

Building Control Solutions

Homeowner Guide 12

Home Owners Checklist



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Why Building Control?

Most people are aware that if they wish to construct or alter a building, they will need permission from someone. However, there are two quite separate areas, Planning Permission and Building Control Permission.

These functions are quite confused and misunderstood by the general public. The rules governing both are completely different. Building Control Permission (referred to as Building Regulation Approval) is not the same as Planning Permission. It is strongly emphasised that advice is sought from both a Planning Officer and Building Control Surveyor during the early stages of your design.

Need advice?

Please consult our Building Control team prior to making an application. Our Service is there to help if you are in any doubts over requirements or require further information.

Do I need building regulation approval for work to my home?

Our Homeowner Guide series of leaflets help to explain various aspects of the Building Control process.

These are available from: www.bcsolutions.org.uk

Why not start with Homeowner Guides 1, 2 and 3?

Why not visit our website?

Why not visit our website to gain assistance and advice on whether your proposal requires consent from us?

If I need building regulation approval, how do I ensure that I get a good builder?

If you are considering any work to your property and you require a builder, you should consider this choice very carefully. The vast majority of builders are respectable and trustworthy. Our web site provides useful advice.

The Government's Trust Mark Scheme will help you ensure that your contractor is genuine and reliable. Please visit www.trustmark.org.uk for details.

Here are some of the points you should consider and the basic precautions that you should take whenever you are choosing a builder.

Follow our guide to choosing the right builder

Homeowner Guide 11, Choosing Your Builder, gives you further advice.

For larger projects, consider employing a professional to advise you. Addresses and contacts are available on our website. Discuss and agree the extent of any professional's responsibility.

If your job is so small that you do not think you need the services of a professional, seek advice from someone in the industry you know and trust.

Always obtain quotations (at least three) in writing and have them checked. Be very clear about what you want done and ask for a written specification and quotation.

Do not automatically go for the cheapest quote, as this may not necessarily be the best one to choose.

Try and visit three or four of the builder's recently completed jobs and if possible speak to the owners about the builders work.

Builders often claim that they are members of trade associations. You should check the validity of any such claim. A respected trade organisation will have membership standards and requirements of its members, check them.

Agree any staged and final payments before work starts. Avoid dealing in cash and do not make the final payment until you are in receipt of a Building Control Completion Certificate.

Good quality builders will be happy to answer any queries as the work progresses, as they have nothing to hide.

Ask to see the builder's Public Liability Insurance Certificate. The building work may also affect your home and contents insurance policy, check this with your insurance company.

Use a formal contract, The Federation of Master Builders has a simple form of contract for small building work. Alternatively, there is a JCT Building Contract for home owners/occupiers. This will give you invaluable protection should a problem occur when the work starts.

Visit: www.buildingcontract.org for further advice or www.findabuilder.co.uk

Finally, having selected a builder, ensure that the scope of the work for the agreed sum, is clearly specified in writing or on detailed plans.

What about the neighbours?

Do my neighbours have the right to object to what is proposed in my Building Regulation Application?

No. While there is no requirement in the Building Regulations to consult neighbours, it can be courteous to do so.

Objections may be raised under other legislation, particularly if your proposal is subject to approval under the Town and Country Planning Acts, where overlooking of windows, for example, may be controlled.

The Party Wall Act may also apply: if you intend to carry out building work which involves:

- Work on an existing wall shared with another property.
- Building on the boundary with a neighbouring building.
- Excavating near a neighbouring building.

If the work falls within the Act you (or your architect on your behalf) must notify all affected neighbours.

Party Wall Act issues must be resolved before agreeing a commencement date with the builder.

Our website provides advice on the Party Wall Act. Please note, Building Control Solutions does not control or enforce the Party Wall Act. Homeowner Guide 13 provides an introduction to the Act.

Please also consider the following

Are you aware of the exact boundaries of your land?

Have you shown a copy of the plans to your neighbour?

Have you spoken specifically about the following items where applicable:

- a. The proposal being constructed partially over the boundary?
- b. The encroachment of the foundation onto their property?
- c. The detailing of the connection of the proposal to your neighbour's building?
- d. The encroachment of the eaves/guttering onto the property?
- e. The connection of the new drainage system into your neighbours inspection chamber/manhole/drain?
- f. Access for maintenance, repairs, painting, clearing gutters etc.?
- g. The overlooking of windows?
- h. The proximity of outlets and flues?
- i. Access onto your neighbours land to build?
- j. Carrying out your work during unsociable hours?

Remember!

If a dispute cannot be avoided the matter can ultimately only be resolved by Civil Action being taken as the Council has no jurisdiction in these matters.

Please ensure that your neighbours property is kept clean, tidy and dust free during the construction process and that building materials are stored in such a way as not to inhibit access to land.



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