Dormer Extensions

This guide is for anyone who wants to build a dormer extension to their home. It is also helpful to neighbours, objectors and community councils to understand the policy guidelines we take in to account before reaching a decision. It details:

1. How planning works
2. What you need to consider
3. What we look for
4. Permitted Development

1. How Planning Works

Our role in Fife Council is to assess planning applications, complaints and appeals. We do this by considering the Development Plan and other material considerations, including these guidelines and other planning policy and advice documents. The guidelines reflect local and national planning policies and laws.

Fife Council approves or rejects planning applications on the basis of planning laws, policies and issues.

When Fife Council approves planning permission it can impose conditions. These might cover, for example, what materials you can or cannot use. Conditions when imposed are normally to overcome an unacceptable element of a proposal. Our job is also to make sure developers and house-builders meet these conditions and build to what is approved.

Minor changes to approved proposals can be submitted and we can treat these as non material variations (NMVs) under delegated powers to officers. There is a separate customer guideline on NMVs showing what they are and how we deal with them.

Any changes to buildings or structures also need to be checked out with the Council's Building Standards and Public Safety Service to confirm if any permission is needed to change the Building Warrant plans or approvals.

2. What You Need To Consider

If you want to make more space in your home, you may be able to extend into your loft/roof space. If you have enough headroom, you may be able to install skylights or windows in the slope of the existing roof. This can be an ideal solution as it does not cost a lot of money or materially change the outside appearance of your home.

Another popular alternative is to consider a dormer extension, which can:

- provide extra floor space and accommodation
- give you extra space without having to extend into your garden

If you opt for a dormer extension, you need to think carefully about what kind to build and how it is designed. You need to be especially careful if you live in a listed building or in a conservation area.

And remember, not every house can take a dormer extension. If the pitch of your roof is too low a dormer will not be an option. The structure of the roof also has to be considered.

Also as a result of changes to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (GPDO) some rear dormer extensions are now exempt from the need to obtain planning consent. These proposals are covered in Section 4 below.

In all cases we recommend that you seek further professional and technical advice from your architect or design agent before you proceed.

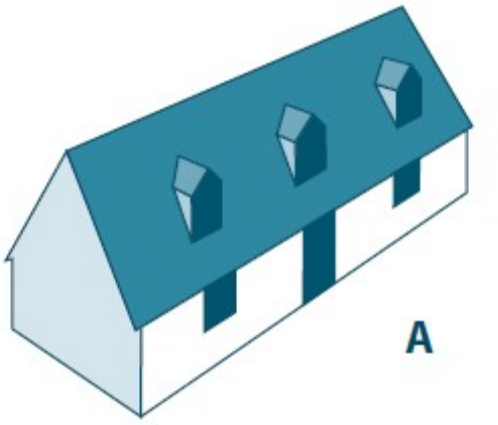
3. What We Consider When Assessing the Application

When you submit a planning application we will consider how the dormer fits in relation to the rest of the roof. We also expect your proposal to:

- be acceptable to look at
- fit in with the design, style, size, proportion and materials of your home.
- respect the privacy and amenity of neighbours

So before you submit your proposal, please consider these guidelines:

- We prefer roof dormers to be at the back of the house, where they are less conspicuous and may not require planning consent. However we would consider a small, traditionally designed dormer window at the front of a property.
- A properly designed dormer extension should normally:
  - have mainly glass at the front face of the dormer; and
  - be constructed mainly of timber, harling, slates or stone as appropriate to match the materials, detailing, age and style of your property.
- Two or even three small, separate dormers can look better than a single, larger dormer and provide a more balanced elevation.
- The windows on the new dormer should open in the same way and be in the same style, proportion and alignment of the door and window openings as the rest of the property. ***Diagram A*** demonstrates this.

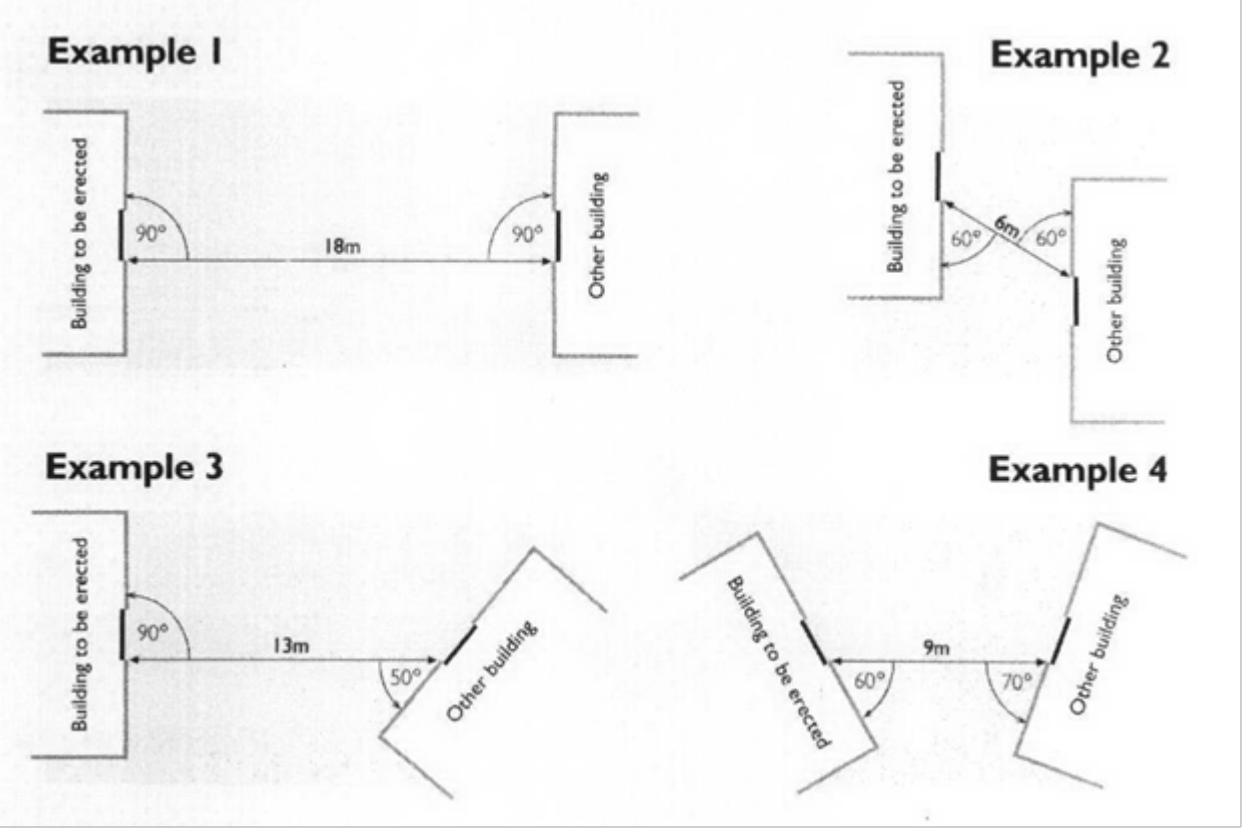


- Obscure glazing should not be used in an artificial manner in main habitable rooms such as living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms to eliminate privacy and overlooking issues. In such cases an alternative design solution or different window solutions may be required and the dormer proposal may not be considered acceptable.
- The distance between facing windows in to adjacent properties needs to be taken in to account and this also requires an assessment of the relative levels of surrounding properties and the levels of accommodation provided. E.g. upper floor living accommodation in close proximity to the proposal, and situations where the properties are already close to each other and the overlooking of accommodation or garden areas may be unacceptable.

The chart in Appendix 1 provides a guide to reasonably accepted separations between windows of habitable rooms of proposed dormers and existing buildings.

- Clear glazed windows should be set 9 metres off a mutual garden boundary where there is a potential for overlooking to the garden of the neighbouring property.

The following examples show how the distances between windows are calculated



- Our Building Standards Team work to nationally agreed minimum standards that the dormer has to meet, so please view our [Building Standards and Safety Section]

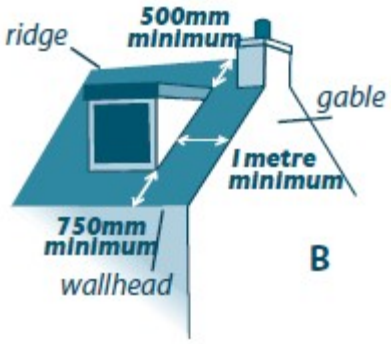
- You should always check with our Building Standards and Public Safety Team as early as you can to find out if there are any technical or structural requirements your dormer extension will have to meet. They can also advise on the amount of daylighting and sunlighting required to each room which will influence the size and positioning of windows.

- Any new dormer should be smaller in shape and size than the existing roof and should usually be:

  - set back from the wallhead (where the roof meets the walls)

  - set below the ridge line, or peak, of the roof

  - set back from the gable ends to comply with the minimum recommended distances. ***Diagram B*** illustrates these.



- If the front of the dormer is not readily visible from the street, we may be able to relax these distances as part of any planning permission. We may also relax them if you are putting in a dormer to replace or copy an existing one, or if the style and design of the house is modern.

- Be careful that your proposed dormer does not completely dominate your home. We won't give planning permission for such a structure. People

can make this mistake when they are trying to get as much space as they can.

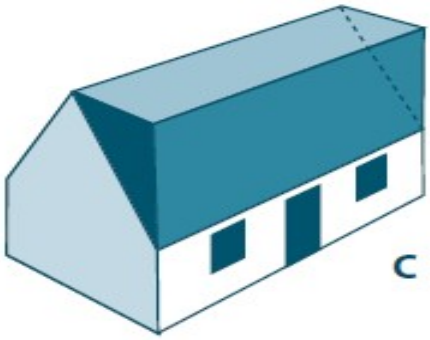
Diagram C shows how a dormer like this:

- is unattractive

- uses too much of the roof area

- gives the house a top-heavy appearance and

- can harm the character of the house and the street as whole.



- You need to be especially careful if you are planning to extend a listed building or buildings in a conservation area, as more restrictive design criteria are likely to be imposed (See also notes below at section 4):

  - Make sure your plans are historically accurate and correctly reflect the architectural styles of the building.

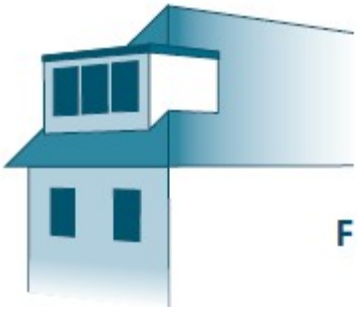
  - You may have to use catslide dormers (also called Scots dormers).These have roofs that slope up to the main roof. ***Diagram D*** shows an example of one.

- If practical any external cladding, such as tiles, on the dormer should be similar to the main roof, but it should be kept to a minimum on the front of the dormer

Diagram E shows an example.

- Use fascia boards sparingly. (These are the boards that cover the front of a roof's woodwork.) You should paint them to match the colour of the front of the dormer faces, rather than window frames.

- Avoid putting dormers on a hipped (sloping) roof as the reducing width of the hipped roof as it approaches the ridge result in the sides of the dormer extending onto another roof slope. ***Diagram F*** shows an example.



Contemporary buildings can in many instances accommodate dormer extensions also, despite the building in many cases being a uniquely designed building for a specific site or layout. Dormer extensions to these buildings as on traditional buildings should never be designed as a later addition. Many of the principles of traditional properties may apply such as aligning windows to give a vertical emphasis and the matching of materials. Adding a dormer to a contemporary design is never an excuse to be un-imaginative by simply adding a box dormer. A contemporary property can be enhanced by a well-designed dormer and give additional visual interest to the property.

Many contemporary dwellinghouses have long sloping roofs which transcend over two or more levels, however the introduction of a sizeable well designed dormer may be visually more acceptable than a small traditional dormer. Care should however be taken to ensure that visually the dormer does not become a foreign element within the streetscene or unbalance the overall proportions of the building onto which it is placed.

On contemporary properties the imaginative use of materials is more acceptable and if used appropriately will introduce additional visual interest to a property whilst not eroding the original design concept of what in many instances are one-off buildings.

Where an area has been designed with an overarching design concept, the introduction of dormer windows should not interrupt the design balance or create an unacceptable visual interruption where the design was based upon symmetry or a strict set of design principles.

4. PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

This section sets out what you can build without planning permission.

Class 1D of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (as revised) states that any enlargement of a dwellinghouse by way of an addition or alteration to its roof allows for the construction of a rear facing dormer, subject to certain limits on dwellinghouses.

For the dormer not to require planning permission the development must be,

- at least 10 metres from the garden boundary that it faces on to
- the dormer must not exceed half the width of the roof plane (the width of the roof plane is measured at the eaves line)
- the development must be at least 0.3 metres from any edge of the roof plane, for example the ridge of the roof or the edge of a hipped roof.
- the overall height of the dwellinghouse cannot be increased as a result of the development. This is measured against the existing ridge of the roof.

Diagram G illustrates these.

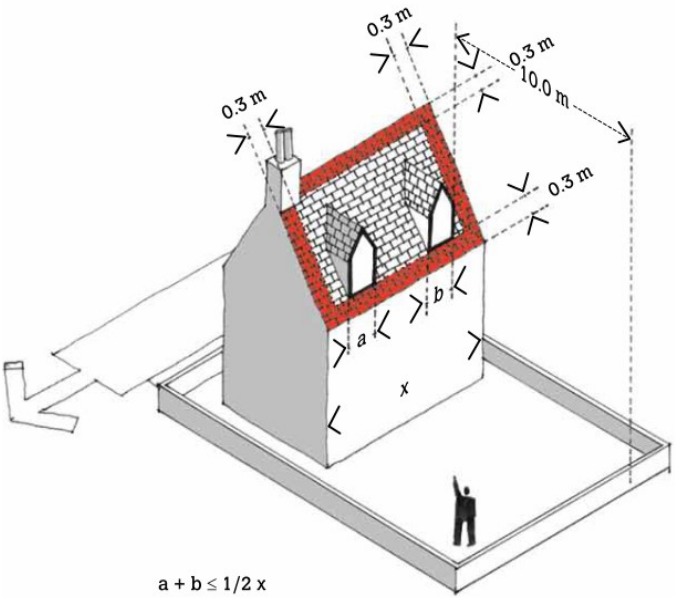


Diagram G

These permitted development rights do **NOT** apply to:

- flats
- if the proposed development is in a conservation area (a planning application is required)
- listed buildings (Listed Building Consent) is required

This change in planning legislation does not remove the need to obtain a building warrant from the local authority.

Class 1D of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (as revised) typically relates to the addition of a rear dormer. The development cannot however be part of the roof forming the principal elevation or side elevation if that elevation is fronting a road. It should be noted that a rear facing roof could still be the principle elevation, and if you are in any doubt you should seek confirmation of this from us at development.central@fife.gov.uk

These guidelines are only a summary of the key design principles we use and refer to in assessing dormer applications. All proposals are different and require to be assessed based on their own individual merits and local context. It is also important to remember that properties vary in size, location and age and there can be a variety of different and

acceptable solutions. Sometimes innovative and creative solutions can be achieved which do not fully meet these guidelines and there may be modern design styles which can also be acceptable in planning terms.

If you are satisfied that your proposed dormer meets these requirements, we can provide formal confirmation, which may be helpful should you wish to sell your property at some future date. To receive this written confirmation, you will need to apply for a Certificate of Lawfulness (Proposed) (CLP).

If your dormer does not meet even one of these requirements, you will need to make an application for planning permission.

Please ask for, or go online for a form for Certificate of Lawfulness (Proposed) or a Planning Application Form. Both a CLP application and a planning application will require "before" and "after" drawings, location and block plans and the fee payable from the current "Scale of Planning Fees" list.

Reviewed March 2016

Appendix 1

Angle at window in existing building Not more than	Angle at window of proposed dormer Not more than									
ANGLE	90°	80°	70°	60°	50°	40°	30°	20°	10°	0°
90°	18	18	16	15	13	9	6	4	3	2
80°	18	16	15	13	9	6	4	3	2	
70°	16	15	13	9	6	4	3	2		
60°	15	13	9	6	4	3	2			
50°	13	9	6	4	3	2				
40°	9	6	4	3	2					
30°	6	4	3	2						
20°	4	3	2							
10°	3	2								
0°	2									