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Can I Have a Downstairs Toilet?

Introduction

There are 4 restricting factors that will determine whether you can have a downstairs toilet or not:

1. Permission
2. Budget
3. The space available
4. The existing plumbing / drainage

1. Permission

Adding a downstairs toilet requires permission from the local council and I have covered this in more detail on p4.

2. Budget

Fully installed downstairs toilets from turnkey installers may start at around £3K but budget varies massively depending on a number of factors so please see p6 for more information on this subject.

3. Space available

You can only add a downstairs toilet if you have space, though a lot can be done with a small space as can be seen here:



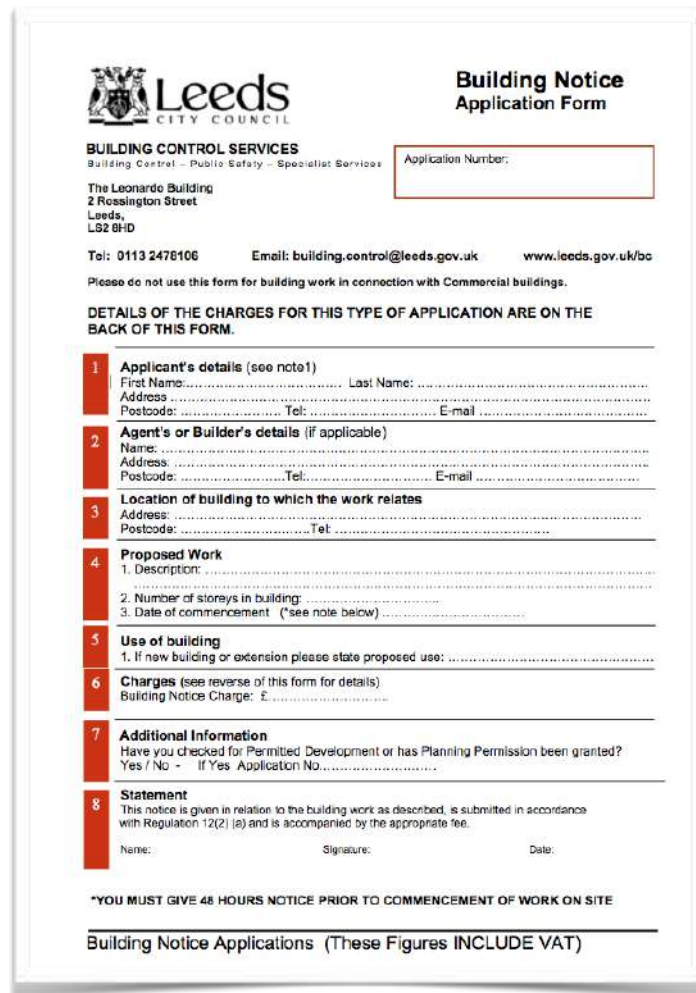
Gaining Permission For a Downstairs Toilet

From Leeds city council (my local council):

Replacement kitchens and bathrooms do not generally need Building Regulations consent but where new drainage is installed to serve a new bathroom (or downstairs toilet) Building Regulations consent is required.

Do I need permission?

In short, yes!

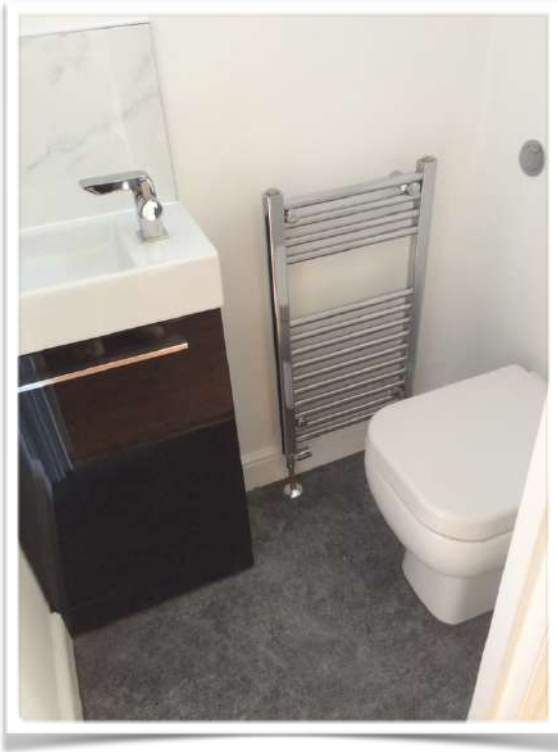


The image shows a 'Building Notice Application Form' from Leeds City Council. The form is titled 'Building Notice Application Form' and includes the Leeds City Council logo. It provides contact information for Building Control Services, including the address (The Leonardo Building, 2 Rossington Street, Leeds, LS2 9HD), telephone number (0113 2478106), email (building.control@leeds.gov.uk), and website (www.leeds.gov.uk/bc). A section for 'Application Number' is present. The form contains several numbered sections for applicant and agent details, proposed work, location, charges, and a statement. At the bottom, it states: '*YOU MUST GIVE 48 HOURS NOTICE PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF WORK ON SITE' and 'Building Notice Applications (These Figures INCLUDE VAT)'.

You should apply for building regulations approval from the local council.

This will ensure that any new windows, ventilation or drainage all comply with building regulations.

Case study 1



SUMMARY: A downstairs toilet (with storage space behind) added under the stairs (Click the link above to read about it in more detail.)

COST: Approx £3600 - £4000

TIME TAKEN: 1.5 week

SIZE: 80 x 120cm

Costs incurred that may not always occur:



3 Ways to Find Space for a Downstairs Toilet

Toilet

The minimum size for a useable downstairs toilet is approximately 130cm x 70cm

There are a few options as to how you find this MINIMUM space for your downstairs toilet (we'll get to dealing with small spaces later).

Option 1: Under the stairs

The most common way of adding a downstairs toilet is to utilise the space under the stairs.

This means that the cloakroom will normally be the same width as the stairs, which is normally 70-80cm internally (which is fine) but it does mean that the toilet cannot be sited facing the doorway unless your stairs are very wide:



Adding a downstairs loo here usually involves building or amending some walls to define the space.

Drainage Limitations to Downstairs Toilet Positioning

Even if you have PERMISSION & MONEY, and there is sufficient SPACE to add a downstairs toilet, DRAINAGE may yet prove to be a stumbling block.....

Introduction

This is because pipework needs to be installed to carry water to the toilet & basin etc but more crucially to **carry waste water away from these items.**

Getting pipework to the downstairs toilet is often less problematic than getting rid of the waste water (i.e. the water that goes down the plughole or down your toilet) which needs to run away under gravity to the nearest drainage outlet.

Background lesson in downstairs toilet drainage

Water from the basin, shower & bath can be run into rainwater hoppers OR the soil pipe. Waste water from the toilet **MUST ONLY** be run into a soil pipe, which is a larger (4" diameter) usually black (plastic or cast iron) pipe normally located on the outside of your house.

This picture shows a common UK house installation:

