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**Understanding
Planning Permission**

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As a homeowner, you have overall responsibility to ensure that your building project complies with the relevant planning rules and regulations. From the outside this may seem daunting but it's not as bad as you may think...

Your local council's planning office will be able to advise you on what permissions you require. You'll want to think about getting a professional to draw the plans for your project, and don't forget to seek advice from competent trusted builders.

If it is required, planning permission should be granted before any work starts.

Do I need Planning Permission?

Lots of home improvements will require planning permission, including increasingly popular micro-generation projects. If you live in a Conservation Area, an Area of Outstanding National Beauty or a World Heritage Site you will almost certainly need permission. There are also specific requirements for listed buildings, which you will need to check.

What are Permitted Development Rights?

Permitted Development Rights allow you to make some changes to your house without the need for planning permission. Permitted Development Rights can apply to loft conversions, extensions, conservatories, outbuildings and porches. You will find a number of useful interactive guides on the permitted development rules on the Planning Portal website: www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission

In 2013, the planning process for large single-storey extensions was simplified:

- If you live in a terraced or semi-detached house you can build a single-storey rear extension of up to 6 metres from the rear wall of the original house without applying for planning permission.
- If you live in a detached house you can build a single-storey rear extension up to 8 metres from the rear wall of the original house without applying for planning permission.

You still need to tell the council and send the planning department a copy of your plan showing the site and proposed extension. The council will notify any adjoining properties and give your neighbours 21 days to raise any objections. The council then has a second 21-day period to give you permission to start your extension, or ask you to make adjustments.

For more information visit www.jdb surveys.com or give us a call on 0151 486 3437

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Tell the neighbours

It's important to keep the neighbours onside. The reaction of your neighbours is an obvious factor that can affect whether or not you will be granted permission. Involve them in the design and talk to them about the builder you have chosen.

Party Walls

Discussing your plans with the neighbours will also ease the way if you need a Party Wall Agreement. In England and Wales, work carried out on a part of your property that adjoins your neighbours must comply with the Party Wall Act 1996. The Party Wall Agreement covers work that might have an effect on the structural integrity of any wall on the boundary line, including garden walls.

Details of the proposed work must be officially notified to the affected neighbour and no work may start until all neighbouring parties have agreed in writing to the notice. It is good practice to record the condition of neighbouring properties before work starts and again upon completion of the works. You would be responsible for repairing any damage.

What is a Lawful Development Certificate?

If you are unsure about whether you need permission, the best advice is to check with the council first. You can even apply to your local council for a Lawful Development Certificate if you just want to be certain that your project doesn't require planning permission, or if you want to check that the existing use of a building is lawful for planning purposes.

The local water authority may also need to be informed if work at ground level involves changes to any underground drainage.

If you live in England and Wales more information is available at: www.planningportal.gov.uk

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The contents of this article are for general information only and is not intended to be relied upon for specific or general decisions. Appropriate independent professional advice should be sought before making such a decision.

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