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Do I need planning permission

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Sometimes it is not clear whether planning permission is needed. Planning permission is necessary for a wide range of developments including extensions and minor alterations to some buildings.

However, some minor alterations and extensions can often be carried out without the need for planning permission. This is known as permitted development.

Permitted developments must not exceed the predetermined limits and conditions. Some properties also fall within areas where permitted development rights have been withdrawn and therefore we strongly advise you check with the planning department before undertaking any work under "permitted development".

In 2013, the government introduced changes to the system of permitted development rights in England. Additional rights were introduced in 2015.

Some are permanent and some are temporary changes:

- Larger single-storey rear extensions to residential properties
- Larger extensions to industrial and warehousing premises, shops and offices
- Conversion of buildings from office to residential uses
- More flexible uses of shops, offices and agricultural buildings
- Easier conversion of some premises for school uses
- Telecom installations in conservation areas

If you want to carry out any of the above, you will need to follow the prior approval process.

Full details of the criteria and procedure are contained in the [legislation](#) and on the [Planning Portal's Website](#)

Please note that if planning permission is required for a development, work must not begin until permission has been obtained.

Properties that do not have permitted development rights

The owners of apartments, maisonettes and flats do not have the same permitted development rights as houses and you can find out more using [The Planning Portal](#).

The council also has the power to withdraw permitted development rights and there are two types of situation where this may happen:

- Where the character of an area, such as a conservation area, would be threatened by permitted developments, the council can issue an Article 4 direction
- On some housing developments where extensions or alterations could have an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbours, the council may have removed permitted development rights by a condition on the original planning permission. For example, if a development has open plan front gardens, permitted development rights to provide front boundary walls/fences may have been withdrawn

If you think your home may fall into either of these categories, please call us. We may be able to tell you if this is the case.

The need for planning permission

If your proposed development does not fall within the scope of permitted development, or if your [permitted development](#) rights have been removed, planning permission will be required.

If you are still unsure or want to talk through your proposal(s), we offer a pre-application advice service where a planning officer will assess whether your proposal would be acceptable in planning terms.. The form, guidance and fees for the service can be found on our [pre-application advice page](#).

If you are lodging an application for pre-application advice, please note that due to the numbers of applications we receive, we might not be able to set up a pre-application meeting/discussion with you immediately, but will give you an indication of when we can do this at the time of enquiry.

If you are proposing to extend/alter an existing house, please apply for a Certificate of Lawful Use for a proposed development.

To find out more about permitted development and whether you need planning permission, please use the government's online resource [The Planning Portal](#).

The Planning Portal also provides advice about building regulations, which is a separate requirement to planning permission. Alternatively you can contact the council's [building control](#) team.

Useful guides

A number of visual guides for householders and business owners have also been created to help. These include an [interactive house](#) which outlines common household projects and [mini guides](#) for more popular types of household projects.

There is also information on common projects for businesses such as change of use, shop fronts and adverts and signs. You can view all these useful tools and information on the Planning Portal's [Do you need permission?](#) page

Finding an agent, architect or architectural technologist

There is no requirement to engage an architect, chartered architectural technologist or a planning agent if you are competent to do the work yourself.

However if you do engage one of the above professionals you may achieve a more satisfactory result for the considerable outlay of time and money which you are undertaking.

Architects have to be registered with the [Architects Registration Board](#) who ensure that they have the necessary educational qualifications and practical experience and are registered as architects.

[The Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists](#) (CIAT) is another professional body, for design professionals

The [Royal Town Planning Institute](#) oversees planning professionals who are trained in the planning process, and may in turn appoint architects or architectural technologists for parts of the work.

There are also agents who will complete an application for you, perhaps using a plan drawer for the drawings but themselves without any professional qualifications, but they may have extensive experience or none, so it is important that you assess some prior work of anyone who you are considering employing.

We are unable to recommend any particular person or practice so please use the links above.

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