

Planning Permission and Building Regulations for conservatories

For many homeowners, planning permission and building regulations are seen as a necessary hindrance in the otherwise exciting process of specifying their ideal conservatory or outdoor living solution.

At Specialised, we take the burden off homeowners by ensuring that all our installers are kept well-informed of changes in Planning and Building Regulations, and even undertake research and applications on customers' behalves, where required.

Planning Permission and Building Regulations are both administered by Local Authorities but involve different aspects of the proposed development. Planning Permission is primarily concerned with how the project aesthetically fits its surroundings while building regulations cover things like structure, construction standards and thermal efficiency.

How does Planning Permission apply to conservatories?

Most conservatories fall into the category of permitted development, i.e. projects that are excepted from Planning Permission provided they meet certain conditions.

For conservatories, these are:

at least half the area around the original house (i.e. the house as it stood when first built or on 1st July 1948 if built before then) must remain free from additions and/or extensions

any principal or side elevation fronting a highway must remain free from extensions

single-storey extensions to the rear of an attached house must not exceed three metres depth (four metres for detached houses)

single-storey rear extensions must not exceed four metres height

rear extensions of more than one storey must not exceed three metres depth

the eaves of any extension within two metres of the property's boundary must not exceed three metres in height

the eaves and ridge of any extension must not exceed the height of the house

extensions to the side of the house must be single-storey, not exceed four metres in height, and be no deeper than half the width of the original house

extensions of more than one storey must have the same roof pitch as the original house

extensions must not feature verandas, balconies or raised platforms

Should your house be situated on designated land (e.g. an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park, the Broads, a World Heritage Site or a conservation area), side extensions are not permitted. Additionally, extensions must not exceed one storey or feature exterior cladding.

How do Building Regulations apply to conservatories?

In most cases, conservatories are exempt from Building Regulations as long as the Local Authority is satisfied that they meet the following criteria:

30 square metre floor area or smaller

built at ground level

50% of the wall area is glazed

75% of the roof area consists of glazed or translucent material

quality external doors distinctly separate the house and conservatory areas

fixed electrical and glazing installations meet the applicable Building Regulations

In addition:

conservatories should not be constructed where they will impede ladder access to loft conversions or 'attic rooms', especially if the window functions as a rescue or escape route in the event of a fire.

new structural openings between house and conservatory are subject to Building Regulations whether or not the conservatory itself is exempt.

Find out more by talking to your Specialised installer or visiting the Government's online resource, The Planning Portal.

N.B. Building Regulations and Planning Permissions differ in Scotland and Northern Ireland to the rest of the UK.