



Planning and Designing a Swimming Pool

Do I need planning permission?

As a guide, outdoor pools, or those housed in a detached building which are for the exclusive enjoyment of the owner of the property, will often be treated as a permitted development and therefore will not require planning consent. Planning consent will normally only be required for an outdoor pool, if there is disturbance to adjacent buildings or drains.

Building Regulations consent will, however, be required for any kind of indoor pool and for a pool located in listed premises or in a conservation area.



To be sure whether your pool will require any type of planning permission, consult your SPATA contractor for advice, or call the relevant Local Authority planning or building control department for further information.

Please note that once you have submitted a planning application for an indoor pool and it is accepted, if you then decide to change the location of the pool you need to discuss this with the relevant planning authority as they may require a further planning application.

Once you have decided on having a pool at home, you should inform your local water authority.





Designing your dream pool

Constructing your dream pool is not just about finding a competent builder; it also requires a specialist to design the pool, and if the pool is to be located indoors, a ventilation engineer will be needed to deal with environmental control.

It's important to ensure the build of the pool integrates all of the specialist elements together as solving technical problems after completion can be difficult, disruptive and expensive. The build must be right from the outset, so it's vital to appoint a professional pool designer or an architect with specialist experience in this area.

There are lots of design considerations to be taken into account when planning a swimming pool, including heating methods (both water and air); dehumidification; ventilation; plant-room noise suppression; recovery of waste heat and cooling in summer.

All of these design elements will depend on the pool size, bather load and hours of use per day and in turn they will affect the choice of building materials and the overall design and layout of the building.

The three major areas of pool construction – the pool itself (and the building and the air treatment plant for indoor pools only) are sometimes left to three separate firms. Ideally it is best if just one company is in charge of looking after all the elements of the design and build of your pool

Where different companies are used, the final result will heavily depend on how well the companies can work together, so consider using recommendations from the appointed builder so you know they have a good working relationship.



Pool installation companies can often suggest names of designers or architects with whom they have worked, or SPATA can signpost you to suitable companies, or individuals.

A specialist designer will be able to discuss your requirements in detail, carry out a thorough assessment of the plan, draw up a complete schedule of work and supervise the project from start to finish.

Besides the practical aspects, a professional designer can also help make the most of the aesthetic possibilities by creating an environment tailored to your own personal requirements. Since swimming pool water is generally flat and still (at least when the pool is unoccupied), an extra dimension is useful to give it a 'WOW' factor.

This extra dimension can be provided as height, depth, light, movement and even sound. If you have sufficient space and your budget will allow you to indulge your imagination, elements such as different levels of pool surround, planted areas, island stepping stones, peninsulas or bathing platforms extending into the pool can all be incorporated. You could even enhance the visual aspect of the pool with waterfalls, water curtains, fountains or bubbling waters.

When researching architects and specialist designers, make sure they can undertake the tasks that they are being required to do by you and always ask for references. If possible go and visit these to see firsthand the quality of their work and to get feedback from the client on how well their installation went.

An integrated approach to pool design is a sure way of ensuring that your pool will be trouble free and of bringing your dreams to life!

