



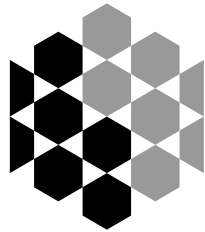
# Planning and Environmental Policy Group

## Addendum to Planning Policy Statement 7

### Residential Extensions and Alterations

March 2008





Department of the  
**Environment**

[www.doeni.gov.uk](http://www.doeni.gov.uk)

## **Addendum to Planning Policy Statement 7: Residential Extensions and Alterations**

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) set out the policies of the Department of the Environment on particular aspects of land-use planning and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. Their contents will be taken into account in preparing development plans and are also material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

This Addendum to PPS 7 sets out the Department's planning policy for achieving quality in relation to proposals for residential extensions and alterations. It also provides guidance which is intended to provide advice to homeowners and to assist the Department in the determination of proposals. The Addendum embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development and the Quality Initiative.

Planning and Environmental Policy Group  
River House  
48 High Street  
BELFAST  
BT1 2AW

March 2008

## **Contents**

<b>Preamble</b>		3
1.0	Introduction	5
2.0	Planning Policy	6
	Policy EXT 1 Residential Extensions and Alterations	7
<b>Annexes</b>		
Annex A:	Guidance for Residential Extensions and Alterations	10
Annex B:	Applications for Permitted Development and Planning Permission	21
Annex C:	Planning Service Offices	23

## **Preamble**

The Department of the Environment is responsible for planning control in Northern Ireland. The Planning Service, an Agency within the Department, administers its development control and development plan functions.

The Department has a statutory duty, laid down in Article 3 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, to formulate and co-ordinate policy for securing the orderly and consistent development of land and the planning of that development. The Department is required to ensure that such policy is in general conformity with the Regional Development Strategy.

The Department's planning policies are normally issued through Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and PPS 1 'General Principles' advises that:

*"Planning Policy Statements set out the policies of the Department on particular aspects of land-use planning and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. Their contents will be taken into account in preparing development plans and are also material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals."*

**This document is an Addendum to PPS 7 'Quality Residential Environments' and must be read in conjunction with the policies contained within that PPS. The Addendum provides an additional planning policy for the extension and/or alteration of a dwellinghouse or flat, including those in multiple occupancy. It embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development and the Quality Initiative. However, it should be noted that unlike the other policies of PPS 7, the policy contained in this Addendum will apply to all dwellinghouses or flats throughout the Region, including single dwellings in the countryside.**

**Proposals for a domestic garage or an outbuilding, or other built development ancillary to a residential property will also be considered under the provisions of this Addendum.**

**Furthermore, the policy approach and associated guidance contained within this document will be useful in assessing proposals for extensions and/or alterations to other residential uses, such as, residential / nursing homes, hostels and holiday accommodation.**

**This Addendum to PPS 7 supersedes policy HOU 16 'House Extensions' of the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland. Where this policy is referred to elsewhere in the Planning Strategy, the policy and guidance in this Addendum will take precedence.**

This policy document has been subject to an equality impact screening exercise in line with the statutory obligation contained in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The outcome of this exercise indicates that the document is unlikely to have any significant adverse implications for equality of opportunity or community relations.

Nothing in this document should be read as a commitment that public resources will be provided for any specific project. All proposals for expenditure by the Department are subject to economic appraisal and will also have to be considered having regard to the overall availability of resources.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Extensions or alterations are one of the most common changes made to our homes to cater for our changing domestic requirements. In some cases it is possible to carry out a small extension or make an alteration to a dwelling house without applying for planning permission, provided you meet specific requirements. This is known as 'permitted development' and more detailed information on this matter is set out in Annex B.

**Please note that an extension to a flat or a residential property in multiple occupancy does not benefit from permitted development rights.**

- 1.2 The Department recognises the value of extensions and alterations in improving residential property as this not only leads to the modernisation and revitalisation of older stock, but can also reduce demand for more land for new homes. It is also acknowledged that extensions may be required in some instances to bring a house up to a standard that provides the minimum amenities for modern day living.
- 1.3 For the individual homeowner, altering or extending the home can offer the desirable option of providing accommodation to meet the needs of their family. However, this needs to be balanced with consideration of the impact of such works on residential amenity and the character and appearance of the individual property and its wider surroundings. There may also be occasions where existing residential properties were not originally designed to be extended or have already been extended to their limit.
- 1.4 The key objectives of this Addendum are:
- to promote high quality in the design of residential extensions and alterations; and
  - to ensure that such works are sympathetic to the original property; respect the character of the local area; and protect neighbouring residential amenity.

## **2.0 Planning Policy**

**In exercise of its responsibility for planning control in Northern Ireland the Department assesses development proposals against all planning policies and other material considerations that are relevant to it.**

**The planning policy of this Addendum to PPS 7 must therefore be read together and in conjunction with the relevant contents of the Department's development plans and other planning policy publications, including the Regional Development Strategy. The Department will also have regard to the contents of published supplementary planning guidance documents.**

**The following policy sets out the main considerations that the Department will take into account in assessing proposals for residential extensions and/or alterations. The provisions of this policy will prevail unless there are other overriding policy or material considerations, that outweigh it and justify a contrary decision.**

## **Policy EXT 1 Residential Extensions and Alterations**

**Planning permission will be granted for a proposal to extend or alter a residential property where all of the following criteria are met:**

- (a) the scale, massing, design and external materials of the proposal are sympathetic with the built form and appearance of the existing property and will not detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area;**
- (b) the proposal does not unduly affect the privacy or amenity of neighbouring residents;**
- (c) the proposal will not cause the unacceptable loss of, or damage to, trees or other landscape features which contribute significantly to local environmental quality; and**
- (d) sufficient space remains within the curtilage of the property for recreational and domestic purposes including the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles.**

**The guidance set out in Annex A will be taken into account when assessing proposals against the above criteria.**

### **Justification and Amplification**

- 2.1 The Department wishes to encourage the highest standard of design for all development, including proposals for residential extensions and alterations. Good design will help promote sustainable development and improve the quality of the existing environment. It should also afford appropriate protection of residential amenity.
- 2.2 A proposal to extend or alter a residential property can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the local environment. The main causes of harm arise where an extension is poorly designed, oversized or badly sited or where inappropriate alterations are proposed. Even small-scale changes can, by virtue of their cumulative impact over a period of time, significantly erode the character of a street, village or rural setting. An extension or alteration can also affect the privacy and amenities enjoyed by neighbouring households, with issues such as dominance, privacy and loss of light often arising.
- 2.3 Applications for house extensions and alterations therefore raise detailed, site specific issues and each case will be assessed on its individual merits. The acceptability of proposals will depend on the particular circumstances on the site and its surroundings and decisions will be informed by the guidance provided in Annex A.
- 2.4 The overall aim is to encourage high quality design solutions. The design approach, which is most commonly followed, is for extensions and alterations to tie in with the style, design and materials of the existing

property. However the Department does not wish to stifle or dismiss an innovative, contemporary design solution and this will be acceptable where the proposal complements the host property and respects its wider surroundings.

### *Sustainable Design*

- 2.5 In promoting good design for residential alterations and extensions, the Department will encourage proposals which incorporate features intended to maximise sustainability and energy efficiency, including the use of renewable energy sources, such as solar panels. The Department would draw attention to a number of best practice guides on this matter that can assist property owners and their professional advisors in preparing proposals for extending or altering a residential property. For example, Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM), Eco-Homes: the environmental rating for homes (BRE) and Civil Engineering Environmental Quality Assessment (CEEQUAL).

### *Landscape*

- 2.6 The Department will resist proposals for extensions or other ancillary buildings that would result in the loss of significant local landscape features, in particular trees which are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order or which contribute to areas designated for their townscape or heritage importance.<sup>1</sup> In other cases, where proposals impact on local landscape features, the Department will normally seek the provision of compensatory planting to mitigate against the loss of local environmental quality and assist in the promotion of biodiversity.

### *People with Disabilities*

- 2.7 The Department will give sympathetic consideration to proposals where an extension or alteration is required for a person with a disability or whose mobility is otherwise impaired. If imaginative and innovative design approaches are fully explored the Department believes it is generally possible to provide a satisfactory solution in line with the policy. The specific needs of a person with a disability are however an important material consideration and exceptionally the policy criteria may be relaxed to meet these needs.

### *Ancillary Accommodation*

- 2.8 There may be occasions when people wish to provide ancillary accommodation to provide additional living space for elderly relatives or to meet a variety of other personal and domestic circumstances.
- 2.9 To be ancillary, accommodation must be subordinate to the main dwelling and its function supplementary to the use of the existing residence. Such additional accommodation should normally be attached to the existing

---

<sup>1</sup> It is an offence to remove a tree which is subject to a Tree Preservation Order or which is located in a Conservation Area, without the prior written consent of the Department.

property and be internally accessible from it, although a separate doorway access will also be acceptable.

- 2.10 Where an extension to the existing house is not practicable and it is proposed to convert and extend an existing outbuilding, planning permission will normally depend on the development providing a modest scale of accommodation. The purpose of this is to ensure the use of the building as part of the main dwelling. The construction of a separate building, as self contained accommodation, within the curtilage of an existing dwelling house will not be acceptable, unless a separate dwelling would be granted permission in its own right. Other proposals for ancillary residential use which are clearly incidental to the enjoyment of the property, such as a garden room or a gazebo, will be treated on their merits within the terms of the policy.
- 2.11 In all cases the Department will need to be satisfied that the proposed accommodation will remain ancillary to the main residential property and careful consideration will be given to the impact of proposals on neighbouring dwellings. Where permission is granted it will be subject to a condition that the extension will only be used for ancillary residential purposes in connection with the main dwelling, and not as a separate unit of accommodation.

### *Rural Design*

- 2.12 Care will be needed to ensure that a proposal to extend or alter a dwelling in the countryside is sensitive to its setting within the rural landscape. This is particularly important where it is proposed to upgrade a small un-improved dwelling to modern amenity standards and for proposals involving ancillary buildings. Such cases also provide the opportunity for additional planting which can assist integration into the landscape and help promote biodiversity.

### *Heritage*

- 2.13 In assessing planning applications for residential extensions and/or alterations in Conservation Areas, Areas of Townscape Character and those affecting Listed Buildings, the Department will also consider the relevant policies contained within PPS 6 'Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage' and its Addendum 'Areas of Townscape Character', together with any policy or advice contained in the relevant development plan or local design guide. Likewise, for proposals within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, regard will be given to any relevant regional policy, development plan or advice set out in local guidance.

## **Annex A: Guidance for Residential Extensions and Alterations**

- A1 The purpose of this Annex is to set out the Department's detailed guidance to provide a consistent basis against which to consider an extension and/or alteration to a dwelling house or flat, including those in multiple occupancy and any proposal for a domestic garage or an outbuilding.
- A2 The guidance is intended to advise home owners on how to extend or alter their property in a neighbourly manner that is sympathetic with the original property, respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area and contributes towards a quality environment. It should also be noted that a well-designed extension or alteration can enhance and add value to a property, while a poorly designed extension or alteration can make it difficult to sell.
- A3 Although the guidance may not cover all the site specific issues that can arise it covers the main considerations that will be taken into account when determining a planning application. If it is followed, an extension or alteration is more likely to be granted planning permission, and unnecessary delays in processing applications avoided.

### **Context and Design**

- A4 An extension or alteration to a residential property should be designed to become an integral part of the property both functionally and visually. Such works should not be designed in isolation solely to fit in a required amount of accommodation. Proposals that are badly sited or designed, or that are incompatible with their surroundings, can lead to an undesirable change in the character of the existing property and the area in which they are located. Success depends upon striking the right balance between adaptation and sensitivity to the original design.
- A5 The overall aim is to encourage high quality design solutions irrespective of whether the approach followed seeks to mirror the style of the existing property or adopts a contemporary modern design approach. To ensure good design any extension or alteration will need to complement the host building and respect its location and wider setting.
- A6 An extension or alteration should not be so large or so prominent as to dominate the host property or its wider surroundings, rather development proposals should be in scale with existing and adjoining buildings. All such works should have proportion and balance, fitting in with the shape of the existing property. The height, width and general size of an extension should generally be smaller than the existing house and subordinate or integrated so as not to dominate the character of the existing property, although it is accepted that on occasion a larger extension may be required - for example to facilitate the renovation and upgrading of a small rural dwelling to meet modern amenity standards. It will not usually be appropriate to allow an extension to project above the ridge line of the existing dwelling and this will be especially important where uniform building height is part of the street scene.

- A7 Proposals in an urban context should not overdevelop the site in terms of massing, plot size and proximity to boundaries thereby, for example, creating a visual ‘terrace’ effect. This is one of a number of problems associated with side extensions, where they can alter the character of the area by filling the visual gaps between residential properties. The need for adequate space along side boundaries is also important to provide ease of access to the rear of the property and to allow for maintenance. This will also serve to eliminate the possibility of any part of the extension, including rainwater goods, overhanging neighbouring property.
- A8 A further concern may arise where a side extension to a semi-detached dwelling is proposed at the same height and follows the same building line as the block comprising an original pair of dwellings. This will often compromise the appearance and architectural integrity of the block, and if repeated throughout a neighbourhood is likely to have an adverse impact upon the character of the wider area. To address this particular problem, proposals of this nature should be ‘set back’ from the building line or front of the house and also ‘set down’ from the ridge line.
- A9 Extensions or alterations to the front of a property require great care as the front elevation is often the most visible to public view. Poor design can upset the architectural integrity of the existing property and have an intrusive effect on the street scene. It is important, therefore, to ensure that extensions and alterations to the front of property do not detract from the street scene, especially where there is a clear and visually obvious ‘building line’ or architectural features. In such cases they should appear to be part of the existing property and not an obvious addition. This can be achieved by ensuring any such works are in proportion with the property, its fenestration and detailing, with matching materials, roof design and pitch.
- A10 Alterations or an extension to a dwelling should not infringe upon a neighbour’s property. For example, it is an infringement of a neighbour’s property rights should foundations or guttering encroach onto their land or if an extension overhangs or attaches to their property. Where an extension abuts or runs close to a property boundary, permission to enter neighbouring land will also be required to enable approved works to be carried out or for future maintenance purposes. Consequently, it is advisable to discuss proposals with any neighbours before submitting a planning application. It should be noted that infringement of property rights is primarily a legal matter between the relevant parties.

### *Garages and other associated outbuildings*

- A11 Buildings within the residential curtilage, such as, garages, sheds and greenhouses can often require as much care in siting and design as works to the existing residential property. They should be subordinate in scale and similar in style to the existing property, taking account of materials, the local character and the level of visibility of the building from surrounding views. The use of false pitches should be avoided as these often detract from the appearance of these buildings, particularly when viewed from the side.

- A12 Garages or outbuildings wholly located in front gardens or those that extend in front the established building line can over-dominate the front of the property and detract from the street scene and will therefore generally be resisted.
- A13 In the countryside, ancillary buildings should be designed as part of the overall layout to result in an integrated rural group of buildings

### *Roof Extensions*

- A14 An extension or alteration which copies the roof type and angle of pitch of the original residential property will be more successful than those proposals that introduce a completely different type of roof. The roofing material of any pitched roof extension should seek to match that of the original. Flat or mansard roofed extensions to traditional buildings are seldom harmonious. However, they may be acceptable where they are not open to public views.
- A15 The use of loft space to provide bedrooms or other living space can often provide additional accommodation. However, alterations to the roof profile of any building can be particularly sensitive as roofs play an important part in contributing to a building's appearance and the overall character of the area. An extension to the rear of a property should ensure that the roof of the extension does not project above the ridge of the existing dwelling as this can give an unsightly view along the streetscape. Rooflights, which lie parallel with the plane of the roof, are a particularly sympathetic way of providing light to a room within a roofspace. They may often constitute permitted development but care should be taken to ensure compliance with Building Regulations where such windows are intended to provide a means of escape.
- A16 The regular repeated rhythm and uniformity of roof forms and chimneys may be a particular feature of a group of similar buildings or the wider townscape and should therefore be retained. If elements, which are not part of the original property are proposed, for example, a dormer roof extension, these should be designed in a manner that complements the period and style of the original property, or to reflect the best examples of such features on properties of a similar period in the area.
- A17 Where a dormer is open to public view, it can interfere with both the original design of the existing building and cause a visual intrusion into the street scene or rural setting. Dormer windows to the front or side of a property will be resisted in areas where they are uncharacteristic, particularly large box dormers that are over-dominant often extending the full width of the roof. The size and number of dormers should therefore be kept to a minimum to avoid dominating the appearance of the roof and should be located below the ridge line of the existing roof. Positioning dormer windows vertically in line with the windows below and ensuring that they are smaller in size will usually avoid a top-heavy or unbalanced appearance.

### *Detailing*

- A18 Attention should be paid to design details such as the position, shape, proportion and style of windows, doors and other features to complement the existing property and respect the character and appearance of the area. To facilitate the integration of an extension or alteration with the existing property, new windows should be aligned to the existing fenestration and match the symmetry of the existing dwelling. The relationship between solids and voids is an essential component of any new proposal, but particularly when extending or altering an existing property where window size and height diminish on upper floors.
- A19 Older residential properties in particular often have interesting arches, brick detailing and other special features or ornamentation which add character. Continuing or reflecting such ornamentation around doors, windows and at the eaves in the design approach followed can be an effective way of integrating any extension or alteration work with the existing property.

### *External Finishes*

- A20 The external finish of a proposal should aim to complement the type of materials, colour and finish of both the existing building and those of neighbouring properties, particularly where certain materials strongly predominate. Using similar or complementary materials to those of the existing property is more likely to produce a successful extension or alteration. The re-use and recycling of building materials is encouraged and will be especially important when carrying out work to a listed building, or buildings within a conservation area or an area of townscape character.

### *Sustainable Design*

- A21 The Department wishes to promote and encourage a sustainable approach to development. The extension or alteration to a residential property can provide the opportunity to improve its sustainability in terms of incorporating energy efficiency measures, renewable energy technologies, the re-use of existing materials and measures to enhance biodiversity. For example, additional insulation and rainwater recycling using water butts.
- A22 Where existing walls are being demolished or roofs altered, existing materials can often be salvaged and re-used, which will benefit the visual appearance of the new work and its integration with the existing property. Solar thermal panels that produce hot water and photovoltaic (PV) panels that produce electricity can be installed in roofs. PV tiles are now available that look like traditional tile and slate roofs, allowing the installation of these systems to be sensitive to the character, colour and style of the existing roof. Green or 'living' roofs can further benefit the environment by enhancing biodiversity and providing high standards of insulation. Extensions also provide the opportunity to consider the provision of additional landscaping to soften the impact of such works (see also paragraphs A39 – A40).

## *Walls and Fences*

A23 Walls and fences, particularly in front gardens, can also have a significant effect on the appearance of the property and streetscape. When erected beside driveways or on corner sites they can have an impact on sightlines and traffic safety. Both the visual and road safety aspects of a wall or fence will be assessed when proposals are being considered. Materials should always complement the character of the property and the neighbourhood. Expanses of close-board fencing bordering public areas are visually unacceptable. It should be noted that some walls or fences may be permitted development (see Annex B for further information on permitted development).

## *The Countryside*

A24 The impact of an extension or alteration on the visual amenity of the countryside and, in particular, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty needs to be considered. Proposals should be in keeping with the character of the existing property and its countryside setting. Through poor design the individual and cumulative effect of extensions and alterations which are disproportionate in size to the existing property, or which require the use of land outside the established curtilage of the property, will result in a detrimental change to rural character.

A25 Many rural dwellings occupy larger plots than their urban counterparts. Whilst there may be sufficient room on the plot to accommodate an extension in physical terms, great sensitivity is required to ensure the proposal integrates with the existing dwelling and surrounding landscape. In assessing the potential impact of development in the countryside, particular regard will be paid to the quality and nature of the landscape in the locality and at the particular site.

A26 The suburban boundary treatment of walls or fences and the introduction of ornate pillars are inappropriate in the rural landscape and will be resisted.

## **Residential Amenity**

A27 The Department considers it important that the amenity of all residents is protected from 'unneighbourly' extensions as these can cause problems through overshadowing/loss of light, dominance and loss of privacy. The extent to which potential problems may arise is usually dependent upon the separation distance, height, depth, mass and location of an extension and window positions. Single-storey extensions to the rear of a semi-detached or terraced dwelling will generally be acceptable where the depth does not exceed 3.5 metres from the back wall of the original building, at the boundary with an adjoining dwelling. Larger extensions will be assessed in light of the following guidance, although it is acknowledged that flexibility may be needed in respect of older properties with small plot areas or where the proposal seeks to meet the specific needs of a person with a disability.

## *Privacy*

- A28 Except in the most isolated rural location, few households can claim not to be overlooked to some degree. The protection of the privacy of the occupants of residential properties is an important element of the quality of a residential environment. It is a particularly important consideration where an extension or alteration is proposed adjacent to existing properties. Balconies, roof terraces, decking, dormer windows, windows in side elevations and conservatories all have the potential to cause overlooking problems, due to their position and orientation, particularly from upper windows. The use of obscure glass, velux windows and high-level windows in appropriate circumstances can often minimise this potential, for example, the use of obscure glass for bathroom and landing windows. However, this is not considered an acceptable solution for windows serving main rooms such as bedrooms, living rooms, dining rooms or kitchens.
- A29 Proposals should seek to provide reasonable space between buildings in order to minimise overlooking. This will also assist in providing acceptable levels of daylight to properties. In the case of dormer windows, restricting the size of the window and setting it back from the eaves is usually an adequate solution that can protect neighbouring privacy.
- A30 Overlooking of gardens may be unacceptable where it would result in an intrusive, direct and uninterrupted view from a main room, to the most private area of the garden, which is often the main sitting out area adjacent to the property, of your neighbours' house. As a general rule of thumb this area is the first 3-4 metres of a rear garden, closest to the residential property.

## *Dominance*

- A31 Dominance is the extent to which a new development adversely impinges on the immediate aspect or outlook from an adjoining property. Neighbouring occupiers should not be adversely affected by a sense of being 'hemmed in' by an extension. This can often result from the construction of a large blank wall. Dominance can be increased when the neighbouring property is at a lower ground level to the development site. Loss of light is usually a consequence of dominance. Two storey rear extensions to semi-detached and terraced dwellings are usually very prominent when viewed from adjoining dwellings and can dominate outward views from adjoining ground floor windows, appearing excessively large and overbearing. It is appropriate, however, to take account of the prevailing local environment.

## *Overshadowing/Loss of Light*

- A32 Sunlight and daylight are valued elements in a good quality living environment. Effective daylighting can reduce the need for electric lighting, while sunlight can contribute towards meeting some of the heating

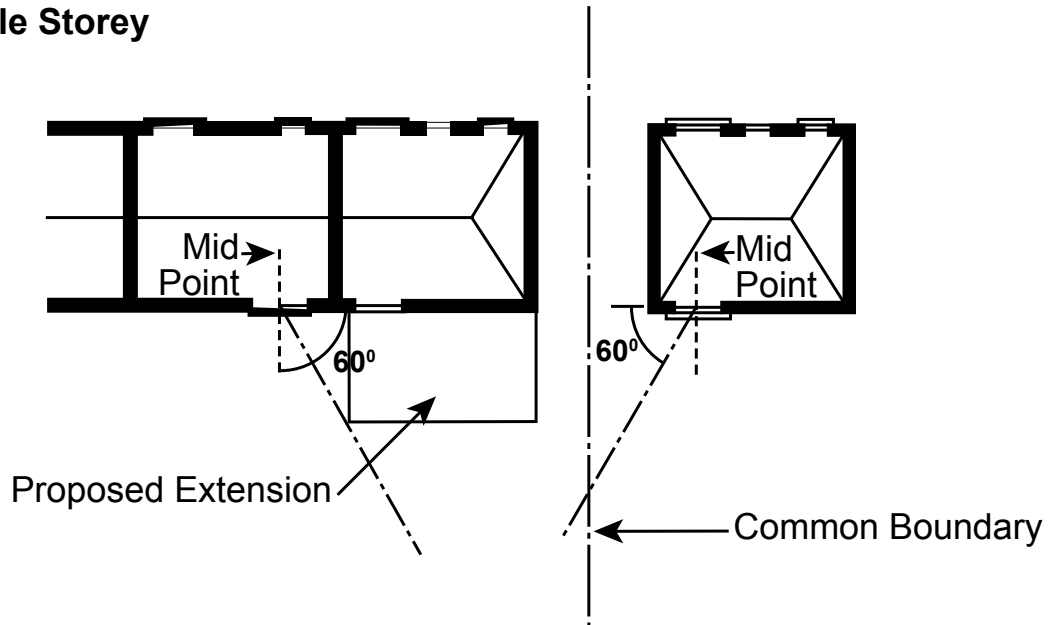
requirements of our homes through passive solar heating. In designing a new extension or alteration to a residential property care should be taken to safeguard access to sunlight and daylight currently enjoyed by adjoining residential properties.

- A33 Where an extension is poorly sited or badly designed it can cast a shadow that may reduce a neighbour's daylight and adversely affect their amenity to an unacceptable level. It is important, therefore, that every effort should be made to avoid or minimise the potential for overshadowing to a neighbour when drawing up plans for an extension. Overshadowing to a garden area on its own will rarely constitute sufficient grounds to justify a refusal of permission.
- A34 In terms of daylighting, the effect on all rooms, apart from halls, landings, bathrooms and utility rooms will be considered. Where an extension would be likely to reduce the amount of light entering the window of a room, other than those indicated above, to an unreasonable degree, planning permission is likely to be refused.
- A35 Significant problems of sunlight or daylight loss are most likely to occur in terraced or semi-detached housing situations and it is here that most care needs to be taken. An extension should be kept as far as possible from neighbouring windows and boundaries to minimise impact.
- A36 To help assess the loss of light as a result of a proposed development to the front or rear of a residential property, the 60 degree and 45 degree lines, as shown in Figure 1 for single storey and two storey extensions respectively, will be employed. These lines will be taken from the centre of the closest neighbouring window. It should be noted that where the closest window is located at first floor level it may be more appropriate to consider this against the 60 degree line. The elevations and outline plans of adjoining properties should be shown on drawings, accurately scaled (in metric measurement) to allow proper consideration of this matter.
- A37 The guidance in Figure 1 is not however a rigid standard which must be met in every case. Rather it is an assessment tool which will be used in conjunction with other relevant factors in order to gauge the acceptability of proposals in terms of the overshadowing / loss of light impact upon neighbouring properties. Other relevant factors which will be considered in this assessment are set out below:
- (1) The existing form and type of extension prevalent in the area.  
For example, where the majority of dwellings in a terrace have already been extended in a similar way to the application proposal this matter will be balanced against any adverse impact on neighbouring properties.
  - (2) The proposed design of the extension or alteration.  
For example, where a proposed extension incorporates significant glazing in the design, the impact on neighbouring properties may be acceptable in circumstances where alternatives might result in unacceptable overshadowing.

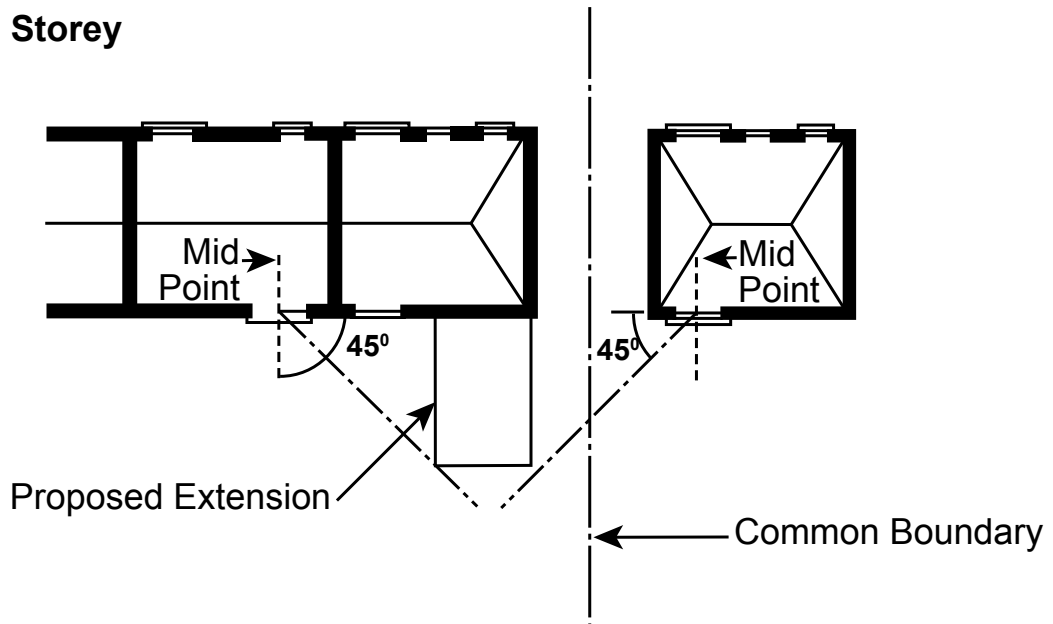
# Figure 1

## House Extensions

### Single Storey



### Two Storey



**Adjoining development should be shown on plan for the proper assessment of the proposal**

- (3) The particular characteristics of the site and its context.  
For example, where daylighting to an adjacent dwelling is already impeded by an existing building or boundary wall and the proposal would not significantly exacerbate the existing situation.
- (4) The orientation and position of a neighbour's window in relation to the proposed extension, the room it serves and whether the window affected is the primary source of light for that room.  
For example, account will be taken as to whether a room affected by a proposed extension benefits from an alternative natural source of light.
- (5) The potential size and form of an extension allowable under permitted development.  
For example, where a proposal would not have an impact significantly greater than that of an extension allowable under permitted development rights.
- (6) Provision of an extension or alterations to meet the particular needs of a person with a disability.  
For example, a modest single storey extension required to meet the particular needs of the person in question will be a material consideration to be balanced against any adverse impacts on the neighbouring property. This may result in the criteria relating to daylighting and overshadowing being relaxed.

### *Noise and General Disturbance*

A38 Residential areas can be sensitive to noise and general disturbance, particularly in the late evening when there is an expectation that surrounding background noise will remain low. An extension or alteration such as a balcony, roof-terrace or high level decking can all increase the level of noise and general disturbance experienced by residents of adjacent properties and will be subject to particular scrutiny.

### **Landscape**

A39 Landscaping is a vital consideration for all development and should form an integral part of any proposal. Landscaping can create a high quality setting, help integrate new development into its surroundings and assist the promotion of biodiversity of native species or other species characteristic of a particular area.

A40 Proposals for landscaping should therefore always be considered as part of any application for an extension. The retention of existing trees, hedges and other significant landscape features will often be an important element in this and will usually help to reduce the impact of an extension

on the character of the surrounding area more readily than walls or fences. Where important trees and landscape features exist within a site, care should be taken that extensions are not sited too close to them. Best practice in relation to this matter can be found in the publication 'Trees and Development' co-sponsored by the Department, the Forest of Belfast and the Construction Employers' Federation. To ensure that full account is taken of existing trees and landscape features within the residential curtilage, such features should, as part of a planning application, be accurately detailed on a site survey map in accordance with British Standards BS 5837 (2005) 'Trees in Relation to Construction'. Where it is proposed that existing trees or significant landscape features are to be removed, the layout plan should indicate proposals for compensatory planting.

## **Private Amenity Space**

- A41 Amenity space is an essential part of the character and quality of the environment of residential properties. It is important therefore to ensure, when bringing forward a proposal to extend, that adequate amenity space - particularly private space, is left. Garden space around a residential property is an integral part of its character and appearance and should not be reduced to a point where it is out of scale or fails to meet the present and future occupiers need for adequate useable private amenity space.
- A42 All residential properties require some in-curtilage private open space, usually to the rear, compatible with the overall size of the plot, for normal domestic activities, such as, bin storage, clothes drying, sitting out and playspace. This space should enjoy a high degree of privacy from the public street and from any other public places.
- A43 In certain Council areas residents may now have up to three bins per household to facilitate recycling. It is inappropriate for these to be stored in front gardens, which are rarely private, as they provide a public aspect and can adversely affect the character and appearance of the area. Care should be taken to ensure that proposals to extend do not decrease the amount of private open space to a level that cannot accommodate the normal domestic activities identified in A42 above.
- A44 The level of private open space for new residential property is detailed in the 'Creating Places' design guide. In considering the effect of an extension on private amenity space the Department will take these guidelines and the prevailing standard of private amenity space in the local environment into account.
- A45 Extensions, particularly to the side of a residential property, whereby refuse and garden equipment will need to be carried through the house or stored in the front garden, will not normally be permitted. An exception may be made where a route can be maintained through the extension via a garage or utility room on the ground floor.

## **Access and Car Parking**

- A46 An extension or alteration to a residential property that involves the conversion of an attached or integral garage to create additional living space can result in the loss of in-curtilage car parking provision. In such cases, care should be taken to ensure that any car parking space lost due to the proposed development is capable of being accommodated elsewhere within the curtilage of the site or can be accommodated on street.
- A47 Proposed works that would result in the significant loss of car parking spaces or a turning area, with no reasonable alternative being available, will not be acceptable. Similarly the use of an entire garden area to provide car parking or a turning area will be resisted.
- A48 Garages should be positioned where they can be accessed safely. To ensure the highway is not blocked while the door is being opened, a new garage which gives access to the public highway should retain a minimum of 6.0m driveway within the residential curtilage. Further detailed guidance in relation to in-curtilage driveways, hardstandings and vehicle turning facilities is set out in the 'Creating Places' design guide.

## **Extensions and Alterations to provide for Ancillary Uses**

- A49 An extension or alteration to a residential property to provide an ancillary use, such as additional living accommodation for elderly or dependent relatives, should be designed to demonstrate dependency on the existing residential property. Proposals of this nature should be designed in such a manner as to easily enable the extension to be later used as an integral part of the main residential property. Ancillary uses should provide limited accommodation and shared facilities, for example kitchens and be physically linked internally to the host property. Ancillary uses that could practically and viably operate on their own will not be acceptable.

## **Security and Designing out Crime**

- A50 When undertaking any building work in the home, it is important to consider how this could affect security. Indeed planning for such works provides an ideal opportunity for householders to review security measures for their entire property and this can help promote a more secure residential environment.
- A51 Incorporating sensible security measures during the extension or refurbishment of buildings has been shown to reduce levels of crime and the fear of crime. By bringing the crime prevention experience of the police more fully into the planning and design process, a balance can be achieved between safety and security. The Police Service have specially trained officers who, free of charge, can advise on Crime Prevention and how to Design Out Crime. Contact your local Crime Prevention Officer or visit the police web-site [www.psnipolice.uk](http://www.psnipolice.uk) for more information.

## Annex B: Applications for Permitted Development and Planning Permission

### Permitted Development

- B1 In some cases it is possible to carry out an extension or make an alteration to a dwellinghouse<sup>2</sup> without the need to obtain planning permission, provided you meet specific requirements. This is known as ‘permitted development’ and detailed information on this matter is contained in the Planning (General Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 1993. The Department has also produced a guide entitled ‘Your Home and Planning Permission’ which provides useful information for householders<sup>3</sup>.
- B2 Permitted development rights are complex and sometimes more restrictive in designated areas, such as, conservation areas and areas of outstanding natural beauty; and for certain properties, such as listed buildings<sup>4</sup>. It may also be the case that in some instances permitted development rights have been removed from a property by condition or have already been used and you should clarify this with your local planning office before proceeding with any proposal. If you consider the works you propose to carry out are permitted development you are advised to apply formally to your local planning office (see Annex C) for a Certificate of Lawful Use or Development before proceeding with the development. Such an application should be made using the appropriate form (LDC1) together with accompanying location map, plans and fee. Full details about the information required are listed on the application form and accompanying guidance notes. Advice on the necessary fee can be obtained from your local planning office or the Planning Service website [www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk).
- B3 There are benefits in gaining a Certificate of Lawful Use or Development. It is a determination that has legal status providing certainty to prospective purchasers of land and buildings, particularly those participating in the housing market. Solicitors representing purchasers of extended or altered residential properties will usually require documentary evidence that the extension or alteration is lawful. This evidence may assist with the sale of property.
- B4 Certificates of Lawful use or Development also provide necessary evidence that any works being undertaken are lawful if, for example, a neighbour were to make an enquiry or complaint about the work.

---

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of permitted development a dwelling house does not include a building containing one or more flats, or a flat contained within such as building. It also excludes any house or flat in multiple occupation.

<sup>3</sup> The document ‘Your Home and Planning Permission’ is available from all Divisional Planning Offices or at [www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk).

<sup>4</sup> Any works of alteration or extension to a listed building which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest require Listed Building Consent.

## Applying for Planning Permission

B5 Should planning permission be required for your extension or alteration

there is a simplified application form for householder development (Form PHD) which can be obtained from your local planning office. Five sets of this completed form and all drawings (location maps and plans) together with the appropriate fee should be submitted to your local planning office (see Annex C). For proposals affecting flats or residential property in multiple occupancy, the standard planning application form (Form P1) should be used. Seven sets of this completed form and all drawings (location maps and plans) together with the appropriate fee will be needed. Details about the information required are listed on the application form and accompanying guidance notes. Advice on the necessary fee can be obtained from your local planning office or the Planning Service website [www.planningni.gov.uk](http://www.planningni.gov.uk).

B6 Where the application relates to the carrying out of works to provide access for or improve the safety, health or comfort of a person with a disability, then it may be exempt from any planning fee.

B7 To avoid unnecessary delays in dealing with planning applications it is important to submit scaled drawings in metric measurements which are clear and accurate. For applications for full planning permission both existing and proposed elevations and floor plans are required. The elevations and outline plans of adjoining properties should also be shown on drawings, again accurately scaled in metric measurement.

B8 Before you apply for planning permission for an extension or alteration it is suggested that you talk to your neighbours so they are aware of your plans. Neighbours are notified as part of the planning application process and their comments will be considered as part of the decision-making process.

B9 You may also wish to appoint an agent to act on your behalf. This can be an architect, planner, surveyor or other professional advisor. All matters concerning your application will be addressed to them.

B10 Whether planning permission is required or not you are advised to contact your local building control office at the earliest possible stage as many domestic extensions and alterations also require approval under the Building Regulations. Furthermore, you may wish to contact Northern Ireland Water Customer Services Unit at the design stage with regard to water supply requirements, foul water and surface water sewerage requirements, septic tank discharge and, in particular, to ascertain if an existing water main or sewer crosses the site. All appropriate consents should be obtained before you commence any work.

## Annex C: Planning Service Offices

### District Council Area    Divisional Planning Office

Antrim  
Ballymena  
Carrickfergus  
Larne  
Magherafelt

Ballymena Divisional Planning Office  
County Hall  
182 Galgorm Road  
BALLYMENA, BT42 1QF  
Tel No: (028) 2565 3333  
Fax No: (028) 2566 2127  
E-mail: [divisional.planning.office.ballymena@nics.gov.uk](mailto:divisional.planning.office.ballymena@nics.gov.uk)

Armagh  
Banbridge  
Craigavon  
Newry & Mourne

Craigavon Divisional Planning Office  
Marlborough House  
Central Way  
CRAIGAVON, BT64 1AD  
Tel No: (028) 3834 1144  
Fax No: (028) 3834 1065  
E-mail: [divisional.planning.office.craigavon@nics.gov.uk](mailto:divisional.planning.office.craigavon@nics.gov.uk)

Derry  
Limavady

Londonderry Divisional Planning Office  
Orchard House  
40 Foyle Street  
LONDONDERRY, BT48 6AT  
Tel No: (028) 7131 9900  
Fax No: (028) 7131 9777  
E-mail: [divisional.planning.office.londonderry@nics.gov.uk](mailto:divisional.planning.office.londonderry@nics.gov.uk)

Belfast  
Castlereagh  
Newtownabbey

Belfast Divisional Planning Office  
Bedford House  
16 – 22 Bedford Street  
BELFAST BT2 7FD  
Tel No: (028) 9025 2800  
Fax No: (028) 9025 2828  
E-mail: [divisional.planning.office.belfast@nics.gov.uk](mailto:divisional.planning.office.belfast@nics.gov.uk)

Ards  
Down  
Lisburn  
North Down

Downpatrick Divisional Planning Office  
Rathkeltair House  
Market Street  
DOWNPATRICK, BT30 6EA  
Tel No: (028) 4461 2211  
Fax No: (028) 4461 8196  
E-mail: [divisional.planning.office.downpatrick@nics.gov.uk](mailto:divisional.planning.office.downpatrick@nics.gov.uk)

Cookstown  
Dungannon  
Omagh  
Strabane

Omagh Divisional Planning Office  
County Hall  
Drumragh Avenue  
OMAGH, BT79 7AE  
Tel No: (028) 8225 4000  
Fax No: (028) 8225 4009  
E-mail: [divisional.planning.office.omagh@nicos.gov.uk](mailto:divisional.planning.office.omagh@nicos.gov.uk)

**District Council Area Sub-Divisional Planning Office**

Ballymoney  
Coleraine  
Moyle

Coleraine Sub-Divisional Planning Office  
County Hall  
Castlerock Road  
COLERAINE, BT51 3HS  
Tel No: (028) 7034 1300  
Fax No: (028) 7034 1434  
E-mail: [divisional.planning.office.coleraine@nicos.gov.uk](mailto:divisional.planning.office.coleraine@nicos.gov.uk)

Fermanagh

Enniskillen Sub-Divisional Planning Office  
County Buildings  
15 East Bridge Street  
ENNISKILLEN, BT74 7BW  
Tel No: (028) 6634 6555  
Fax No: (028) 6634 6550  
E-mail: [divisional.planning.office.enniskillen@nicos.gov.uk](mailto:divisional.planning.office.enniskillen@nicos.gov.uk)

**Planning Service Headquarters**

Millennium House  
17-25 Great Victoria Street  
BELFAST, BT2 7BN  
Tel No: (028) 9041 6861  
Fax No: (028) 9041 6802  
E-mail: [planning.service.hq@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:planning.service.hq@doeni.gov.uk)



