

Building an Extension Within 1 Metre of a Boundary (UK Guide)

Overview

If you're planning to build a house extension within 1 metre of your property boundary, it's crucial to understand the relevant UK Building Control regulations, planning permissions, and fire safety considerations.

This guide provides everything you need to know, including steps to ensure compliance, foundation advice, and options for fire-resistant wall construction.

Compliance Checklist

- Extension does not exceed height limits (3m for single-storey, 4m pitched roof)
- Within 1 metre of boundary: walls constructed with fire-resistant materials
- Complies with Part B (Fire Safety) of Building Regulations
- Minimum 1 metre clearance for any windows facing the boundary (if required)
- Appropriate drainage and water management plans in place
- Permission granted via full planning or lawful development certificate
- Building Control approval obtained
- Party Wall notice served if shared walls/foundations affected

Planning Steps

1. Check Permitted Development Rules

You may be allowed to build under permitted development if certain criteria are met. If not, full planning permission will be required.

2. Submit a Lawful Development Certificate (Optional but Recommended)

Even for permitted development, a certificate offers proof that your extension is legal.

3. Apply for Planning Permission (If Required)

Especially if:

- The extension exceeds PD limits
- You're in a conservation area or AONB
- The extension affects privacy/light to neighbours

4. Notify Neighbours

Particularly under the **Party Wall Act**, if foundations or structural changes may affect shared walls.

5. Appoint Building Control

This can be via your Local Authority or an Approved Inspector. They'll ensure your work complies with:

- Fire safety (Part B)
- Structural integrity (Part A)
- Energy efficiency (Part L)

Foundation Tips for Boundary Extensions

Building close to the boundary introduces specific foundation challenges.

- **Avoid Encroachment:** Ensure foundations do not trespass onto neighbouring land.
- **Consider Piling or Raft Foundations:** These minimise disturbance and are ideal for tight spaces.
- **Check Soil Type:** Clay soils may require deeper or wider foundations.
- **Drainage Matters:** Avoid blocking natural flow or causing water to pool near boundaries.
- **Protect Trees & Roots:** Nearby trees can impact foundation depth (consider NHBC standards).

Fire Safety Wall Options (Required Within 1m)

If you're building within 1 metre of the boundary, fire-resistant walls are mandatory. Here are some compliant solutions:

1. Concrete Block + Fire-Resistant Plasterboard

A traditional, affordable fire-rated system.

2. SFS (Steel Frame System) + Fireboard

Popular in modular builds. Combine with Rockwool insulation and A1-rated cladding.

3. Brick/Block Cavity Wall + Non-Combustible Insulation

Provides both fire resistance and thermal performance.

4. Pre-Fabricated Fire-Rated Panels

Ideal for modular or rapid builds. Pre-certified to meet BS EN standards.

Important: Windows are restricted within 1m of the boundary unless they are:

- Fire-rated
- Small (<1m²)
- Fixed shut

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do I need planning permission for an extension within 1 metre of the boundary?

Yes, if your design doesn't fall under permitted development or you're in a restricted area.

2. What wall construction is allowed within 1 metre of a neighbour's fence?

Walls must be fire-resistant and meet Building Regulations Part B.

3. Can I have windows facing the neighbour?

Only if they're fire-rated or comply with size and opening restrictions.

4. How close can foundations go to the boundary?

They must stay within your land. Trespass can lead to legal issues under the Party Wall Act.

5. What's the best way to build in tight back gardens?

Modular extensions are ideal—they reduce mess, noise, and access issues.

6. How long does planning permission take?

Typically 8 weeks. Faster under permitted development with a certificate of lawful use.

7. Will I need Building Control even if I don't need planning permission?

Yes. Building Control is always required.

8. What materials are best for fire-rated boundary walls?

Steel frame systems with cement board, cavity block, or non-combustible render systems.

9. Can I build a conservatory within 1 metre?

Yes, but only if it's fully detached or uses fire-safe materials.


10. Is the Party Wall Act involved?

Yes, if you're working on or near a shared boundary or wall.



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