

Ancillary Dwelling Units and Family Annexes

Planning Guidance Note

Introduction

East Dunbartonshire Council has seen a rise in the number of applications for ancillary dwelling units or family annexes (commonly referred to as 'granny flats') over recent years. This is partly due to the demographic make-up of East Dunbartonshire.

However, this increase in applications has led to pressures for developments in rear and side gardens of existing properties, extremely large extensions within small sites and even totally independent units. Some of these can be challenging to deliver within the framework of planning design guidance which is primarily developed to avoid adverse impact on neighbouring properties, road safety and the amenity of the area.

Format of Guidance

This is one of a suite of guidance on house extensions and design, and should be read in conjunction with the House Extensions and Garages and Daylight and Intervisibility of Windows Guidance Notes.

All planning guidance notes are material considerations in the assessment of planning applications and shall be afforded significant weight in the decision making process. Failure to comply with Guidance Notes may be a reason for refusal of planning consent.

Planning Framework

East Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2, Policies DQ1, DQ2 and DQ2B set out the policy context for annexes and state that all developments should enhance and certainly not reduce the amenity and character of the surrounding area, in particular residential amenity will be strongly protected. The impact of proposals on neighbouring properties will be closely examined as a result of proposals for annexes.

Policy Guidance

An ancillary dwelling unit or family annexe is the creation of a new self-contained residential accommodation area. The creation of an annexe often results in either a new house (a separate planning unit) or occurs as an extension to an existing property. All annexes however should take the form of a physical extension to the main dwellinghouse, taking account of the principles of house extensions given in the House Extensions and Garages Planning Guidance Note.

In general the Planning Authority will resist the creation of new or separate planning units as annexes, as this often leads to sub-division of a plot, and such annexes will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where it is

demonstrably not possible to comply with the guidance. Where new or separate planning unit annexes are proposed, e.g. through the conversion of an existing outbuilding, applicants must provide justification as to why this annexe cannot be formed through an extension to the existing property.

Layout and Design

The layout, design and physical relationship between the house and the proposed annexe will be important in the consideration of applications, as will the size of the annexe proposed. In all cases a degree of internal connection will be required for dependant care access.

In general terms, the annexe should be the minimum size possible to allow for suitable living accommodation, with a maximum of one bedroom, and should be of a scale which is capable of being integrated into the main dwellinghouse once the dependency need has ceased.

In general, annexes should be located to the rear of the existing property, with shared vehicular access and garden ground. Annexes which have separate accesses or garden ground will generally be resisted by the Planning Authority.

In all cases, sufficient space between and around buildings, particularly garden ground requirements, should be retained, in line with the House Extensions and Garages Guidance Note, when considering proposals for annexes.

Annexes will be resisted here they create a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties, through overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of daylight or sunlight or lead to overdevelopment of the site.

Annexes in the Green Belt

Local Plan Policy GB2C limits the creation of new houses to full time workers in agriculture and forestry. The creation, therefore, of separate units for use as an annexe is inappropriate in planning policy terms and the Planning Authority will resist new or separate units for annexes with the Green Belt. All annexes within the Green Belt should therefore take the form on an extension to an existing dwelling.

Planning Conditions and Legal Agreements

Where an annexe is granted consent, the Planning Authority will place restrictions on any permission to ensure that the annexe is used solely as accommodation ancillary to the main dwellinghouse and cannot be disposed or let separately from the main house and that the annexe is fully integrated within the existing property upon such time as the dependency ceases.