

INFORMAL DEVELOPMENT CONTROL GUIDANCE NOTE 1

RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS

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1. Introduction

1.1 The CPA (Audit Commission) inspection of Hackney Planning Service (November 2005) considered the service to be fair with prospects for improvement. The inspectors identified two areas where the service could be improved. One of these recommendations related to the need to improve the quality and consistency of service regarding minor applications.

1.2 In order to address the CPA recommendations the Planning Service is taking forward a number of initiatives, including the preparation of a pre-application pack; staff training; an engagement strategy; dedicated consultation with applicants and a series of informal briefing notes on specific topics.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this note is to give day to day advice in assessing and processing planning applications for alterations and extensions to residential properties. It is intended to bring forward a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Residential Extensions and Alterations for adoption in 2006/7 as part of the council's policy development work on the new Local Development Framework (LDF). This note provides informal guidance, expanding on the adopted policies in the current development plan (UDP) and is intended to address, in the short term, the CPA recommendations to provide greater certainty and consistency in the planning application process.

3. Policy background

The relevant policy for assessing applications for residential extensions and alterations is **Policy EQ6** in the Hackney UDP 1995.

Policy EQ6 states:

The Council will normally permit alterations and extensions to buildings which:

- (A) Satisfy policies EQ1, 5 and 7;
- (B) Respect the architectural character, plan form, window and door size and pattern, materials, details and other conventions of the original building;
- (C) Retain and rehabilitate existing traditional features and materials (where replacement is necessary, this should be of authentic design, colour, detail and material);
- (D) Confine alterations and extensions wherever possible to the rear and minor facades and place ductwork, plant, lifts and other mechanical equipment within the envelope of the building or where they cause the least visual damage;

Where a roof extension is acceptable in principle, sympathetic and traditionally designed roof forms and dormers which relate to the townscape context will be sought.

Where enlargement of basement windows is required to satisfy daylighting standards or new windows are required within roof extensions, traditional proportions should be maintained and account taken of the alignment of windows on other floors of the building.

4. General design principles

- (i) Residential extensions and alterations should respect the architectural character of the building and its setting.
- (ii) Roof alterations should not disrupt the existing roof form, including hips, eaves and ridges
- (iii) Extensions and alterations should be subordinate to the original building in size and scale.
- (iv) Alterations and extensions to front elevations and roof forms are likely to have a greater impact on the appearance of a building and the surrounding townscape.
- (v) As a general rule extensions and alterations should be confined to the rear elevations, and extensions should be smaller in scale than the original building.

- (vi) Extensions can lead to a loss of privacy for neighbouring properties due to overlooking, and the size of an extension may also be limited by the impact on the daylight and sunlight received by neighbouring properties.

5. Informal guidance

5.1 The adopted policy and general design guidelines are very much in line with the policy guidance of other planning authorities, including other London boroughs, and are applicable to most areas of the borough. In general, the council encourages conversions which demonstrate a high quality of design.

5.2 However, the adopted policy has not been consistently applied and a considerable amount of development, both permitted and unauthorised, has taken place since 1995 that breaches the adopted policy. Much of this development is concentrated in the Stamford Hill area to the north of Clapton Common and in parts of Stoke Newington. Streets in and around these areas are distinguished by the large number of roof extensions involving front and rear box dormers, which often span between party walls and exceed the original ridge height. This form of development is contrary to the principles set out in Policy EQ6 and should not be permitted.

5.3 Where very significant erosion of the street environment has already occurred, however, this should be taken into account when assessing individual applications. In streets where 30% or more of the existing properties have already been altered in this way then there is scope for greater flexibility in considering front roof extensions. Where there are less than 30% affected properties then only front Velux windows are acceptable.

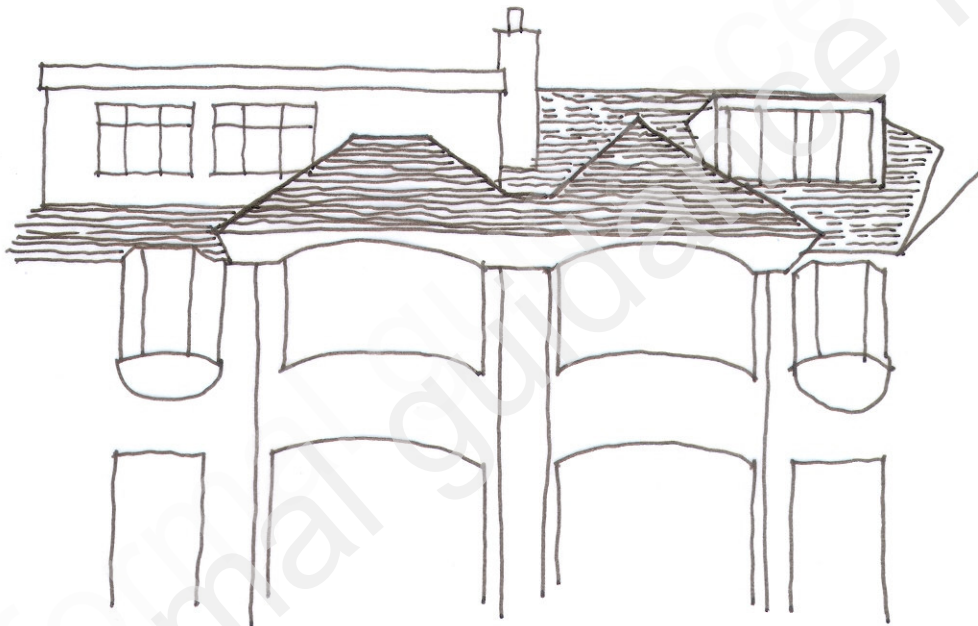
5.4 Rear extensions, including larger rear dormers, can also be considered more flexibly in these areas subject to normal residential amenity criteria concerning overlooking and sunlight and daylight. However, proposals for front roof and dormer extensions should only be considered where they take the form illustrated in section 6 below.

5.5 In general, all extensions should accord with the general design principles in reflecting the design of the original building and having regard to the character of the area and the amenity of neighbours. It is important to note that not all houses are capable of extension either because there is not enough space or their position or design would mean that any extension would harm the street scene or local amenity. There is also a limit to the amount of extension most houses can accommodate.

5.6 There are special provisions and policies that apply to listed buildings and to buildings in conservation areas.

6 FRONT ROOF EXTENSIONS

The following illustrations indicate acceptable types of front roof extensions in the form of dormer windows. These principles are applicable in those areas where 30% or more of existing properties have already been altered with front roof extensions and where the form of the house and the size of the roof permit an extension. This largely applies to terraced and semi-detached houses of the late Victorian, Edwardian and inter-war periods.



Left: **WRONG** – Large box dormer full width of property and front hipped bay roof truncated

Right: **RIGHT** – Acceptable dormer window set in plane of roof below ridge height



WRONG – Full width box dormer between raised party walls



RIGHT – Acceptable dormer window set in plane of roof below ridge height



WRONG – Large box dormer full width of house with deep fascia and wrapping around hipped roof



RIGHT – Dormer window set in plane of roof; width proportional to window below

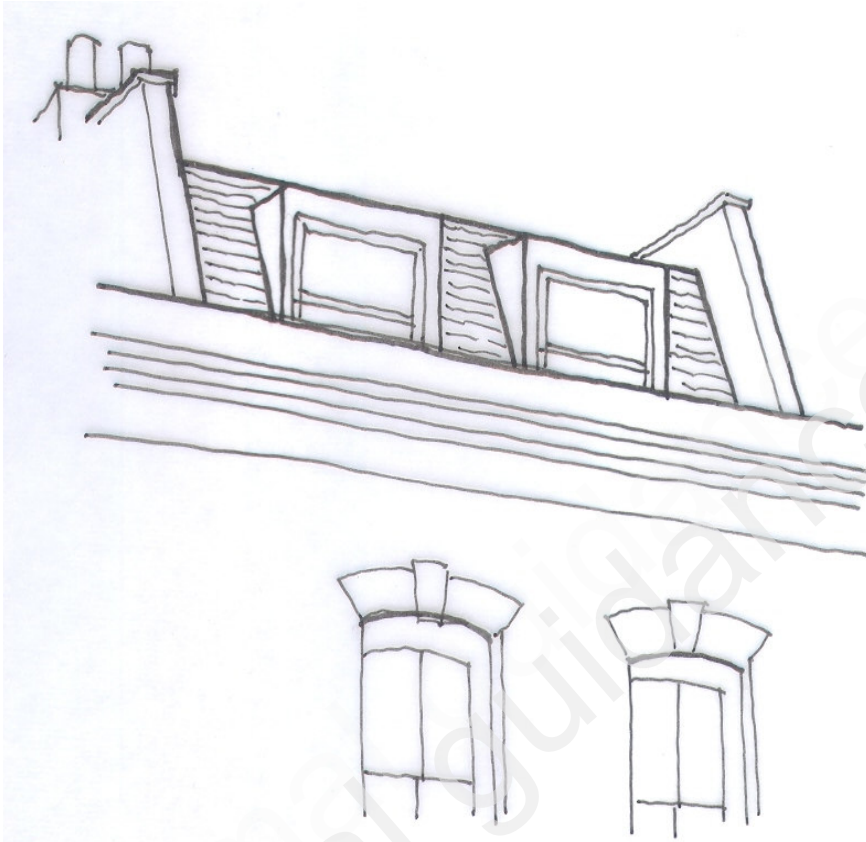
7 MANSARD ROOFS

In cases where the introduction of a roof extension would be acceptable the mansard roof is generally the correct form for roof extensions to Georgian or Victorian terraced houses.

Older Victorian properties, particularly terraced houses, often have shallow pitched roofs concealed behind a parapet forming a uniform cornice line on the street frontage. Although some terraced houses were originally built with mansard roofs, the continuity of the parapet line is an important townscape feature of early/mid Victorian streets and is typical of the street scene of large areas of residential Hackney. Consequently, where there are no roofs above the parapet in view elsewhere along the terrace, where the terrace forms an overall composition the balance of which would be upset, or where the scale of the house or terrace would be damaged by adding extra height, then a roof extension of any form should not be permitted. In streets where 30% or more of properties have already been altered at roof level then a mansard roof may be acceptable subject to the recommended design criteria being satisfied.



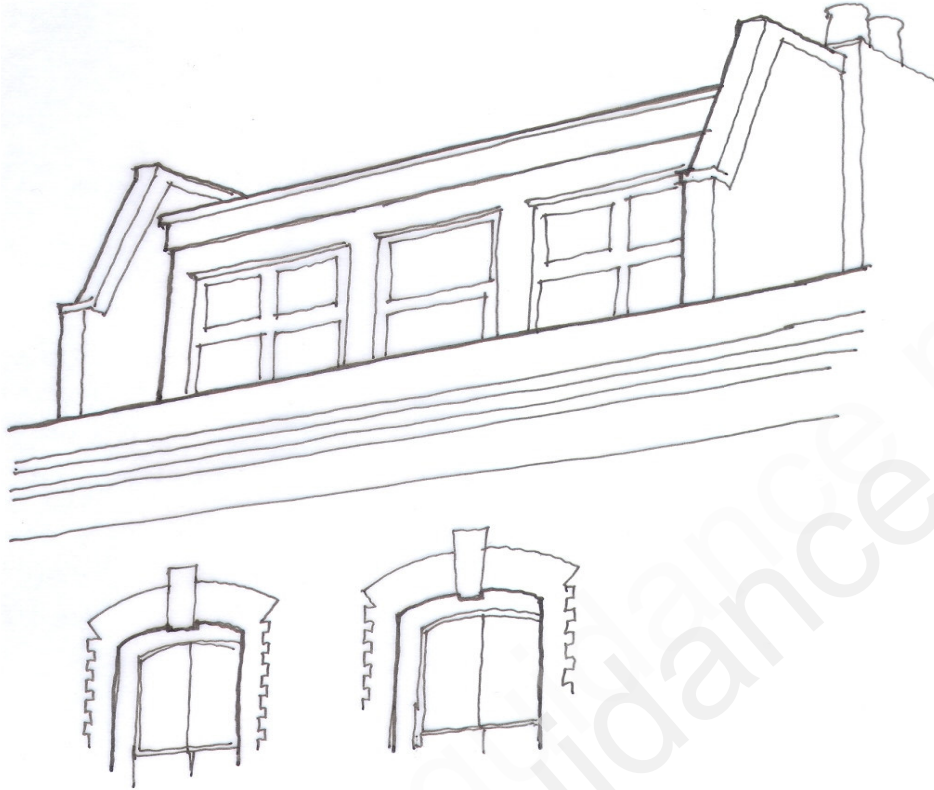
WRONG – a non-traditional roof form breaks the parapet roofline where no other roof extensions exist



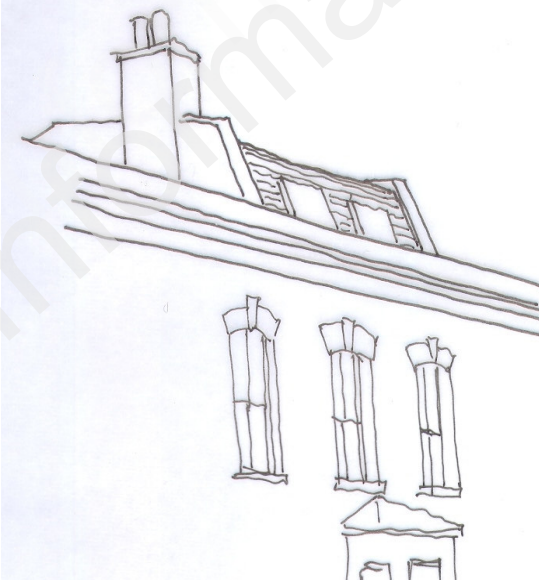
RIGHT – Mansard roof with dormer windows

A mansard roof should have two slopes, the lower face being steeply pitched and the upper one at a shallower pitch. Windows in mansard roofs should be set behind the parapet wall and project from the lower roof slope. Party walls and chimneys should normally be properly built up above the level of the new roof, with the party wall following the pitch of the roof.

In this example the individual dormer windows project from the slope of the roof and are simply detailed, modest in size and unpretentious. The party walls have been raised parallel with the slope of the roof. For correct appearance the mansard slope should not rest on the parapet wall but should rise from a point sufficiently behind the parapet wall at both the front and back, and should normally be separated from the wall by a substantial gutter.



WRONG – This is not a mansard roof. The extension takes the form of a flat roofed box between raised party walls. The vertical front wall is set back from the parapet to form a roof terrace, and the windows bear no relationship to the existing windows of the house below. The parapet walls are built up vertically from the top of the parapet.

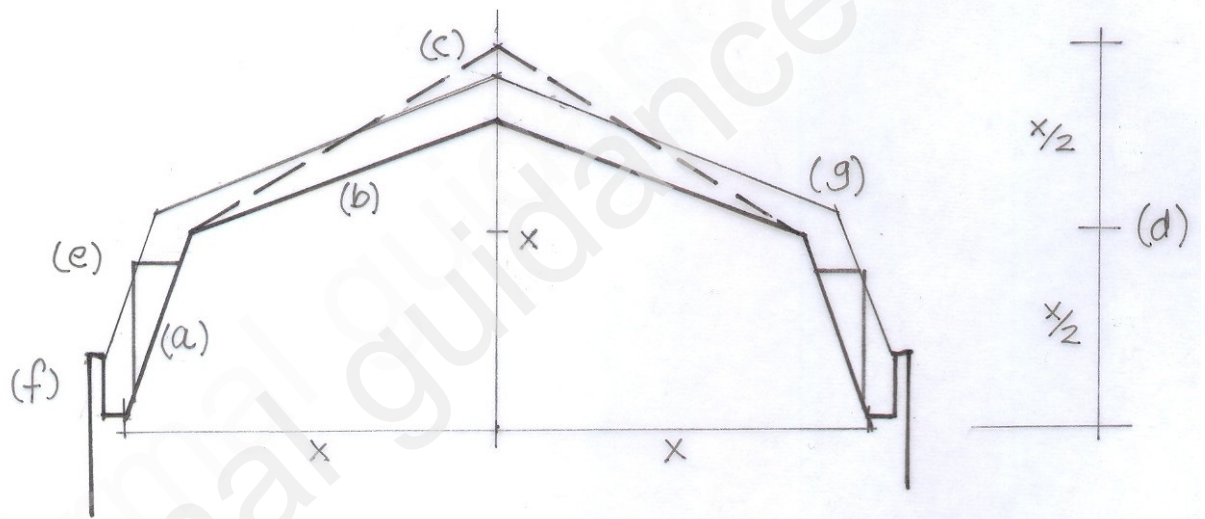


WRONG – the mansard roof form is correct but the windows are set in the roof plane instead of being projecting dormers.

MANSARD ROOF

SETTING OUT PRINCIPLES

The traditional method of setting out a mansard roof is based on a semicircle with the span of the roof as the diameter. The upper slope should generally not be greater than 30 degrees (depending on roofing materials and other factors) and the lower slope should be in the region of 70 degrees. The parapet coping should fall towards the gutter and the party wall line should start behind the back line of the coping.



KEY

- (a) lower slope approximately 70 degrees
- (b) upper slope can be approximately 20 – 25 degrees minimum (suitable for natural and artificial slates)
- (c) traditional upper slope maximum 30 degrees
- (d) junction between the two roof slopes ('knee') traditionally located at mid-point of height from diameter to ridge
- (e) dormer window projecting from the roof plane
- (f) parapet wall and gutter
- (g) party walls and chimney stacks raised parallel to roof slope