



Planning applications for the installation of solar photovoltaic panels

The installation of solar panels will not always require planning permission. An installation would not legally constitute development if it does not “materially affect the external appearance of the building”. For example if it relates to a small installation applied to a roof slope to an internal courtyard or behind a parapet wall that cannot be viewed from outside of the site. In most cases solar panel installations do however constitute development.

Where the installation would constitute development planning permission may still not be necessary under what are known as permitted development rights. These are rights conferred by legislation that in effect issues a blanket planning permission for specific works.

There are extensive permitted development rights for the installation of solar panels to dwelling houses (please note that this excludes flats) and guidance on these is available from the [Planning Portal](#).

Some non-residential uses (including [industry and warehouses, shops, catering, professional and financial services, offices, hospitals, universities, colleges and schools](#) and [agriculture](#)) are covered by separate legislation but in most cases planning permission will still be necessary. Other non-residential uses and flats are not covered by the same permitted development rights and planning permission will be required.

If you are unsure as to whether the proposed installation would require planning permission please contact Jonathan Coombs (Bristol City Council Planning Officer) on 0117 922 3841.

Listed building consent will be required where a property is listed. This is a separate requirement to planning permission and will be necessary in all cases where a building is listed.

Submitting a planning or listed building application

Advice on submitting a planning application can be found [here](#). The fee for a householder planning application will be £150 and for a full planning application £170. There is no fee for a listed building application.

The following is a list of supporting information that must be submitted with a planning application or listed building application for the installation of solar panels.

Please note that drawings do not have to be drawn by a professional architect or surveyor. However, they do need to be to scale and an accurate representation of the proposal. Photo montages, while of use, cannot act as a replacement for scale drawings.

Detailed guidance on the content and quality of the documents listed below can be downloaded from Bristol City Council [here](#).

The following documents will be required for all solar panel applications:

- **Application form** - There are five types of application form that may be necessary depending on whether the application relates to a dwellinghouse (this excludes flats) and whether the property is listed. These can be found [here](#) and are:
 - Householder Application
 - Full Planning Application
 - Householder Application with Listed Building Consent
 - Full Planning Application with Listed Building Consent
 - Listed Building Consent (when planning permission is not required but a building is listed)
- **Site location plan**
- **Site Layout Plan/Block Plan**
- **Existing and proposed elevations**
- **Existing and proposed roof plan**
- **Section through roof/installation**
- **Solar panel manufacturer's details** – specification details of the solar panels to be fitted, including size and power generated.
- **Supporting frame manufacturer's details** – specification details of the supporting frame should include the size, materials and fixings.

The following documents will be necessary under the circumstances described below:

- **Design and Access Statement** – This is required for all planning applications, except householder applications not within a Conservation Area. This document should set out the rationale behind the proposals and how they were developed to application stage. Further guidance on Design and Access Statements can be found [here](#).
- **Heritage Statement** - Only applicable if within a Conservation Area or the works are to a Listed Building. This document should state the Conservation Area or listing of the building, identify any heritage features (including internal features for listed buildings) of the building that would be affected by the proposal, including photographs of these, and explain how the proposals have been developed in consideration of heritage impacts.
- **Arboricultural report and tree survey** - If works to trees are required to remove overshadowing of the solar panel installation or the solar panels are to be fixed to a free-standing or raised supporting frame that would result in works to trees being necessary.
- **Photographs and photomontages** – Relevant where effecting important views (e.g. fronting onto the Floating Harbour).