DWELLINGS4U

Our Build, Your Comfort

Do I need planning permission?

Dwellings4U's free guide to understanding General Permitted Development Order (GPDO)

OUR BUILD, YOUR COMFORT

As a full-service construction company, one of the questions we are often asked by homeowners looking to improve their property and developers who are just starting to invest in property is, 'Do I need planning permission?'

While we would always suggest making appropriate enquiries to ensure that you have satisfied any potential issues with the appropriate authorities, these broad guidelines should help to establish in principle if your plans are within the GPDO regulations, as required in England.

The Town and Country GPDO 2015 is a set of Government regulations which grants planning permission for specified limited or minor forms of development. It should be noted that the GPDO may be subject to change and that consequently this document is for general information and should not be considered to be definitive.

Dwellings4U takes no responsibility for any loss or damage arising from the information provided. Please contact our team at **info@dwellings4u.co.uk** to discuss your next project and plans.

WILL I GET PLANNING PERMISSION?

It's a question we're frequently asked by homeowners and developers looking to modify, extend or convert their property, and understanding the language and restrictions of the GPDO regulations can be challenging!

Broadly speaking, Part 1 of the GPDO relates to the 'curtilage of a house' which in simple terms means the land surrounding the property and might include drives, lawns, outbuildings which are not considered part of the dwelling, even though it sits within the plot. External changes to flats and maisonettes require full planning permission, although internal changes can be undertaken.

In truth, there are plenty of ways to expand, alter and improve your home or property without planning permission, and as an imaginative and creative builder and developer we are able to help you make your dream home a reality. Talk to us about how you would like your property to work better for you and your family, and allow us to come up with some options – together we can make it a special place to live.

Now, let's cover the permission required for some of the main areas of development.

Craig and Kevin,
Directors, Dwellings4U
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CLASS A: GENERAL EXTENSIONS

A growing family, boomerang kids, multi-generational living, changing requirements of your home (working from home, anyone?) – whether you need more space to live or work, extending your property can be life-changing.

The GPDO allows for 'the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house' which covers a variety of extensions on many homes without the need for planning. A dwelling house includes C3 houses (whether or not sole or main residence) occupied by a single person, family or up to six residents living as a single household; and might include a small or large house in multiple occupation (HMO).

Often on new build properties or as a result of previous planning approval, there may be conditions attached and this should be checked before undertaking any work. However an extension will need to comply with building regulations and will be subject to the approval of an inspector.

Once complete, it may be worth applying for a Lawful Development Certificate from your local planning authority to confirm the extension is legally permitted as this may be useful if you choose to sell your property.

Extensions are considered against the original building as it stood on 1 July 1948, so if it has already been extended this must be factored in as part of the total permitted extension.

The Class A General Extensions regulations cannot be applied to houses which have been converted from agricultural buildings, storage, light industrial, shops or casinos. There are also restriction on buildings which are listed, in a conservation area, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Broads or Heritage site.

To determine the permitted extension for your property type, select from the following:

REAR EXTENSIONS

SINGLE STOREY

- up to 3m depth for a terrace or semi-detached house
- up to 4m depth for a detached house
- max height of 4m and not higher than the ridge-line of the house
- max eaves height of 3m if within 2m of a boundary and not higher than the eaves of the house
- up to 50% of the original space around the house including any existing outbuildings or sheds etc.
- no cladding on article 2(3) land – conservation area, AONB, Broads
- materials of a similar appearance to existing house
- must not extend beyond a side elevation that fronts a highway or the principal elevation of the original dwelling house
- no verandah, balcony or raised platform

DOUBLE STOREY

- up to 3m depth on a detached, terrace or semi-detached house
- max eaves height of 3m if within 2m of a boundary and not higher than the eaves of the house
- not higher than the ridge line of the house
- not higher than the eaves of the house
- must be more than 7m to the rear boundary
- up to 50% of the original space around the original dwelling house including any existing outbuildings or sheds etc.
- no cladding on article 2(3) land – conservation area, AONB, Broads
- not on article 2(3) land – conservation area, AONB, Broads
- materials of a similar appearance to existing house
- upper floor side-windows obscure glass and non-opening
- pitch of roof same as original house
- must not extend beyond a side elevation that fronts a highway or the principal elevation of the original dwelling house
- no verandah, balcony or raised platform

SIDE EXTENSIONS

SINGLE STOREY

- max of 50% width of original house
- max height of 4m and not higher than the ridge-line of the house
- max eaves height of 3m if within 2m of a boundary and not higher than the eaves of the house
- up to 50% of the original space around the house including any existing outbuildings or sheds etc.
- no cladding on article 2(3) land – conservation area, AONB, Broads
- materials of a similar appearance to existing house
- not on a side elevation that fronts a highway
- no verandah, balcony or raised platform

DOUBLE STOREY

- not allowed – requires planning

LARGER REAR EXTENSIONS

Allows up to an 8m (detached) or a 6m (semi/terrace) extension. Before beginning the development, the developer must notify the local authority by providing 'a written description of the proposed development', 'a plan indicating the site and showing the proposed development and any existing enlargement of the original dwelling house to which the enlarged part will be joined', and certain other information.

The local authority will write to all neighbours to see if anyone objects. If none of the owners or occupiers of the adjoining premises object to the proposed development, then the local planning authority confirms to the developer that prior approval is not required.

If anyone objects to the proposed development, then the local authority must assess 'the impact of the proposed development on the amenity of any adjoining premises'. They then either grant prior approval (either unconditionally or subject to conditions) or refuses prior approval. Should they refuse or add conditions you have a right of appeal.

SINGLE STOREY

- between 3m and 6m for a terrace or semi-detached house
- between 4m and 8m for a detached house
- max height of 4m and not higher than the ridge-line of the house
- max eaves height of 3m if within 2m of a boundary and not higher than the eaves of the house
- up to 50% of the original space around the house including any existing outbuildings or sheds etc.
- not on article 2(3) land – conservation area, AONB, Broads or a site of special scientific interest
- materials of a similar appearance to existing house
- must not extend beyond a side elevation that fronts a highway or the principal elevation of the original dwelling house
- no verandah, balcony or raised platform

DOUBLE STOREY

- not allowed – requires planning or opt for the 3m option above

Despite the various restrictions, you can build quite a large side or rear extension as long as your garden is large enough. The 50 per cent restriction includes any outbuildings, so beware of any garages or large sheds etc.

CLASS AA: ENLARGEMENT OF A DWELLING HOUSE BY CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL STOREYS

If you don't have space to spread out, look up! Adding a storey to your home can provide extra accommodation, working space or – used creatively – help you to make the most of your property's outlook with an impressive first or second floor living and entertaining space.

The GPDO permits up to two additional storeys where the existing house consists of two or more storeys or one additional storey with one storey or a bungalow. It is imperative to ensure the foundations of a property are able to take additional storeys and a full structural survey should be undertaken.

You may extend upwards by the additional storeys on a detached property, subject to a prior approval application, up to a maximum height of 3.5m on a bungalow or single storey property or up to 7m where the existing house consists of two or three storeys. These measurements are the highest part of the house that are permitted. If the property is a semi-detached or in a terrace then you are limited to 3.5m above the other property or the highest part of the terrace on any building. The height of the upwards extensions is also limited by the factor that it can't exceed that of any existing floor to ceiling height or 3m, whichever is the lower. Finally you must only extend the principal part of the house upwards and any strengthening works required must be within the boundaries of your own property and those works cannot be visible on the outside of the property. Materials must be of a similar appearance to the rest of the house, and you can't add windows to a side elevation including the roof, which must be the same pitch as the existing roof. Once constructed you can only use this for a C3 dwelling house.

The Class AA Enlargement of a Dwelling House by Construction of Additional Storeys regulations cannot be applied to houses which have been converted from offices under Class O, agricultural buildings, storage, light industrial, shops or casinos. There are also restriction on buildings which are listed, in a conservation area, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Broads, National Park, Heritage site or Site of Scientific Interest. If a property has been previously extended upwards, built before 1 July 1948 or after 28 October 2018, it cannot have storeys added.

CLASS B: ADDITIONS TO THE ROOF OF A HOUSE

A well-designed loft conversion can create additional space for your family and doesn't always have to mean losing all of your storage space.

The GPDO allows for roofs to be added to with dormers or loft conversions without planning on many properties however such modifications will be subject to building regulations. Velux windows are considered internal works and are allowed outside of the GPDO. New build properties may have conditions attached and this should be checked prior to undertaking any work.

THE CLASS B ADDITIONS TO THE ROOF OF A HOUSE REGULATIONS REQUIRE:

- A volume allowance of 40 cubic metres additional roof space for terraced houses
- A volume allowance of 50 cubic metres additional roof space for detached and semi-detached houses
- No extension beyond the plane of the existing roof slope of the principal elevation that fronts the highway
- No extension to be higher than the highest part of the roof
- Materials to be similar in appearance to the existing house
- No verandas, balconies or raised platforms
- Side-facing windows to be obscure-glazed; any opening to be 1.7m above the floor
- Roof extensions not on article 2(3) land – conservation area, AONB, Broads
- Roof extensions, apart from hip to gable ones, to be set back, as far as practicable, at least 20cm from the original eaves
- The roof enlargement cannot overhang the outer face of the wall of the original house

Once complete, it may be worth applying for a Lawful Development Certificate from your local planning authority to confirm the extension is legally permitted as this may be useful if you choose to sell your property.

The Class B Additions to the Roof of a House regulations cannot be applied to flats or maisonettes, houses which have been converted from agricultural buildings, storage, light industrial, shops or casinos. There are also restriction on buildings which are listed, in a conservation area, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Broads or Heritage site. Finally alterations to the roof are to the original building or as it was on 1 July 1948, so this means you can't add on a dormer to an extension built under permitted development.

CLASS D: ADDITIONS TO THE ROOF OF A HOUSE

Are you sick of piles of shoes, coats and bags dropped and taking up residence in your hall or kitchen? A porch can provide a highly useful space to absorb the detritus of everyday life. A porch can also help to keep draughts out and heat in during the winter months, improving your home's energy efficiency.

Broadly speaking, porches are exempt from planning permission under the GPDO. However it is important to check there are no conditions on your property, particularly new build or if it has previously received planning permission for other building work.

THE LIMITATIONS FOR THE PORCH ARE:

- The ground floor area (measured externally) should not exceed three square metres
- No part should be more than three metres above ground level
- No part of the porch should be within two metres of any boundary of the dwelling house and the highway

The Class D: Porches regulations cannot be applied to flats or maisonettes, houses which have been converted from agricultural buildings, storage, light industrial, shops or casinos. There are also restriction on buildings which are listed, in a conservation area, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Broads or Heritage site.

CLASS E: OUTBUILDINGS INCIDENTAL TO THE ENJOYMENT OF A DWELLING HOUSE

With more of us working from home, looking to create an area for our hobbies and interests or just wanting to enjoy our living space more, an outbuilding can provide a welcome spillover from a main residence.

Outdoor offices, home gyms or a housed indoor swimming pool are highly desirable additions to a property, and a dedicated stables or kennels can be sought-after by buyers if you come to sell your home.

Outbuildings can only cover 50 per cent of the curtilage (outdoor space) of the original dwelling house or when built on 1 July 1948, including any extensions, sheds or outbuildings, although this doesn't include separate land or paddocks. Depending on size, an outbuilding may be subject to building regulations, but is permitted within the following:

- No outbuilding on land forward of a wall forming the principal elevation
- Outbuildings and garages to be single storey with maximum eaves height of 2.5 metres and maximum overall height of four metres with a dual pitched roof or three metres for any other roof
- Maximum height of 2.5 metres in the case of a building, enclosure or container within two metres of a boundary of the curtilage of the dwelling house
- No verandas, balconies or raised platforms
- No more than half the area of land around the 'original house' would be covered by additions or other buildings
- In National Parks, the Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and World Heritage Sites the maximum area to be covered by buildings, enclosures, containers and pools more than 20 metres from house to be limited to 10 square metres
- In National Parks, the Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, conservation areas and World Heritage Sites, enclosures, containers and pools at the side of properties will require planning permission
- Within the curtilage of listed buildings any outbuilding will require planning permission

CLASS F: DRIVEWAYS

A practical addition to your property, an upgraded drive is a fantastic way to boost your home's kerb appeal. With a few restrictions, a driveway does not require planning permission for C3 houses and houses converted from offices under Class O, although new build properties and homes which have previously received permission may have certain conditions.

Although there is no restriction on size, where the hard surface is greater than five square metres and in front of the property, the hard surface must be porous or incorporate a direct run-off water from hard to a porous area within the curtilage of the house.

If cars are to be parked on the drive, a drop kerb is required for access as it is an offence to cross a pavement without one.

Permissions do not apply to flats and maisonettes, houses that have been converted from agricultural buildings, storage, light industrial, shops or casinos. There are also restrictions for listed buildings, and properties in a conservation area, Area of Natural Beauty, Broads or Heritage site.

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