

Householder Extensions & Alterations Guidance advice

BEFORE YOU START

Covenants

These or other restrictions on your property's title or conditions in a lease may require you to get someone else's agreement before carrying out any building work. This may be the case even if you do not need planning permission. You can check this yourself or take legal advice.

Specialist Advice

Is your home subject to a special designation? For example if your home is within a Conservation Area or the indicative 1 in 100 year flood plain you may have to take specialist advice.

Listed Buildings

As well as planning permission you will need separate listed building consent. There is no fee to pay for this type of application.

Trees

Are there any trees nearby? Remember tree roots can go beyond a tree's canopy, which means you could affect your neighbour's trees. If a tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order or is within a Conservation Area, you will need the Council's consent to prune or fell it. You should take specialist advice in these circumstances. There is no fee to pay for this type of application.

Neighbours

Put yourself in their shoes. Would you be concerned about the extension you want to build being next to you? If yes then perhaps you need to think again.

Your neighbours rights to light

See separate guideline advice on this

Communication

Speak to your neighbours. How would you feel if the first thing you knew about your neighbour intending to start building works is either a letter from the Council or the builders turning up to start work? Disputes often arise because of a lack of communication or misunderstanding.



Design

- How will the extension appear from your neighbour's point of view?
 - Is the ground level ?
 - Is there a direct or indirect loss of car parking spaces ?
 - Does the size of your plot reduce the scope for extending ?
 - Could you make your home more environmentally friendly and implement 'green' changes?
 - Are you going to change the boiler or use a water butt ?
- Consider drainage and flood risk, for example reducing the amount of hard surfaced area.

Security

- Is this an opportunity to make your property more secure ?
 - Are you going to fit better locks on windows and doors ?
 - Are you creating an opportunity to gain easier access to your property ?
- For example, are first floor windows and the rear garden now more easily accessed ?
- Are potential access points visible to the street to prevent potential intruders being hidden from view?

Wildlife

Some properties hold roosts of bats or provide refuge for other protected species. The law protects bats because of their roosting requirements. For further advice contact English Nature.

Make up your mind

Have you applied for what you actually want and or can physically build ?
You will be surprised how many people have planning permission and then build something different, which can lead to formal action being taken.

BEFORE AND DURING BUILDING WORK

Before building work starts

Check your Planning and Building Regulations Notices to see if there are any conditions that require you to do anything before you can start. For example do you need to submit samples of external materials ?

Protect trees with fencing to prevent them being hit or having material stored under their canopy, which can cause damage.

Do you want to make any changes to your approved plans? For example are you changing the number of windows. If so, check with the Council, as you may need a new planning application.

Remember your neighbours:

Noise - Tell them before your building work starts. Let them know how long the work will take, and try to arrange noisy jobs at a time and on a day that minimises disturbance. For example restrict noisy work to between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Mondays to Fridays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays.

Skips - Where will any skip or rubble be stored? Can the waste be reused in an extension's foundations or a new patio? If the skip is to be on the road you need to obtain a licence from your Council.

Security - Scaffolding and openings provide easy access to your and your neighbour's property.

Safety - Any building work creates potential hazards, especially for children.

Fires - When clearing the site to build your extension do not burn waste material such as vegetation. This causes pollution and nuisance for your neighbours.

During building works

As work progresses check that your builder is working in accordance with your approved plans and any conditions imposed. For example if a window is required to be obscure glazed, make sure it is.

Make sure an approved Building Control Officer/ Inspector from your Council regularly inspects the work