

UK GOVERNMENT EXTENSION OF PLANNING PERMISSIONS

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The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) issued a statement ([view source](#)) on 23rd June 2020 confirming that planning permissions and listed building consents expiring from 23rd March 2020 to 31st December 2020 will be extended until 1st April 2021. This is a direct response to the Covid-19 pandemic that we are all too familiar with.

At the beginning of this saga many practitioners immediately called for planning permissions to be extended. In the first instance, the lockdown created practical implications for implementation, secondly the global financial market ([view source](#)) almost immediately went into free fall therefore creating uncertainty for developers.

This isn't the first time a Government has introduced emergency measures to ensure permissions stay alive. In 2008, the Labour Government introduced a mechanism to apply for an extension of time of the life of a permission to correlate with the economic recovery post-recession. Indeed, as news of the economic consequences of the pandemic start to show, it is conceivable that such a further measure could be introduced if the road to recovery is not as 'V' shaped as the most optimistic might hope.

England is late to the party on this one, the Scots already legislation at the start of April affording expiring permissions an additional year. That said, we welcome the Government's commitment. Quantitatively, construction analysts Glenigan identified 430 residential projects totalling 24,800 units ([view source](#)) with consent (detailed or outline) where development is yet to start between 23 March and 30 June 2020. Plainly, the intervention was absolutely necessary.

The legislation will form part of the coronavirus recovery bill which the Government is hoping to fast-track through parliament. Planning permissions that have already lapsed prior to the bill becoming law will be subject to an Additional Environmental Approval process. More details to follow on this. We would note that an Environmental Approval process sounds awfully Zone-esque perhaps a sign of what's to come, who knows?

Planning Appeals

In the same statement, it was announced that the recommendations for the Roswell Review to allow PINS to permanently have the ability to combine appeal procedures.