How to Make a Planning Application

A step-by-step guide to submitting your application

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QUICK SUMMARY

- Most applicants use an agent (architect or surveyor)
- Apply online via Planning Portal or submit paper forms
- Full applications need detailed drawings; outline for initial feedback
- Required: site location plan (1:1250), block plan (1:500), elevations (1:100)
- Local criteria may require additional reports (ecology, flood risk, trees)

Getting Started

Most people use an 'agent' such as an architect or building surveyor to apply for planning permission on their behalf. Doing this means your agent receives all council correspondence relating to the application. Planning applications are made in two ways: either online through the national Planning Portal or by submitting paper copies of all documents to the council. You can get a paper application form at the planning department office or download one from your local council's website.

Types of Planning Applications

At this stage, you must decide what type of planning application you want to make:

A 'full' application

This applies in most cases where you want to change the use of your house or garden, or when you have prepared detailed drawings outlining your plans.

An 'outline' application

This is useful if you want to know the council’s thoughts on your proposal before you make detailed drawings. If you make an outline application, you must make another application for ‘reserved matters’ approval before you can commence building.

Home extensions and 'prior notification'

You are required to submit a standard planning application to the local planning authority and consult neighbours, unless in certain designated areas. Check the relevant procedure with your local council.

What do I need to make a planning application?

There are minimum requirements on the documents that must be presented with any planning application form. This minimum information is:

A site location plan – with the proposed site in red along with any other land you own in blue. The scales of the project must be 1:1250 or 1:2500

A block plan – this is a more detailed location plan for the site and must be at a scale of 1:500

Any drawings of the building's existing elevation, roof, floor plan and the elevation, roof and floor plan of the proposed works. All of these must be at a scale of 1:100

The correct application fees

Local criteria

Many councils require additional information for certain types of application. You should be able to find details of these 'local criteria' with your downloaded application form or via the national Planning Portal. They may include, arboriculture reports, an ecological report if it has the potential to affect protected species and a flood risk assessment where your project concerns land which is liable to flooding.

Make sure to sign and date the ownership certificate that accompanies the application form, along with any notices you have served on other parties with an interest in the application site. If you'd like to mention any exceptional circumstances in support of your planning application, do this through a separate planning statement accompanying your documents.

Check the number of copies of plans and documents that you need to provide, particularly if you are applying in paper form. It varies from council to council but traditionally this will not exceed four copies.All dimensions and quantities on planning application drawings must be in metric, not imperial, units.