



Obtaining Planning Permission for Ancillary Structures

Garages, Carports, Garden Cabins, Garden Rooms, Home Offices, Sheds & other 'Outbuildings'
Michael Benfield

Books & Advice

Although there is a vast amount of information available for you to buy in books, or to obtain free on line from central and local government, e.g. [Planning Permission Made Easy](#), [Planning Portal](#) .[RTPI Planning Aid](#), it is hoped that this brief paper will provide a quick, easy and useful introductory guide to what many people feel has become a 'vexed' subject.

However, it must be regarded as just this – a guide and not advice. In the UK planning cannot be regarded as an exact science for which some pre-prescribed formula will yield known results. Here each and every planning requirement has to be assessed individually and on its own merits.

Your Rights to 'Permitted Development'

Other articles in this series have noted the change that took place in October 2008, granting 'permitted development' rights to UK property owners. This meant that for many cases where small developments were proposed, application for planning permission was no longer necessary – providing certain specific conditions were observed.

Minor Works

You can carry out minor works, like fitting an alarm box or other small changes, without planning permission. Subject to them falling within particular guidelines you can also carry out things like Loft conversions, Roof alterations, and laying of Patios and driveways without needing to get specific permission.

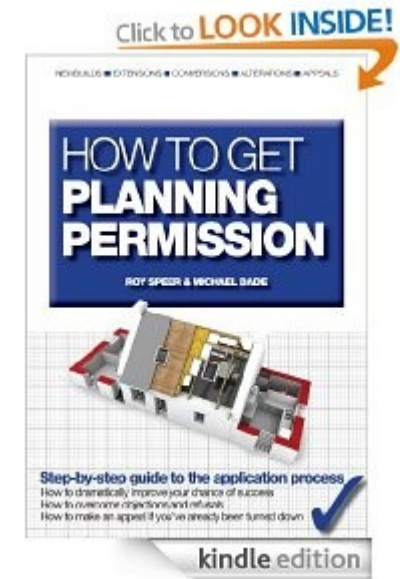
This also applies to the construction of outbuildings, including sheds, garages, car ports, playrooms, workshops and so on, providing they are no closer than 5 metres from the main house. It is also often permissible to cover up to 50% of the garden area with them.

In all cases remember - it is always best to check with your Local Planning Officer before going ahead with your project.

Erecting or Taking Down Fences, Gates and Garden Walls

Planning permission is required if you want to build a fence, garden wall or gate and:-

- it will be higher than 1 metre next to a footpath or road where the road is used by vehicles. Elsewhere it can be up to 2 metres high.
- your right to alter or erect a wall, gate or fence has been removed a planning condition or an article 4 direction.
- your property has been built, or is in the curtilage of, a listed building.
- your property forms part of a boundary with an adjacent listed building or its curtilage.



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Unless you are in a Conservation Area, you will **not** need to apply for planning permission to take down a fence, wall, or gate, or to alter or improve an existing fence, wall or gate (no matter how high) unless increasing its height.

Hedges

Unless your property is subject to a planning condition or restrictive covenant on the deeds, no planning consent is required for hedges. This may not apply if, for example, you live on an 'open plan' estate, or if the site line of a driver's could be blocked by the hedge at some time after it is planted.

Outbuildings

In general, outbuildings (see below) are considered as 'permitted development,' and do not therefore need planning permission, providing:-

- They do not project in front of any wall that forms part of the 'principle elevation'.
- They are of single storey construction, no more than 2.5 metres high at the eaves, no more than 4 metres high at the ridge if they have a dual pitch roof, or 3 metres if they have any other form of roof.
- Any building, enclosure or container within 2 metres of the boundary is not more than 2.5 metres high.
- There are no raised platforms, balconies, or verandas.
- At least half the area surrounding the 'original house' remains uncovered by other buildings or additions.
- Any pools, enclosure, or container sited over 20 metres from a house in a National Park, the Broads, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or a World Heritage Site is limited to 10 square metres.
- On 'designated' land (see below) planning permission is required for buildings, enclosures, containers and pools at the side of a property.
- Any outbuilding sited inside the curtilage of a listed building will require planning permission.
- You obtain planning permission for erecting any high walls or fences.



Note that there are separate rules for constructing new roofs.

Porches

You will not need permission to add a porch to any external door providing it will not:-

1. exceed 3 square metres over the outside of the covered area.
2. be above 3 metres from the ground, measured like a house extension.
3. be within 2 metres of any boundary between the house and the public road.



When you don't need to apply

Unless your property is a Listed Building or in a Conservation Area you generally do not need permission to repair or replace windows, including double glazing, or for a new or replacement staircase, or to repair or replace the roof or insert roof lights or skylights (this does not include dormers). However, you may need permission from your landlord or management company if your property is leasehold.

This dispensation applies providing:-

- No alteration projects more than 150 millimetres from the existing roof plane.
- No alteration is higher than the highest part of the original roof.
- Side facing windows have obscure-glazed; with any opening being 1.7m above the floor.



Solar Panels

Fixing solar panels on a single house roof (not a flat or maisonette) may be treated as 'permitted development', but there are important exceptions and provisos, especially in protected areas, which must be observed. You should consult your local planning officer on this.

Car Ports For Shelter

Although car ports may be less popular than they were, possibly due to DIY 'kit' garages having become so much cheaper to buy and easier to erect and because they provide less security than a garage, they can be very useful in front of or alongside a garage. This is all the more so if the garage sits back from the front of the house with the drive in front or beside it. Then a carport



can provide excellent shelter for a car, boat, motorbike, or other low height vehicle, as well as shelter from the weather while unloading before garaging the automobile.

With most car-ports made from GRP (glass reinforced plastic) and translucent, polycarbonate glazed roofs. it is easy for them to be attached to the side of a house or garage with side pillars or even set on freestanding pillars. New cantilevered [canopy designs](#) are also available that easily attach to any wall, with little or no visible support. Many of these also require few, if any, foundations or other ground works.

Planning for a Car Port

Because they are considered to be 'temporary structures', car ports don't generally require planning approval. The same applies to some ready-made, or 'kit' garages. However, you will need to observe a number of other regulations, for example, if the structure is to be closer to the road than the front of your house.

You'll also need to comply with any applicable building regulations, like being at least a metre from the boundary' although in general terms building regulations do not apply to detached single storey structures located more than a metre from the boundary. Providing they are open on at least two sides and have a floor area of not more than 30 square metres, car ports do not need building regulations approval.

Preferring a Garage

Although you will need to do a lot more preparation work for most garages, depending on your circumstances they may provide you with greater flexibility. For instance, adding water and electricity inside the garage may give it additional workshop and storage uses.

In most cases you may wish to lay a floor, with a slight fall toward the entrance doors to make sure that any water or spillages can drain, or be swept away, easily. While this should be solid and properly constructed, even when a 'kit' garage is going to be built on it, sometimes reinforced concrete paving slabs may be substituted for having to pour concrete.

While many garage kits come as timber, concrete or steel, newer self-assembly 'traditional oak' style packages, like [SolidLox](#) or [Beamlock Buildings](#), are increasing in popularity. This is because their styling and appearance potentially increase the value of your property more. Often used to create rustic, coach house, or other 'traditional' car ports and garages, they are also used for home extensions, home offices and garden rooms.



Planning for a Garage

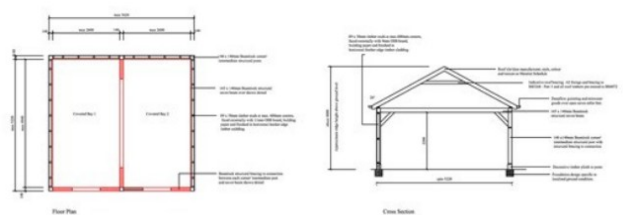
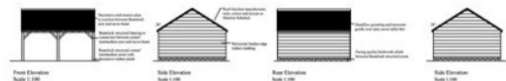
Providing your proposals meet certain size and location considerations, and providing a vehicular access to a drive and/or parking space already exists, you may be deemed to have 'permitted development' rights. This means you will not need to apply for planning permission for a garage unless Conservation Area, or Listed Building orders affect your property.

Planning Permission for a 'SolidLox or Beamlock Building'

As with other types of small development, if it is not too large a SolidLox or Beamlock structure may fall under the permitted development rules.

However, while it is always best to check with your Local Planning Authority (LPA), as a general guide you will require formal planning and/or other consents if:-

- Your property is a 'listed' building and your proposals affect this or are to be built in its grounds.
- If your project lies inside an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB), a Conservation Area, a National Park, or equivalent.
- Your intended development is closer than the nearest part of the original house to the highway.




- You intend to build it within 5 metres of the 'original house'.
- Your proposed ridge height will be higher than 4 metres.
- Your project lies within an area where planning permission is required for an agricultural building.

If you find you do need to apply for planning consent, then some companies, like the [SolidLox](#) or [Beamlock Building Company](#) offer standard planning drawing kits at very low prices to help you obtain approval.

These can include roof tile samples, drawings of popular designs (which can sometimes be 'tailored' to your needs) and structural engineering calculations. They may also be able to make your planning application for you.

Extending Above a Garage

 If you want to build a second storey on top of your existing garage, you may well need planning permission. Your planners may also want you to set this back from the front of any existing building so that it won't be over dominant, or affect any other considerations, especially the visual aspects of your conversion. Generally these need to be in keeping with surrounding properties.



Terminology

- "original house" is the house as it was first built or stood on 1 July 1948 if built before then. Although you may not have built an extension to the house, a previous owner may have done so.
- 'designated' land includes National Parks, the Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites.

Disclaimer

This article applies to planning in England. It is an introductory guide only and must not be relied on as a definitive source of information. Policy in N. Ireland, Scotland & Wales may be different. The permitted development allowances described do not apply to flats, maisonettes or other buildings.

Author

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