

Installing renewable energy on your home: when is planning permission required?



Introduction

'Microgeneration' is the small-scale generation of electricity (up to 50 kilowatts) or the production of heat (up to 45 kilowatts thermal) using one of the following energy sources or types of technology:

- a) solar power or photovoltaics**
- b) geothermal sources**
- c) combined heat and power systems**
- d) biomass or biofuels**
- e) wind**
- f) water**
- g) fuel cells**
- h) other sources of energy and technologies for the generation of electricity or the production of heat, the use of which would, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, cut emissions of greenhouse gases in Great Britain¹.**

From a sustainability point of view the Council strongly supports the installation of renewable microgeneration technologies on buildings. However, all developments must comply with national and local planning legislation and policy to ensure that they do not negatively impact on the environment or other people.

Following new planning legislation that came into force in April 2008², the installation (and alteration or replacement) of certain types of microgeneration equipment on your home³, whether a house or a flat, does not require planning permission as long as certain rules are followed. The rules for what counts as 'permitted development' (development which does not need planning permission) for different types of microgeneration technology are summarised below.

In order to follow this guidance, you will need to check if your home is in a Conservation Area, is affected by an 'Article 4 direction' or is a listed building (see below for how you can find this out). These designations all give additional protection to areas and buildings with particular heritage or historical importance and so it is important that you find out whether they apply to your property.

Please note that if the building on which you want to install microgeneration technology is not a house or flat then you need to apply for planning permission as the permitted development rights currently only apply to residential properties.

How can I find out if I live in a conservation area, 'Article 4 direction area' or a listed building?

You can check if your property is affected by any of the above by using the interactive map (accessible from the Council homepage 'Find It' section at www.islington.gov.uk) to 'zoom' to your address and turning on the 'conservation areas' and 'listed buildings' map layers (found under the 'Planning & Environment' heading on the right side of the map) and the 'conservation article 4' layer (found under the 'Unitary Development Plan' heading). Alternatively you can check with a planning officer by calling: **020 7527 2000**.

¹Section 82 of the Energy Act 2004.

²The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2008. Part 40. This guidance is largely based on information provided in this document, which can be viewed at:

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/uksi_20080675_en_1

³A building which consists wholly of flats or which is used for residential accommodation such as a house or flat.



Solar photovoltaic or solar hot water panels



Do I need planning permission for installing (or altering or replacing) solar photovoltaic (PV) or solar hot water panels mounted on my house or flat?

Only if it would break one or more of the following rules:

- 1. Size:** The equipment must not protrude more than 200mm from the roof or wall surface.
- 2. Positioning:** The highest part of the equipment must not be higher than the highest part of the roof (excluding any chimney). The equipment should be located, as far as is possible, to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building and on the character of the surrounding area. It should also be located to avoid or minimise overshadowing from nearby trees or structures – where the need to prune or remove trees cannot be avoided, this should be discussed with the Council (see Trees section below).
- 3. Conservation areas:** If the property is within a conservation area, the equipment must not be installed on a wall or roof slope –
 - forming the front or side elevation of the building where it is visible from a public highway; or
 - of a building within the grounds surrounding a home where it is visible from a public highway
- 4. Article 4 direction:** If the property is within an Article 4 direction area the equipment must not be installed on any parts of the building fronting the street.
- 5. Listed buildings:** The equipment must not be installed on, or within the grounds of, a listed building (planning permission and listed building consent would be required).

On flat roofs of homes, solar panels may be mounted on A-frames so that they are tilted towards the sun. However, panels mounted on an A-frames will require planning permission if they extend more than 200mm above a flat roof (see rule 1 above).

If the above rules are adhered to then you can install, alter or replace solar PV or solar thermal mounted on a house or flat without planning permission. Note however that solar PV or solar thermal equipment that is no longer needed should be removed as soon as possible.

If these rules are not adhered to, planning permission is required. For example, the installation of a solar PV system on a listed building will require planning permission and listed building consent. The planning officer who deals with your application will make a judgement on the acceptability of the solar panel, taking into account relevant planning policies and legislation and the likely impact on the character and amenity of the property and surrounding area (see conservation section below).

How to apply for planning permission

Information on applying for planning permission and downloadable application forms are available at: <http://www.islington.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/Applications/Applying/>. Forms 001 and 003 should be used to make applications for microgeneration – which form is selected will depend whether the home is in a conservation area or is a listed building. Guidance specifying what information (including what types of plans) you need to submit with the application form and fee is available at: http://www.islington.gov.uk/DownloadableDocuments/Environment/Pdf/planapps/validation_requirements.pdf

In addition to this, any photographs you can supply of the site showing the location where the equipment would be installed as well as details of the type of equipment proposed will also be useful.



Stand alone solar



Do I need planning permission for installing (or altering or replacing) stand alone solar (i.e. solar equipment not installed on a building) within the grounds surrounding my home?

Only if it would break one or more of the following rules:

- 1. Multiple installations:** Only one stand alone solar is allowed within the grounds of a property
- 2. Size:** The surface area of the solar panels should not exceed 9 square metres, and no dimension (width or length) of its array should exceed 3 metres
- 3. Height:** No part of the stand alone solar must be more than 4 metres in height above ground level
- 4. Positioning:** No part of the stand alone solar must be situated within 5 metres of the boundary of the grounds of the property. The equipment should be located, so far as is possible, to minimise its effect on the character of the surrounding area. It should also be located to avoid or minimise overshadowing from nearby trees or structures – where the need to prune or remove trees cannot be avoided, this should be discussed with the Council (see Trees section below).
- 5. Conservation areas:** In the case of land within a conservation area, no part of the stand alone solar must be visible from a public highway
- 6. Listed buildings:** No part of the stand alone solar must be situated within the grounds of a listed building.

If these rules are adhered to then you can install, alter or replace stand alone solar without planning permission. Note however that stand alone equipment that is no longer needed should be removed as soon as possible.

How to apply for planning permission

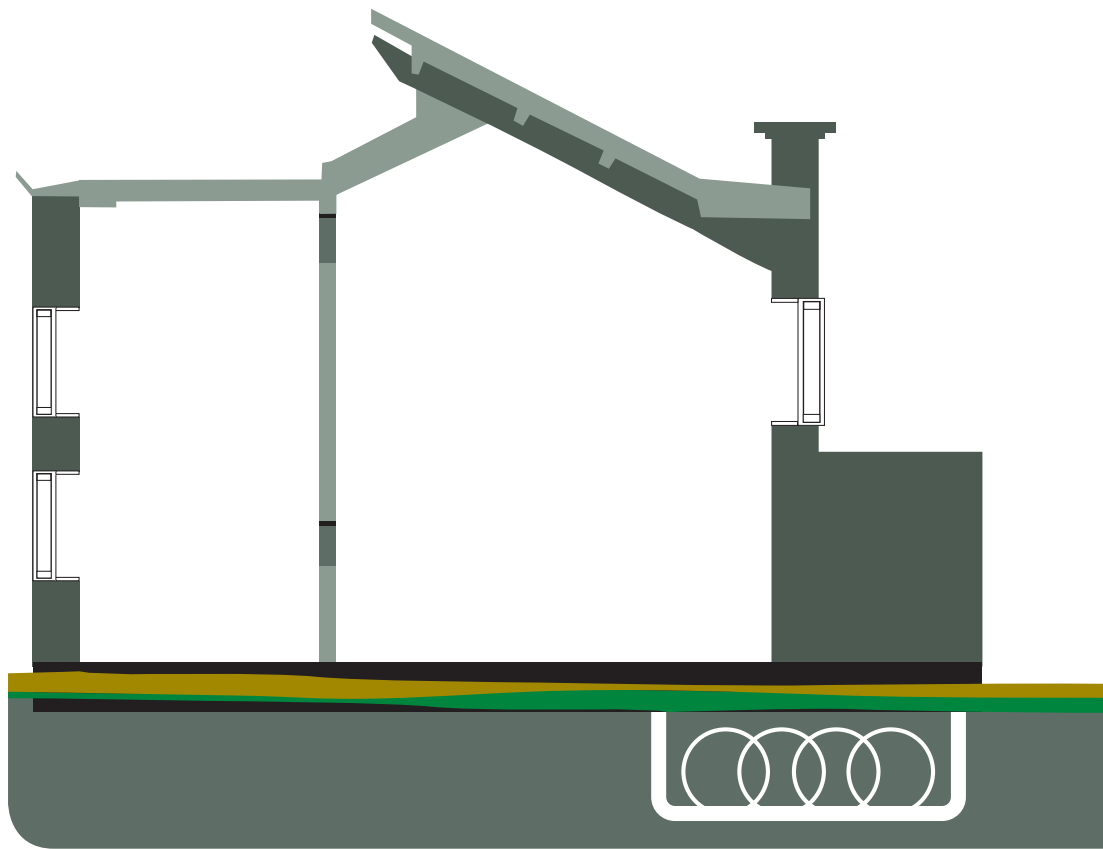
If these rules are not adhered to, planning permission is required. Information on applying for planning permission and downloadable application forms are available at: <http://www.islington.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/Applications/Applying/>. Forms 001 and 003 should be used to make applications for microgeneration – which form is selected will depend whether the home is in a conservation area or is a listed building. Guidance specifying what information (including what types of plans) you need to submit with the application form and fee is available at: http://www.islington.gov.uk/DownloadableDocuments/Environment/Pdf/planapps/validation_requirements.pdf

In addition to this, any photographs you can supply of the site showing the location where the equipment would be installed as well as details of the type of equipment proposed will also be useful.

Ground source and water source heat pumps

Do I need planning permission for installing (or altering or replacing) ground source and water source heat pumps?

Installation, alteration or replacement of a ground source or water source heat pumps within a home or the boundaries of the grounds of a home is 'permitted development' and does not generally require planning permission. However, if the works would impact on any trees (including their roots) then you will need to check with the Council to see if any permission or notification is required (see Trees section below). This will be especially likely if the pipe is buried in horizontal trenches (rather than a borehole) as a large area of garden may need to be excavated, increasing the likelihood that the development would negatively impact the roots of nearby trees.



Biomass and combined heat and power

Do I need planning permission for installing biomass heating or combined heat and power systems?

If the work is all internal then planning permission is not normally needed when installing a biomass system or micro-combined heat and power system in a home. However, you may require listed building consent for any internal alterations if your property is a listed building.

Building regulations will apply – factors such as ventilation, noise and general safety must be taken into account. Islington's Building Control Services can be contacted on **0207 527 5999** or **building.control@islington.gov.uk**.

Installation, alteration or replacement of an external flue on a home that forms part of a biomass heating system or part of a combined heat and power system will require planning permission if it would break one or more of the following rules:

- 1. Height:** The height of the flue must not exceed the highest part of the roof by 1 metre or more
- 2. Conservation areas:** In the case of land in a conservation area, the flue must not be installed on a wall or roof slope forming the front or side elevation of a building used for residential accommodation where it is visible from a public highway.
- 3. Article 4 direction:** If the property is within an Article 4 direction area the flue must not be installed on any parts of the building fronting the street.
- 4. Listed buildings:** The flue must not be installed on a listed building (listed building consent would be required).

If these rules are adhered to then you can install, alter or replace a flue that forms part of a biomass heating system or part of a combined heat and power system without planning permission.

How to apply for planning permission

If these rules are not adhered to, planning permission is required. Information on applying for planning permission and downloadable application forms are available at: **<http://www.islington.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/Applications/Applying/>**. Forms 001 and 003 should be used to make applications for microgeneration – which form is selected will depend whether the home is in a conservation area or is a listed building. Guidance specifying what information (including what types of plans) you need to submit with the application form and fee is available at: **http://www.islington.gov.uk/DownloadableDocuments/Environment/Pdf/planapps/validation_requirements.pdf**

In addition to this, any photographs you can supply of the site showing the location where the equipment would be installed will also be useful.



Wind turbines

Do I need planning permission for installing a wind turbine?

Yes, at present installation of a wind turbine on your home or in the grounds surrounding your home requires planning permission.

Please contact the Planning Service (contact details below) before applying for planning permission for a wind turbine so that we can discuss with you the relevant planning issues (e.g. possible visual and noise impacts, vibration, electrical interference and safety issues and any impacts of the proposal on nearby trees) and advise you on how to proceed with an application and what information is required.



Additional Information

Conservation and microgeneration

When microgeneration equipment is added to historic and listed buildings it is important that the fabric and appearance of the building are not negatively affected. The installation of solar panels, wind turbines and other equipment has to be considered carefully with regard to their location, design, visual impact and the effect on the historic fabric.

In many historic properties solar panels and solar water heating systems can be accommodated on the roof, but it will in most cases be desirable to install those out of sight, in order to protect the setting and visual amenity of the building or conservation area. On many terraced houses with flat or butterfly roofs solar heating systems and panels can be hidden behind the parapet, and on buildings with sloping roofs solar equipment can be accommodated on the rear roof slope.

Most alteration works associated with domestic microgeneration will require listed building consent in listed properties, and planning permission may be required in conservation areas for external works.

It's worth bearing in mind that there are also many measures you can take to improve energy efficiency in your home which have little or no adverse impact on historic buildings. These include upgrading boilers, installation of modern heating controls, repair or restoration of historic shutters, draught proofing of existing windows and low energy lighting. These measures will generally not require listed building consent or planning permission.



Trees and microgeneration

When considering the installation of microgeneration technologies, choice of location should take into account the need to avoid or minimise any negative impacts on existing trees, especially those trees of significant amenity and/or biodiversity value. The removal of trees and inappropriate or excessive pruning should be avoided where possible. Where it is unavoidable, you will need to check with Council to find out if the trees are protected. Some trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) – all parts of such trees are subject to statutory planning controls and it is an offence to damage them including their roots. Any works proposed to a tree protected by a TPO will require written consent from the Council. Trees in Conservation Areas are also protected because they can make an important contribution to the character of the area – if you intend to undertake works to such a tree you would need to give six weeks notification to the Council prior to undertaking the works.

If you have any queries about impacts on trees please consult the Council and ask to speak to a Tree Preservation Officer.



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Following new planning legislation that came into force in April 2008, the installation (and alteration or replacement) of certain types of microgeneration equipment on your home does not require planning permission as long as certain rules are followed. This note summarises the rules for what counts as 'permitted development' (development which does not need planning permission) for different types of renewable energy microgeneration technology, including solar panels, wind turbines, biomass boilers and ground source heat pumps.



If you would like this document in large print or Braille, audiotape or in another language, please contact 020 7527 2000.

For further information, please contact the Planning Service on;
222 Upper Street, London N1 1XR
E contact@islington.gov.uk
T 020 7527 2000
F 020 7527 5001
Minicom 020 7527 1900
W www.islington.gov.uk