

Fuller Long Limited

1 Waverley Lane
Farnham
Surrey
GU9 8BB

Our Ref : 24/01106/PREH

Contact : Thomas Howe
Direct Line : 01462 474249
Email : thomas.howe@north-herts.gov.uk
Date : 9th July 2024

FAO: Fiona Flint

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Pre Application Householder : Alterations and extensions including ancillary annexe
The Old Vicarage, Church Road, Kings Walden, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 8JX**

I refer to your pre-application submission in respect of the above site, I am writing to you following an examination of the information submitted.

I would emphasise that this does not constitute a formal determination and is without prejudice to any subsequent formal planning application.

For your information the relevant government guidance and policies from the development plans are set out below.

Development site

The application site comprises a large, detached two storey dwelling off Church Road, Kings Walden. The land is brushed over by the Green Belt.

Relevant planning history

No previous history.

Proposal

Pre-application advice is sought for the erection of extensions to the dwelling to allow for the introduction of a residential annex, an attached front garage and a single storey rear/side extension.

Consultation responses

None consulted.

Relevant policies

NPPF

Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport;
Section 11 – Making effective use of land;
Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places;
Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land;

North Hertfordshire District Local Plan 2011-2031:

Policy SP5 – Countryside and Green Belt
Policy SP6 Sustainable transport
Policy SP8 Housing
Policy SP9 Design and Sustainability
Policy SP12 Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape

Policy T1 Assessment of transport matters
Policy T2 Parking

Policy D1 Sustainable design
Policy D2 House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings
Policy D3 Protecting living conditions
Policy D4 Air quality
Policy NE4 Biodiversity and Geological Sites

Discussion

The main material considerations related to this application are:

- The principle of the development in the Green Belt and for the introduction of a residential annex.
- The impact of the development to the character and appearance of the local area and the host dwelling.
- The proposed impacts of the development on neighbour amenity.
- The impact of the development on parking in the local area.

Principle:

Green Belt:

The site is within the Green Belt, and therefore, the provisions of Section 13 of the NPPF are of relevance. This advises that significant weight should be given to harm to the Green Belt. With regards to the erection of extensions and annexes, the NPPF permits such developments provided they do not disproportionately enlarge the host dwelling. Upon investigating the site history and plans for the site, it does not appear that the dwelling has been enlarged other than the outbuildings to the rear. The proposed enlargements would comprise approximately a 40% increase over the original dwelling. Cumulatively, these enlargements are not considered to be disproportionate to the original dwelling and therefore, I consider that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of its relationship with the provisions of Section 13 of the NPPF and Policy SP5 of the Local Plan 2011-2031.

Annex:

Policy HS6 relates to the provision of residential annexes within the curtilages of residential dwellings. This policy sets out requirements for residential annexes and these are: a genuine need is demonstrated, the annex is subordinate to the main dwelling and can be easily reincorporated into the dwelling, it is of a size that would normally be acceptable, and its use is restricted by condition.

Given that the annex would be used by an elderly relative associated with the household, I consider that sufficient need has been demonstrated. Due to its attached nature, it is considered that the annex can be easily reincorporated into the main dwelling and therefore, the first two criteria are met. The matter of the final criterion will be covered in the design section and any permission would be granted subject to an occupancy condition.

Character and Appearance:

The proposed development would introduce extensions to both side elevations and to the rear elevation. Some views would be gained from the public realm on surrounding roads, however, this would be limited to the winter, when trees are not in full leaf. Otherwise, the enlargements would not significantly alter the character and amenity of the dwelling as viewed within the context of surrounding area. Materials of construction appear to be broadly consistent across the dwelling, though these are not specified in detail.

My previous response raised some concern with the layout and visual appearance of the extensions. Following consideration of the amended scheme, I consider that the proposed plans are an improvement over the previous submission, given that the roof forms improve the visual relationship between the dwelling and the extensions and because the principal elevations now feature fenestration that breaks the wall up and provides some interest. It is strongly recommended that any application features materials of construction that match the existing dwelling to ensure that the extensions visually relate to the host dwelling. The scale of the development is considered to be acceptable, and I consider that the proposed enlargements suitably achieve a level of subservience to the main dwellinghouse. The design is therefore acceptable.

Neighbour Amenity:

Due to the isolated location of The Old Vicarage, I do not consider that the proposed enlargements nor their use as an annex would result in unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers in the form of a loss of light, from dominance or from noise generation.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

Given that the proposed development would require an application for householder planning permission, it would be exempt from the requirement for delivering a Biodiversity Net Gain as defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Conclusion

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle. It is recommended that comments above be considered prior to making any formal submission for planning permission for these works.

Any advice given by Council Officers for pre-application enquiries does not constitute a formal response or decision of the council with regards to future planning permission or other consents. The above comments are not binding on any future decision of the Local Planning Authority.

Thomas Howe

Planning Officer

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