



ARCH angels

Richard Zinzan of ARCH-angels architects on understanding permitted development

So, you've decided to extend your property. Before we let our creative minds roam free, we need to ensure we're within our rights to realise our dreams. We may not have to go through the rigmarole and cost of seeking planning permission. Recent amendments to legislation for permitted development have ushered in major changes to planning law, which introduce a relaxation of what you can build without requiring planning permission.

What can I build under permitted development?

How you alter your property is subject to many of the same rules as before, so if you own a flat, maisonette or a property other than a house, permitted development is not the route for you. If you live within an area of outstanding natural beauty, such as the South Downs National Park, then chances are, any proposed extension will have to go through planning.

The big changes – as of 30 May 2013 until 30 May 2016 – apply to extensions so the planning permission you thought you may need, you probably will not.

What do changes mean for householders?

Two amendments are key: the size of the extension and the new 'neighbour consultation' process.

For domestic houses, the rules apply to single-storey rear extensions only, while for grander designs, you must still seek planning permission. First, the great news is that homeowners can erect far larger extensions than before; doubling the limit from 4m to 8m for detached houses and from 3m to 6m for all others. Second, 'neighbour consultation' has caused a bit of a stir, so it's important to clarify the facts.

Homeowners must now seek consent from any adjoining neighbours. OK, the days of nattering over the fence may be gone for many but being on good terms with your neighbours has no bearing on the law even though, under permitted development, you do need their consent and 'prior approval' from the local planning authority.

Once the applications are submitted, your neighbours have 21 days and the local authority 42 to raise any objections. If none are forthcoming within that window, regardless of whether both parties actually object, you can proceed. If an objection is made, however, you still have the right to appeal.

Always check the details first

It's always best to err on the side of caution, so before diving into a building project, check for any restrictions on your property. Seek advice from your local authority planning department and always consult an architect, planning consultants or builders for professional advice.

For more information on householder permitted development and the new neighbour consultation scheme visit:

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/responsibilities/planningpermission/permitted>

http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/neighbour_consultation_scheme_guidance_may13.pdf

<http://www.planningjungle.com>

If a single-storey extension is your dream, you have a grand design for your property or just want to talk about your options, we'll be happy to help realise your vision.



Richard Zinzan and Nicola Thomas are founders of ARCH-angels Architects in Brighton, an approachable local practice specialising in environmentally conscious, cost-effective architecture. We work closely with you to maximise your space and provide beautiful integrated buildings.
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