UK Planning Permission

NATIONAL PLANNING CONSULTANCY · UK-WIDE

FREE STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Planning Permission for House Extensions

A step-by-step UK guide · England focus, with notes for Wales, Scotland & NI

Permitted development limits, the larger home extension scheme, lawful development certificates, householder applications, drawings, fees, timescales, neighbours, Building Regulations, party walls and appeals, explained in plain English.



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Edition: November 2026

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About this guide

Most extensions start with one question: *do I need planning permission?* In England the answer depends on the type of house, where it is, what has been built before and the exact size of what you want to add. This guide walks you through the decision in order, then explains how to apply. The main text covers **England**; key differences in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are on page 10.

Important: please read

This guide is general information about the planning system. It is not legal advice and not advice about any particular property. Legislation, fees and local policies change, and every site is different. Always check with your local planning authority (and, where relevant, a qualified professional) before starting work, buying property or submitting an application. Figures and rules are correct at the time of writing, November 2026. Where this guide summarises legislation, the official text takes precedence.

Not sure which route applies to you?

Send us a short description and a few photos of your house. We will tell you whether your extension looks like permitted development, needs prior approval or needs a full householder application.

Ask about my extension → ukplanningpermission.co.uk/contact

Or call 020 3951 1896 · info@ukplanningpermission.co.uk

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STEP 1 · START HERE

Three questions before you measure anything

Many single-storey and some two-storey extensions in England can be built without a planning application under "permitted development" (PD) rights in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 ("the GPDO"), Schedule 2, Part 1. But PD rights do not apply to every home.

1

Is it a house?

Part 1 PD rights apply to **dwellinghouses**. They do not apply to flats or maisonettes. Homes created through certain change-of-use PD rights (for example offices converted under Class MA) do not get Class A extension rights either.

2

Is it on protected land?

Tighter limits apply on "article 2(3) land": **conservation areas, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (National Landscapes), the Broads and World Heritage Sites**. Listed buildings also need listed building consent for most works.

3

Have rights been removed?

A planning **condition** on your house's original permission, or an **Article 4 direction** made by the council, can remove some or all PD rights. Check the planning history and the council's Article 4 list.

Key terms used in the rules

Term	What it means
Original dwellinghouse	The house as it stood on **1 July 1948**, or as first built if built after that date. Limits are measured from the original house, so extensions added by earlier owners count against your allowance.
Principal elevation	Usually the front of the house facing the main road. PD extensions cannot extend beyond it, or beyond a side wall that fronts a highway.
Curtilage	The garden and land belonging to the house. Buildings (other than the original house) may not cover more than 50% of it.
Prior approval	A light-touch application where the council checks specific matters (such as the effect on neighbours) rather than the principle.
Lawful development certificate	A legally binding certificate confirming that a proposal is lawful, for example because it is PD (page 6).

Tip: get the planning history first

Search your council's online planning register by address. Look for earlier extensions, conditions removing PD rights, and whether the house sits in a conservation area or an Article 4 area. It takes ten minutes and avoids the most expensive mistakes.

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STEP 2 · PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT (ENGLAND) · CLASS A

The extension limits checklist

An extension is PD only if it meets **every** limit that applies. Fail one and you need planning permission (or, for some larger rear extensions, prior approval).

✓	Check	Not permitted development if...
☐	**Garden coverage**	Buildings (other than the original house) would cover more than **50%** of the curtilage.
☐	**Height and eaves**	The extension would be higher than the highest part of the existing roof, or its eaves higher than the existing eaves.
☐	**Front and road-facing sides**	It would extend beyond the principal elevation, or beyond a side elevation that fronts a highway.
☐	**Single-storey rear**	It extends beyond the original rear wall by more than **4 m (detached)** or **3 m (other houses)**, or is more than **4 m** high. (Up to 8 m / 6 m is possible through prior approval, page 5.)
☐	**More than one storey**	It extends beyond the original rear wall by more than **3 m**, or is within **7 m** of the boundary opposite the rear wall.
☐	**Near a boundary**	Any part within **2 m** of a boundary has eaves higher than **3 m**.
☐	**Side extension**	It extends beyond a side wall and is more than **4 m** high, has more than one storey, or is wider than **half the width** of the original house.
☐	**Joined extensions**	Together with any existing extension it joins, it would exceed any of the limits above.
☐	**Excluded works**	It includes a verandah, balcony or raised platform; a microwave antenna; a chimney, flue or soil and vent pipe; or any alteration to the roof (roof works fall under Classes B and C).

Conditions that also apply

- ☐ Exterior materials of similar appearance to the existing house (conservatories excepted).
- ☐ Upper-floor side windows must be obscure-glazed and non-opening unless the opening part is more than 1.7 m above the floor.
- ☐ Two-storey extensions: roof pitch to match the original house as far as practicable.

ON ARTICLE 2(3) LAND (CONSERVATION AREAS, NATIONAL PARKS ETC.)

No side extensions, no rear extensions of more than one storey, no exterior cladding (stone, render, timber, plastic, tiles etc.), and no larger home extension prior approval.

Source: GPDO 2015, Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A (paras A.1–A.3), legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/596. See also MHCLG, *Permitted development rights for householders: technical guidance*.

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STEP 2 CONTINUED · OTHER HOUSEHOLDER PD CLASSES (ENGLAND)

Larger extensions, lofts, porches and outbuildings

Larger single-storey rear extensions: prior approval

Outside article 2(3) land and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, a single-storey rear extension can go up to **8 m (detached)** or **6 m (other houses)** beyond the original rear wall, maximum **4 m** high, if you first obtain the council's prior approval Class A.1(g), A.4.

1. **Apply before you start** with a written description (depth, maximum height, eaves height), a plan of the site, the addresses of adjoining properties and the fee (**£249**; **£310** from 8 December 2026).
2. **The council notifies the adjoining neighbours**, who have at least 21 days to comment.
3. **If a neighbour objects**, the council judges the effect on the amenity of all adjoining premises.
4. **Do not build until** you receive written notice that prior approval is not required or is given, or **42 days** pass without a decision.

Project	Key PD limits in England (summary)
Loft / dormer (Class B)	Additional roof space no more than **40 m³** (terraced) or **50 m³** (other houses); nothing higher than the existing roof; no extension beyond the roof slope forming the principal elevation and fronting a highway; no balconies; side windows obscure-glazed. **Not PD on article 2(3) land.**
Porch (Class D)	Ground area up to **3 m²**, no more than **3 m** high, and no part within **2 m** of a boundary with a highway.
Outbuildings (Class E)	Single storey, not forward of the principal elevation, max **4 m** high (dual-pitched roof), **3 m** otherwise, or **2.5 m** within 2 m of a boundary; eaves max 2.5 m; 50% coverage rule; must be incidental to the house (not a separate dwelling). Not PD within the curtilage of a listed building.
Additional storeys (Class AA)	Houses built between 1 July 1948 and 28 October 2018 may add storeys (one on a bungalow, up to two otherwise) subject to height limits and prior approval. Not on article 2(3) land.

Tip

Prior approval is not a full planning application, but it is still a formal decision. Keep the approval (or proof that 42 days passed) with your house deeds; buyers' solicitors will ask for it.

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STEP 3 · CERTAINTY OR PERMISSION?

Lawful development certificates, and when you need permission

Lawful development certificate (LDC): proposed use or development

If you believe your extension is PD, you do not have to apply for anything. But a **certificate of lawfulness of proposed use or development** under section 192 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 gives you a legally binding confirmation from the council. It is useful when a project is close to a limit, for re-mortgaging, and when you sell.

- ✓ Apply to the council, usually through the Planning Portal.
- ✓ Provide accurate existing and proposed plans and elevations, and evidence that the project meets each PD limit.
- ✓ The council tests the facts and the law only: there is no neighbour "objection" stage on planning merits.
- ✓ Fee: **half** the normal application fee, so **£274** for a single house (rising to **£287.50** from 8 December 2026).
- ✓ Councils aim to decide within about 8 weeks.
- ✓ For work already built, a different certificate applies (existing use or development, section 191).

You will need a householder planning application if...

- ✗ Your home is a flat or maisonette.
- ✗ The extension breaks any Class A limit (and is not a larger rear extension eligible for prior approval).
- ✗ It extends forward of the front wall or beyond a road-facing side wall.
- ✗ It is a side or two-storey rear extension on article 2(3) land.
- ✗ PD rights have been removed by condition or Article 4 direction.
- ✗ It includes a balcony, raised terrace over 0.3 m, or roof works outside Classes B and C.
- ✗ Earlier extensions have used up your allowance.
- ✗ The prior approval application was refused.

Listed buildings

Most works to a listed building, inside or out, need **listed building consent** as well as (or even where you do not need) planning permission. Carrying out unauthorised works to a listed building is a criminal offence, so always speak to the council first.

Close to a limit?

A few centimetres can decide whether you need an application. We can check your drawings against the GPDO and apply for a lawful development certificate or prior approval for you.

Check my extension → ukplanningpermission.co.uk/contact

Or call 020 3951 1896 · info@ukplanningpermission.co.uk

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STEP 4 · APPLYING

Making a householder application, step by step

1. **Consider pre-application advice.** Many councils offer paid householder pre-app advice. It is optional but useful where design or neighbour impact is finely balanced. Check the council's local design guide too.
2. **Commission measured drawings.** You will usually need existing and proposed floor plans and elevations (and roof plans and sections where relevant) at a recognised scale such as 1:50 or 1:100.
3. **Prepare the national requirements.** Every application needs: the completed application form; a **location plan** (usually 1:1250 or 1:2500) with the site edged in red; a **site or block plan**; the correct **ownership certificate** (A, B, C or D) and notice to any other owners; and the **fee**. A design and access statement is needed for householder applications only in a conservation area or World Heritage Site.
4. **Check the council's local validation list.** Councils can ask for extra items, such as a tree survey, flood risk assessment or heritage statement, if relevant to your site.
5. **Submit online** through the Planning Portal (planningportal.co.uk) or the council's own system. The Planning Portal adds its own service charge on top of the statutory fee.
6. **Validation.** The council checks the application is complete. If something is missing it will tell you; the clock does not start until it is valid.
7. **Consultation.** The council publicises the application by a site notice or letters to neighbours, who have **21 days** to comment. A case officer usually visits the site.
8. **Decision.** The council should decide within **8 weeks** of receiving a valid application, unless you agree an extension in writing. Most householder decisions are made by officers under delegated powers.
9. **Read the conditions.** Permission normally lasts **3 years** for you to start work. Some conditions must be "discharged" (details approved) before work begins.

> **Tip: describe the proposal precisely**
>
> Use clear dimensions on the drawings and a plain description ("single-storey rear extension, 4.5 m deep, 3.4 m high"). Vague or inconsistent drawings are a common reason for delay.

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STEP 5 · COSTS AND DECISION

Fees, timescales and what the council looks at

Application (England)	Fee 1 Apr – 7 Dec 2026	Fee from 8 Dec 2026
Householder: alteration or extension of one house	**£548**	**£575**
Householder: two or more houses	£1,083	£1,130
Outbuildings, gates, fences, walls (works within the garden, applied for alone)	£272	£285
Prior approval: larger rear extension (Class A) or additional storeys (Class AA)	£249	£310
Lawful development certificate (proposed): half the application fee	£274	£287.50
Discharge of conditions (householder, per request)	£89	£125
Non-material amendment (householder)	£46	£53

Sources: MHCLG, *Planning fees: annual indexation from 1 April 2026* and *Fees for planning applications in England from 8 December 2026* (gov.uk). Applications made before 8 December 2026 pay the fee in force when made. Applications solely for works to improve access or facilities for a resident disabled person are exempt. Fees are correct at the time of writing, November 2026; check the Planning Portal fee calculator before you apply.

Typical timescales

Stage	Time
Neighbour comments	21 days
Householder decision	8 weeks
Larger home extension prior approval	42 days
Start work after permission	Within 3 years

What the council assesses

- **Design:** scale, form and materials in keeping with the house and street.
- **Neighbours:** loss of light, overshadowing, overbearing impact, overlooking and privacy.
- **Heritage:** effect on conservation areas and listed buildings.
- **Other:** trees, parking, flood risk, the local plan and design guides.

Neighbours' objections

Objections are not votes. The council can only weigh "material planning considerations" such as light and privacy, not private matters like property values or boundary disputes. Talking to neighbours early often heads off objections.

STEP 6 · BEFORE AND AFTER THE DECISION

Building Regulations, party walls and appeals

Building Regulations: a separate approval

Planning permission (or PD) covers whether you can build. **Building Regulations** cover how it is built: structure, fire safety, insulation, drainage, ventilation and so on. Most extensions need Building Regulations approval from the council's building control service or a registered building control approver, even when no planning permission is needed. Some small porches and conservatories can be exempt.

Party Wall etc. Act 1996

In England and Wales, if you will work on a shared (party) wall, build on the boundary, or dig foundations close to a neighbour's building, you must serve notice on the neighbour: generally at least **two months** before party wall work and **one month** before excavation. This is separate from planning and Building Regulations.

Other consents to check

- Listed building consent (listed buildings).
- Trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order or in a conservation area.
- Restrictive covenants in your title deeds, and freeholder or lender consent.

If permission is refused: appeals

You can appeal to the **Planning Inspectorate**. For applications made on or after 1 April 2026 the Inspectorate must receive a householder appeal within **12 weeks** of the decision notice. An appeal against conditions, or against the council's failure to decide, has a 6-month time limit.

- ✓ Read the reasons for refusal carefully.
- ✓ Often a revised application addressing the reasons is quicker than an appeal.
- ✓ An appeal is decided on the plans you applied with; you cannot usually change the scheme.
- ✓ Prior approval refusals can also be appealed.

If you build without permission

The council can take enforcement action. In England, for breaches occurring on or after 25 April 2024 the time limit for enforcement is generally **10 years**. You can apply for retrospective permission, but there is no guarantee it will be granted.

> **Biodiversity net gain**
>
> Householder applications are exempt from England's mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain requirement.

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AROUND THE UK

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Planning is devolved. The principles in this guide are similar across the UK, but each nation has its own legislation, limits, fees and online systems. Do not apply the England figures elsewhere.

WALES

Householder PD is set by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as amended in Wales. The Welsh limits differ in detail and there is **no equivalent of England's larger home extension prior approval scheme**. Welsh planning fees are set by the Welsh Government and differ from England's. Applications are made through Planning Portal Wales or the council. Party wall rules (the 1996 Act) apply in Wales too.

SCOTLAND

Householder PD is set by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (as amended), with its own classes and limits. Applications are made through **ePlanning Scotland**. Instead of Building Regulations approval, most building work needs a **building warrant** from the council before work starts. The Party Wall Act does not apply in Scotland. Appeals go either to the council's Local Review Body or to the Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA), depending on who made the decision.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Householder PD is set by the Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, Schedule Part 1. Applications are decided by the 11 councils, mostly through the NI Planning Portal, and appeals go to the **Planning Appeals Commission**. Policy for extensions is in the council's Local Development Plan or, until adopted, PPS 7 Addendum (Residential Extensions and Alterations). There is no larger home extension prior approval scheme. The Party Wall Act does not apply in Northern Ireland.

Our advice

Wherever you are, check your council's website for local householder design guidance, and ask before you build if anything is close to a limit.

Extending outside England?

We advise across the UK and can explain the rules that apply in your nation and council area.

Ask a planning consultant → ukplanningpermission.co.uk/contact

Or call 020 3951 1896 · info@ukplanningpermission.co.uk

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AVOID THE PITFALLS

Common mistakes and FAQs

Common mistakes

- ✕ Measuring from the current rear wall instead of the **original** house.
- ✕ Forgetting that earlier extensions and outbuildings count towards limits and the 50% rule.
- ✕ Assuming PD applies in a conservation area or to a flat.
- ✕ Starting a larger rear extension before the 42 days or written prior approval.
- ✕ Missing a condition that removed PD rights, or an Article 4 direction.
- ✕ Thinking planning permission covers Building Regulations (it does not).
- ✕ Not serving party wall notices in time.
- ✕ Starting work before discharging pre-commencement conditions.
- ✕ Inaccurate drawings or the wrong ownership certificate, causing invalid applications.

How long does a householder application take?

The target is 8 weeks from a valid application. Allow time before that for drawings and validation.

Can my neighbour stop my extension?

Not on their own. The council weighs their comments only on planning grounds such as light and privacy.

Do I need permission for a single-storey rear extension?

Not if it meets every Class A limit (3 m / 4 m) and PD rights apply. Up to 6 m / 8 m needs prior approval.

Is a conservatory treated differently?

For planning, a conservatory is an extension and follows the same limits. Matching materials are not required.

How long does permission last?

Normally 3 years to begin the work.

Do I need an architect?

Not legally, but accurate, clear drawings are essential for a valid application.

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YOUR CHECKLIST

Before you build: printable checklist

- [ ] My home is a house, not a flat or maisonette.
- [ ] I know whether it is in a conservation area, National Park, AONB/National Landscape, the Broads or a World Heritage Site.
- [ ] I have checked the planning history for conditions or Article 4 directions removing PD rights.
- [ ] I know what the original house was and what has been added since 1 July 1948.
- [ ] The extension meets every Class A limit (page 4), or I have applied for prior approval (page 5).
- [ ] I have considered a lawful development certificate.
- [ ] If needed, I have drawings, location and site plans, ownership certificate and fee ready.
- [ ] I have spoken to my neighbours.
- [ ] I have arranged Building Regulations approval.
- [ ] I have served any party wall notices.
- [ ] I have discharged any pre-commencement conditions.

HOW WE HELP

- ✓ Permitted development checks
- ✓ Lawful development certificates
- ✓ Larger home extension prior approvals
- ✓ Householder planning applications
- ✓ Planning drawings coordination
- ✓ Discharge of conditions
- ✓ Planning appeals

CONTACT US

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Get a clear answer on your extension

Tell us about your house and what you would like to build. We will advise on the right route: permitted development, prior approval, a lawful development certificate or a householder application.

Make an enquiry → ukplanningpermission.co.uk/contact

Or call 020 3951 1896 · info@ukplanningpermission.co.uk

SOURCES

Sources and disclaimer

Important: please read

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Official sources (checked November 2026)

- The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (S.I. 2015/596), article 2 and Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A, AA, B, D and E. legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/596
- MHCLG, *Permitted development rights for householders: technical guidance*. gov.uk/government/publications/permitted-development-rights-for-householders-technical-guidance
- MHCLG, *Planning fees: annual indexation from 1 April 2026*. gov.uk/government/publications/planning-fees-annual-indexation-from-1-april
- MHCLG, *Fees for planning applications in England from 8 December 2026*; and the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) (Amendment and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2026. legislation.gov.uk
- Planning Portal: Householder planning consent; Extensions: prior approval; fee calculator. planningportal.co.uk
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990, sections 91 (time limits), 191 and 192 (lawful development certificates). legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8
- Planning Practice Guidance: Making an application; Lawful development certificates; Enforcement and post-permission matters. gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance
- Planning Inspectorate, *Planning appeals: procedural guide for appeals relating to applications dated on or after 1 April 2026*; gov.uk/appeal-householder-planning-decision
- Party Wall etc. Act 1996 and gov.uk/party-walls-building-works
- gov.uk: Biodiversity net gain exemptions.
- Welsh Government: Planning permission (householders), gov.wales; Planning Portal Wales.
- Scottish Government: Householder permitted development rights guidance, gov.scot; ePlanning Scotland.
- Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015, legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2015/70; nidirect planning guidance; NI Planning Portal.

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