

Garden building projects “Annexe” / “ancillary garden buildings”. (Small Accommodation Buildings) - 2016

1. Background

Demand for extra living space in gardens continues to increase due to the following factors:

- The cost of accommodation relative to available family funding continues to rise.
- The cost of Residential Care for the elderly continues to rise.
- Helping youngsters getting towards the so-called “housing ladder” is becoming more common.
- Our health system is doing a great job extending peoples lives.

This market has grown significantly over the last 7-8 years and is maturing as a direct result of the reasons above.

2. What is not acceptable?

- Building separate accommodation space in domestic gardens for rental purposes
- Converting any existing garden buildings for rental purposes

3. Which legal controls are in place?

Planning permission

Must always be obtained for additional buildings that could be considered “separate dwellings”. Permission is also needed for **all** buildings not allowed under the “permitted development” rules that govern (proximity to boundary, height and % of garden space which can be built on)

Building Regulations

(This is a completely separate subject to planning permission)

Full compliance schedules must be submitted for any structures offering accommodation space above and beyond 30 square metres as a single unit. (The “Building Regulations”) govern - environmental controls, structural strength, insulation properties and electrical safety).

Note 1: Building Regulations Part P electrical is mandatory for safety reasons in for **all** buildings of any type outside the main house requiring mains electrical feeds. All electrical work needs to be certificated by a qualified competent person.

Note 2: Full compliance costs required to complete a building of more than 30 sq m allowance can add some 20% to the project cost overall.

3. The current position

If a new building in the garden complies with “permitted development” rules - no planning permission is required.

A garden building can be used as (“ANCILLARY” accommodation to the main dwelling) providing it meets the rules.

Currently many planning officials (not all) draw their own line at installed cooking and kitchen facilities as the deciding factor between what is a separate dwelling unit and what is an ancillary accommodation building. i.e. Bedrooms for sleeping are ok, toilets and showers are ok but a separate kitchen, cooking and laundry facility make the building a fully equipped “separate dwelling”. Currently there is no legislation governing this but worktop, sink and microwave might be the best option.

4. Neighbour concerns:

It is best practice to ensure that neighbours will not be disadvantaged by your development.

Here is a list of common factors that sometimes lead to stress and difficulty regarding the use of a garden building as ancillary accommodation.

- Noise – in particular loud music.
- Parking of additional vehicles at the roadside as a direct result of permanent occupation. Whilst unavoidable at times this can lead to aggravation and should be considered.
- Light pollution – Overuse of strong lights facing neighbouring properties can be an aggravating issue.

Design of the structure should always take into account any issues, which may cause concern to immediate neighbours.

Put simply:

Consideration must be given to a neighbours continued enjoyment and privacy of their own property.

Costs for small accommodation building full projects 20-30 sq m of good living space with plumbing range from £1250 to £1500 per sq metre depending on site access, groundwork required and design/specification.

About the Author:

Richard Grace - has been involved directly in this market area for more than 10 years. Author of the most visited UK web page on this subject. Richard has significant experience gained from hundreds of conversations / mail exchanges with competitors, enquirers, planners, structural engineers and building control staff.