

Building over Anglian Water sewers and drains



Everything you need to know:

It's common these days to want to increase the living area of your home by adding an extension. Habitable additions usually require permission but one area that may have an impact is the existing drainage. It isn't always as straight forward as it may seem and this is where your Local Authority Building control Team can help! Below are some helpful tips and things to be aware of!

What should you consider?

Do I need Planning Permission? Sometimes, many extensions fall under permitted development, it's best to contact the Planning Team to make sure.

Do I need Building Control approval? Sometimes, habitable extensions like kitchen, living rooms do, some such as conservatories, porches can be exempt.

When a Building Regulation application is required there is often a choice of a Full Plans or Building Notice format. If there is a sewer under, or close to, a proposed extension, there is no choice, it will have to be a Full Plans.

So what is a drain and what is a sewer? A drain is a pipe that serves a single property. A sewer is a pipe that serves more than one property. Public sewers are the responsibility of the sewerage undertaker (typically Anglian Water in this region). They are concerned with maintaining and having access to sewers.

When do you need to discuss your proposals with the sewerage undertaker? If the sewer meets the following criteria you do not have to enter into an agreement with them-

1. The sewer is less than three metres deep.
2. The sewer is a maximum 150 mm in diameter.
3. The maximum length of the sewer under the building is six metres.
4. Manholes/access points not located under the building.

5. The sewer must not be a pressured or pump system.
6. The building must be designed to ensure no loads imposed on the sewer.

Unless all these are met you will have to make an application to the sewerage undertaker to build over the sewer. Building over also includes building to within three metres of the sewer. This is in addition to the Building Regulations application; Building Control will need to know this has been done, and have details of that agreement.

So how can you know if there is a sewer where you wish to build? There are a few things to look at before you start –

Can you find any any inspection chambers or manhole covers? Can the covers be lifted to see depth and direction drains flow? Do the neighbours have any covers in their properties? Have neighbours had extensions built and any knowledge they can pass on? If you are using a surveyor and/or builder is their experience helpful? Does your Local Council Building Control Surveyor have relevant knowledge?

Sometimes even after the detective work you don't find out until excavations start and uncover a sewer. However, at whatever stage you may encounter a sewer we are available to assist and advise you through.

On successful completion you will receive a certificate of compliance to keep safe should you ever sell your property.

Still have a query? Did you know that we do offer 1 hours free pre application consultation for those who need it. Contact us today at building.control@eastssuffolk.gov.uk / 01502 523072