or, if poorly designed, impoverish a part of the public realm. The impact of a proposal on the appearance and character of the existing building and street scene generally must be satisfactory and there should be no unreasonable loss of amenity and privacy for immediate neighbours.

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 character.

The equivalent policy in the Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan (2006, 2011) is

## **Policy E43** Alterations and Extensions

There are also restrictions on development in the Green Belt, which could affect the principle and scale of extension which might be acceptable. Separate guidance is provided in the Countryside and Green Belt Development guideline.



# Other Consents

Other consents may be required before you start work. These can include:

**Listed Building Consent** if the property is listed as being of special architectural or historical interest – see the separate [Listed Building and Conservation Area Guidance](#) for more details.

**Conservation Area Consent** if you are demolishing an unlisted building in a conservation area – see [Listed Building and Conservation Area Guidance](#) for more details

**Planning restrictions** may have been imposed when the original consent was granted, e.g. prohibiting certain kinds of work or removing permitted development rights – check the conditions on any previous consents, including those for the original estate layout if it is relatively new.

Converted, new or altered buildings may require a **Building Warrant**, even if planning permission is not required. [Building Standards](#) can provide more information on 0131 529 7826.

A **Road Permit** will be required if forming a new access or driveway. Contact the Area Roads Manager in your [Neighbourhood Team](#) for more information

If there are any **trees** on the site or within 12 metres of the boundary, they should be identified in the application. Please refer to Edinburgh Council guidance on [Trees and Development](#) for advice. Trees with a

Tree Preservation Order or in a conservation area are also protected by law, making it a criminal offence to lop, top, cut down, uproot, wilfully damage or destroy a tree unless carried out with the consent of the Council. Contact numbers for more information are 0131 529 3919 or 3531

Some species of animals and plants are protected by law. Certain activities, such as killing, injuring or taking the species or disturbing it in its place of shelter, are unlawful as is damaging or disrupting its breeding site or resting place, even if the species is not there at the time. If the presence of a European Protected Species (such as a bat, otter or great crested newt) is suspected, a survey of the site must be undertaken. If it is identified that an activity is going to be carried out that would affect protected species, a licence may be required. More information on European Protected Species, survey work and relevant licenses is available on the [Scottish Natural Heritage website](#)

Other factors such as old mine workings (particularly in the south-eastern suburbs), restrictions where water or gas mains have wayleaves across the site; or water/drainage consents from [SEPA](#).

If you intend to rent your property you will require to [register as a Landlord](#) with the Council. Depending on numbers, you may also require an [HMO \(Houses in Multiple Occupancy\) licence](#)

Although not a planning issue, there may be **legal restrictions** on development in your title deeds - for example feu superiors' consent may be required or you may require the consent of other joint owners – and legal advice may be required.

If you think that your proposals do not need consent, or if you are not sure that previously undertaken work has proper consent, you can apply for a [Certificate of Lawfulness](#) to confirm the position in writing.

# Step 1: Planning Your Extension

Home improvements such as extensions or alterations should be carefully considered. Time spent on initial planning can save money in the long run.

It is the property owner's responsibility to ensure that all the statutory requirements are met and that all necessary permissions have been obtained. If the development doesn't comply, the owner could be asked to take – and pay for – remedial action including, in extreme cases, demolition and restoration back to what had been there before.

## Good enough in the past?

Extensions or alterations in the surrounding area that were granted permission in the past and which do not comply with these guidelines will NOT be taken as setting any form of precedent, and should not be used as examples to follow.

## What needs planning consent?

Many minor works do not require planning permission – *see pages 14-16*. But note that most properties that are listed buildings or in conservation areas will require consent – and that flatted properties in any part of the city have much more limited exemptions.

## House or Flat?

It seems obvious, but ... A flat is not only an apartment in a traditional tenement or modern block. The official definition is a “separate and self contained set of premises whether or not on the same floor and forming part of a building from some other part of which it is divided horizontally”.

So, whatever the estate agents say, “four-in-a-blocks” or “maisonettes” are also flats, not houses. So are some studios and mews. The distinction is important in deciding whether planning permission is required for extensions or alterations.

## Listed buildings

If you are fortunate enough to live in a property which is listed as being of special architectural or historical interest, then you will also require Listed Building Consent as well as planning permission. Consult the separate guidance on *Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas*.

## Listed Building or Conservation Area?

To check if your house is in a conservation area or is a listed building, use the Council's Interactive map at

[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/192/planning-listed\\_buildings\\_and\\_conservation\\_areas](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/192/planning-listed_buildings_and_conservation_areas)

## What space do you need?

The first stage is to work out what you are really looking for in terms of extra accommodation and floor space. Consider the various ways of achieving it – for instance, a rear extension compared with expanding into the roof space. An extension may not always be required - can you achieve the same result just by rearranging the existing space?

## Working out a plan

When you work up your proposals, always bear in mind the impact they might have.

What effect will the extension have on your existing house? Is it in harmony in scale and appearance? Do the doors and windows match the existing ones? If it is an attic extension, does the roof still come over as the main element rather than a dormer with a small amount of roof left around it? Is the new roof pitch the same as the existing? Are matching materials used throughout? How is the junction between old and new being handled?

What is the impact on the street? Is the appearance changed? Does the extended house still fit in, or will it stand out obtrusively?

What is the impact on neighbours? Will the extension still preserve their light, or will it overpower their garden and cut out their sunlight? Is the elevation they will see well designed? Will the new extension protect their privacy and avoid introducing new overlooking from windows, balconies or terracing?

All these things will be important to your neighbours, who have the right to make their views known to the planning authority (see panel right). The Council will consider their comments when reaching a decision.

Note that there is no automatic right to extend and, at the end of the day, if your site is too small or your proposal doesn't meet policy requirements, it may not be possible to grant permission for your proposals.

## Changes of Use

This guidance sets out the physical considerations in planning your domestic extension. However, if the alterations are to allow you to operate a business from your home, then you should consult the Council's [Guidance for Businesses](#) to see if planning permission is required for the use. Note that consent for a self-contained extension (a "granny annexe" does not give you permission for a totally independent house - it is still ancillary to the main building.

If you intend to rent out your property, you will require to [register as a Landlord](#) with the Council, and may need to consult the [Houses in Multiple Occupancy](#) guidance.

## Consulting neighbours

When a formal planning application is made, neighbours will be notified by the Council. It is usually a good idea to tell them what you are thinking of before you start, so that notification doesn't come as a surprise – especially if you might need to negotiate access with them.

The Planning Authority is obliged to take account of comments and objections received from neighbours.

If once you have permission, you need to get onto their land to build your extension, then planning permission does not grant any automatic rights – you will still need to agree terms with them.

## Step 2: Fitting it on to the site

Before getting down to the detailed design, it is important to check whether your site is big enough to take the scale of extension you want to achieve.

Any extension should still leave a reasonable proportion of private garden space - usually at least 9 metres to the rear boundary (see the section on Private Open Space in the Edinburgh Design Guidance). If the plot is small, with minimal or shared garden space, there may not be sufficient room for your extension.

The general density and scale resulting must also be in keeping with the overall spatial pattern of the area. Where there is a traditional development pattern in the area, such as villas with single storey outbuildings, this may determine the form and size of any addition.

The position and design of an extension should not prejudice the ability of neighbours to add similar or equivalent extensions.

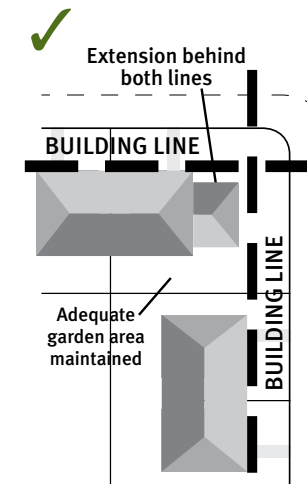
### Extension to Villas

In terms of the guidance, a 'villa' is a traditional large detached or semi-detached house built before 1914. Normally stone built, they are mainly in conservation areas or on some arterial routes. A bungalow is not a villa.

Special guidelines apply to extensions and alterations to villas:

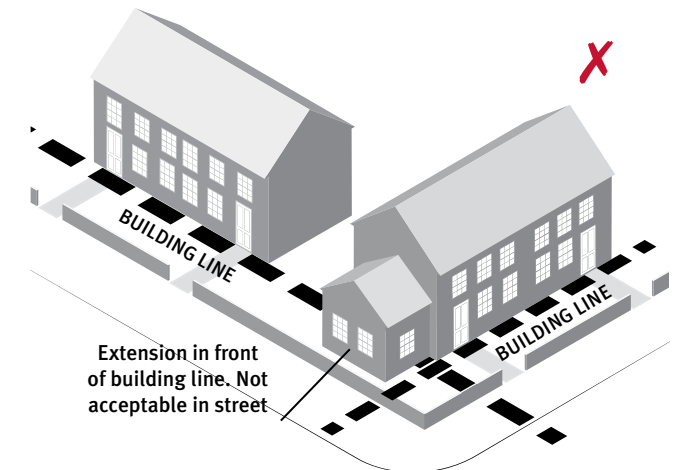
- The character of the original villa should not be adversely changed as a result of the extension
- When complete, the whole building, including the original villa and the extension should still be in character with the scale and spacing of the surrounding properties and rhythm of the street
- The design approach – including form, scale, style, proportions including windows, storey heights and materials – should relate to the original building and be subservient to it
- Total site coverage of the new and existing building should not exceed 1.5 times the original villa, subject to:
  - Maximum site coverage of all buildings, garages, parking and access driveways should not exceed 40% of the site area, and
  - Distances from the main facades to the boundaries being at least 12.5m
- If the villa is listed, if there are protected trees or if it is in a corner site, you should discuss your proposals with a planning officer.

### Front extensions and building lines



#### What is a building line? -

It is the line formed by the frontages of the buildings along a street. Sometimes it is defined in the title deeds. Generally developments other than porches etc are not acceptable in front of the building line as they disrupt the character and appearance of the street.





Extensions that project beyond the front building line are not generally allowed unless this fits in with the local character of the street.

Corner plots can present a particular problem where the majority of the house's garden space is in front of the building lines.

Where they contribute to the character of the area, their openness will be protected by resisting any significant intrusion into the corner ground.

Modest porches may be acceptable where they do not detract from the design of the original building or the character of the street.

## Side Extensions

In achieving an extension that will fit in 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.

Where a side extension could visually connect separate houses so that they appear like a continuous terrace, planning permission will only be permitted if that is characteristic of the area.

## Rear extensions

Rear extensions should not occupy more than one third of the applicant's original rear garden area.

For flats, including 4 in a block and maisonettes, the opportunity for extending, if any, will be limited.

## Conservatories

Consent will not normally be granted for a conservatory on a principal, or other conspicuous, elevation. Exceptions may be justified for appropriately designed conservatories where this is part of the traditional character of the area.

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.

Proposals for a new conservatory on a *listed building* should ensure that the original stonework inside a conservatory remains unpainted, and that the colour of the conservatory respects the character of the area.

## Daylight and sunlight

Daylight and sunlight are important to health and well being. Lack of daylight contributes to depression (SAD), and sunlight helps synthesise Vitamin D which is important for bone health.

Adequate daylight can also reduce the energy requirements of development through lessening the need for electric lighting.

All extensions and alterations will be required to ensure adequate daylighting, privacy and sunlight both for themselves and to their neighbours.

Calculating daylight and sunlight is complex, but there are some simple "rules of thumb" which can be used to check whether a proposed development is likely to conform. These are set out here.

All new development should ensure that:

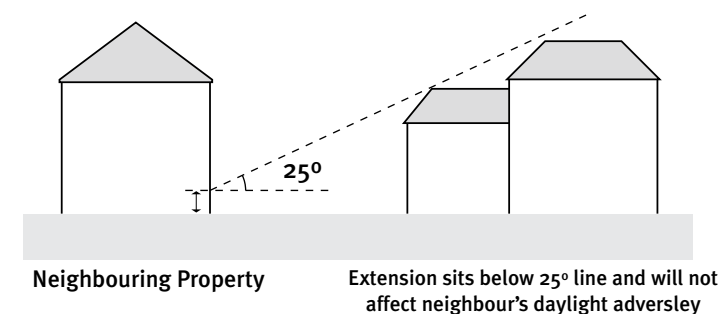
- the amenity of neighbouring development will not be adversely affected by impact on privacy, daylight, sunlight or immediate outlook from main (i.e. front and rear) windows; and,
- occupiers will have adequate daylight, sunlight, privacy and immediate outlook

If the proposal does not meet these criteria, and there are good townscape reasons for looking at other solutions (for instance, the character of an historic area), then more detailed calculations will be required. Guidance can be found in the *Building Research Establishment* guide Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight - A Guide to Good Practice.

## Daylight to existing buildings

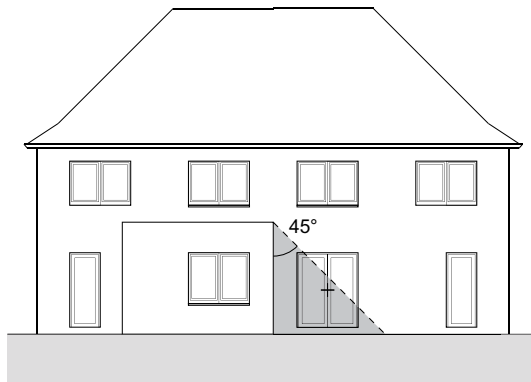
Reasonable levels of daylight to existing buildings will be maintained where the measure of daylight falling on the wall (the Vertical Sky Component - VSC), does not fall below 27%. This standard can be achieved where new development is kept below a 25° line from the mid point of an existing window.

Daylighting to side or gable windows is not protected (see Side Windows, page 7)

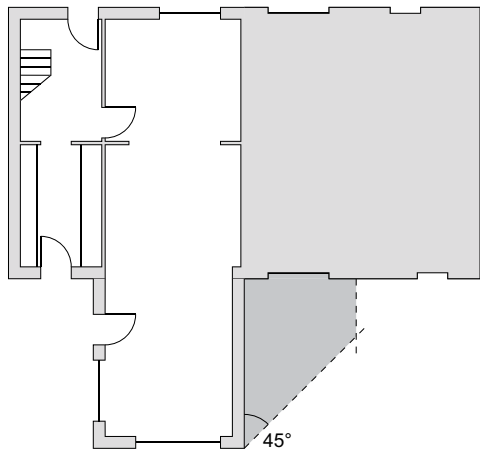


## Step 2: Fitting it on to the site

For rear extensions on terraced or semi-detached houses, adequate daylight will be maintained to the neighbouring property if 45 degree lines drawn from both the plan and section of the new extension do not enclose the centre of the neighbour's window.



Not acceptable because the centre of the window is within the 45° lines



## Sunlight to existing development

How the affected area of a garden is used and its overall size, will be taken into account when determining whether any loss of sunlight from a new extension or outbuilding is acceptable.

Generally, half the area of garden space should be capable of receiving potential sunlight during the spring equinox for more than 3 hours.

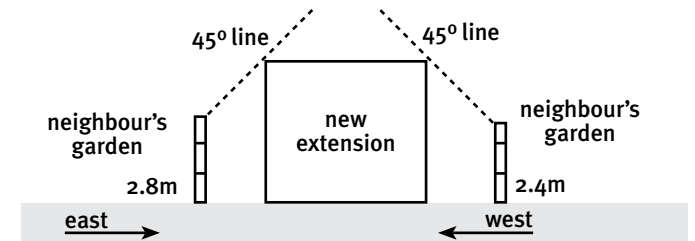
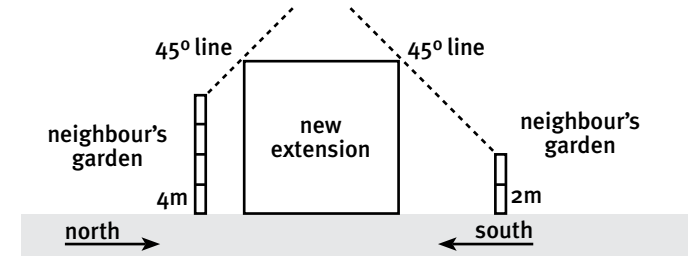
The sunlight of spaces between gables will not be protected unless the affected space is of particular amenity value in comparison with the remainder of the garden. Such a space might be a patio which was designed as an integral part of the plan-form of the original house.

There are various methods of calculating sunlight, but a simple check is to use the 45 degree method below:

Where development is located to the south or south west of a garden, if it rises above a 45° line to the horizontal which is set 2m from the ground level, the sunlight to the garden may be adversely affected.

Where development is located in other orientations in relation to a neighbouring garden, the 45° line should be set at a distance from the ground level as follows:

N 4m	NE 3.5m
E 2.8m	SE 2.3m
S 2m	SW 2m
W 2.4m	NW 3.3m



## Protecting sunlight to neighbour's property

In more complex cases, or where the development fails this test, other methods may be required – for instance, a measurable hour by hour sun path analysis showing how sunlight moves through the affected space for both before and after situations.

## Privacy and outlook

People value privacy within their homes but they also value outlook - the ability to look outside, whether to gardens, streets or beyond. To achieve both, windows either have to be spaced sufficiently far apart so that it is difficult to see into a neighbouring property or windows have to be angled away from one another.

18m is the minimum recommended distance between windows, usually equally spread so that each property's windows are 9 metres (10 metres for a dormer) from the common boundary.

A frequent objection to a development is loss of a particular view from the neighbour's house. Whilst this may be unfortunate, there is no right to a view across someone else's property simply because they had not chosen to develop it in the past.

## Side Windows

Windows will only be protected for privacy and light if they themselves accord with policies in terms of distance to the boundary. Windows on side walls or gables - as often found on bungalows, for instance - will not normally be protected as they are not set back sufficiently from the boundary to be "good neighbours" themselves, taking only their fair share of light.

Ground floor windows can sometimes be closer than 9 metres to a boundary if they can be screened in some way, e.g. by a fence or hedge. However, the barrier must not exceed the normal height of a fence or wall. The permission would be conditioned to ensure that the screening remains in place permanently.

## Decking and Balconies

Balconies and decking which are close to boundaries and overlook neighbouring properties can be a major source of noise and privacy intrusion.

Generally, decking should be at, or close to, ground level (taking account of any level changes in the garden ground), of simple design (including barriers and steps), and should not detract from the appearance of the house.

For this reason, opportunities for decking may be limited on listed buildings.

In some instances privacy issues from balconies or decking can be overcome by screening, for instance with frosted glazing, or by inseting the balcony or deck into the building or roof. However, any screening would still have to permit adequate light to neighbouring properties.

## Gardens

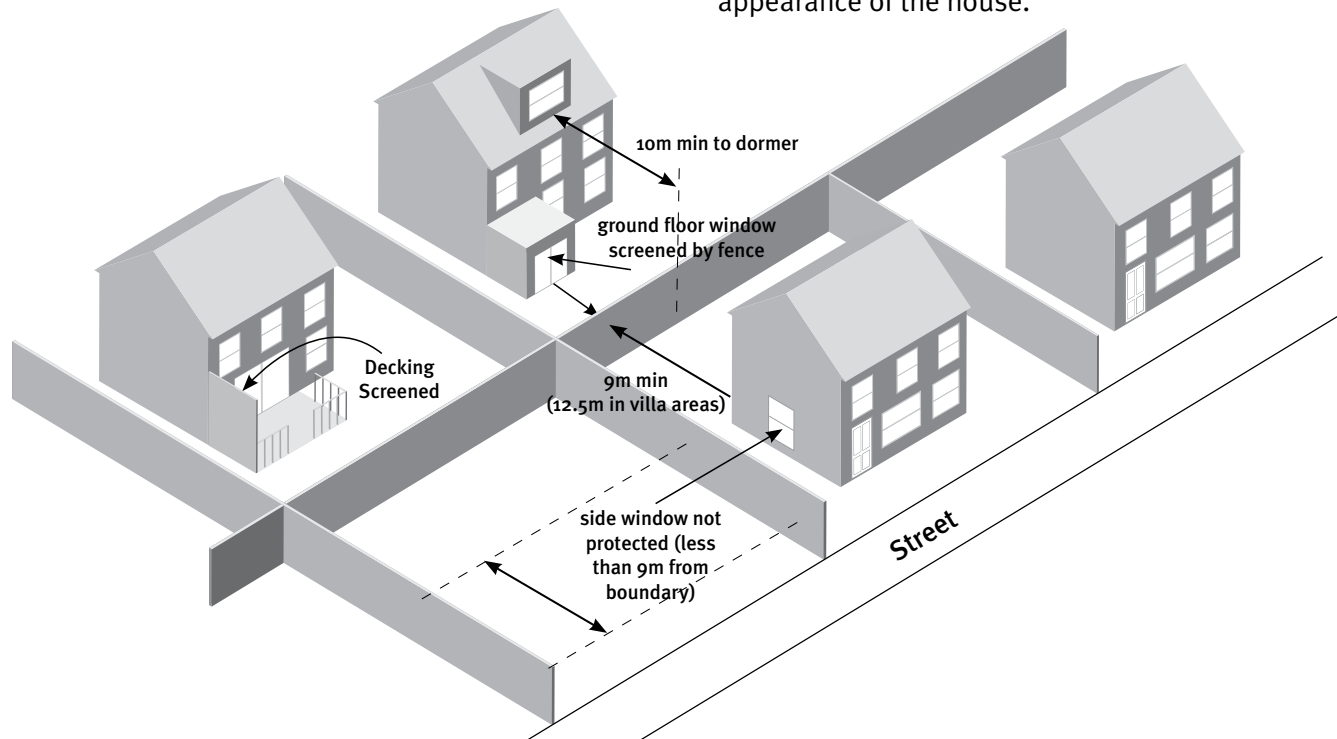
There should be enough private garden space left after extensions – normally at least 9 metres depth, or 30 sq.metres. This may have to be more – e.g. at least 12.5 metres depth in villa areas - depending on the spatial pattern of neighbourhood to avoid over-development.

## Trees

The retention of trees and landscape can soften the impact of a new building and help it to blend in. Mature landscape should therefore be retained where possible.

If a tree would overhang the proposed development or is closer to it than a distance equal to half the tree height, it must be shown on the application plans.

The tree species and the position of the trunk and extent of branch spread must be accurately indicated. The case officer will then assess if more detailed information, such as a tree survey of the site, is required.



## Garages and outbuildings

Buildings within the residential curtilage – such as garages, sheds or greenhouses – should be subordinate in scale and floor area to the main house. In many cases, they will be “permitted development” if:

- they are not in front of the principal or side elevation which faces a road;
- they are not more than 3m high at the eaves and 4m overall;
- no part of them within 1m of the boundary is more than 2.5m high;
- they do not take the total coverage of development (extensions, sheds etc, but excluding the original house and any hard surface or deck) to more than 50% of the front or rear curtilage area;
- in a conservation area or within the curtilage of a listed building, they would not have a footprint exceeding 4sq.m.

If they don't fit these criteria, or if they are within the curtilage of a flatted property, planning permission will be required. Proposals will be assessed for their impact on the amenity of the area and on neighbouring property (eg loss of daylight) in the same way as extensions. Some points to note when planning your development:

- the use must be ancillary to the “enjoyment of the dwelling house”; for instance, gardening, maintenance or hobbies, and not for a commercial business (see our Guidance for Businesses for advice in these cases);
- in flatted properties, the way that the garden ground is allocated and the position of neighbouring windows may restrain the size or position of any outbuildings;
- buildings in front gardens will not usually be acceptable, because of the damaging impact on the appearance and amenity of the street and the surrounding area;
- there may be additional considerations for listed buildings and conservation areas.

Sheds for cycle storage are subject to the same principles as sheds for any other purpose. The Council has worked with Spokes to produce guidance on the storage of bikes for tenement and flat dwellers. A Spokes factsheet sets out useful practical advice.

### Links:

[business guidance](#)

[flatted properties](#)

[listed buildings](#)

[spokes factsheet](#)

## Step 3: Design Matters

Extensions and alterations should be architecturally compatible in design, scale and materials with the original house and its surrounding area. This does not preclude high quality innovative modern designs.

Extensions should not overwhelm or dominate the original form or appearance of the house, or detract from the character of the area.

A well-designed and attractive extension will enhance the appearance – and value – of your property and of the neighbourhood.



Extension subservient to original home in scale and size and compatible with original house in materials and form

### Roof Design

In general the pitch and form of an extension roof should match that of the existing roof.

Flat roofs may be appropriate on modest, single storey extensions where not visible in public views. Side extension roofs should normally be pitched to match the house.

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.

New eaves heights should either match or be lower than existing eaves, to avoid extensions being greater in storey height than the original building.

Development above the existing roof ridge will not be permitted.

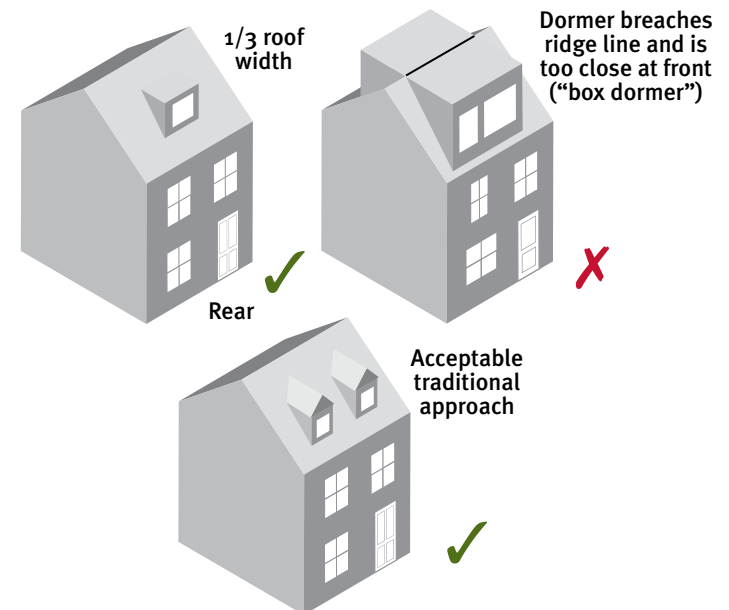
Chimneys form an important feature of many roofs, often marking the subdivision of terraces or adding height to bungalows. Even if disused, they should normally be retained. New false ones can act as ventilation flues from kitchens or bathrooms.

### Dormers

Dormers should be of such a size that they do not dominate the form of the roof. Side dormers and large single box-like dormers tend to look intrusive and clumsy, upsetting the appearance of the house. They should normally be avoided.

Dormers should not come to the edges of the roof. There should be visible expanses of roof on all 4 sides.

A single dormer should be no greater in width than one third of the average roof length.





Dormers on principal elevations, and all dormers in conservation areas or on a listed building, will require consent. New dormers on a listed building are not normally acceptable unless they are to the original or an early historic design.

If there are two or more dormers, their combined width should be less than 50% of the average length of the single roof pitch on which they are located.

The relationship between a dormer and its surrounding roof is particularly important.

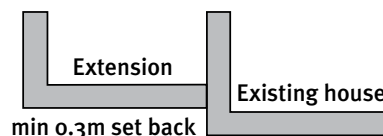
Dormers should normally be a minimum of 500mm clear of the ridge, hip and eaves and a minimum of 1 metre from the gable. If this cannot be achieved, rooflights may be an alternative solution.

## Materials

The materials used to construct a building are one of the most important elements in helping a new extension to sit harmoniously with the original building. Materials characteristic of the neighbourhood and of Edinburgh can provide a sense of quality and identity. Cheap or inappropriate materials can detract from the neighbourhood and the value of the house.

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 of the same type and colour should be used for the extension.

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.



If it is impossible to get an exact match for the existing material, it is better to set the extension slightly back so that there is a visible break between the old and new.

The use of sustainable long-lasting materials, locally sourced wherever possible, and with the potential for later recycling will be encouraged.

The use of materials that are reclaimed or recycled will be encouraged.

uPVC is not a traditional or sustainable material, and its use will not normally be acceptable in listed buildings and conservation areas.

## Doors and windows

Doors and windows should be sensitively replaced, in keeping with the character of the original building, the quality of its design and in an environmental sustainable way. The character of the area should be protected and enhanced.

Replacement windows, and new windows on an extension, should be of the same size and style as the existing ones, keeping the same proportions.

Repairs to match the original do not require planning permission or listed building consent. However, where a building is listed, consent may be required for:

- Double glazing;
- Secondary glazing;
- The removal or replacement of windows and doors;
- Alterations to windows such as the changes to astragals, and alterations to doors.

Window and door alterations to listed buildings may require planning permission as well as listed building consent, if they are considered to be 'development', eg if the new window or door is materially different and changes the character of the building.

Window replacement on unlisted buildings in conservation areas may also require planning permission, as may alterations such as converting a window to French windows.

Door alterations to unlisted buildings in conservation areas may require planning permission.

Permission will not normally be required in the following cases:

- The replacement of doors and windows on a like-for-like basis.
- In properties which are not in a conservation area.

If you want formal confirmation that your replacement doors and windows are lawful, you can apply for a *Certificate of Lawfulness*.

## Boundary walls

Walls and fences to the street frontage should harmonise with street and the house. They should not be so high as to be intimidating or reduce security overlooking from the houses.

Front walls and fences should not be more than 1 metre in height unless there is a prevailing size already established in the neighbourhood. They will not be acceptable at all in estates designed as open-plan front gardens.

## Access and parking

Forming an access for a parking space or garage will require permission where it is taken from a classified road or trunk road. In all cases, a permit will be required for works required to form a new access.

In flats, within conservation areas and within the curtilage of a listed building permission is also required to form a hard surface – a driveway or a parking space. For other properties, see the section on forming a hard-paved area in Permitted Development Rights.

Demolition or alteration of walls will need consent in conservation areas or for listed buildings. A building warrant is also needed where the hard paved area is more than 200 square metres.

Parking in front gardens will not normally be allowed

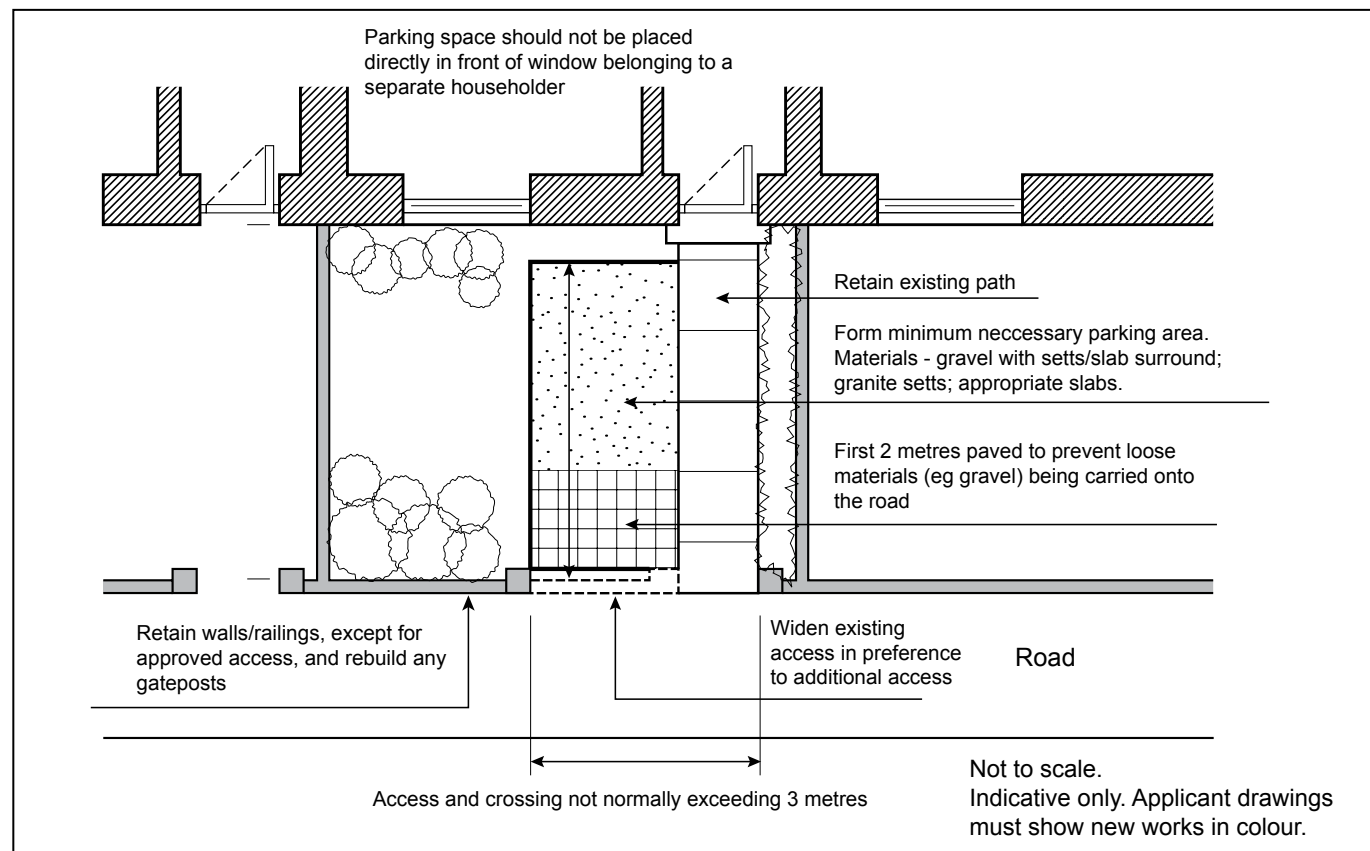
- within traditional tenements;
- in listed buildings, where loss of original walls or railings and the creation of a hard surface would have an adverse effect on the character and setting of the building and its special architectural or historic interest;

- where the parking space would be formed in front of the windows of a habitable room owned by a different occupier.

For road safety reasons, an access must not be formed

- within 15 metres of a junction;
- where visibility would be obstructed;
- where it would interfere with pedestrian crossings, bus stops, street lighting or existing street furniture.

Only one access will be permitted per property.



A parking space will normally be allowed if the front garden is at least 6 metres deep, with a maximum area of 21 square metres or 25% of the front garden, whichever is the greater. The design should be such as to prevent additional parking on the remainder of the garden area, eg by using kerbs, planting boxes or changes of level. The access should not be wider than 3 metres.

Materials must be of high quality and appropriate for the house and the area. The paving must be porous or combined with a soakaway within the site; the first 2 metres from the road should be paved to avoid loose chippings spilling out. Gates should be of appropriate design and open inwards, to avoid obstructing the pavement.

Garages or car-ports must have at least a 6 metre driveway in front to allow vehicles to draw in completely off-street.

Where the provision of parking was part of the original grant of consent, the number of parking spaces should be maintained. Loss of a parking space (eg by the conversion of a garage) may, in a controlled parking area, affect the householder's right to obtain a parking permit.

## Sustainability

The Council encourages energy conservation, including microgeneration where appropriate. However, some devices are not always suitable on older listed properties or in conservation areas.

However, the re-use and adaptation of old buildings, which have long paid back their carbon footprint, is in itself sustainable.

Adaptable buildings, which allow for change or rearrangement in the future, are also sustainable, as they have a longer lifespan than those designed so tightly that they cannot be altered to meet future needs.

Other ways to make your extension more sustainable are to use environmentally-friendly and re-cycled materials.

Extensions must comply with Building Standards, which place a strong emphasis on energy-conservation measures such as insulation and appropriate materials. This passive energy approach is often more cost and energy-efficient than renewable technology.

## Solar Panels

The provision of solar panels can contribute to sustainability. However, on listed buildings and/or 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 should be designed and laid out as part of an overall architectural treatment.

## Wood-burning stoves

Wood burning stoves and biomass boilers are similar appliances, both burn organic materials to create space heating. In addition, larger biomass central heating systems are available which can also heat water. The main difference between the two appliance types is that wood burning stoves burn wood, or wood pellets; and biomass stoves burn a variety of energy crops, including wood.

Provided that the wood burning stove or biomass boiler is located inside the dwelling house, the stoves themselves do not require planning permission. However, permission may be required for the flue and any storage facility required for the fuel. Where the building is listed, listed building consent may also be required if the storage is attached to the listed building. A building warrant will be required to cover installation, the flue and fuel storage.

This advice covers domestic stoves and boilers up to 45kW (heat) output. The Council's Environmental Assessment team can advise on acceptable types of stoves to achieve the required air quality standards.

## Other services on buildings

Some new buildings, whether extensions or new-build houses or flats, spoil their exterior finishes with construction joints, outlets for flues and fans, weep holes, grilles, etc that were not taken into account at the time of design. These should be considered and planned in to minimise their impact.

## Satellite Dish Aerials

Where they fall within planning control, e.g. in conservation areas, dishes will not normally be acceptable on the front or street elevation of any building.

However, they may be acceptable in the following situations:

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

## Secured by design

The design and layout of your extension should not affect the security of your home or those of your neighbours. Blank walls, hidden corners and secluded passageways provide cover for intruders to work at gaining access.

Many break-ins take place at the rear of the house, taking advantage of the privacy of the rear garden. Ways of making your property more secure include:

- Making access to the rear difficult, using alarms and sensors;
- ensuring flat roofs do not provide access to upper windows;
- deterrent prickly planting under windows; and
- strong locks and fastenings.

You can get advice from the Architectural Liaison Officer at your local police station. It is much easier and cheaper to build in security features while you are constructing your extension, than trying to add them afterwards.

## Considerations Checklist

Before you submit your completed design to the Council for all the necessary permissions, which might include:

- Planning Permission
  - Listed Building Consent
  - Conservation Area Consent
  - Building Warrant
  - Roads Consent
  - Licensing (landlord/HMO etc.)
- (see page 2 for details of these and other consents)

... look at the list of considerations in the panel right.

These are some of the basic questions which the Council will ask in assessing your proposal; have you covered all of them?

Is the site big enough to take an extension?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the layout and scale fit with the general pattern of development within the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the design of a high enough standard for the house and area?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the extension subservient to the main house?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does it avoid any overlooking which would result in a loss of privacy for the neighbours?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does it avoid overshadowing the neighbouring properties and significantly reducing their daylight?	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a side extension, does it avoid a terracing effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does it leave enough garden space for a house of the final size?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does it avoid loss of significant trees or landscaping?	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is its impact on access, parking and road safety?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the details and proportions of doors and windows appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Step 4: Submitting your Application

## Do I need Permission?

Not all extensions or alterations require planning permission. Many small alterations and extensions can be carried out without the need for planning permission – this is known as Permitted Development (PD) and some alterations may not even be ‘development’ at all.

However, there are some limitations, particularly for:

**Flats** (see definition on page 3)

**Houses in Conservation Areas**

**Listed Buildings**

There are restricted permitted development rights for flats, houses in a conservation area or to a listed building, which are identified in the following pages.

Planning permission will always be required for extensions, dormers and conservatories to flatted properties and to any house in a conservation area.

New dormers on principal frontages always require planning permission, as do balconies and roof terraces.

Listed building consent is always required for an extension, dormers, rooflights or conservatory to a listed building. An application for planning permission may also be needed.

Even if planning permission is not required, other

consents such as a building warrant may still be necessary.

The main provisions of the Permitted Development rights are set out on the following pages. However, this is just a summary and, particularly if you are considering unusual proposals or have an awkward site, you should check the Scottish Government Circular (see panel below).

## Whose responsibility?

It is the householder’s responsibility to make sure that all alterations they make without permission do in fact fall within the exemptions of the Permitted Development scheme. If not, you could be asked to alter or even demolish new work and put back the original.

The Scottish Government circular *Guidance on Householder Permitted Development rights*, available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/02/9140/downloads>, sets out what is included, with examples.

If you want to be sure whether or not works are permitted, you can apply for a *Certificate of Lawfulness*, both for proposed works or those already carried out. This certificate is particularly useful if you are selling your house or to avoid legal disputes. Details are given on [page 18](#).

## Permitted Development: the main exemptions

If your proposals exceed the constraints set out here, they may still be acceptable if they accord with the Council policies and do not adversely affect amenity, but they will require permission.

**Enlargement** is any development that increases the internal volume of the original house. It includes a canopy or roof, with or without walls, which is attached to the house, but does not include a balcony. Therefore, a car port is an enlargement but a balcony is not.

The most common types of enlargements covered by Permitted Development are:

## Houses

A house can be a detached, a bungalow, semi-detached, or terraced dwelling sitting on its own ground. However, if there is any other occupant or use above or below, it is a flat – see definition on page 3. Flats do not have as wide a range of permitted development as houses.

These guidelines apply to houses only. See the separate section on flats on page 17.



## Single storey extensions

A single storey extension in the rear garden is acceptable if the height of the eaves is not more than 3 metres and the overall height is not more than 4 metres above the existing ground level measured at lowest part of the adjacent ground surface.

If any part of the extension is within a metre of a boundary it cannot extend back from the original rear wall of the house more than 3 metres for a terraced house, or 4 metres in other cases.

The area covered by any existing and proposed extension cannot be greater than the area of the original house footprint or 50% of the area of the rear “curtilage” (ie the part of the garden behind the front elevation of the original house).

## Extensions of more than one storey

Typically, these are either 1½ storey (ie single storey with converted roof space) or 2 storey extensions.

The extension must be at least 10 metres from any boundary. The majority of extensions will not be able to meet this criterion, therefore an application for planning permission would be required.

## Porches

Porches are allowed on any external door of the house providing they are not higher than 3 metres, and the overall footprint of the porch is not more than 3 square metres.

The minimum distance between the porch and any boundary with a road must be more than 2 metres.

## Enlargements of the roof

Permitted development rights allow the enlargement of a house by an addition or alteration to its roof, e.g. by a dormer.

However, dormers are not permitted on the principal elevation (usually the front), or on a side elevation if it fronts a road;

- the distance from the face of the dormer to the boundary must be at least 10 metres;
- the height of the dormer must not be higher than the existing house;
- the dormer, or dormers, must cover less than half the roof, measured at eaves level; and
- the distance between the dormer and the edges of the roof (including any common boundary with another attached property) must be at least 0.3 metres.

## Access ramps

Small ramps to any external door are allowed so long as the ramp is not higher than 0.4 metres or longer than 5 metres. The overall length of the ramp and landings cannot be more than 9 metres. The combined height of the ramp and any handrail cannot exceed 1.5 metres.

## Improvements or alterations that are not enlargements

These include: replacement windows and doors, satellite dishes, cladding, painting and new flues; and photo-voltaic or solar thermal equipment, etc.

This class is best visualised as a 1 metre “bubble” surrounding the walls and roof of the house. A householder can add a wide range of different types of development within this “bubble” without having to apply for planning permission.

Balconies, roof terraces or raised platforms are specifically excluded from this class.

## Microgeneration equipment

Permitted development rights for wind turbines and air, ground and water source heat pumps as well as flues for biomass heating and combined heat and power systems are covered in other classes of PD.

## Ancillary buildings such as sheds, garages, sun-houses, and greenhouses

PD rights allow buildings “incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse” within the rear garden. The height of the eaves (gutter) of any building, including sheds and greenhouses, can not be higher than 3 metres and no part of the building can be higher than 4 metres.

Any part of the building within a metre of a boundary cannot be higher than 2.5 metres.

The total area covered by proposed and existing development must be less than half the relevant curtilage.

In conservation areas or for a listed building, the footprint of the ancillary building cannot exceed 4 square metres.

## Other building, engineering, installation or other operations

Typical development permitted by this class within the rear curtilage of a house would be free standing solar panels, flag poles, swimming pools and oil tanks.

The resulting height cannot be more than 3 metres, and the total area covered by proposed and existing development must be less than half the curtilage.

## Hard surfaces

A new or replacement hard surface located between the house and a road must either be porous; or rain water run-off must be dealt within the curtilage of the house, e.g. with a soakaway.

## Decking

The floor level of the deck or other raised platform must not exceed 0.5 metres, and the combined height of the deck and any balustrade or screen attached to it must not exceed 2.5 metres.

In conservation areas or the curtilage of a listed building its maximum size is 4 square metres.

## Gates, fences, walls or other means of enclosure

The overall height must not be more 2 metres; but if it fronts a road or is in front of the principal or side elevation nearest a road, it cannot exceed 1 metre.

## Flats

See the definition of a flat on [page 3](#)

Improvements or alterations that are not enlargements, such as replacement windows and doors, photovoltaic or solar panels, flues or satellite dishes, may be allowed under Permitted Development rights.

The exemption is best visualised as a 1 metre “bubble” surrounding the flat. A wide range of different types of development is permitted within this “bubble” without having to apply for planning permission providing that:

- the development does not enlarge the flat;
- the development does not project more than 1 metre from the walls or roof of the flat;
- the development is not a balcony, roof terrace or raised platform or a wind turbine.

Installing a flue forming part of biomass heating system, a flue forming part of combined heat and power system, an air source heat pump or CCTV is not permitted by this class because it is subject to restrictions identified in by other classes of PD.

Other classes relevant to flats include:-

construction of gate, fences, walls and other means of enclosure;

Closed Circuit Television Cameras (CCTV).

## Further information

This is just a brief summary of the more common aspects of the Permitted Development scheme.

For more information see the circular at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/02/9140/download>

## Making an application where permission is required

### How to apply for planning permission

#### Apply online

Applications can be submitted online using the Planning and Building Standards online service. Before you submit your application online, you'll need to register with the *e-Planning service*. This is free and only takes a couple of minutes.

Once registered you can log in and begin making your application. A guide to submitting an application online is available to help you go through the process.

#### Apply by post

If you prefer paper forms then these can be downloaded from the Scottish Government website.

#### Data protection

When you submit a planning application, the information will appear on the Planning Register and will also be published on our weekly list of planning applications. This is all done in accordance with data protection law.

## Preparing and Submitting your Planning Application

#### Forms

Two sets of the planning application form are required. The same number of land ownership certificates must also be submitted. Guidance on their completion is provided with the forms.

The Council will notify all those with an interest in

neighbouring land within 20 metres of the application site that you have submitted a valid planning application. They have 21 days from the date of the Council's notice to make formal representations. Note that anyone can send in comments, not just the notified neighbours.

#### Application Fee

The fee list explains what, if any, fee you must pay when submitting your application. Cheques should be made payable to the City of Edinburgh Council.

#### Requirement for Plans and Drawings

All applications should be accompanied by a location plan, to scale and showing the application site in red and any other land owned by the applicant in blue. Almost all will also require a site plan.

Other plans and drawings will depend on the scale, nature and location of the proposal. For minor householder applications, such as a garden fence or a satellite dish, brochure details may be acceptable, but their precise location should be shown on a scaled drawing.

All new work should be coloured and the plans should be annotated with the proposed materials and dimensions, and details such as the design and location of bin stores and recycling facilities.

For listed building consent, where new openings/ changes are proposed, details of internal elevations and sections are required. With larger applications, a photographic survey will need to be submitted.

The minimum detailed information on the plans must be as follows:

#### Location plan

This must identify the land to which the proposal relates and its situation in relation to the locality - in particular in relation to neighbouring land (land within 20 metres of the boundary of the land to be developed) for notification. Location plans should be a scale of at least 1:2500 and should indicate a north point.

#### Site Plan

This should be of a scale of at least 1:500 and should show:

- a. the direction of North;
- b. any access arrangements, landscaping, car parking and open areas around buildings;
- c. the proposed development in relation to the site boundaries and other existing buildings on the site, with written dimensions including those to the boundaries;
- d. where possible, all the buildings, roads and footpaths on land adjoining the site including access arrangements;
- e. the extent and type of any hard surfacing;
- f. boundary treatment including walls or fencing where this is proposed.

#### Site Surveys

Including existing site levels, will be required for all new build proposals.

## Existing and proposed elevations

(at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100) which should:

- a. show the proposed works in relation to what is already there;
- b. show all sides of the proposal;
- c. indicate, where possible, the proposed building materials and the style, materials and finish of windows and doors;
- d. include blank elevations (if only to show that this is in fact the case);
- e. where a proposed elevation adjoins another building or is in close proximity or is part of a larger building (eg flats), the drawings should clearly show the relationship between the buildings, and detail the positions of the openings on each property.

## Existing and proposed floor plans

(at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100) which should:

- a. explain the proposal in detail;
- b. show where existing buildings or walls are to be demolished;
- c. show details of the existing building(s) as well as those for the proposed development;
- d. show new buildings in context with adjacent buildings (including property numbers where applicable).

## Existing and proposed site sections and finished floor and site levels

(at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100) which should:

- a. show a cross section(s) through the proposed building(s);
- b. where a proposal involves a change in ground levels, show both existing and finished levels to include details of foundations and eaves and how encroachment onto adjoining land is to be avoided;
- c. include full information to demonstrate how proposed buildings relate to existing site levels and neighbouring development;
- d. show existing site levels and finished floor levels (with levels related to a fixed datum point off site), and also show the proposals in relation to adjoining buildings (unless, in the case of development of an existing house, the levels are evident from floor plans and elevations).

## Roof plans

(at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100) to show the shape of the roof and specifying details such as the roofing material, vents and their grilles /outlets.

## I don't need permission but ...

you want to be sure that you have correctly interpreted the permitted development rules, or that alterations carried out in the past are legitimate?

To cover these situations, you can apply for a *Certificate of Lawfulness*.

## Apply on line

Applications for Certificates of Lawfulness can be made online through the Planning and Building Standards on-line services at [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planning](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planning).

Alternatively you can download the forms from the website. There is a fee for the certificate. The scale of fees can also be found on the website.

Although you do not have to apply for this certificate, there are benefits in doing so. It has legal status, giving certainty to prospective buyers, and immunity from future enforcement action.

Certificates of Lawful Development are particularly useful when selling properties in the housing market, where the buyer may want proof that the works are lawful and planning permission was not required.

The onus is on you to provide supporting information as to why you think that the works are lawful under the Planning acts. When a certificate is being sought for building works - e.g. an extension to a house - drawings will be required to ascertain that the proposal is actually permitted development. *Guidance* is available on the Council's web-site.

It may become apparent during the processing of the application for the certificate of lawfulness that this is not the case and planning permission will be required. In these cases, the certificate will be refused. You have a right of appeal against this decision.

# Want to give us your feedback?

We would like to know what you think of this Guidance for Householders document?  
Your feedback will help us make it clearer and more useful when we review it.  
Please tear off and post this feedback survey using the freepost address.

## 1 What did you use this document to do?

- Prepare an application submission    Decide what to do with a property    Comment on an application    Other (please use box to specify)

Please give any further details (if appropriate):

## 2 How easy to understand was this document?

- Very easy    Fairly easy    Fairly difficult    Very difficult    Don't know

Please give details:

## 3 How did you access this document?

- Paper copy    Online copy    Both paper and online

## 4 Which of these best describes you? (Please only choose one option)

- Member of the public    Community Group    Planning consultant / Architect    Developer

If posting, use this address to avoid the need for a stamp:

Development Planning  
FREEPOST RSJS – UBAT – GHYL  
Mailpoint G3  
City of Edinburgh Council, Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street,  
Edinburgh, EH8 8BG





**HAPPY TO TRANSLATE**

ترجمہ کے لئے حاضر آماندہر سچے انুবاد کررر

بسمدنا توفیر الترجمة MOŻEMY PRZETŁUMACZYĆ 很樂意翻譯

**You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats if you ask us. Please contact ITS on 0131 242 8181 and quote reference number 12-0931. ITS can also give information on community language translations. You can get more copies of this document by calling 0131 529 7635 or 529 7627.**