Building Control

Understanding building regulations approval

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QUICK SUMMARY

- Building Regulations 2010 set minimum technical standards
- Covers structural safety, fire, insulation, drainage, accessibility
- Separate from planning permission—both may be required
- Either you or your builder must apply for approval
- Non-compliance risks prosecution and an unsafe building

Meeting Building Regulations Standards

Once planning permission has been granted, you must obtain building regulations approval for your project to make sure that your plans can actually be realised. Most construction work in England and Wales is covered by the Building Regulations 2010. These minimum technical standards, set by the government, make sure that building work is designed and constructed properly. These include public health and safety, the welfare of people working or living in the building, and environmental standards.

The main areas covered by the Building Regulations 2010 are:

- Structural stability– the building's ability to safely carry expected loads without collapsing
- Fire precautions– this includes the construction materials used in the build as well as how easy the building is to evacuate in case of fire
- The prevention of dampness and condensation
- Sound resistance between dwellings
- The ventilation of habitable rooms and unheated voids
- Hygiene, drainage and sanitary appliances
- Heating appliances– this includes the safe discharge of flue gasses
- Stairways, ramps and any vehicle barriers
- Fuel and power conservation, including insulation

- Disabled access and facilities
- Safe glazing for windows and doors
- Electrical safety

As building regulations are only minimum standards, they simply cover what is necessary for the building to be constructed safely. For that reason you should be aware when hiring a contractor that a building which meets regulatory standards may not meet the individual standards you require. By law, either you or the builder must make an appropriate building regulations application and comply with the regulations. If you don’t do this, you risk being left with an unsafe building and being prosecuted in court.