

According to a recent survey conducted by architectyourhome, the UK's largest supplier of architectural services for the domestic market, the most common home renovation request amongst British homeowners this year has been for a rear glass extension. Despite its popularity, however, new environmental based building regulations could result in thousands of quashed dreams.

With planning applications submissions for glass extensions ever increasing in Oxfordshire the recent alterations to Part L building regulations will affect what designs will be permissible for homeowners considering adding an extension in Oxfordshire.

Who does this affect?

All British homeowners thinking of making renovations to their homes will need to consider whether the new building regulations affect their proposed design.

The new Part L Building regulations only apply to requests for renovation or building works not approved before 31st March, 2006. Hence if your renovation is complete and building regulations obtained/approved before the above date, the new Part L regulations do not apply.

What does it mean for homeowners thinking of / or currently renovating?

The new rules mean that any renovation work homeowners are looking to complete will be judged on whether it effects the properties 'thermal performance' (i.e. the amount of

heat that would be lost through the walls, floor, windows etc.). Whilst considerations of this kind have long been the case, the new changes have made the requirements much more onerous.

In addition the new requirements have become fiendishly complex. The official guidance suggests no less than three alternative methods for calculating whether what you are proposing will be compliant. Often this requires calculating the total thermal performance for the house and offsetting higher performance areas against other, less thermally efficient areas.

Whilst the regulation targets are set, the building designers/architects have flexibility in how they meet these requirements. When renovating your home consulting an architect in the design process will help you to understand your options.



The building regulations are based upon the principle that where the works are modifying an existing building, the requirement is only that the situation is no worse (in building regulations terms) than the situation it replaces, and this allows a variety of solutions. These calculations are not necessarily designed for the general public to do themselves, so more and more people are turning to professionals - such as architectyourhome - for help.

Architects will have an in depth knowledge of the Part L regulations and will be able to come up with a number of creative ways to offset your emissions whilst still managing to fulfil your design, living and budget requirements. For example homeowners looking for a glass rear extension can

compensate loss of emissions through glass by providing more insulation in existing roofs and walls, by using thermally efficient materials for their extension, or even through renewable micro-generation such as a heat pump, solar panels or a wind turbine.

How does it affect new renovations?

Extensions or renovation works which involve the use of lots of glass will be particularly affected as glass generally has the poorest thermal performance of all external elements (or to use industry jargon - has a poor "U-value"). Walls, floors and roofs can be packed with insulation, but glazed roofs, windows and French doors, even if they are double glazed, are thermally very inefficient. Thus the amount of glazed area a typical extension can have will be dramatically reduced.

Why were the regulations introduced?

The new regulations are motivated by the government's aim to make us all more energy efficient, to reduce household carbon emissions and to contribute to the awareness and protection of the environment.

It is anticipated that the improved energy efficiency measures will save one million tonnes of Carbon per year by 2010 (equivalent to emissions from more than one million semi-detached homes).

According to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG, formerly ODPM) the revised regulations will produce additional benefits such as:

- Higher quality of construction through the development of robust standard details
- Improved skills in the construction workforce
- Innovation in construction materials, components and building design innovation
- Culture of continual improvement

Who can help me?

- Local or district councils deal with planning permission, a list of local Oxfordshire councils:
- **Cherwell District Council** <http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk/planning/index.cfm>
- **Oxford City Council**
<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/planning/index.cfm>
- **South Oxfordshire District Council**
<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-building-control/>
- **Vale of White Horse District Council**
<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/environment%5Fand%5Fplanning/>
- **West Oxfordshire District Council**
<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning/index.cfm>

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