

The UK Residential Guide to Extensions & Planning

Everything you need before you commit: your route, your drawings, your costs and your timeline.

Editable Word version and our other guides: exparc.co.uk/free-guides

In this guide: your approval routes, what trips people up, what it costs, how long it takes, a checklist you can work through, and answers to the questions we are asked most.

1. Your approval routes

Route	When it applies	What you submit
Permitted Development	Many single-storey rear extensions, lofts that keep the roof shape, most garden rooms	Nothing is required, though a lawful development certificate protects you at resale
Prior Approval	Larger single-storey rear extensions, up to 6m or 8m depending on house type	Notification, drawings and neighbour consultation
Full Planning	Two-storey, side and front extensions, and anything in a conservation area	Full application with existing and proposed drawings

2. What trips people up

- 27% of people planning work call planning permission a major obstacle, yet around 88% of householder applications are approved. Preparation is the difference.
- Assuming the wrong route is the most common and most expensive early mistake.
- Planning permission and Building Regulations are separate approvals. You usually need both, and one does not imply the other.
- Permitted development is measured against the original house, so earlier extensions may already have used your allowance.
- Percentage-based fees rise with your build cost. A fixed written price is the only way to know your number before you start.

3. What it costs

Typical UK market ranges, so you can sanity-check any quote you receive. Exp|Arc quotes one fixed written price after a free route check, and flags the third-party costs below up front.

What	Typical UK range	Who it is paid to
Planning drawings	£1,200 – £2,500	Your drawing practice
Full set incl. Building Regs	£2,500 – £5,000	Your drawing practice
Council application fee	£548 (householder, England, from April 2026)	Local authority
Structural engineer	£700 – £2,000	Engineer, where structure changes

Measured survey	Up to £450, or £0 with a guided self-survey	Surveyor
-----------------	---	----------

4. How long it takes

Stage	Typical time
Free planning-route check	Same working day
First draft drawings	10 working days
Revisions until you are happy	Unlimited, usually 1 to 2 rounds
Council decision	6 to 8 weeks from validation
Building Regulations set	1 to 2 weeks after approval

5. Your checklist

☐	Confirm your route in writing before you design anything
☐	Check what earlier extensions have used up
☐	Measure boundary distances, ridge heights and the garden area
☐	Budget for the council fee and a structural engineer
☐	Commission accurate existing drawings
☐	Consider the Party Wall Act if building near a shared wall
☐	Plan for a 6 to 8 week council decision
☐	Keep the completion certificate for resale

6. Questions people ask

How do I know which route applies to me?

It depends on your property type, its history, its location and exactly what you want to build. Send us the postcode and the plan and we confirm it in writing, free, usually the same working day.

What drawings will I receive?

Existing and proposed floor plans, elevations and sections, a site location plan and a block plan, plus a Building Regulations set where the work is structural.

Do I have to deal with the council?

No. We prepare the application, submit it, answer the case officer and manage it through to a decision.

What if the application is refused?

We handle changes and resubmission, and if any application we submit is refused you get a 100% refund within 5 days.

Get your free planning-route check

Send your postcode and what you are planning. You get the route confirmed in writing, the drawings you need, and one fixed price, usually the same working day. If any application we submit is refused, you get a 100% refund within 5 days.

exparc.co.uk/get-a-quote · info@exparc.co.uk · +44 7883 283289

General information for UK projects, not planning advice for a specific property. Limits and local policy vary, so always confirm your position before committing. Exp-Arc Limited, company no. 16980239, 167–169 Great Portland Street, 5th Floor, London W1W 5PF.