

If you're a homeowner in Solihull considering extending your property, you might have noticed that while your neighbours sailed through their recent renovations with no need for planning permissions, you face a much more complex scenario. This raises a common question: *why do some extensions need detailed planning consent even when similar work nearby didn't?*

From my 12 years managing and estimating residential extensions across the UK, including numerous projects in Solihull, I have seen this bewilder new homeowners repeatedly. The answers lie partly in local rules unique to the area and partly in detailed planning considerations that go beyond apparent works. Combined with the Solihull price gap driving extend-not-move decisions, understanding these intricacies upfront can save you considerable time, money, and frustration.

Solihull's Price Gap: Why Many Choose to Extend Not Move

According to the **Office for National Statistics (ONS)** May 2026 local house price breakdowns, Solihull's average property prices continue to outpace neighbouring areas. This widening price gap has made moving to a larger property less affordable for many residents, who instead look to extend their existing homes.

While moving might offer instant additional space, costs including stamp duty, estate agent fees, removal charges, and solicitor fees add a substantial financial burden—expense that doesn't add any usable space to your living environment.

Here's a quick breakdown of typical moving-related fees in Solihull:

- **Stamp duty:** Up to 5% of the property purchase price
- **Solicitor/legal fees:** £800–£1,500
- **Estate agent fees:** Usually 1-1.5% of sale price
- **Removal and other relocation costs:** £1,000–£3,000

Add to this the inconvenience and hassle of moving, and the prospect of extending locally often becomes the more attractive proposition despite the upfront build costs.

Extension Costs by Size and Type in Solihull

When estimating extension costs, I always sanity-check prices per square metre to avoid surprises and unbudgeted expenses. Prices vary significantly depending on size, type, and specification.

Typical Extension Build Costs per Square Metre in Solihull (2024) Extension Type Approx. Cost per m²

(Including VAT) Notes Single-Storey Rear Extension £1,600 – £2,200 Depends on depth, specifications, and finish

Two-Storey Side or Rear Extension £1,800 – £2,500 Includes more structural work, possible internal remodelling

Loft or Dormer Extension £2,000 – £2,800 Higher complexity and regulations, often requires planning

It's crucial to remember these costs depend on your specific site conditions and requirements. Getting quotes from vetted, local builders through platforms like **Checktrade** and **MyJobQuote** can help ground budget expectations <https://solihullobservers.co.uk/lifestyle/why-solihull-homeowners-are-extending-instead-of-selling-up/> in reality.



Understanding Planning Permission: Why Your Extension May Require Detailed Plans

Even when neighbours seem to have extended without fuss, your extension might still require a full planning application. Here's why:

1. Permitted Development Restrictions in Solihull

Permitted Development (PD) rights allow certain extensions without formal planning permission—but these rights come with strict limits. In Solihull, a number of factors can restrict PD rights:

- **Article 4 Directions:** Solihull Council may have issued Article 4 directions to restrict PD rights in specific locations, requiring even minor extensions to undergo planning scrutiny.
- **Conservation Area Rules:** Properties within Solihull's conservation areas must adhere to stricter controls on design, materials, height, and footprint.
- **Previous Extensions or Alterations:** If your property has already had extensions under PD rights, further works may require planning permission.

2. Individual Plot and Neighbourhood Considerations

Planning departments view each application on its own merits. Differences in site orientation, proximity to neighbours, trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), or flood risk zones can all trigger the need for detailed planning approval.

Just because your neighbour's extension went ahead informally doesn't guarantee your project will be treated the same by Solihull Council's planning officers.

3. Structural and Safety Requirements

Two-storey extensions or loft conversions typically require detailed structural plans and sometimes building regulations approval even if planning permission is not needed. For example, internal staircases, load-bearing walls, and underpinning must be professionally certified.

4. Role of the Solihull Council Pre-Application Enquiry

To manage the uncertainty, the Solihull Council pre-application enquiry service is invaluable. It offers early feedback on whether your plans are likely to meet PD conditions or require a full planning application.

Many homeowners skip this step at their peril, assuming “if neighbours got permission, so will I.” It’s the best way to avoid costly redesigns or enforcement action after you’ve started building.

Planning Application vs Permitted Development Checks

How do you know for sure if your project falls under Permitted Development or needs a planning application? Use the following approach:

1. Consult the Planning Portal’s Permitted Development Checklist for initial guidance.
2. Check local limitations such as Article 4 directions or conservation area overlays on the Solihull Council Planning Webpages.
3. Submit a pre-application enquiry to Solihull Council for tailored, site-specific advice.
4. If you must apply, use the Council’s online planning application service, making sure to include all requested documents such as scaled drawings and design statements.

Homes within conservation areas generally should expect more rigorous scrutiny, making a detailed planning application almost inevitable.

What People Forget to Budget For

As someone who has priced hundreds of extensions, one thing I always emphasize is building a realistic budget that accounts not just for the build but all associated costs. Homeowners often underbudget or overlook:

- **VAT:** Make sure quotes explicitly state whether VAT is included. Most building work in the UK attracts 20% VAT, which can significantly increase total costs.
- **Contingency:** Always allocate at least 10-15% contingency for unexpected issues like hidden damp, structural challenges, or material price fluctuations.
- **Professional fees:** Architect, engineer, and surveyor fees for drawings, reports, and certifications.
- **Building control fees:** Charges from local authorities to approve compliance with construction regulations.
- **Planning application and pre-application fees:** Solihull Council charges for these vary—check their website for the latest scale.
- **Temporary accommodation or disruption costs:** Sometimes minor stays elsewhere or facility adjustments are needed if your home becomes unlivable during works.

Final Thoughts: Extend Smart in Solihull

Solihull’s house price pressures mean more people are choosing extension over moving. However, with this comes the critical need to navigate local planning controls carefully. Just because neighbouring properties seemed to bypass detailed planning does not mean your project will be exempt.

Use official tools like the Solihull pre-application enquiry and make thorough permitted development and planning application checks before committing your budget. Employ trustworthy tradespeople verified through platforms like **Checkatrade** and **MyJobQuote** to get reliable prices that factor in all necessary protocols.



By grounding your project in clear knowledge of Solihull's planning landscape and realistic cost expectations, you'll avoid unexpected delays or expenses and build your dream extension with confidence.

Author's note: As a former project manager and estimator with over a decade of experience in UK home extensions, I always urge homeowners to get professional advice early and budget prudently—forewarned is forearmed.