

what we lend on

As a unique mortgage provider we only lend on properties and projects that minimise environmental impact or which help promote sustainable communities and lifestyles.

Even if you don't consider yourself to be green, your project might be. Our mortgages are available for properties in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

we lend for...



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Energy saving improvements

Any property can be made more energy efficient, for example by improving insulation, fitting a condensing boiler or installing a wind turbine. If you've found a property that is in good structural repair, but you would like to install energy saving measures and/or renewable energy technologies – we're here to help. By making these improvements your mortgage may qualify for an interest rate discount – see **Our C-Change discounts** leaflet for further details.

Renovations

Renovation projects usually entail bringing an existing or derelict dwelling back into habitable use. We consider this to be a form of recycling as you're making use of existing resources. Some examples of such properties are a dilapidated historic listed house, an old terrace, or a fire damaged thatched cottage. You may need to obtain listed buildings consent.

We are not put off by the condition of the property, it may just be a shell or need bringing into the 21st Century – so long as the works required are substantial i.e. not just redecoration, and planning permission can be obtained for the work you intend to carry out – we'll consider lending. Of course, we'll encourage you to use low impact building materials and create an energy efficient home.

Conversions

These are similar to renovations, except the building wasn't formerly used as a dwelling – it may have been a barn, lighthouse, oast house, signal box, church or chapel, for example. Like a renovation project the building can often be in a poor state of repair, requiring substantial work to convert it into a home – which may offer the opportunity to incorporate more ecological elements than a renovation. You may need to obtain change of use and/or listed buildings consent.

New builds

The best time to consider the environmental impact of a home is at the very beginning, at the design and specification stage – where we start with a clean sheet. You may be purchasing a new energy efficient property or doing your own ecological self build. There's no fixed or rigid definitions of what constitutes an eco home, instead we assess whether your property will meet our criteria and if the design and specification contain some of the features described overleaf. It's unlikely that all these features will be incorporated in a single building, but the more features that are present the better, and the keener we are to lend. Our starting point is to try and determine the environmental impact in terms of energy use, pollution and saving resources. See **Our C-Change discounts** leaflet for interest rate discounts available for eco homes.

Green by nature

Some properties may not require any work, but qualify for an Ecology mortgage due to their construction or use. In many instances, standard lenders reject the properties and projects that the Ecology positively welcomes – basically if the property has an environmental benefit and can be valued, we'll consider lending. Such properties include...

- Timber constructions – a renewable and sustainable building material
- Earth sheltered dwellings
- Traditional constructions such as straw bale, thatch, rammed earth, wattle and daub, cob – using local and sustainable resources
- Live/work units
- Back-to-back terraced properties – energy saving by design

If you think your project has environmental benefits, but doesn't seem to fit with any of the above, give us a call to discuss it.

N.B. Where the property does not currently attain an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) energy rating of 'B' we will lend if you intend to undertake works that will improve on a property's current rating.

Green extensions and loft conversions

We'll also consider lending where you're converting your loft or adding a green extension to your home. Adapting your current home to meet your growing needs may be a more environmentally friendly option than moving to a larger, possibly more inefficient, house. You should of course be using sustainable materials and incorporating energy saving measures. It may be that this addition allows you to work from home, so reducing your need to rent office space or time and energy spent commuting.

Shared ownership

Some new properties are sold on a shared ownership basis – where you purchase a percentage share in the property and pay a small rent on the portion you don't buy. This is an affordable way of buying a new home and we'll lend on such schemes, as outlined in our **Current mortgage rates and charges** leaflet.

We do not lend for...

- The purchase of holiday or second homes due to the impact on local house prices
- Agricultural activities involving intensive farming practices or riding stables
- The purchase of dwellings classed as mobile
- Houseboats (as they are mobile), although we do lend for the purchase of houseboat moorings
- The purchase of dwellings with less than 12 month residential occupancy rights – you must be able to live in the property all-year round

Eco-friendly features

Whatever type of project you are engaged in, here are the aspects of green building that we are interested in promoting. The list is by no means exhaustive, and we do not expect you would want or be able to include all of them!

Use of eco-friendly materials

- Materials that come from renewable sources and can be easily recycled – e.g. straw or Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) registered timber
- Use of reclaimed stone, brick, slate or timber from demolished properties – reusing existing material
- Materials sourced locally to reduce the energy costs of transportation
- Consider whether the materials you're using represent a low energy cost in their production and disposal. For example, sustainably grown timber actually has a positive environmental benefit as it grows, and is therefore preferable as a building material to brick, steel, uPVC and concrete as these consume substantial amounts of energy in their manufacture.

A condition of any mortgage offer we make will be that you do not install any uPVC window frames or doors.

Reducing energy and resource usage

- Heat recovery systems
- High levels of environmentally friendly insulation – such as recycled newsprint, wool, cork or hemp (materials containing CFC gases must be avoided)
- Double or triple glazing with low emissivity glass in wood frames
- Composting toilets
- Heavy mass construction (thick solid walls and internal features that enable the building to store heat which radiates out when temperatures drop)
- Renewable energy generation – solar panels, photovoltaics, wind turbines
- Low water consumption/rainwater harvesting
- Construction resources that have reduced raw material inputs such as Masonite I-beams which replace roof timbers

A condition of any mortgage offer we make will be that thermal roof insulation should be at least to the level required by building regulations.

Minimising pollution

- Low toxicity wood treatments, such as borax, which minimise the risk of harm to humans and wildlife
- Natural paints and finishes (non petro-chemical based)
- Water recycling including reed beds
- Using passive solar methods – south facing conservatories and upstairs living rooms

A condition of any mortgage offer we make will be that timber treatments should only be carried out using chemicals that minimise the risk of harm to humans and wildlife.

See our **Eco renovation** and **Eco new build** fact sheets for further information and more energy savings features. Our **Sources of help and information** leaflet lists various organisations and suppliers that can help you with your project.



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