



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 July 2025

by **H Marriott MPlan MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L2630/W/25/3364300

Sunnyside, Longwater Lane, Costessey, Norfolk NR5 0TD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr S Mann against the decision of South Norfolk District Council.
 - The application Ref is 2025/0101.
 - The development proposed is described as 'retrospective householder application for conversion of garage block into 2-bedroom self-contained annex'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the conversion of garage block into 2-bedroom self-contained annexe at Sunnyside, Longwater Lane, Costessey, Norfolk NR5 0TD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2025/0101, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans CH24/LBA/676/HP-1-100 and CH24/LBA/676/HP-1-101.
 - 2) The annexe hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as Sunnyside.

Preliminary Matters

2. The application form confirms that the development has already started. I saw on my site visit that conversion works appear to be in progress although the former garage block is not yet occupied as an annex. I have considered the appeal based on the plans before me.
3. The description of development in this appeal decision is taken from the Council's decision notice as this more accurately reflects the development proposed. Reference to the retrospective nature of the appeal proposal has been removed, since this does not refer to an act of development.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether or not the development meets the specific requirements of the development plan with regards to residential annexes.

Reasons

5. Sunnyside is a dormer bungalow located within a row of dwellings fronting an access road known as 'The Loke', which leads off Longwater Lane. It is set within a large plot and has a gated access with gravel driveway leading to the former

garage block and various other outbuildings located to its rear. The former 3-bay garage block sits within the rear garden of Sunnyside, behind the existing residential development fronting The Loke. Its façade comprises brickwork, a tiled roof and grey coloured feature cladding.

6. Policy DM3.7 of the South Norfolk Local Plan Development Management Policies Document (2015) (LP) requires residential annexes to be considered favourably provided that they are designed so that they can continue to be used as part of the main dwelling, without creating independent dwelling units, in future.
7. The proposed conversion includes the addition of two dormer windows in the front elevation of the building. Internally, the annexe would be capable of supporting independent living, with two bedrooms, a lounge and an open-plan kitchen/diner area. Nonetheless, its modest footprint and overall scale ensure that the building remains visually subordinate to the main dwelling. Importantly, the limited separation distance between the dormer windows and the main house means that occupiers of the annexe would directly overlook the main private rear garden of Sunnyside. This close and intimate spatial arrangement would render the annexe undesirable for use as an independent dwelling in the future for privacy reasons.
8. The annexe is intended to accommodate the appellant's son and his family, with the arrangement facilitating shared childcare and the use of larger rooms within the main dwelling. Whilst these personal circumstances may evolve over time, the annexe would remain capable of serving a variety of ancillary functions associated with the main dwelling. Whilst the Council is concerned that the proposal would be akin to an independent dwelling in a location where new housing is restricted, the appeal proposal is described as an annexe and a condition can be imposed to ensure the annexe is only used for purposes ancillary to the main dwelling. Furthermore, any proposal to establish it as an independent residential unit would require a separate grant of planning permission, at which point the planning implications of such a change could be fully assessed.
9. Although the annexe would not be directly connected to the main dwelling, it would retain a close spatial relationship through shared access, limited separation and shared parking and garden areas. These physical characteristics, combined with the familial connection between the respective occupiers and the anticipated regular interaction between the occupiers of the two buildings, would ensure the annexe functions in a manner that is ancillary to the main dwelling.
10. I therefore conclude that the development would meet the specific requirements of the development plan with regards to residential annexes. In this regard, it would comply with Policy DM3.7 of the LP for the aforementioned reasons.

Other Matters

11. The Council has drawn my attention to an annexe dismissed at appeal in 2016 at Meadowley¹. However, I do not have full details of that scheme including proposed plans illustrating the relationship between the annexe and the main dwelling in that instance and so I cannot be certain that the circumstances were the same. In any case I have considered the appeal proposal on its own merits.

¹¹ Appeal ref: APP/L2630/W/16/3149130

12. The potential for the appeal proposal to require consideration under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Habitats Regulations), in relation to its effect on the integrity of nearby habitats sites has been raised but it not a matter in dispute. As the appeal proposal relates to ancillary accommodation, and not to new dwelling units, the Council confirm that matters relating to nutrient neutrality and the Green Infrastructure Avoidance Mitigation (GIRAMs) are not applicable. For the same reasons, the Council state that the proposal is not liable for Biodiversity Net Gain. Whilst the Council's Environmental Quality Team requested a screening assessment in relation to contaminated land, the Council's report confirms that this was not reasonable or necessary since the appeal proposal does not involve any ground works. I find no reason to reach a different conclusion in relation to any of these matters.

Conditions

13. The Council has suggested various conditions in the event that the appeal is allowed. I have considered these against the tests set out in the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). In some instances, while I have adopted the suggested conditions, I have made changes to wording to add clarity as appropriate.
14. A time limit condition is not necessary since the development has already commenced. A condition requiring the development be carried out in accordance with the approved plans (2), is necessary in the interests of planning certainty.
15. The imposition of Condition 2 is considered reasonable and necessary in accordance with Policy DM3.7 of the LP which requires planning conditions to be imposed to restrict occupation of annexes to persons related or similarly linked to the occupants of the main dwelling.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

H Marriott

INSPECTOR