

# Planning Monkey Business - Planning Permission For Tree Houses



Since the dawn of time children have looked to the trees to act out their playtime fantasies ? after all, what could possibly be better than an tree top ?base? or a castle in the sky?

Fairies, soldiers, monsters, pirates, goblins, cowboys and Indians and even Peter Pan himself can, on occasion, be found in children?s imaginations while they play in the perfect make-believe play space...

...but who in their *grown-up* mind would believe that a tree house (of all things) would need planning permission!

In 2008 every kid?s classic back-garden dream became a planning nightmare...

The 2008 Town and Country Planning Act (General Permitted Development) Amendment regards ?any? tree-house (raised platform, balcony or veranda) as development ? and therefore requiring planning permission ?Prior to the 2008 amendment ?permitted development? rights existed and planning permission was not [necessarily] required.

The reality for most parents is that your common or garden tree-house is likely to comprise a simple rope ladder and a number of pieces of reclaimed timber (perhaps a recycled brick pallet or two), held together with an assortment of nails and sisal twine perched in the bowl of a suitable tree. The reality is that the construction of such a platform is a bit of weekend fun which could (if the local council demand it) be taken down in a heartbeat and without any pain or suffering...

So should the ?backyard architect? apply for planning ? technically yes ? however common sense perhaps ought to prevail...

# Important things to consider when planning any tree house:

- Does it need planning ? YES almost certainly!
- Is the tree protected? ? A £20,000 fine could await you if you damage a TPO protected tree.
- Is your property Listed? ? Listed building consent may well be required...
- Is it definitely your tree? Trees on your boundaries are not necessarily your property
- Is the design practical and safe? ? A qualified Architectural / Engineering team will ensure the safety of your children ? and your investment.

The major issues arise where more elaborate and technically challenging designs and associated building costs increase; If you're planning to build anything beyond a basic platform: a 'proper' play-ground fortress, tree top office or an elevated summer house (for example) the costs will undoubtedly mount and the 'building' will begin to take on the characteristics of a more complex building project and give the finished masterpiece an 'air of permanence' ? In other words it won't be removed from the site without considerable effort.

The technicalities and implications of such a complex 'development' take a significantly different slant to that of a few planks of timber and some tatty sisal rope...

In design terms (providing the right tree or trees are available) the sky is the limit for tree house design. In planning terms there is little to say that the most elaborate or far-fetched concept cannot be granted permission (under the right circumstances). In fact there are some amazing examples to be found across the country...

Keith Farmer Associates have extensive experience in designing, planning and creating bespoke buildings at various prestigious locations all over the UK. Our heritage and listed buildings specialists have created some truly unique solutions for some fantastic properties and our planning team will help with even the most trivial of matters right through to the most complicated schemes imaginable.

As with any design and planning matter, we are delighted to discuss any issues by telephone, to provide onsite / written advice as needed and to work with you to turn your planning nightmares into a fairytale project...

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