

## Planning simplification could lead to neighbour feuds

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The Government has announced changes to planning law simplifying the procedure for homeowners wishing to extend. For example:

- From 01 October single storey extensions up to four metres deep can be built without permission on detached properties.
- On smaller homes three metre extensions will be permitted.
- There will no longer be a maximum volume for a rear extension.
- The rules governing loft conversions and extensions will also change.
- New driveways or parking areas will not require planning permission if a permeable material is used.

Planning permission will still be required in Conservation areas.

The reduction of planning red tape will have several positive benefits, both for individual homeowners and the overburdened and under funded local authorities, in the case of the latter saving millions of taxpayers money.

Local residents in areas such as Jesmond will be concerned that additional loft bedrooms accommodating students will lead to further pressure on the limited availability of on street car parking

Also the reduction of planning red tape may increase disputes between neighbours as household planning applications are notoriously contentious on issues including privacy, overlooking and a loss of amenity. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors have recently launched the RICS Neighbour Dispute Service (NDS). This is designed to make use of surveyors` skills to resolve disputes speedily and cost efficiently via a structured , non-confrontational approach.

It remains to be seen if this service will have a role to play in planning related matters but it seems clear that there will need to be some effective means of dispute resolution.

For further information please contact Nick Lansberry.