The Guide to House Extension

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In the residential property sector in the UK, extensions are more popular then new-build projects. It is connected with the difficulties to find the building plot and all the burden of planning permissions for new builds. Extensions are projects that involve work to existing buildings and extending is the common way of adding more space and increasing the value of the property. This guide is an introduction to all important factors connected with extension projects- planning permissions, building regulations, costs, technology and materials.

Planning permissions

With all building work, the owner of the property is responsible for complying with the planning rules and building regulations. Under the Permitted Development Rights some extensions can be built without the requirement of planning permission. The first step in the extension project is to test the project against permitted development rights to find out whether the planning permission is required or project can go ahead straightaway.

An extension will be considered as a permitted development and no planning permission will be required if the following conditions will be met:

- No more than 50% of the garden around the existing building could be covered.
- Extension forward of the existing building elevation or side elevation fronting a highway are not permitted development.
- Height restrictions - no extension to be higher than the highest part of the roof.
- Single-storey rear extension must not extend beyond the rear wall of the existing building by more than 3 metres if an attached house or by 4 metres if a detached house. In addition, outside Article 2(3) designated land* and Sites of Special Scientific Interest the limit is increased to 6m if an attached house and 8m if a detached house until 30 May 2019. These increased limits (between 3m and 6m and between 4m and 8m respectively) are subject to the prior notification of the proposal to the Local Planning Authority and the implementation of a neighbour consultation scheme. If objections are received, the proposal might not be allowed.
- Maximum height of a single-storey rear extension of 4 metres.
- Extensions of more than one storey must not extend beyond the rear wall of the original house* by more than 3 metres.
- Maximum eaves height of an extension

within 2 metres of the boundary of 3 metres.
- Maximum eaves and ridge height of extension no higher than the original house*.
- Side extensions to be single storey with maximum height of 4 metres and width no more than half the width of the original house*.
- Two-storey extensions no closer than 7 metres to rear boundary.
- Roof pitch of extensions higher than one storey to match original house*.
- Materials used must be similar in appearance to the original house*.
- No balconies and verandas are permitted.
- Upper-floor, side-facing windows to be obscure-glazed; any opening to be 1.7m above the floor.
- On designated land* no permitted development for rear extensions of more than one storey.
- On designated land* no cladding of the exterior with stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles.
- On designated land* side extensions are not a permitted development.

If the project meet conditions of the permitted development works can start straightaway. However, it is strongly recommended to obtain the Lawful Development Certificate as a prove that all works will be legal. The application for LDC can be done at local council, the fee will apply.

When considering applications for house extensions local authority will look at four main issues:
- The design in relation to the existing house
- The effect on the street scene and character of the area - outlook
- The effect on the neighbouring properties - separation distances, privacy, overshadowing
- The effect on parking facilities and highway safety

If the project does not qualify as a permitted development then there is need to submit the planning application. There are various factors that might affect the planning permission such as neighbours, design, nature and wildlife, environmental health, roads and highways. Please refer to local authority for more details.

The failure to obtain planning permission or comply with the details of a permission is so called planning breach. It is not illegal and often the council permits a retrospective application where planning permission has not been sought. However, if the breach involves a previously rejected project the council can issue an enforcement notice requiring to put things back as they were. Also the enforcement notice can apply if planning control rules are broken and the breech affects public amenity or the existing use of land and buildings. It is illegal to disobey a enforcement notice unless it is successfully appealed against.

** Designated land includes conservation areas, national parks and the Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and World Heritage Sites.*
** Original house means the house as it was first built or as it stood on 1 July 1948 (if it was built before that date). Although you may not have built an extension to the house, a previous owner may have done so.*
** Please note: The permitted development allowances described here apply to houses and not to: Flats and maisonettes (view our guidance on flats and maisonettes), Converted houses or houses created through the permitted development rights to change use (as detailed in our change of use section), Other buildings, Areas where there may be a planning condition, Article 4 Direction or other restriction that limits permitted development rights.*
** Please be aware that if your development is over 100 square metres, it may be liable for a charge under the Community Infrastructure Levy.*
** You should check with your Local Planning Authority whether permitted development rights apply – they may have been removed by what are known as Article 4 directions. Other consents may be required if your house is listed or in a designated area. Please refer to the Planning Portal for all details.*

Building Regulations

Every extension project requires the Building Regulation Approval, regardless of whether it needs the planning permission or not. Building regulations ensure that the minimum required standards of design and construction are met, such as insulation norms, energy efficiency, ventilation, fire resistance, drainage, access etc. Building control officer is assessing the works in accordance with the Building Regulations. Please bear in mind that regulations differ between England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Please refer to the following websites for the exact requirements: DCLG in England; Building Standards in Scotland; Building Control in Northern Ireland; or the Welsh Government website. Also worth a look is www.planningportal.gov.uk.

How to obtain the Building Regulations approval?

There are two options to consider:

- ***Building Regulations Application*** - Submitting the Full Plan to the local planning authority, pay the fee and expect the building inspector to visit site regular and inspect works. The local authority will assess plans and consult for instance utility providers, to give the approval within 5 weeks. In some cases the conditional approval might be given which will specify what to modify in plans. If the application is refused appeals can be made to a magistrates court or to the Department for Communities and Local Government.
- ***Building Notice*** - Submitting the Building Notice, informing the council that you will be complying with the regulations and gives the building control department 48 hours notice of the intention to start the work. Surveyors will come and inspect the work at various stages and will advise you of any problems. This option does not require the preparation of full detailed plans and enable to start some works straightaway. This option is recommended for simpler projects, for instance extensions that fall within permitted development as it might be risky due to no assurance that the project meets the regulations.

All documents - full plans and building notices- submitted to local authority are valid three years

Building Regulations Approved Documents

Structural safety	Part A
Fire safety	Part B
Resistance to contaminants and moisture	Part C
Toxic substances	Part D
Resistance to sound	Part E
Ventilation	Part F
Sanitation, hot water and water efficiency	Part G
Drainage and waste disposal	Part H
Heating and appliances	Part J
Protection from falling	Part K
Conservation of fuel and power	Part L
Access to and use of buildings	Part M
Glazing safety	Part N
Electrical safety	Part P

Inspection stages	Notice
Works commencement	2 days
Excavation of foundations	1 day
Foundations laid	1 day
Oversite preparation	1 day
DPC	1 day
Drainage	1 day
Occupation prior to completion	within 5 days
Completion	within 5 days

from the date of submission and will lapse if not started within that time. There is no need to wait for the approval before commencing work if the 48 hours written notice was submitted. Inspectors will assess the work progressively to find and correct any faults. In Scotland, work cannot start without approval of plans and in Ireland the system relies on self-certification only.

Inspection

Building control officers will inspect the work progress on site to assess its compliance with the Building Regulations both in the case of Building Regulation applications and building notices. Contractor is responsible to notify the inspector when the particular stage is reached and give 24 hours' notice for inspection. If the assessment of the particular stage was missed, the local authority can ask to open up the work for inspection at owner's or contractor's expense.If the approved inspector will be appointed it is his/her responsibility for checking the plans and inspect the work on site. Contractor and the approved inspector need to jointly notify the local authority of start of works on site. When the project is finished, the approved inspector issue a final certificate to the local authority which prove that the work is completed and it complies with the regulations. The Association of Consultant Approved Inspectors (ACAI) website provides the database of approved inspectors.

If the contractor does not apply for inspection or completion certificate and does not comply with the building regulations there are fines up to £5,000 or requirement to re-do works. Contractors registered with Gas Safety, NICEIC etc. can self-certify for boiler installations, electrical works or drainage. Ultimately, the owner of the property is liable for all building regulations compliance. Contractor is liable for the first six months only. Completion certificate at the end of works confirms that the building regulations are met.

Projects may be subject to other statutory requirements such as fire precautions, water regulations, energy performance certificate, licensing/registration and the Party Wall Act 1996, conservation area or listed building consent.

Party Wall Agreement

In accordance with the Party Wall Act 1996 when commencing any extension works there should be a Party Wall Agreement, as the extending works might involve underpinning, injecting DPC or internal linings. A signed Party Wall Agreement provides evidence that the owner of the adjacent building consents to any potential alterations.

Energy Performance Certificate

EPC gives the property the energy efficiency rating from A to G,which is valid for 10 years. EPC is required before moving to the property. An EPC contains and information about a property's energy use and typical energy costs, plus recommendations about how to reduce energy use. EPC is issued by the approved assessors, which can be find here www.epcregister.com/searchAssessor.html

Extensions costs

We highly recommend to use IBB Estimator online programme or mobile application for your cost calculations with regards to extension projects. It provides detailed schedule of works, prices of materials and cost of labour. Currently depending where in the UK the extension project will be undertaken it is necessary to allow £1000-2000 per square meter for single storey extension, bearing in mind that the price will be influenced by the specification and standard required.

Manual guide to extensions

The works connected with adding the extension to the existing structure will vary depending on the project specification, but this manual guide is giving some insights on what is involved and what materials will be required:

1. ***Setting out, digging footings and pouring foundation:***
   sand, cement, balast, sharp

2. ***Installing DPC and new drainage,***
   finishing concrete and floor structure:
   DPC, drainage pipes, self-levelling mortars,
   insulation

3. ***Building cavity or solid walls***
4. ***Installing steel beams***
5. ***Installing roof structure and laying roof coverings***
6. ***Installing windows and doors***
7. ***Drylining profiles, plasterboards***
8. ***Providing first fix on plumbing and electric, UFH / radiators***
9. ***Plastering:***
   Multifinish, Cekol C45, Megaron, Superfinish

10. ***Providing second fix on plumbing and electric***
11. ***Fitting floor finishes, painting: Sniezka***

12. ***Kitchen units installation, bathroom works if required***
13. ***Finishing external walls insulation, rendering or brickwork etc.: IBB Therm, polystyrene***
14. ***Snagging list***

Where new work is proposed, there should be done survey to establish the condition of the existing building and if some elements of structure will not be able to meet the life expectancy of 60 years or 15 years for non-structural elements, they should be replaced or repaired.

Foundations and load-bearing elements (walls, floors, roofs)

The survey is particularly important for retained elements, foundations and load-bearing structures including walls, floors and roofs. If there are visible cracks or suspected movements the remedial measures should be advised by the Structural Engineer. In case of extensions or loft conversions any additional loads must be taken into account. Moreover the consideration of additional drainage is essential. Where existing foundations require underpinning, a design by a Chartered Structural Engineer should be provided and approved by the Warranty Surveyor prior to work commencing on-site. In order to prevent the movement, the new structure should have the same foundation type as the existing building. Separating walls between new and existing structure must meet the Building Regulations requirements to account for sound insulation and fire resistance norms. The calculations should be done whether the existing wall is strong enough to support any additional loads of new structure. The junctions between new and existing walls should be properly insulated to prevent dampness, method of bonding should be advised by the Structural Engineer.

DPC

All walls, floors and basements should include a DPC. The effective DPC should be present in the existing wall, linked to the new DPC and Damp Proof Membrane (DPM) of the new structure. The new DPC should lap the existing DPC by at least 100mm.

Roof coverings

Fixing of slates, tiles and the condition of existing fixings, e.g. nails and clips, should be examined if the intention is to keep the roof covering.

Please note that this is an introductory guide and it is not a definitive source of legal information.

(Source: PlanningPortal, NHBC)