



Planning information leaflet

Extensions to Dwellings

Permitted Development Rights

You can make certain types of minor changes to your home without needing to apply for planning permission. These are called "permitted development rights". They derive from a general planning permission granted not by the local authority but by Parliament. Bear in mind that the permitted development rights which apply to many common projects for houses do not apply to flats, maisonettes or other buildings.

More restricted permitted development rights apply in 'designated areas' which include National Parks and Conservation Areas. Sometimes permitted development rights may have been withdrawn as a result of a condition imposed on an earlier planning permission or you may live in an area affected by an 'Article 4 Direction' removing certain permitted development rights.

The **Planning Portal** is the UK Government's online planning and building regulations resource for England and Wales. It has lots of useful information about the types of minor works you can do to your home without the need for planning permission. A brief overview of the need for planning permission for different types of **home alterations** can also be found on the Authority's website.

Applying for planning permission

Like many local planning authorities, the National Park Authority has an agreed planning policy against which it considers planning applications for domestic extensions – policy DP 11 of the adopted **Core Strategy** (the 'local plan').

Successive local plans in the New Forest, dating back to the 1990s, have sought to limit the size of extensions to help protect the unspoilt character of the New Forest and to maintain a range of housing types, particularly the stock of smaller dwellings to meet the needs of the New Forest community.

Policy DP 11 allows householders to extend and improve their homes although there are certain limitations, depending on where you live and whether your home has been extended in the past.

As a general rule, you can extend the floor space of your home by up to 30% providing that other standard planning considerations are met, such as scale, appearance and consideration of impacts on neighbours and the wider area.

But there are two exceptions to the "30% rule":

1. If you live within one of the four main villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst or Sway, you can extend your property beyond the 30% but again, normal planning considerations still apply.
2. If your property is classed as a 'small dwelling' – which is defined as a dwelling of 80 sq. metres or less – then that can normally only be extended up to a maximum of 100 sq. metres.

The baseline for calculating increases in floor space and defining a 'small dwelling' is 1 July 1982 – this is the baseline date that has been used in nearly all of the New Forest since the 1990s.

There are circumstances when a larger extension may be permitted and these are explained in the policy.

The full policy, and the supporting text, as it appears in the local plan, is set out below.

Policy DP11: Extensions to Dwellings – extract from the local plan

Policy DP11: Extensions to Dwellings

Extensions to existing dwellings will be permitted provided that they are appropriate to the existing dwelling and its curtilage.

In the case of small dwellings, the extension must not result in a total habitable floorspace exceeding 100 sq. metres, and in the case of other dwellings (not small dwellings) outside the defined villages the extension must not increase the floorspace of the existing dwelling by more than 30%. In exceptional circumstances a larger extension may be permitted:

- a) to meet the genuine family needs of an occupier who works in the immediate locality; or
- b) to meet design considerations relating to the special character of the dwelling (e.g. listed buildings).

In respect of these exceptional circumstances, the maximum habitable floorspace of an extended small dwelling must not exceed 120 sq.metres.

In the case of agricultural or forestry workers' dwellings, the extension must not result in a total habitable floorspace exceeding 120 sq. metres.

Extensions will not be permitted where the existing dwelling is the result of a temporary or series of temporary permissions or the result of an unauthorised use.

7.39 For the purposes of applying Policies DP10 and DP11:

- **original dwelling** means the dwelling as first built;
- **existing dwelling** means the dwelling as it existed on 1 July 1982, or as the dwelling was originally built or legally established, if the residential use post-dates 1 July 1982;
- **small dwelling** means a dwelling with a floor area of 80 sq. metres or less as it existed on 1 July 1982, or as the dwelling was originally built or legally established, if the residential use post-dates 1 July 1982;

- **floorspace of original, existing and small dwellings** will be measured as the total internal habitable floorspace of the dwelling but will not include floorspace within conservatories³⁵, attached outbuildings and detached outbuildings (irrespective of whether the outbuilding's current use is as habitable floorspace);
- **floorspace of proposed extensions** will include conservatories and attached outbuildings and any habitable floorspace provided within a detached outbuilding;
- a **conservatory** is defined as having not less than three-quarters of the area of its roof and not less than one-half of the area of its external walls made of translucent material; and
- **genuine family need** is defined as an exceptional and unique family need that could not have been reasonably anticipated at the time of purchase of the property. For example, additional floorspace may be required to cater for specialist equipment and facilities required in connection with an unforeseen event, such as a severe disability arising from an accident whilst in occupation of the property; but, it normally would not cater for the needs of growing families or the need to care for elderly relatives, as these needs are not considered to be so 'exceptional' as to warrant a departure from the floorspace restrictions set out in this policy.

Further guidance on measuring floorspace (existing and proposed)

Habitable floorspace is calculated as gross internal floorspace including all floors and stairwells.

Accommodation within the roof space is included where there is natural light (e.g. via a dormer window or roof light), a permanent staircase and headroom of at least 1.5 metres.

The policy excludes **attached outbuildings** when calculating the existing internal floorspace. Outbuildings are normally defined as subsidiary buildings which have not been designed or built for habitable use as part of the main dwelling. Examples include log stores, sheds, carports, garages and greenhouses. Outbuildings will often be distinguishable from the main dwelling, both in their visual appearance and physical construction. There will inevitably be some 'borderline' cases where it could be argued that an attached building is part of the main house and there will be some discretion on this interpretation depending on the individual characteristics of the site and buildings.

Substantial open sided areas which are covered by a roof, such **verandas** and **large porches** may also be included in calculating new additional floor space.

As planning permission is not required to extend or add a mezzanine floor within a dwelling, **double height living rooms** with glazing up to what would be first floor, will be regarded as having two floors. Where glazing is not proposed at first floor level then there may be scope to include only the ground floor subject to a restriction on any further addition of windows at first floor level (if it is likely that any further accommodation would exceed floorspace limits).

A modest **basement** will not normally be regarded as habitable floorspace. However, some judgement will need to be applied in terms of whether it is genuinely a secondary space in association with the main dwelling. Key criteria to consider include:

- Availability of light
- Size (and relation to the main dwelling)
- Access
- Use
- Layout
- Headroom

Basements to houses set into a hillside with any form of exposed elevation will usually be treated as habitable accommodation.

Other relevant local plan policies

There are a number of other local plan policies that you should have regard to when drawing up your plans, in particular:

- Policy DP1 General Development Principles
- Policy CP8 Local Distinctiveness
- Policy DP6 Design Principles

These policies focus on the need to ensure that all new buildings are sympathetic and in keeping with their surroundings. The New Forest is a very special place and one that has a rich and locally distinctive built heritage.

Design is therefore a very important consideration. All extensions should:

- Be compatible with the main buildings, avoiding significant impact on the scale of the core or original element;
- Avoid impacts on neighbouring properties, such as building bulk and loss of light;
- Use a sympathetic choice of materials; and
- Minimise bulk by setting back with reduced height and smaller roof spans.

We positively encourage discussions with prospective applicants before an application is submitted and can provide further guidance and assistance as required. To contact us, please telephone 01590 646615 or write to the office (South Efford House, Milford Road, Lymington, SO41 0JD) or email your enquiry to:

dev.control@newforestnpa.gov.uk

Planning Constraints

Contact us for help identifying any planning constraints that may relate to the property such as areas of flood risk, nature designation or whether the property is in a conservation area. You can also check the property's development history in the 'planning history' section.

Planning application forms

Householder planning application forms can be downloaded from the Authority's website.

Building Regulations

Whether your extension is permitted development or requires planning permission, you must also consider whether you need to submit a Building Regulation application. The Building Regulations control the way in which a building is constructed, for example, the type of foundations, walls, insulation required. You will need to check with your local district/borough/unitary authority whether you need to also apply for Building Regulations Approval.