

PARKING CARS IN FRONT GARDENS

Introduction

Well considered and appropriate designs for off-street parking in front gardens can provide for the car parking needs of residents while making a positive contribution to the character and amenity of streetscapes. By comparison, poorly designed parking in front gardens can detract from the visual character of streets through the excessive removal of front boundary walls or railings and the surfacing of the entire front garden. This booklet is intended to provide guidance on the design of off-street parking bearing in mind aesthetic, environmental, planning and traffic safety requirements. In all cases the acceptability of a proposal will depend on several issues as outlined below and will be at the discretion of Dublin City Council.

Planning Permission

Planning Permission is required for the alteration of a front garden in order to provide car parking by creating a new access, or by the material widening (i.e. significant widening) of an existing access. Proposals for off-street parking in the front gardens of single dwellings in mainly residential areas will not be permitted where residents rely on on-street car parking and there is a strong demand for such parking.

Application forms and Vehicular Access Guidelines can be obtained from Dublin City Council's Planning Department. You should contact the Planning Department and the Roads & Traffic Department to get advice on the acceptability of your specific proposal and other technical requirements before any planning application is made. You should also contact Road Maintenance Services in advance to discuss the dishing of the public footpath outside the proposed entrance. Dishing of footpaths to allow off-street parking is carried out by Road Maintenance Services and would be at your expense.

Please note that if you carry out development which has not been authorised you may be subject to enforcement action by Dublin City Council to reinstate any alterations you may have undertaken.

Basic Dimensions and Surfacing

Generally, the vehicular opening proposed shall be at least 2.5 metres or at most 3.6 metres in width and shall not have outward opening gates. Narrower widths are generally more desirable and maximum widths will generally only be acceptable where exceptional site conditions exist.

The Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017 sets out the detailed requirements for parking in the curtilage of Protected Structures and in Conservation Areas at Section 17.10.6 and Appendix 10. Proposals for off-street parking in these instances will not normally be acceptable where proposals would significantly impact on the character or setting of the dwelling or where the scale of intervention would be excessive, particularly in the case of smaller gardens. The width of the vehicular access shall be kept to a minimum, having a maximum width of no more than 2.6 metres, and shall not have outward opening gates.

The basic dimensions to accommodate the footprint of a car within a front garden are 3 metres by 5 metres. It is essential that there is also adequate space to allow for manoeuvring and circulation between the front boundary (be it a wall, railing or otherwise) and the front of the building. A proposal will not be considered acceptable where there is insufficient area to accommodate the car safely within the garden, and to provide safe access and egress from the proposed parking space, for example near a very busy road or a junction with restricted visibility. In all cases you should check that the proposed entrance will not interfere with any features on the public footpath such as trees, lamp posts, bus stops, etc. The area paved for the car need only be that required for the actual wheels and a strip would suffice with gravel, slate chips or grass between. Precast or natural slabs, setts, cobble or other such materials are preferable to the use of concrete or tarmacadam for the paved area. This minimises the visual impact when the car is not parked in the garden.

The combined effect of paving a number of gardens in a street or area increases the risk of flooding and pollution (oil, brake dust, etc).

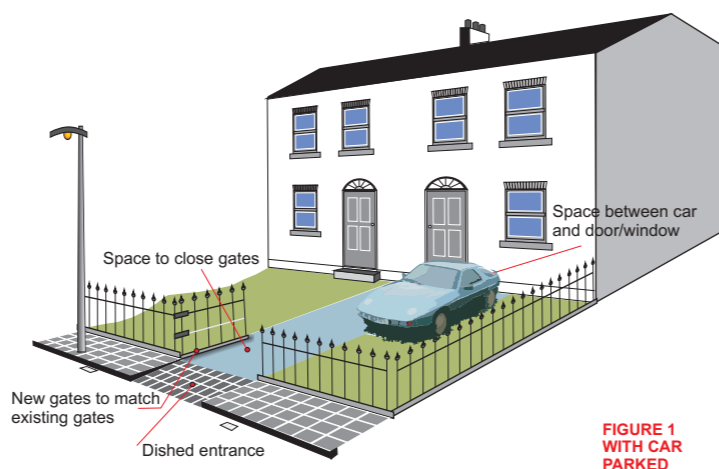


FIGURE 1 WITH CAR PARKED

The use of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) management practices can help remove pollutants from surface water runoff and reduce overall flood risk in the city while also enhancing amenity and biodiversity.

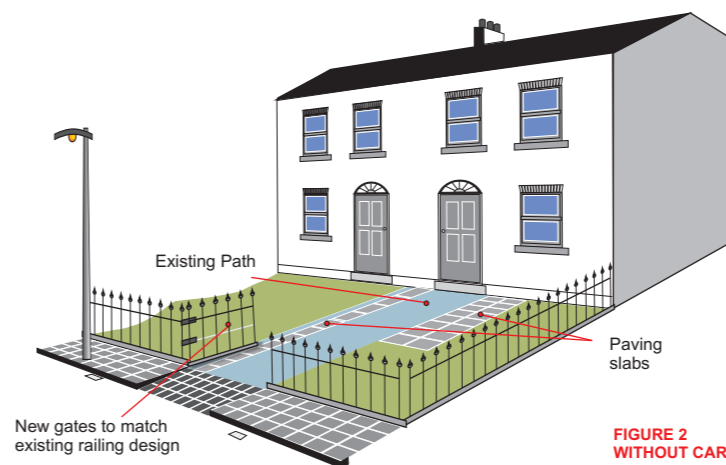


FIGURE 2 WITHOUT CAR

Proposals should therefore indicate how the design aims to control surface water runoff in a sustainable fashion through the use of permeable or porous surfaces such as gravel and green areas, etc rather than excessive hard surfacing. Large unrelieved areas of paving or other impermeable surface treatments will not be considered acceptable.

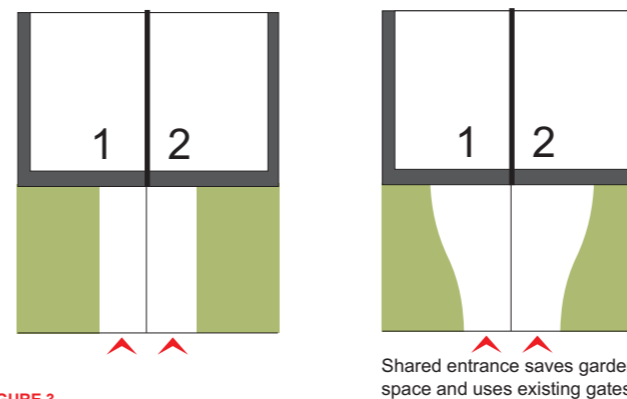


FIGURE 3

Treatment of Front Boundaries

There are many different types of boundary treatment in existence. When considering any alterations, minimal interventions are desirable and proposals should aim to be complementary or consistent to others in the area which are of a high standard.

1. Boundary walls of limestone, granite or rubble, either plastered or unplastered

As mentioned earlier, there are many different kinds of boundaries in existence.

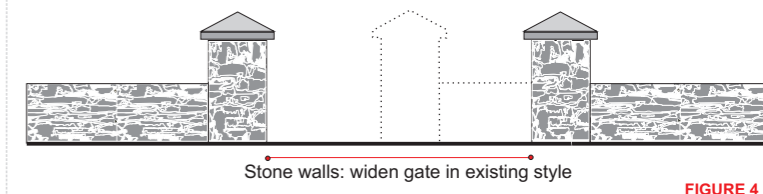


FIGURE 4

These may have granite piers. The widening of the entrance should be carried out carefully to move one of the existing piers to a new position, with a revised gate design similar to the existing. Some existing gates can be extended to provide increased width by welding on additional sections.

2. Iron railing with or without a plinth

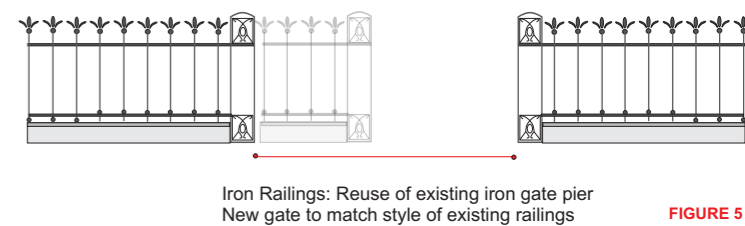


FIGURE 5

This type of boundary sometimes incorporates an iron gatepost or stone pier. The entrance should be widened on one side by moving the gatepost or stone pier and extending one leaf of the gate. A very disruptive effect is caused by the insertion of a completely different type of gate and gate pier. Minimal intervention is desirable where the gate pier is of ornamental wrought iron design.

3. Low walls (without railings)

There are usually two gate piers, one which can be moved back to provide for the extra entrance width and any hedge or shrub trimmed accordingly.

4. Open plan with low plinth or kerb



**FIGURE 6
ENCLOSURE VERSUS
OPEN PLAN EFFECT**

This is typically found in housing estates and preferably no change should be made. It is very undesirable to erect gates, gate piers and enclosing walls in such circumstances as they disrupt the character of the estate.

5. Brick or plastered concrete walls

Existing gate piers should be duplicated, and replacement of plaster and brickwork should match the existing.

6. Wooden fencing

This is not very common and has a limited life in the Irish climate. In replacing decayed timber fencing you should look at how other people nearby have dealt with the problem and try to be consistent with neighbouring boundaries. It may be worthwhile to agree a common approach with neighbours.

7. Hedges with or without a fence

Hedges of privet, thorn, Griselinia, etc can form very attractive boundaries. In widening an entrance gate care should be taken to ensure that the roots of the existing hedge are not disturbed beyond what is necessary for the insertion of the wider gate. The existing hedging can then grow and improve the appearance of the new entrance.

Landscape Treatment of Front Gardens

By reducing the paved area to the front garden to a minimum, space can be left for the planting of shrubs and ground cover. Even a narrow strip of earth will provide scope for the planting of trees, hedging and shrubs. The front boundary wall or fence should always be provided with a screen of ornamental small trees or hedging to give visual definition to the extent of the front garden and soften the appearance of the parked car. Importantly, any planting incorporated in the garden must not obscure visibility for drivers when exiting the driveway.

The Problem of Multiple Parking

The guidelines and principles in this advisory booklet are not intended to apply to cases where multiple commercial or residential off-street car parking is required. It is important that professional advice and the guidance of the Planning Department be sought at a preliminary stage due to the relative complexity and individual characteristics of these situations.

Type of Vehicle

The advice and guidance in this booklet refers to the parking of private cars in front gardens used in connection with the normal residential use of the dwelling. Parking of any type of vehicle used in connection with a commercial operation requires separate planning permission. Further advice should be sought from the Planning Department in this instance.

You may keep or store not more than one caravan, campervan or boat within the curtilage of your house. However, the caravan, campervan or boat must not be used for the storage, display, advertisement or sale of goods, or for the purpose of any business. Furthermore, the caravan, campervan or boat must not be occupied as a dwelling while parked or stored, nor may it be left on the site for more than nine months in any year. These requirements are laid down in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, and are designed to avoid disputes where neighbours object to the parking of caravans and large vehicles in front gardens. In this respect, it may be desirable to park your caravan, etc in the back garden in a place where it will not be incongruous or lead to a loss of amenity for you or your neighbour.

Summary Principles

1. The front garden shall still give the impression of being a front garden.
2. New work to the front boundary should be sympathetic to that existing and to the street.
3. Where a gate pier or gate support has to be removed, it should be reused or reproduced in a new position.
4. Considerable care should be taken with the design and layout and qualified professional advice is desirable.
5. The Planning Department and Roads & Traffic Department of Dublin City Council should be consulted at an early stage and before a planning application is submitted.

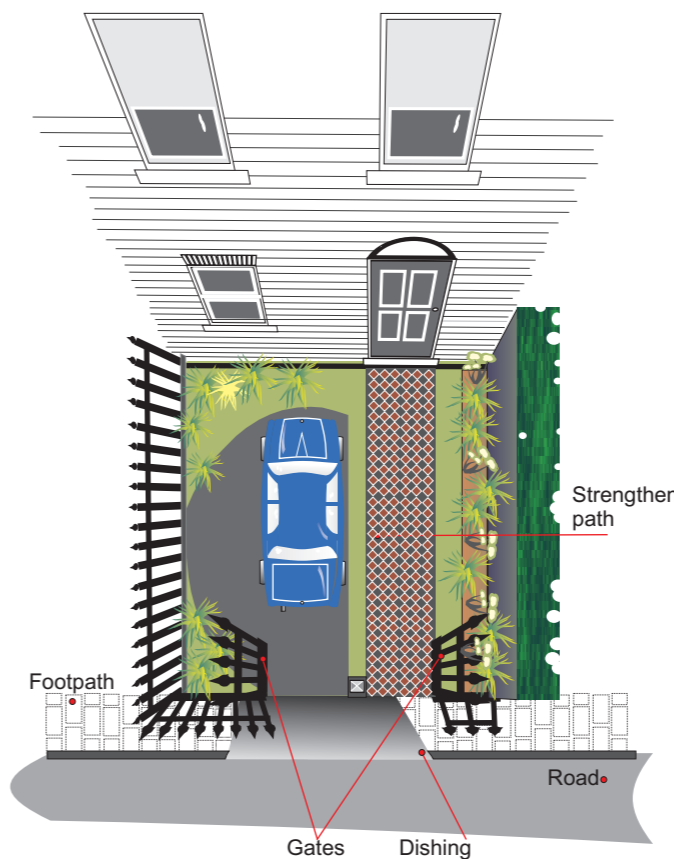


FIGURE 7

This advice booklet does not purport to be a legal interpretation of the Planning and Development Acts or associated Regulations.

Contact Details:

Planning & Economic Development Department	Roads & Traffic Department
Dublin City Council	Dublin City Council
Civic Offices	Civic Offices
Wood Quay Dublin 8	Wood Quay
Telephone: (01) 222 2151	Dublin 8
Email: planning@dublincity.ie	Telephone: (01) 222 3176
	Email: traffic@dublincity.ie

Road Maintenance Services (Head Office)

Dublin City Council
Civic Offices
Wood Quay
Dublin 8
Telephone: (01) 222 2255
Email: roadmaintenance@dublincity.ie

Web: www.dublincity.ie

