

# Fuller Long

11 Septembre 2024  
Planning Department  
North Herts Council

Dear Sir/Madam

**Householder Application for Planning Consent at The Old Vicarage, Church Road, Kings Walden, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 8JX**

This letter is written in support of a householder planning application on behalf of Mr Chris Parsons, the freehold owner of the property. The application seeks consent for the creation of a residential annexe through various extensions and modifications to the property, as well as an attached garage and other extensions to improve the internal living space.

This letter sets out the proposal, as well as providing an assessment of the scheme against relevant national and local planning policy.

This letter is accompanied by the following supporting documents:

- Suite of application drawings;
- Previous pre-application submission (including photographs of the site); and
- Previous pre-application response.

**Site and Surrounds**

The site comprises a private detached residential dwelling and garage surrounded by garden land with a large driveway to the front. It is set back from the road with no other dwellings in close proximity. To the rear is an outbuilding comprising two storage rooms and a covered external storage area between the building and the main house. This building is constructed in a manner that would not be suitable for habitation and as such is unusable for anything other than storage. The property is located off Church Road, Kings Walden.

The site is surrounded by farmland to the north and west. To the east and south the site is bound by Church Road which leads into Kings Walden. Kings Walden itself is characterised by large residential dwellings set back from the road within large plots.

The site is identified in local planning policy as falling within the Green Belt.

The property is not listed, nor within a Conservation Area.

**Proposal**

The proposals include extensions to the property to create a residential annexe to provide accommodation for the applicant's mother. This includes a single storey extension to the south elevation to provide a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, living room and entrance area.

In addition, the rebuilding of the existing single garage to create a larger garage to the front of the property is proposed alongside a single storey rear / side extension within an existing courtyard to allow for the kitchen/living area to be expanded to better meet the needs of a modern family.

Materials are proposed which match those of the existing dwelling including red brickwork and tiled roof.

**Pre-Application Advice**

The Applicant has undertaken two rounds of pre-application discussions with the Council. The first of these was in April 2024 (ref 24/00604/PREH) where the Applicant proposed various extensions to the property to create a residential annexe and garage, as well as extensions to the living space. The response confirmed the principle of the development of the annexe was accepted but that there were some concerns about the design of the proposed extensions, particularly in regard to the roofscape and fenestration of the annexe and garage.

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Following on from this a second pre-application request for advice was submitted under reference 24/01106/PREH, incorporating amendments to the design of the built development. The response, received in July this year, concluded that:

*"The proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle".*

The proposals put forward in this application have taken into account the advice received in this response.

## **Planning Policy Context**

The Development Plan for Hart District Council comprises:

- The North Hertfordshire District Local Plan 2011 - 2031 (adopted November 2022);

Other material considerations include:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2023); and
- National Planning Policy Guidance (2023).

The most relevant planning policies are outlined below.

## **Local Plan**

**Policy D1** relates to **Sustainable Design**. It states that planning permission will only be granted for proposals which respond positively to the site's local context, and which seek to maximise sustainability.

**Policy D2** specifically relates to house extensions. It confirms that these will be granted where the extension is sympathetic to the existing house in height, form, proportions, roof type, window details, materials and orientation of the main dwelling. Furthermore it states that the extension should not dominate the neighbouring properties, leaving appropriate distances and spacing between buildings to maintain amenity and the character and appearance of the streetscene.

**Policy D3 (Protecting living conditions)** expands on this. It states that the Council will grant developments which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions. Where harm is identified it should be mitigated to a suitable level.

The creation of accommodation for relatives and dependents is dealt with under **Policy HS6**. It states that dependents' accommodation created through the adaption or extension of the main dwelling will be permitted where:

- a genuine need for the accommodation is demonstrated;
- the annex is subordinate to the main dwelling and designed in such a way that it can be easily (re-)incorporated
- into the main house if use as an annex ceases;
- any development would not exceed the size of extensions that would otherwise normally be acceptable;
- the occupation of the accommodation is restricted by condition.

**Policy SP5** deals with the **Countryside and the Green Belt**. It confirms that development proposals will only be permitted where they would not result in inappropriate development or where very special circumstances have been demonstrated.

## **Planning Consideration**

An assessment of the application against planning policy is provided below.

## **Principle of Development**

The proposals seek to create a residential annexe so that the Applicant's mother, who has increasing mobility issues, can live with the family. This will enable her to retain a level of independence but to also have family on hand to provide assistance when necessary and reduce any feelings of loneliness and isolation.

As set out in the pre-application response, Policy HS6 of the Local Plan allows for the development of a residential annexe provided that a genuine need is demonstrated. In addition the policy states that the annexe must be subordinate to the

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main dwelling and could be easily re-incorporated into the dwelling in the future. The scale of the annexe is also required to be of a size that would normally be considered acceptable.

The Case Officer who assessed the pre-application submission was content that a genuine need had been demonstrated. The annexe is proposed to be attached to the dwelling so that it could be incorporated within the main living areas if required at some time in the future. As such the first two parts of the policy are met and, in general, the principle of development is acceptable.

An assessment of the scale of the annexe must be carried out in combination with an assessment of the proposals against the green belt policy.

## Impact on the Green Belt

The NPPF provides detailed policy on development within the Green Belt. It states that extensions to existing residential dwellings may be considered appropriate development so long as they do not disproportionately increase the size of the host dwelling, taking into account any previous extensions to the property.

In this instance there are existing outbuildings to the rear of the property. When taking these into account the floorspace uplift proposed represents approximately 40%. Given the size of the host dwelling and the wider plot it is our contention that this is not disproportionate and this was agreed by the Council in their pre-application response. The final part of the policy in regards to annexes is therefore met, in addition to meeting the requirements of Green Belt policy.

## Character and Appearance

The property is set back from the road surrounded with dense planting, particularly during the summer months. As such, the views of the proposed extensions and garage from the public streetscene are limited.

Notwithstanding this, the additions will use the same materials as the existing dwelling so as to blend in and not detract from the original dwelling, in line with comments received during the pre-application process and the requirements of Policy D2. Red brickwork will be used on the facades of the extensions, with tiled roofs to match the existing.

Amendments were also made to the fenestration to add in more windows to ensure that it provided more detail, which had been picked up during the pre-application process.

The roof form was also amended to improve the relationship between the existing dwelling and the extensions. Pitched roofs are now proposed which has been welcomed by the Council's pre-application officer.

The scale of the scheme has been considered appropriate by the Council in their pre-application response and it is hoped that the additional changes that have been made go further to meet the Council's expectations and result in a well designed and sympathetic scheme, in line with local and national policy requirements.

## Access and Parking

No change is proposed to the access to the property. Parking will still be available to the front of the dwelling and two garage spaces are also proposed. The proposals are therefore acceptable in this regard.

## Residential Amenity

The property is within a large plot and consequently the extensions do not infringe on any neighbours and there is therefore no issue with regards to the impact on neighbouring amenity. This was agreed in the pre-application guidance received and therefore the scheme complies with local Policy D3.

## Ecology

No trees or plants will be removed. The extensions are proposed on areas which are currently low quality grass or hardstanding. As such, there is no negative impact in terms of ecology or biodiversity as a result of the scheme proposed.

## Conclusions

The proposals seek to create a residential annexe to house the mother of the Applicant to ensure that she has the support she requires for the future. In addition, an attached garage and single storey side/rear extension are proposed to make the living space more suitable for the family.

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The Applicant has undertaken two rounds of pre-application discussions to ensure that the proposed scheme is appropriate and consequently all guidance that has been received has been taken into account. The result is a scheme which is not overly dominant, constructed of appropriate materials, which the Council have agreed is acceptable. The further details provided within this application confirm this.

It has been demonstrated that the proposals comply with the development plan and it is therefore politely requested that planning permission is granted.

Your sincerely



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FullerLong