

From start to finish

a checklist for building projects

January 2013

Introduction

The purpose of this advice note is to help people who want to construct an extension or new building to follow the key steps required in order to get their project completed without incurring unnecessary delays or costs. It also gives information on how to ensure that the development takes place in a considerate way that minimises disturbance to neighbouring residents. It is not an exhaustive list of all issues that you may need to consider and we therefore recommend that get professional help with your project.

You should check each item listed below carefully. To help you ensure that nothing is missed we have included a box which you can tick.

1. Discuss your ideas with your neighbours

By discussing your ideas with people who may be affected by what you want to do at an early stage you will help to maintain good relations with them. If you need planning permission discussions with the neighbours can also reduce the chance of objections being submitted to council and possible subsequent delays or refusal of planning permission.

In addition, the neighbours may be aware of local issues on your site such as the location of drains or other infrastructure which could help to save you a substantial amount of time and money.

2. Find out if you need planning permission

You can quickly and easily find out what type of schemes require planning permission by using the [interactive house](#) or [interactive terraced house](#) on our website or by viewing the advice produced by the [Planning Portal](#) on their website.

You can also use our [planning map](#) on our website to view previous planning approvals on your property and find out if there are any conditions on a decision notice that require you to submit a planning application for your scheme.

If your project is to extend or alter an existing house you can download our [householder enquiry form](#) and send it to us to check if planning permission is needed. We will then, for a small fee, provide you our informal written opinion about whether you need planning permission.

Alternatively, you can apply for a Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Development for a formal decision. This decision is legally binding and needs to be made using the correct [application form](#).

Please note that we are not able to confirm over the phone if your scheme will need planning permission.

3. Find out if you need Building Regulations consent

The vast majority of building/conversion projects require Building Regulation consent. Please contact us to obtain advice about the need for building regulations consent and find details of our Building Control Service by visiting our [website](#).

We offer a professional, efficient and responsive service for all our customers on projects from small domestic extensions up to the large multi-million pound developments. The team has an in depth knowledge of the area and has experience with dealing with all types of work.

4. Get help

We strongly recommend that you employ the service of professional architect or suitably skilled designer to help you design and submit your scheme.

We also operate an Accredited Agent's scheme. Accredited Agents are planning agents that have a track record of submitting to us the correct information, drawings and documents. This means that delays are limited when we register the planning application. Details of this scheme are available [on our website](#)

All the planning policies which will be used to decide whether we will grant planning permission can be viewed [on our website](#). If your scheme is for residential development you should review our residential design guides which are also available on our website

For other schemes we offer a written pre-application advice service. There is a fee for this service. Details of how to use this service are available [on our website](#).

5. Submit a valid application to the council

If your project is to extend or alter an existing house we have prepared a simple [guide for home owners](#) to explain what information and plans you need to submit in order for your application to be valid. For other schemes please see the list of [Planning Application Requirements](#) on our website.

You are also normally required to submit a fee with your application. Details of the amount of the fee and what information and documents you need to include can be found [on our website](#).

6. Select a suitable builder

Ask friends and family to recommend a building they know and trust. Talk to people in your area who have recently had building work done, especially if their property or project is similar to yours. If you are using an agent to help prepare your planning application ask them for a recommendation.

You can also find recommendations at various websites online, including those listed below:

- [MyBuilder.com](#) a website that allows you to connect with recommended trades people for any job.

- [Rated People.com](#) a website that allows homeowners who are in need of a tradesman to post jobs for free on Rated People and receive quotes from up to 3 interested tradesmen.
- The [Find A Builder](#) service from the Federation of Master Builders. The FMB is a trade association for small to medium-sized builders, and vets its members.
- Government-endorsed [Trust Mark](#) is a quality mark for builders and other repair, maintenance and improvement professionals, who are vetted.

You should obtain at least three firm written quotations before appointing your builder.

7. Comply with the Party Walls Act 1996

You must make sure that you comply with the Party Wall Act 1996 before you start work on site. The Government have produced a help full guide to the Act which can be viewed on the [Planning Portal](#) website. If you do not comply with the requirements of the Party Wall Act you could incur substantial additional costs and lengthy delays. We therefore recommend that if you are in any doubt about how the Part Wall Act affects your scheme you should get professional help.

8. Comply with the approval notice

If we grant planning permission, you must make sure that you comply with any conditions attached to the planning approval notice. If you do not comply with conditions you could be subject to costly planning enforcement action. In addition, people who do not comply with conditions often experience substantial delays when they come to sell their property.

Please pay particular attention to those conditions that have to be complied with before work commences. There is a fee for requests for written confirmation that conditions have been complied with and for when you send in details for approval. When sending us information please use the relevant form and include the decision reference number and condition number. Details of the [fee](#) and the relevant [form](#) can be found on our website.

You should also carefully read any other notes attached to the decision notice.

9. Stick to the approved plans

Make sure that you build in accordance with the approved plans. If you do not build in accordance with the approved plans, without the formal written consent of the planners, you could be subject to enforcement action.

Should you wish to change your plans for any reason, including the need to meet the requirements of other legislation (for example Building Regulations) it is important that you notify the planning officer before carrying on with work. Amendments to your approved plans may require a fresh application and could even prove to be unacceptable. Details of how to seek formal approval of amendments to a planning approval can be found [on our website](#) or by visiting the planning portal website.

10. Consider your neighbours during construction

Discuss with your neighbours the most suitable hours for work to be undertaken and ensure you employ a builder who is a “Considerate Constructor” (see www.ccscheme.org.uk/). Discuss your building plans including timeframes and dates of when the more disruptive or noisy work will happen so that they can plan their time too. This also offers them an opportunity to voice concerns should they have any prior to the build commencing.

You should also agree with your builder where contractor and delivery vehicles will park in order to minimise disturbance to neighbours and prevent blocking the highway

11. Check you have adequate insurance

Ensure all insurance cover is up to date with your contractor. In the unfortunate event that some of your materials on-site are stolen, you should be able to claim back replacement costs if adequate security precautions were in place.

12. Works to footpath or roads

If your project includes work to the public highway you may be required to seek the formal permission of the council and to coordinate with “statutory undertakers” (such as the water and power companies), to jointly identify any affected apparatus, and to agree diversion or protection measures and corresponding payment in order to minimise disruption. For further advice you should contact the Council’s Street Works Section at least one month before you start work. They can be contacted on 01934 427451 or by e-mail at streetworks@n-somerset.gov.uk.

We recommend that site vehicles are parked on site where possible or out of the way of neighbouring properties to allow access to residents and emergency vehicles. You should also consider carefully where skips and materials are located to avoid blocking the highway (which is a criminal offence).

The granting of planning permission does not entitle you to interfere or obstruct any public right of way (PROW) or to drive a vehicle on it. The obstruction of a PROW is an offence but if required an application can be made to the Council to divert the PROW but this should be made well ahead of works starting on site. Please contact our PROW Team for further advice on 01934 888802.

13. Register the new address

When you receive permission for the building of a new property or the creation of additional flats within an existing dwelling, for reasons of public safety and for the allocation of an official postal address, please contact our Street Naming and Property Numbering Section on 01934 634943; or by email at: strnames@n-somerset.gov.uk.

This publication is available in large print, Braille or audio formats on request.

Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.

Please contact 01275 888 811.

