Add new living space without needing planning approval and increase the value and use of your property

We offer a range of buildings that can be installed as a residential annexe on the drive or in the garden of your main house without the need for planning approval. This is possible because laws relating to touring caravans also apply to year-round accommodation on a larger scale, so your new building is regarded as a ‘static caravan’ or ‘mobile home’.

Overview of the law
The legal definition of a ‘caravan’ is any structure designed for human habitation that is capable of being transported. A ‘mobile home’ is a type of caravan that is not meant to be directly towed on road by a vehicle. Regarded as an article of movable personal property (known as a ‘chattel’), there is no public law preventing one being kept in your garden, but there are laws regulating the use of land.

Use
Your new mobile home must be used by members of the household in connection to the enjoyment of the house or as extra accommodation for visiting guests, provided occupants continue to use the facilities of your house. Essentially, this ensures that your new living space is not regarded as a separate or independent dwelling or business, and a ‘material change of use’ has not occurred.

Location, size and construction
It must be located in the ‘curtilage’ of your dwelling house, not surrounding land. The term curtilage is defined as a garden, but can include parking areas, access roads, vegetable plots, children’s play areas, and stables (where horses are kept for pleasure rather than agricultural use). The curtilage may not necessarily be marked off or enclosed, but should be clearly attached to your house or serving the purpose of the house in some useful and intimate way.

We can assemble your new living space on-site (even if access is restricted) from many precision engineered, prefabricated pieces, running services from your main house. In terms of conforming as a caravan, the law focuses on the structure, which must be movable in one whole unit and capable of transport down a hypothetical road, even if access to a road may require craning over buildings or complicated procedures. So you can have one of our buildings installed even if access to a road is impossible and the building can’t actually be lifted out.

The maximum size you can go to is 20 x 6.8m (approx 65 x 22ft), and the internal floor to internal ceiling height no greater than 3.05m. This provides enough space for five or more bedrooms with kitchen, living space and toilets. You can consider any of our buildings that fall within the maximum size stated. The layout, as well as the doors and windows, can be configured to suit your needs.

Advantages over alternative planning routes
Adding a new living space as a ‘mobile home’ obviously comes with the benefit of not needing to obtain planning approval, but it also has its advantages over Permitted Development or seeking traditional Planning Approval.

Permitted Development
As a home owner you may be familiar with permitted development rights that allow the construction of outbuildings, extensions, sheds, etc without the need for planning approval. However, there are a number of restrictions. Most importantly, it won’t allow you to add living accommodation or a structure with kitchen and bathroom. You are also much more restricted in terms of height, positioning, the percentage of the total available area it can take up, and floor space. And if your property falls within a greenbelt or conservation area, or area of outstanding natural beauty or scientific interest, permitted development may not be possible at all.

The use of a ‘caravan’ is not a permitted development right or even ‘development’. Caravans are not ‘buildings’ or ‘structures’,
so these restrictions won’t apply to your mobile home. It means you could create living accommodation, including kitchen and bathroom, on a much larger scale, more freely.

**Planning Approval**

You could seek traditional planning approval for your new living space. However, there is a high chance of refusal, and a ‘caravan’ can be significantly larger than most buildings capable of obtaining planning approval as annexes. Planning may also dictate the style of building you are allowed. If your new space will have living accommodation, include a kitchen and bathroom, or is larger than permitted development allows, you will need to seek planning approval when not opting for the mobile home route. Meeting UK Building Regulations will likely also be a requirement rather than option.

**What to do next**

If you would like one of our buildings in the grounds of your main house, as a mobile home without the need for planning approval, we advise applying for a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC). It is issued by your local planning authority (LPA). Once granted, the certificate will remain valid for the use or development described in it, on the land it describes, as long as the use doesn’t change.

Applying involves form-filling, producing a site plan, and providing supporting evidence to show how your new living space will conform as a mobile home under caravan laws. You may wish to apply yourself, or we can do it for you with our Mobile Home Planning Service.

**iForm Mobile Home Planning Service**

Applying for a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) can be tricky and time-consuming, and getting something wrong can ruin your chance of the council agreeing. While we obviously can’t guarantee a positive outcome, we can manage the application process for you with our Mobile Home Planning Service.

We would work with you to obtain the information required, before completing the application form and submitting it with location plan and supporting covering letter. Once the council has made a decision, we report to you on the outcome.

**Statutory Declaration**

We recommend also including a ‘statutory declaration’ as part of the LDC application. The authorities may be concerned about the use of the mobile home (referred to as a separate unit contention issue), being that it likely has all the facilities to allow independent living. The statutory declaration is a legal document declaring under oath and in the presence of a lawyer how your mobile home will be used, and it will strengthen your application. As part of our planning service, we will provide a document that you can take to your solicitor, who will probably charge you between £10 and £30 for their time.

**Applying yourself**

Alternatively, if you’d prefer to apply for a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) yourself, rather than take advantage of our Mobile Home Planning Service, we have outlined what to do, and you will find useful examples in the next section.

Your local planning authority (LPA) is there to help, and you may initially want to write an informal letter detailing the location and use of the proposed ‘caravan’. If lawful, we advise you to apply for a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC). This offers extra peace of mind, because a response to your informal letter is not legally binding. We will also ask to see a copy of your LDC before proceeding with your order.

There will be a fee associated with an LDC application (£100-£200), and often a fee for a written response to an informal letter. Costs vary, and you may want to phone your council and ask the planning department first.

The application form you need is a ‘Lawful Development Certificate Application for a Proposed Use’. It can be found by searching on the website of your council or by calling the council planning office and asking for one to be posted to you. Alternatively, you can apply online: www.planningportal.gov.uk

You will need to include a site location plan with your application. If you don’t already have one of your property, you can purchase online (www.streetwise.net or www.getmapping.com). A 1:500 Site Plan or 1:1250 Location Plan is usually ideal. You could also indicate where on the map the mobile home will be sited.

As mentioned above, we recommend also including a ‘statutory declaration’ to strengthen your application.

More information can be found at www.planningportal.gov.uk
Example letter to send your local planning authority seeking confirmation on an informal basis

[Date]
[Council address]

Dear Sir

[FULL ADDRESS OF THE PROPERTY]
[Phone/email]

I am proposing to station a mobile home in the garden of my property above. A location plan is attached with the property edged red.

I understand I do not need planning permission to station a mobile home and would be grateful to receive your confirmation.

The mobile home would be stationed within the curtilage of my house.

The mobile home would come within the definition of a caravan in terms of its design, mobility, size and construction.

The mobile home would be placed on the land and would not be fixed to the ground.

The mobile home would be used for [an annexe by a family member(s) / additional bedrooms / guest accommodation / staff accommodation / hobbies] as an integral part of the overall use of the house as a single dwelling. It would share services, facilities and access with the house.

I believe the proposed use would not be a material change of use and would be incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house.

If you have any questions, please contact me. Otherwise, I look forward to receiving your confirmation.

Yours faithfully

[signature]
[your name]
Example covering letter to send with your application for a Lawful Development Certificate

[Date]
[Council address]

Dear Sir

[FULL ADDRESS OF THE PROPERTY]  
[Phone/email]

Please find attached an application for a certificate of lawfulness of proposed use in respect of stationing a mobile home at this property.

Enclosed are:
Application form
Location plan
Cheque payable to the council in respect of the application fee

[Statutory declaration]
The caravan will have living space, kitchen, bathrooms and multiple bedrooms. I understand as such it could be viewed as being capable of independent living, so I’ve also enclosed a sworn statutory declaration indicating the mobile home will not be used independently.

The following constitute the grounds for making the application:

• The mobile home would be stationed within the curtilage of my house
• The mobile home would come within the definition of a caravan in terms of its design, mobility, size and construction
• The mobile home would be placed on the land and would not be fixed to the ground
• The mobile home would be used for [an annexe by a family member(s) / additional bedrooms / guest accommodation / staff accommodation / hobbies] as an integral part of the overall use of the property as a single dwelling. It would share services, facilities and access with the house
• The mobile home would not be used as a separate dwelling
• The proposed use would not constitute development requiring planning permission because the property would remain a single planning unit and either:
  a) the use would be an integral part of the main use of the planning unit as a single dwelling house in single family occupation and, therefore, would not involve a material change of use of the land
  or:
  b) the use would be a use of land within the curtilage of a dwelling house for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house as such

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Yours faithfully

[signature]
[your name]
Example statutory declaration

STATUTORY DECLARATION

I Mr [Joe Bloggs] of [Address]

DO SOLEMNLY AND SINCERELY DECLARE as follows:

Mr [J and Mrs S Bloggs] the owners of [Address], shown edged red on the attached plan.

1. The property is used by us as a single dwelling house.
2. We are proposing to station a mobile home within the curtilage of our dwelling house.
3. The mobile home would be used by members of the household and visiting guests only as an integral part of the use of the property as a single dwelling house and/or for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house.
4. The mobile home would share services, facilities and access with the house.
5. The mobile home would not be used as a separate dwelling.

AND I make this solemn Declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the Statutory Declarations Act 1835.

SIGNED AND DECLARED at [Name of legal practice]

in the County of this [XXth/nd/st] day of [Month] [Year]

Before me [Solicitor signature]

Solicitor/Commissioner for Oaths

[Signature]

Mr [Joe Bloggs]
Example location plan
Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for a Proposed use or development.


You can complete and submit this form electronically via the Planning Portal by visiting www.planningportal.gov.uk/apply

Publication of applications on planning authority websites

Please note that the information provided on this application form and in supporting documents may be published on the Authority’s website. If you require any further clarification, please contact the Authority’s planning department.

Please complete using block capitals and black ink.

It is important that you read the accompanying guidance notes as incorrect completion will delay the processing of your application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Applicant Name and Address</th>
<th>2. Agent Name and Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title: MR</td>
<td>Title:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First name: JOE</td>
<td>First name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last name: BLOGGS</td>
<td>Last name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company (optional):</td>
<td>Company (optional):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit:</td>
<td>Unit:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House name: THE HOUSE</td>
<td>House name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address 1: THE STREET</td>
<td>Address 1:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address 2:</td>
<td>Address 2:</td>
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<td>Address 3:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town: THE TOWN</td>
<td>Town:</td>
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<td>County: THE COUNTY</td>
<td>County:</td>
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<td>Country: THE COUNTRY</td>
<td>Country:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postcode: XXX XXX</td>
<td>Postcode:</td>
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</table>
3. Site Address Details
Please provide the full postal address of the application site.

Unit: 
House number: XX
House suffix: 

Name: THE HOUSE
Address 1: THE STREET
Address 2: 
Address 3: 

Town: THE TOWN
County: THE COUNTY
Postcode (optional): XXX XXX

Description of location or a grid reference. (must be completed if postcode is not known):
Easting: 
Northing: 

Description: THREE STOREY DETACHED HOUSE WITH FENCED GARDEN

4. Pre-application Advice
Has assistance or prior advice been sought from the local authority about this application? Yes No

If Yes, please complete the following information about the advice you were given. (This will help the authority to deal with this application more efficiently).

Officer name: 
Reference: 
Date DD/MM/YYYY: 
Details of pre-application advice received:

5. Lawful Development Certificate - Interest In Land
Please state the applicant's interest in the land?

Owner: Yes No
Lesse: Yes No
Occupier: Yes No

If Yes to Lessee or Occupier please give details of the owner and state whether they have been informed in writing of this application:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Have they been informed in writing of the application?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If No to all the above, please give name and addresses of anyone you know who has an interest in the land:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Nature of interest in the land</th>
<th>Have they been informed of the application?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If they have not been informed of the application please explain why not

6. Authority Employee / Member
With respect to the Authority:
1. I am a member of staff
2. I am an elected member
3. I am related to a member of staff
4. I am related to an elected member

Do any of these statements apply to you? Yes No
### 7. Grounds For Application

**Information About The Existing Use(s)**

Please explain why you consider the existing or last use of the land is lawful, or why you consider that any existing buildings, which it is proposed to alter, or extend are lawful:

**THE DWELLING HOUSE (CHOOSE ONE)**

- **HAS THE BENEFIT OF PLANNING PERMISSION OR**
- **HAS BEEN IN USE AS A DWELLING HOUSE SINCE BEFORE 1948**

**AND THE LAND COMPRIS THE CURTILAGE OF THE DWELLING HOUSE**

Please list the supporting documentary evidence (such as a planning permission) which accompanies this application:

1. **STATUTORY DECLARATION**
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.

If you consider the existing, or last use is within a ‘Use Class’ in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), state which one:

### Information About The Proposed Use(s)

If you consider the proposed use is within a ‘Use Class’ in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), state which one:

Is the proposed operation or use:

- [ ] Temporary
- [x] Permanent

If temporary please give details:

Please state why you consider that a Lawful Development Certificate should be granted for this proposal:

**STATIONING A CARAVAN WITHIN THE CURTILAGE OF THE DWELLING HOUSE WOULD NOT CREATE A SEPARATE PLANNING UNIT AND EITHER: WOULD NOT INVOLVE A MATERIAL CHANGE OF USE; OR WOULD BE INCIDENTAL TO THE ENJOYMENT OF THE DWELLING HOUSE AS SUCH.**

### 8. Description Of Proposal

Does the proposal consist of, or include:

a) The carrying out of building or other operations?  
- [x] Yes  
- [ ] No

If Yes to a, please give detailed description of all such operations (includes the need to describe any proposal to alter or create a new access, layout any new street, construct any associated hard-standings, means of enclosure or means of draining the land/buildings) and indicate on your plans (in the case of a proposed building the plan should indicate the precise siting and exact dimensions):

b) Change of use of the land or building(s)?  
- [x] Yes  
- [ ] No

If Yes to b, please give a full description of the scale and nature of the proposed use, including the processes to be carried out, any machinery to be installed and the hours the proposed use will be carried out:

**STATIONING OF A CARAVAN**

If Yes to b, please describe fully the existing or the last known use, with the date this use ceased:

**EXISTING USE – RESIDENTIAL CURTILAGE**

Has the proposal been started?

- [ ] Yes  
- [x] No
Example Lawful Development Certificate application form (page 4 of 4)

9. Planning Application Requirements - Checklist
Please read the following checklist to make sure you have sent all the information in support of your proposal. Failure to submit all information required will result in your application being deemed invalid. It will not be considered valid until all information required by the Local Planning Authority has been submitted.

The burden or proof in a Lawful Development Certificate is firmly with the applicant and therefore sufficient and precise information should be provided.

The original and 3 copies of a completed dated application form: 

The original and 3 copies of such evidence verifying the information included in the application as you can provide: 

The original and 3 copies of a plan which identifies the land to which the application relates drawn to an identified scale and showing the direction of North: 

The correct fee: 

10. Declaration
I/we hereby apply for a Lawful Development Certificate as described in this form and the accompanying plans/drawings and additional information. I/we confirm that, to the best of my/our knowledge, any facts stated are true and accurate and any opinions given are the genuine opinions of the person(s) giving them.

Signed - Applicant

Signed - Agent

Date (DD/MM/YYYY): (date cannot be pre-application submission)

WARNING: The amended section 194 of the 1990 Act provides that it is an offence to furnish false or misleading information or to withhold material information with intent to deceive. Section 193(7) enables the authority to revoke, at any time, a certificate they may have been issued as a result of such false or misleading information.

11. Applicant Contact Details
Telephone numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country code</th>
<th>National number</th>
<th>Extension number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XXXX</td>
<td>XXXX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Country code: Mobile number (optional): 

Country code: Fax number (optional): 

Email address (optional): 

12. Agent Contact Details
Telephone numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country code</th>
<th>National number</th>
<th>Extension number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Country code: Mobile number (optional): 

Country code: Fax number (optional): 

Email address (optional): 

13. Site Visit
Can the site be seen from a public road, public footpath, bridleway or other public land?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If Other has been selected, please provide:

Contact name: 

Telephone number: 

Email address: 

Warning: It is an offence to provide false or misleading information or to withhold material information with intent to deceive. The council can revoke, at any time, a certificate they may have issued as a result of such false or misleading information. iForm shall not be held liable or responsible.