

Organising and Planning Your Kitchen Extension



Design

With any building project, one of the first problems you face is the design of the build. Experts, such as Architects, Architectural Technologists and Interior Designers will add additional costs to the project, represent another person to deal with and might push their own ideas.

There is no law that says you have to have a designer and with a simple extension lots of people, in consultation with a good builder, manage to do this job themselves. But, it's worth bearing in mind that such experts can make the best of the space you have, take a degree of the stress out of the design stage and often have a deep knowledge of the planning process.

What to Keep In Mind When Choosing A Designer

- Do they hold professional qualifications demonstrating their competence to deliver your project?
- Are they registered with an industry recognised professional body, such as the [Architect's Registration Board](#) (ARB), the [Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists](#) (CIAT) or the [British Institute for Interior Design](#) (BIID)?
- Do they hold adequate insurance to protect you from errors in their work (Professional Indemnity Insurance)?



How to Choose a Designer

- Personal recommendations are always best. Ask people you know who have undertaken building work to suggest good professionals to work with
- Aim to meet at least three designers to discuss the project in depth
- Give each a brief of what you want and an outline of the budget you have in mind
- Ask to see their portfolio, ask to visit other projects they have worked on and ask to speak to past clients
- Talk to them directly about their fees



Planning

Whatever kind of extension you have in mind, whether it's a simple, single storey or something more elaborate, it still technically requires planning permission. For those opting for a modest construction, that permission might already pre-exist via General Permitted Development (PD).

What is permitted development (PD)?

PD is a right to develop your home within certain parameters without the requirement of approval from the local planning authority.

If you plan to undertake works under PD, according to the UK Government's Planning Portal there are strict rules outlining what you can and can't do:

- No more than half the area of land around the "original house"* can be covered by additions or other buildings.
- There can be no extension forward of the principal elevation or side elevation fronting a highway.
- No extension can be higher than the highest part of the roof.
- Single-storey rear extensions must not extend beyond the rear wall of the original house* by more than three metres if an attached house or by four metres if a detached house.
- The maximum height of a single-storey rear extension must not exceed four metres.



- Extensions of more than one storey must not extend beyond the rear wall of the original house* by more than three metres.
- The maximum eaves and ridge height of the extension must be no higher than existing house.
- Side extensions to be single storey with maximum height of four metres and width no more than half that of the original house.
- Two-storey extensions must be no closer than seven metres to the rear boundary.
- Roof pitch of extensions higher than one storey to match existing house.
- Materials to be similar in appearance to the existing house.
- No verandas, balconies or raised platforms.
- Upper-floor, side-facing windows to be obscure-glazed; any opening to be 1.7m above the floor.
- On designated land* no permitted development for rear extensions of more than one storey.
- On designated land no cladding of the exterior.
- On designated land no side extensions.

* The term "original house" means the house as it was first built or as it stood on 1 July 1948 (if it was built before that date). Although you may not have built an extension to the house, a previous owner may have done so.

Variations in Permitted Development

Be aware that PD rules are less generous in 'designated areas', such as conservation areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks.



It's also the case that not only are PD rights complex, they can be removed on an individual property or a whole area via an Article 4 Direction applied by the local authority.

Applying for Planning Permission

If your scheme doesn't fit under PD then you'll need to submit a full planning application. According to the Government's [Planning Portal](#), when applying, as a minimum, you must provide the following documents for your application to be valid:

- The standard application form
- Most planning applications require two plans to be submitted as supporting documents: (1) **Location plan** – which shows the site area and its surrounding context and (2) **Site Plan** – which shows the proposed development in detail
- An ownership certificate must be completed stating the ownership of the property
- Agricultural holdings certificate – this is required whether or not the site includes an agricultural holding. All agricultural tenants must be notified prior to the submission of the application
- Design and access statement – this should outline the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development and how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with
- Correct application fee



Local Level Requirements

Each local planning authority may also produce a list that outlines additional documentation required to accompany the application. The requirements might vary according to the type of application you are submitting.



Choosing A Builder

Extensions aren't cheap, they have a significant impact on your life, the entire process can last for several months and the final product really matters. So that makes your choice of builder/contractor a hugely important part of the process.

How to Find and Choose a Builder

- Personal recommendations are always best. Ask people you know who have undertaken building work to suggest good professionals to work with
- Talk to other tradesmen (ideally those you have worked with) about people who might be highly rated locally
- Look online at professional organisations, such as the [Federation of Master Builders](#) and the [Guild of Master Craftsmen](#) as well as review sites, such as [Checkatrade](#)
- If you have one, talk to your designer. They will likely have considerable experience of similar projects and might be able to recommend good local builders and tradespeople
- Aim to meet at least three builders to discuss the project in depth
- Give each a brief of what you want, the budget you have and a rough date of when you would want the work done
- Speak to past clients, asking questions such as do the builders turn up on time? are they polite? do they keep the site tidy?



Project Management

The role of a project manager is to take the design and complete the project within a set budget and timescale.

How to Find and Choose a Project Manager

- Personal recommendations are always best. Ask people you know who have hired project managers to suggest good professionals to work with
- If using a professional, such as a Builder, an Architect, an Architectural Technologist or an Interior Designer (all of whom can offer project management services) ensure that they belong to a professional body
- Aim to meet at least three project managers to discuss the project in depth
- Ask to see their portfolio, ask to visit other projects they have worked on and ask to speak to past clients
- Ask them directly about their fees

Keep in mind that an independent project manager is not usually required for small extension. You can take this role on yourself, with the help of a main contractor to coordinate the management of the build.



Self Project Management

Doing it yourself is common with kitchen extensions. However, it requires a significant investment of time, a good head for figures, the ability to manage scheduling and the confidence to get on with people. Every person choosing this route will have to keep the following in mind:

Budget: Money is vital to every project. Make sure you set and keep to a budget and be aware of cash flow. If bills are paid on time then the pace of the build is not disrupted.

Planning: Although complications generally occur, setting and sticking to a plan will keep costs down and keep the build to your desired schedule.

Site Management: Be aware of what jobs are currently underway and what tradesmen are booked to come on site next. A good project manager will need to make daily site visits and should hold a site meeting once a week.

Communication: Being a good communicator will make a huge difference to how smoothly the build goes. You need to ensure that instructions are clear, everyone understands them and that everybody is working to the same end.



Building Regulations

Extension building projects need Building Regulations Approval (BRA). These are rules that ensure that minimum design and construction standards are achieved. The rules cover a variety of subjects, including fire safety, drainage and access.

Applying for BRA

There are two types of Building Control Bodies (BCB): a Local Authority Building Control service and a private sector Approved Inspector Building Control service. Once you have chosen which BCB you are applying to, according to the [Local Government Association](#), there are three main types of application:

- Full Plans Application: This is the most thorough option. Decision on whether plans meet building regulations are given within 5 weeks (or 2 months with the consent of the applicant)
- Building Notice Application: This type of application is only for smaller projects. Work can start 2 days after a notice has been submitted to the relevant BCB
- Regularisation Application This type of application is for retrospective approval for work already carried out without consent (from a local authority BCB only). Only work carried out after 11 November 1985 can be approved in this way



Completion Certificate

A Completion Certificate will be issued once the building work is completed to the satisfaction of the inspector. This document is vitally important. It must be retained alongside the written planning permission for use if you ever want to sell. It is also needed in order to release final funds from lenders, to obtain the warranty certification and reclaim VAT (if applicable).





**On a final note, remember
getting your dream
kitchen doesn't have to be
a stressful process.**

At Ruach Kitchen we offer the ultimate turnkey service which means we'll take full responsibility for the entire project, so you can get on with your life.

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