

Application for a variation of planning condition: Field View, Tydd St Mary Planning Statement

Background

The application refers to a former garage which stands in the south-east corner of the back garden of Field View, a large detached house on Lowgate, Tydd St. Mary. Field View is part of a ribbon of development that stretches south out of the village. To both the front and rear of the property are open fields.

The former garage at Field View was converted to a 'Granny Annexe' in 2007 (application Ref: H21/1647/07 dated 13 Dec 2007 refers) and following a site visit in October 2008 was subsequently granted planning permission on appeal (application Ref: APP/A2525/A/08/2074282 refers). The planning inspector's decision was subject to three conditions, of which **one** is the focus of the current application. This condition is quoted in full as follows:

"The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as Field View, Lowgate, Tydd St Mary, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE13 5PF".

The Inspector imposed this condition in order to secure the development as one unit of occupation in conjunction with Field View and hence to ensure that the development was ancillary to the main dwelling and the whole would remain as one planning unit.

Field View was sold in September 2014 and the annexe has been unoccupied since that date. The new owners are submitting this application.

Rationale

The annexe at Field View is habitable but remains unoccupied. It is exempt from council tax. If left unoccupied there is a risk that the structure will slip into disrepair because of unsustainable maintenance costs. We wish to use the existing granny annexe for the purpose of providing holiday accommodation for visitors and to attract tourists from outside the local area. We understand that the planning condition imposed in 2008 does not permit this.

If we are successful in being granted a variation of planning conditions then we anticipate that the annexe will enable us to attract tourists to the area and enable us to promote other local tourist attractions. This makes good use of a perfectly habitable annexe and would generate a modest income. The revenues derived would enable us to maintain the building in good order. Depending on the level of occupation we could also anticipate providing regular employment for a cleaner and occasional employment for a tradesman to maintain the structure and facilities. We understand that if used for this purpose the annexe will in future qualify for council tax.

We believe that a variation of the existing planning condition to permit this intended use can be granted consistent with the current policies of the South Holland Local Plan. The key to this is our belief that the proposed development cannot be considered to be tantamount to creating a 'new' dwelling in the open countryside. The following supporting evidence supports this argument:

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The location

The annexe is a small detached, self-contained unit separate to the main dwelling but is contained wholly within the boundary of the property. It is located discretely behind and to the side of the main dwelling, adjacent to the rear boundary of the property some distance from and hence not within prominent view from the public highway. There would be no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the area.

Curtilage facilities

The annexe uses existing curtilage facilities such as access, parking and drying areas belonging to the main dwelling. Access to the annexe is secured with automatic steel security gates located across the driveway alongside the main dwelling. There is adequate parking for visitors' cars behind the gates, with hard standing in front of the annexe with capacity for two cars. The driveway, security gates and parking areas are all illuminated with external lighting at night that can be controlled by visitors at the discretion of the owners. This application excludes any development to existing curtilage facilities.

Accommodation & facilities

The annexe is fully equipped and furnished for visitor self-catering and can comfortably accommodate a couple, but with optionally up to two small children also if needed. The facilities, fixtures, fittings and decor provided are of a high standard, and hence what visitors would expect from a high quality holiday accommodation. This application excludes any development of accommodation or facilities.

Services

All utility services such as electricity and water are provided as ancillary to the main dwelling. There are no separate electricity or water meters serving the annexe. Nor is there a separate telephone line provided. This application seeks no changes to current service provisions or arrangements. The annexe would therefore remain suitable only for temporary occupation. Hence we believe that the annexe can only be considered as one planning unit together with the main dwelling and not as a separate dwelling in its own right.

No structural development

No additional development is required nor is planned to the structure of the annexe in order to fulfil the purpose intended. All existing elevations will be retained exactly as they are at present.

Local environment

The intended purpose of the annexe is entirely in keeping with the existing environment. The short term occupation of the annexe would increase the occupation of the whole property by no more than what might reasonably be expected for the main dwelling. The main dwelling is a 5-bedroomed detached family house occupied solely by the owners, a retired couple. Hence there would be no material harm to the amenity of the existing nearby residents stemming from disturbance, noise or overlooking as a consequence.