

Planning Statement

**The Retreat
Elmswell Road
Wetherden
Stowmarket
IP14 3LN**



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Date of Application	September 2022
Local Planning Authority	Mid Suffolk District Council
Applicant	Ms Karen Hayes
Development Description	Change of use of a garden store associated with dwelling house known as The Retreat to an Annexe.
Site Address	The Retreat, Elmswell Road, Wetherden, Stowmarket, IP14 3LN
Report Revision	V1.2

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Parker Planning Services Ltd on behalf of Ms Karen Hayes (The Applicant) to accompany a full planning application for the change of use of and conversion of a Garage/ Garden storage building associated with the dwellinghouse known as 'The Retreat' into an annexe.
- 1.2. The intent behind the conversion is to enable the applicant to accommodate a dependent older relative. In the short term to allow this relative to maintain a semi-independent lifestyle and in the longer-term view to allow for care provision once this is no longer possible. It should be noted that this application is for an annexe and not a granny annexe as this would allow the applicant greater flexibility in how they use the annexe once this need has ceased.
- 1.3. This statement should be read in conjunction with the plans submitted alongside the pre-application.

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2. Development Description

Site and Context

- 2.1. The principal dwelling known as 'The Retreat' is situated in the settlement of Wetherden which is defined as a "Hamlet" in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Settlement Hierarchy Review (2020) and is within the settlement boundary.
- 2.2. The building subject to this change of use application was previously used as a garage/garden store prior to its conversion into an annexe. See Figure 1 for the development area (in red) and the land associated with the principal dwelling 'The Retreat' shown in blue.

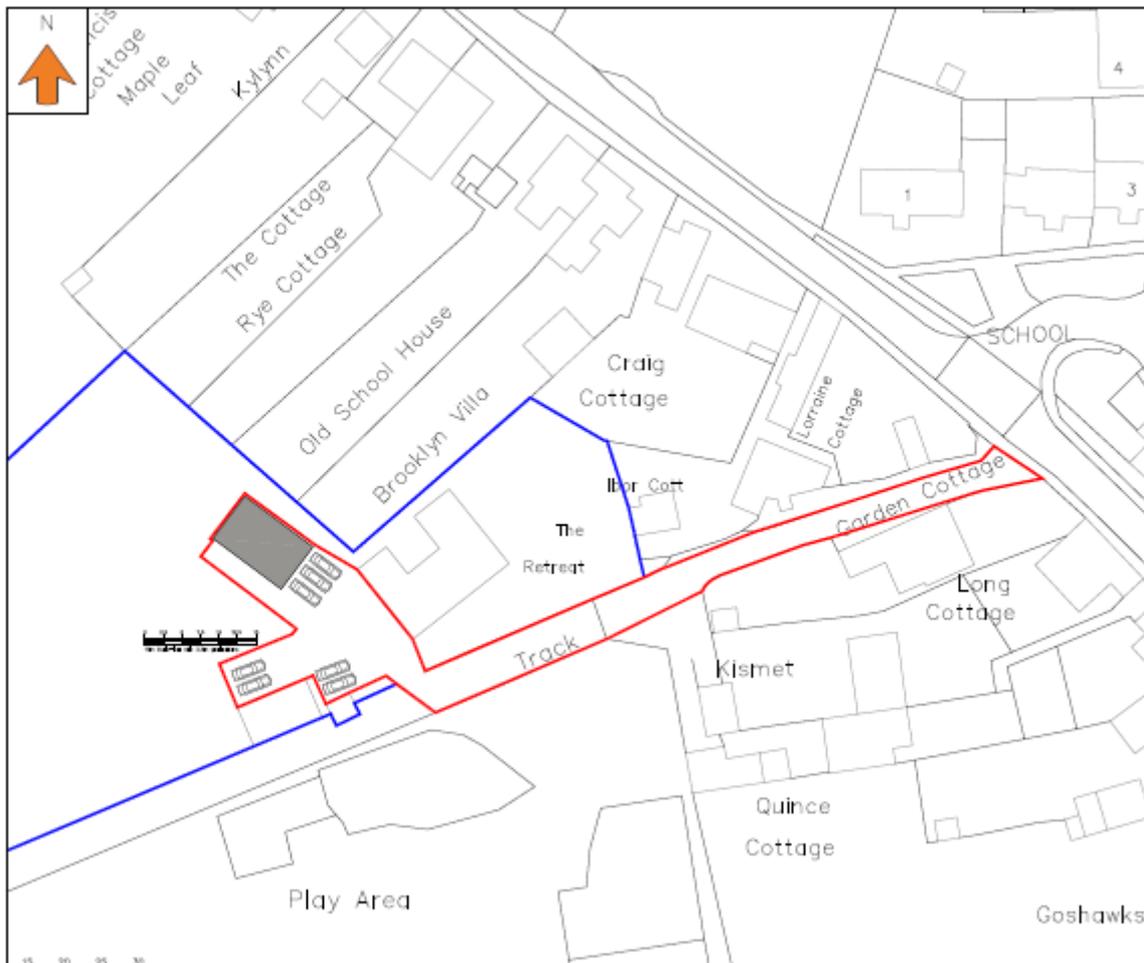


Figure 1 - Block Plan

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3. Relevant Planning History

3.1. A search of the xx District Council’s online planning records identified Two planning applications relevant to the proposal at this site. They are as follows:

Planning Application Reference	Description	Decision
0746/16	Erection of garage/garden store. The Retreat, Elmswell Road, Wetherden, IP14 3LN.	Approved
1184/17	Conversion of a garage for residential annexe including alterations to the existing roof and link to the main dwelling. April Cottage, Elmswell Road, Wetherden, Stowmarket, IP14 3LN.	Approved

Table one: Relevant planning history.

- 3.2. In the previous application submitted on this site (0746/16) the applicant had received approval for an additional large garage/garden store building on this site. Whilst never constructed the officer in the previous application had noted that due to the large size of the garden and the distance from other dwelling houses no significant impact on no harm would be caused to residential amenity.
- 3.3. The other referenced application (1184/17) was for an annexe on another nearby property (approximately 110m from the applicant’s site) which received approval in 2017. This application was highlighted as whilst our proposal does not include an internal connection the principle of its development is quite similar. In our view, this site had greater constraints with regards to the impact on nearby heritage assets and on residential amenity.

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4. Design and Access Statement

Design

4.1. The proposal includes some external material changes which include:

- Removal of 2x Garage Doors on the Front elevation and their replacement with uPVC Windows and white weatherboarding (See Drawing Number PPS22-3833-ESE1).
- Removal of 1 Garage Door and 3 Small windows on the South-West Side elevations and their replacement with uPVC Windows and white weatherboarding and uPVC French door (See Drawing Number PPS22-3833-ESE1).
- Replacement of existing door on the North-East Side elevation with a new Door as well as the addition of a small accompanying window (See Drawing Number PPS22-3833-ESE1).

Use

4.2. The Garage/ Garden Store is to be converted into an annexe associated with the principal dwelling known as the retreat.

Scale and Layout

4.3. The accompanying floor plan indicates the provision of one bedroom, bathroom, dining room, kitchenette and living space.

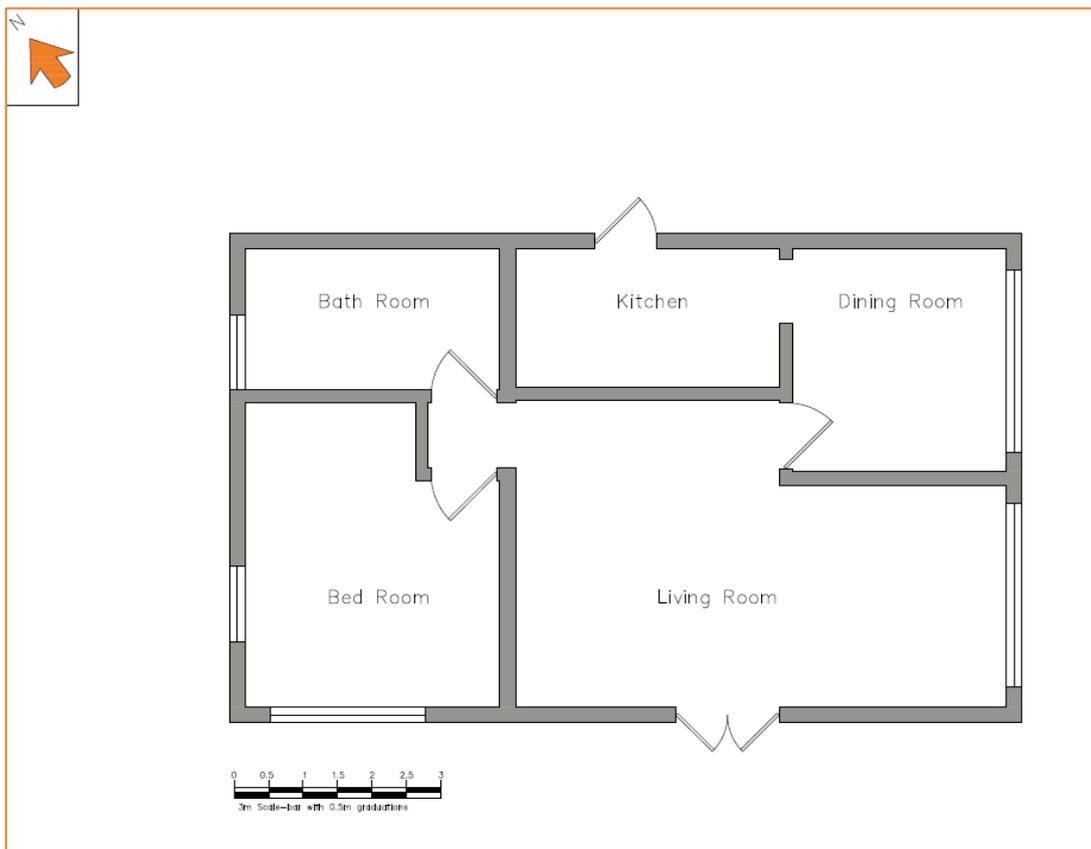


Figure 2 - Floor Plan

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Appearance and landscaping

- 4.4. The conversion has comprised of a minimal and modest conversion. Replacing most of the pre-existing openings (previously for garage doors) with new uPVC fittings.
- 4.5. No modifications to the surrounding environment have been made.

Access

- 4.6. The proposal will continue to use the existing access onto Elmswell Road and will share it with the principal dwelling. Whilst this proposal would result in the loss of some parking provision. The cumulative total of bedrooms across the principal dwelling and the annex is five, as indicated in figure one irrespective of the loss of space the existing yard space can allow for parking up to seven vehicles which is more than sufficient as the minimum requirement as set out in the 'Suffolk guidance for parking' (2019) is three.

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5. Planning Policy

Local Policies

5.1. The site is located within Mid Suffolk District Council and as such, any development must account for the development strategies and plans in place locally. The Council have in place a Local Planning framework incorporating:

- Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998).
- Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008) planning related.
- Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review (2012).

Mid Suffolk Local Plan

- Policy H16: Protecting existing residential amenity.
- Policy H18: Extensions to existing dwellings.
- Policy H19: Accommodation for special family needs.

Mid Suffolk Core Strategy & Focused Review

- Policy FC 1.1: Mid Suffolk approach to delivering Sustainable Development.

National Planning Policy

5.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 and National Planning Practice Guidance are both material planning considerations for this proposal. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied while the NPPG sets out Government guidance concerning planning-related issues in England.

- NPPF 2: Achieving sustainable development
- NPPF 4: Decision-making
- NPPF 5: Delivering a Sufficient supply of homes
- NPPF 11: Making effective use of land

6. Discussion

- 6.1. The proposal seeks to change the use of the garden store to an annexe which would facilitate the applicant to accommodate and provide a care for an elderly dependant relative. The proposal involves some minor exterior changes (as detailed earlier in the statement). Whilst the loss of the garage would result a loss of parking space the site already has more than sufficient room for car parking provision within the existing yard space (see Figure 1) as it would more than adequately meet the minimum three space requirement as indicated by the 'Suffolk Guidance for Parking' (2019).
- 6.2. Policy H16 of the 1998 local plan was designed to "protect the existing amenity and character of primarily residential areas. In our view this proposal is consistent with this policy and would not harm the existing amenity or harm the character of the area. This is as a conversion of an existing structure the proposal would not contribute to a loss of open space. This is further reinforced by the previous application on the site (0746/16) in which the planning officer had noted in the officer report that due to the large size of the garden and the distance from other dwelling houses no significant impact on no harm would be caused to residential amenity.
- 6.3. Whilst it is noted that this proposal would impact the amenity of the Retreat, in our view, this proposal would share the residential amenity associated with the Retreat and the proposal would have a limited to no impact on the existing residents.
- 6.4. Policy H18 of the 1998 Local plan outlines the policy on the extension of existing dwellings, as there is no policy specifically concerning annexes it is assumed that this policy would be relevant in its absence. This policy is largely concerned with the appearance and design of the proposal (and its impact on the area) as well as the impact on the amenity of neighbours. As this is an existing building it could not constitute overdevelopment within the curtilage of already a large garden. Additionally, as the proposed exterior material changes are minimal and modest from a design perspective this would not detrimentally impact the character and appearance of the area.
- 6.5. Policy H19 refers to specifically accommodation involving special family needs, it does however state that "annexes for this purpose should normally be physically part of or connected to the original house". In this instance, on this site, this physical connection would not be appropriate as it would result in a greater impact on amenity than a conversion would as such an extension would only be feasible in the directions of a nearby neighbour.

Paragraph 55 of NPPF requires that conditions imposed on applications are both necessary and reasonable. Whilst we acknowledge that when this policy was designed it may well have been deemed acceptable, we believe it would be unreasonable to impose an S106 agreement onto this applicant as this is both a needlessly costly process and in our view is contrary to the spirit in which the NPPF was written as in the longer term it creates spaces that are undesirable to buy (with the principle dwelling) and often underutilised.

- 6.6. It is considered that the proposal is small in scale and therefore sustainable. From a socio-economic perspective, if approved, the dependent relative of the applicant would be able to retain a greater level of independence and would simultaneously reduce the pressure on spaces in nearby care homes (the likely alternative) meaning that these can be prioritised for those with

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the greatest need. Additionally, the garage/ garden store has already been built and therefore would generate less carbon than creating a new dwelling elsewhere within the parish.

7. Summary

7.1. In conclusion, the conversion and change of use of the garage/garden store should be viewed as acceptable as it makes efficient use of a pre-existing structure, does not impact the residential amenity of neighbours, and enables a dependent relative of the applicant greater independence than other care opportunities would offer.

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