

Whitefriars, Barnwell, PE8 5PU – Annexe Support Document

The Proposal

We are seeking permission to convert the existing pool house in the garden into an annexe, to form separate and additional accommodation for the main dwelling house. This would require infilling the existing pool and replacing the roof. There would be no change to the existing footprint of the building. The walls would be raised by apx 430mm to support the new roof, giving an eaves height of 2488mm. However, due to a change in pitch, there would only be a very small increase of 58mm to the existing ridge height, to 4000mm.

The proposed annexe would contain an open plan lounge, kitchenette and dining area, two bedrooms, one with an en-suite, a bathroom and a games room. There would also be a home office, separated from the rest of the annexe accommodation by a hallway.

The internal area of the proposed annexe would be 114.6m². This is clearly subordinate in size to the main dwelling, the internal area of which is 289.1m².

Principle of Development

We need additional ground floor guest accommodation for elderly relatives and friends with limited mobility, for whom stairs have become impossible. They are couples and families who are able to live independently in single storey accommodation, but need separate bedrooms, easily accessible toilet and bathroom facilities and areas to relax in. The annexe accommodation would enable them to visit for extended periods and would allow them to have their own space and retain a degree of independence. This would help to improve their quality of life, especially given the restrictions now imposed by age and limited mobility. The only bedroom available for guests in the main dwelling is above the garage. However, it is accessed via a staircase and also has areas of restricted headroom in both the bedroom and en-suite shower room. We therefore keep it for use by our young grandchildren.

We also want to create a home office in the annexe, which would be used by us on a regular basis. The office would be separated from the rest of the annexe accommodation by the hallway, giving privacy to guests. The lounge area would be used by our guests, and by ourselves as a garden room at other times, and likewise the games room.

The occupants of the annexe would interact regularly with us in the main dwelling, including having meals together, and outside in the garden. As detailed on the floor plan, the annexe would only have a kitchenette (rather than a kitchen) in one corner of the lounge area. The proposed annexe is 16.2m from the back door of the main dwelling, which leads into the utility room and then through to the kitchen. However, it would be reasonable to incorporate basic facilities in the annexe for occupants who are elderly and have limited mobility, and to allow a limited degree of independence. As detailed on the floor plan, the annexe would rely on the main dwelling for laundry facilities.

The annexe would share all services and utilities with the main dwelling. There would be no separate access, parking, address, post box, utility meters or refuse/recycling bins. Both the annexe and main dwelling would have shared use of the entire garden and external amenity spaces. No changes are proposed in respect of sub-dividing the land and the annexe would not have a separate garden or outdoor area.

The additional accommodation proposed could not reasonably be provided by extensions to the original dwelling. This could only be contemplated at the rear of the property, but would mean completely redesigning the existing layout and how we use it. Not only would it necessitate major structural work, roof alterations and involve moving utilities (including the drains which run along the rear of the property), but it would also lead to a serious reduction or total loss of natural light in some rooms. In addition, significant re-landscaping would need to be undertaken, including removing a mature oak tree. All of this would greatly reduce and negatively impact our residential amenity and quality of life. There would inevitably be an ecological effect of reducing the size of the garden, removing a mature tree and increasing the footprint of the existing house. It would also result in currently porous surfaces being replaced with impermeable structures and surfaces. This would appear unnecessary and questionable when there is already a large, existing building within the curtilage which could be converted into the annexe accommodation proposed and which would result in no change to the garden, or to the current footprint of buildings on the site.

Visual Impact

It has been established (NE/23/00863/FUL, Case Officer's Delegated Report) that the proposal would not cause any additional visual harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Whilst the structure is not clearly visible from the street scene, replacing the existing polycarbonate roof with tiles would greatly improve its appearance and complement the main dwelling and neighbouring properties. As detailed on the drawings, the annexe would also utilise external materials which are complementary to the main dwelling.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

It has been established (NE/23/00863/FUL, Case Officer's Delegated Report) that there is only one neighbouring dwelling which could potentially be impacted by the proposed development, 'Monks Way', and that there would be no concerns regarding loss of neighbouring amenity, or impact on residential amenity, to this property.

Highways

It has been established (NE/23/00863/FUL, Case Officer's Delegated Report), that there is sufficient existing, and potential for additional, off-street parking to the front of the site and that the proposal would not cause harm to the highway network or users.

Ecology

NNC Ecology were consulted (NE/23/00863/FUL) and commented that 'it would be good to get photos of the tiles and loft just to assess if there is a potential for bats'. They also suggested that 'an informative for protected species (birds, bats) should be appropriate'. Attached (Appendix A) are photos showing the existing pool house and polycarbonate roof. As can be seen, there is no roof void and the entire structure is completely enclosed from the outside. The existing building has been regularly used and is well maintained. There are no access opportunities and therefore no potential for either birds or bats. There would be no change to the footprint of the existing building and only a very small increase of 58mm to the ridge height. No trees or hedges would need to be removed or pruned in order to carry out the proposed development.

Summary

This document explains how the proposed development complies with the set criteria in the Residential Annexes Supplementary Planning Document (2021). The annexe would be an ancillary building, subordinate in size and scale and subsidiary in occupation, to the main dwelling. The annexe would share all services and utilities with the main dwelling. We would have regular access to the annexe and the occupants would be relatives and friends of ours.

The application is for the conversion of an existing outbuilding, within an existing residential curtilage, into an annexe which would be functionally connected to, and heavily dependent on, the main dwelling. The annexe would remain part of the same planning unit as the main dwelling. It would not have all the necessary components to function as a standalone residential unit and could not therefore be seen as tantamount to a new independent dwelling. As highlighted in *Uttlesford DC vs SSE & White (1992)*, even if accommodation does provide the facilities for independent day to day living, that does not necessarily make it a separate planning unit. Rather, it is a matter of fact and degree. Furthermore, as stated in the Council's pre-application advice (NE/21/01413/QRV), 'any annexe could not be rented out or occupied by anyone that does not have a relationship with the ownership or become a separate dwellinghouse, as this would require planning permission in its own right'. To use the building in a different way, or as a separate dwelling, would require a different planning application and would risk enforcement action if permission had not been obtained.

Mr & Mrs Barker
24 November 2023

Appendix A - Photos of Existing Pool House and Roof

