

Planning Permission

Domestic Extensions and Additions

From 1st October 2008, unless your home is a Listed Building or lies within an environmentally sensitive area (Conservation Area, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a World Heritage Site) where firmer restrictions still apply, there is greater scope to extend or add to your home, without the need to apply for planning approval, provided that you meet a new set of limits and conditions.

The new regime for what is allowed without planning permission applies to the dimensions of the proposed extension, its position on the house and its proximity to your boundaries. Many rear and side extensions will not now need planning permission as long as you accord with certain restrictions, such as using obscure glazing and limiting the height of any opening part of a window installed in a side extension. There are also differences in what is allowed by way of rear additions to a detached property and what is allowed for a rear extension to a semi-detached or terrace property.

While there is much greater opportunity to extend to the side and rear, you will, however, still, need to apply for planning permission if:

- You want to build an addition which would be forward of the principal or side elevation of the original house which faces a highway
- Additions or other buildings would cover more than half the area of land around the original house.

Full details of the new regime can be found on the Planning Portal web-site, including an "Interactive House" design tool that illustrates what can and cannot be done before Planning Permission is needed:

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/hhg/houseguide.htm>

The following guidance relates to some other common alterations, additions or extensions that homeowners might wish to carry out:

Conservatories:

The addition of a conservatory is treated exactly the same as any other extension under planning regulations, regardless of the materials used. Thus, in many instances planning permission will not be needed.

Dormer Windows and Loft Conversions:

Whether or not you need planning permission for a dormer window or loft extension depends on its size and where on your home it is positioned. Planning Permission will not be needed provided that:

- Your home is not situated in a Conservation Area or An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a World Heritage Site; and
- If your property is a terraced dwelling, the loft extension does not exceed 40 cubic metres or
- If you live in any other dwelling (excluding "flats") the loft extension does not exceed 50 cubic metres;
- You would not increase the height of the dwelling above its existing maximum height;

- Side-facing windows are obscurely-glazed and any opening is a minimum of 1.7m above the floor;
- Materials are similar in appearance to the existing dwelling;
- The work does not affect a principal elevation that faces onto a highway;
- The work does not include a veranda, balcony or raised platform such as decking; and
- Roof extensions, apart from hip to gable ones, are set back, as far as practicable, at least 20cm from the eaves.

Porches do not need planning permission provided that their ground area does not exceed 3 square metres; they do not exceed 3 metres in height; and they do not lie within 2 metres of any boundary with a highway.

Buildings and other structures on land around dwellings

do not need planning permission if they satisfy the following criteria:

- It does not project forward of the principal elevation of the original house
- It is not more than single-storey in height
- It does not exceed 4 metres in height if it has a dual-pitched roof
- It does not exceed 3 metres in height if it has any other roof form
- It has a maximum eaves height of 2.5 metres
- No part exceeds 2.5 metres in height if it is within 2 metres of the boundary
- It does not cover more than half the area of land around the original house
- It does not include a veranda, balcony or a raised platform with a height greater than 30 centimetres
- Any oil storage container has a capacity less than 3,500 litres

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Within Conservation Areas, outbuildings at the side of properties will require planning permission, whilst all outbuildings within the boundaries of Listed Buildings will require permission. Within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and World Heritage Sites planning permission will be needed if the total area of ground covered by buildings or other structures situated more than 20 metres from the dwelling would exceed 10 square metres.

Decking:

Putting up decking or other raised platforms, in your garden is permitted development providing:

- Its height is not more than 30 centimetres above the existing ground level; and
- Together with other extensions, outbuildings etc, it does not cover more than 50 per cent of the garden area.

Paving Driveways or Front Gardens:

Planning Permission **will** be needed to either provide or replace an existing hard surface area, such as a vehicle standing or driveway, in your front garden which covers more than 5 square metres surface area unless:

- The surface finish being used is made of porous or permeable material such as gravel, permeable block paving or porous asphalt; or
- If any other surface material is used, the rainwater is directed to a lawn or flower/shrub border to drain away naturally.

Fences, walls and gates do not need planning permission if they are 1 metre or less in height and lie next to a footpath or highway used by vehicles or are 2 metres or less in height elsewhere.

Roof lights or Skylights:

You do not need permission to install either rooflights or skylights to your home provided that they do not project more than 150mm from the plane of the existing roof and do not extend higher than the existing maximum height of the roof. If you fit these to a side facing elevation, obscure glazing must be used and any part of the window that opens for ventilation must be a minimum of 1.7 metres above the floor level of the room being served.

Flues, Chimneys and Soil and Vent Pipes:

You can now fit, alter or replace a flue, chimney or soil and vent pipe without needing planning permission as long as it does not extend higher than 1 metre above the existing highest part of your roof, although if your home is in a Conservation Area, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a World Heritage Site you can only undertake the work provided it is not on a principal elevation or a side elevation facing a highway.

Wall or Roof Mounted Solar Panels:

You do not require permission to add solar panels to your home, as long as they do not project more than 200mm above the plane of the existing roof slope or above its ridge height and they are sited to minimise their effect on the external appearance of the building and the amenity of the area. In addition, within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, solar panels are not permitted on walls forming the principal and side elevations of the dwelling, or on the walls of any buildings within the grounds of the dwelling, which would be visible from the highway. If the dwelling is a Listed Building no solar panels are permitted either on it or on buildings within its grounds.