

North Norfolk District Council

Explanatory Guidance: Approach to Annexed Accommodation (Policy HOU6)

Provides guidance for applicants, agents and planning officers on designing and assessing annexed accommodation in line with Policy HOU6 of the North Norfolk Local Plan (2024-2040).

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Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Policy context.....	2
3. Policy approach to annexed accommodation (through extension or conversion).....	4
4. Guidance for new detached annexed accommodation	6
5. Checklist of key considerations relevant to annexed accommodation when applying for planning permission	8
6. Key Assessment considerations for Officers	10

Appendices

Appendix A: Useful link and Glossary of terms	11
Appendix B: Policy HOU6 - Criteria 3 Extract	12
Appendix C: Example Condition to control occupation	13

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this guidance is to provide policy context and further detail in the implementation of North Norfolk Local Plan Policy HOU6 Replacement Dwellings, Extensions, Domestic Outbuildings & Annexed Accommodation, where Criterion 3 relates to annexed accommodation.

Applicants will need to ensure that proposals for annexe accommodation comply with ALL relevant policies in the adopted North Norfolk Local Plan (2024-2040).

- 1.2. The guidance is aimed at supporting applicants, agents and planning officers. The current Local Plan, adopted in December 2025, provides a change in approach to annexe accommodation from the previous local plan by supporting the approaches of either an annexe extension to an existing dwellinghouse or the conversion of an existing outbuilding. These types of development are explained in Sections 2 and 3 below.

When does an annexe need planning permission?

- 1.3. Planning permission is normally required for the erection of a new building in the garden that is not attached to the main dwellinghouse and which will be used as an annexe to provide living accommodation. Unlike the incidental uses allowed under permitted development rights (see paragraph 1.5 below), annexe accommodation provides a supportive function connected to the primary residential use of the main dwellinghouse.
- 1.4. Planning law in this area is complicated. In the case of a detached building for use as annexe accommodation, case law states that whether the use of an annexe would involve the creation of a separate 'planning unit' and independent unit of occupation will be a matter of 'fact and degree' in any particular case. For example, even if annexe accommodation is for a relative and provides facilities for independent day to day living, it would not necessarily be considered a separate planning unit, if there was a clear functional relationship where the annexe is regarded as part and parcel of the main dwellinghouse. A fact and degree¹ judgement has to be made on the specific circumstance of a proposal and be determined on its own individual merits.

Permitted Development

- 1.5. For information, some outbuildings can be built/converted for an 'incidental use' to the enjoyment of a house without planning permission under 'permitted development rights.' [Part 1, Class E](#) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (as amended), sets out the rules for permitted development concerning domestic buildings within the **curtilage** of a property.

Permitted development rights do not extend to new or converted outbuildings for the use of primary living accommodation (e.g. bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms).

¹ Appeal Ref: APP/T3725/X/13/2194189 Catesby Cottage, Catesby Lane, Lapworth, Solihull with reference to [Uttlesford DC v SSE & White 1992](#)

- 1.6. Permitted development is a national grant of planning permission, which allows certain types of development without the need for the formal grant of planning permission. For more information visit the [Planning Portal website](#).

2. Policy context

The aims and objectives of Policy HOU6

- 2.1. The overall aim of Policy HOU6 is to positively manage the impact of incremental changes associated with replacement dwellings, house extensions, domestic outbuildings and annexed accommodation on the character of the district. This is because such proposals account for a substantial proportion of new development within the district, which can have cumulative impacts affecting a range of matters from landscape character to living conditions (also known as residential amenity).
- 2.2. Well-designed and proportionately scaled proposals for extensions and outbuildings can enhance a property and its setting, but disproportionately large and poorly designed and located proposals have the potential to negatively affect the character of the property and its local environment, including through its impact on the residential amenity of neighbours.
- 2.3. This approach is particularly important in the designated Countryside Policy Area where new dwellings are generally restricted. In these locations, detached or independent annexes would have greater potential to function as separate dwellings over time, which conflicts with the overall strategy for managing development in the Countryside, as set out in Policy SS2 Development in the Countryside of the Local Plan.

What type of annexed accommodation does Policy HOU6 support?

- 2.4. For annexed accommodation, Criterion 3 of Policy HOU6 (see Appendix A for details) supports the conversion of an existing outbuilding, or the extension of a dwellinghouse in order to provide annexed accommodation, where the new accommodation provided should be genuinely **ancillary** in its function and physical form to the main dwellinghouse.
- 2.5. **Ancillary** means that the annexe extension/accommodation should be smaller in scale in relation to the main property, where some facilities are preferably shared, such as a vehicular access, garden space, and where the annexe is used by a family member, or a carer, in order for it to be genuinely ancillary. In addition, the accommodation would ideally provide some, but not all, of the following primary living accommodation; bedroom, kitchen, bathroom and/or living room. This would ensure that there would need to be a direct functional relationship with the main dwellinghouse, such as a shared living room, so that the occupant(s) of the annexe are sharing at least one aspect of daily living with the main dwellinghouse. However, this is not vital, as explained in paragraph 1.4 above.

2.6. To be considered ancillary, and not an isolated self-contained unit of accommodation, an annexe is normally expected, in broad terms, to have the following key characteristics:

- Should be smaller in scale in comparison to the main dwellinghouse.
- Have shared vehicular and pedestrian access, parking facilities and cycle/ bin storage.
- Be within the garden/ curtilage of the existing dwellinghouse and share the garden.
- Have no physical subdivision between the annexe and the main dwellinghouse.
- Be used in conjunction with the main dwellinghouse. Ideally, sharing a kitchen or living room.
- Have a functional connection - be for the use of the same family or a carer of a family member occupying the main dwellinghouse.
- Be either physically attached or located close to the main dwellinghouse.

2.7. Where an annexe does not follow these key characteristics there is more of a risk that it would be assessed as being separate and self-contained living accommodation, which could function in isolation of the main dwellinghouse. If such self-contained accommodation is proposed, then planning permission for either new build or a change of use (for conversion) is likely to also be required.

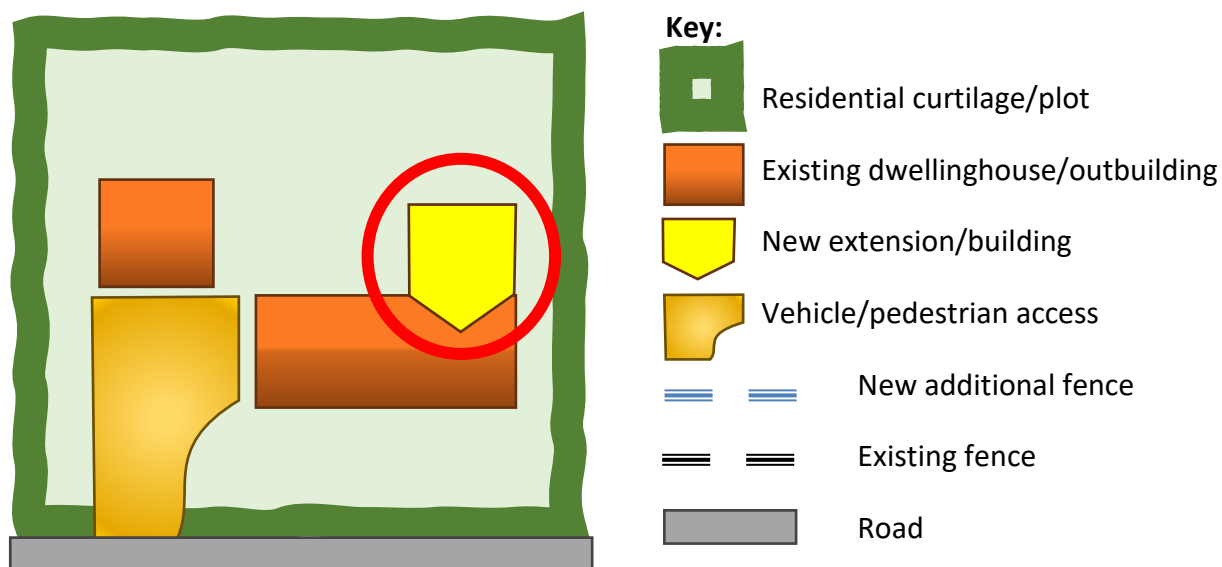
3. Policy approach to annexed accommodation (through extension or conversion)

Policy HOU6 (Criterion 3) - Annexed Accommodation requirements

3.1. Criteria 3 of Policy HOU6 supports two alternative approaches for the development of annexe accommodation and also includes a requirement that both types of accommodation will need to satisfy, as follows:

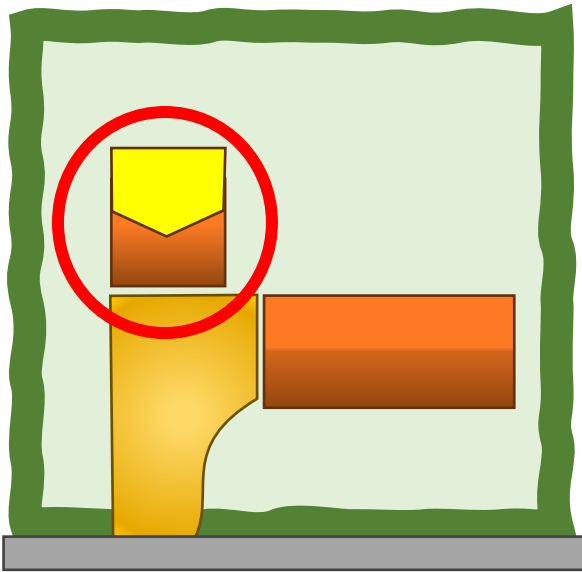
3. Proposals for annexed accommodation will be supported provided that the proposal:
a. is physically attached to, and comprises an extension to an existing dwelling; or

Example 1 (below): shows the principle of an appropriately sized annexe extension to an existing dwellinghouse.



3. Proposals for annexed accommodation will be supported provided that the proposal:

b. is for the sympathetic conversion and restoration of an existing building; and



Example 2 (opposite): shows the principle of an appropriate conversion of an existing outbuilding, with a proportionate extension, within the curtilage of an existing dwellinghouse to provide annexed accommodation.

3. Proposals for annexed accommodation will be supported provided that the proposal:

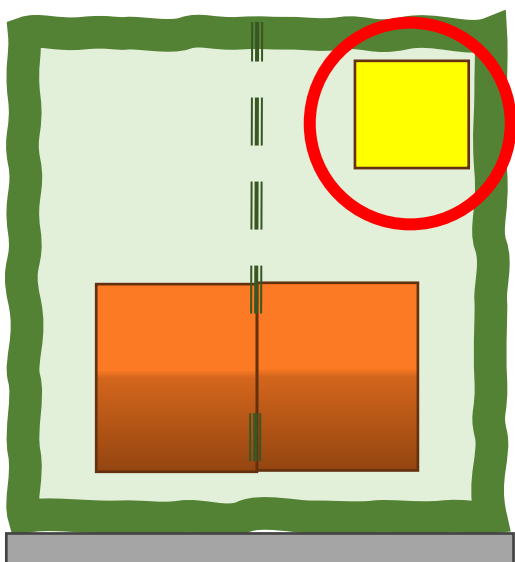
c. in both cases, provides a scale of accommodation which is subordinate to the existing dwelling and clearly designed for the intended purpose.

See also North Norfolk Local Plan [Policy ENV8 High Quality Design](#) and the [North Norfolk Design Guide \(2008\)](#) (or any subsequent updated guidance) for general design guidance.

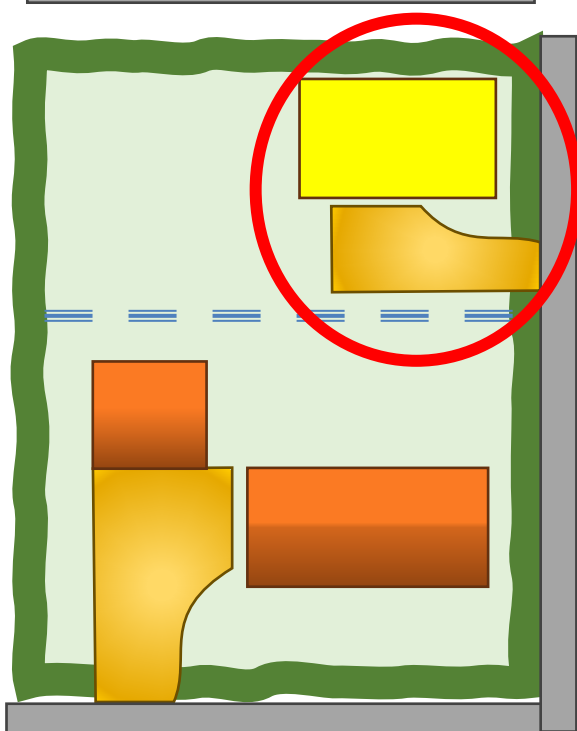
4. Guidance for new detached annexed accommodation

New detached annexed accommodation where it is demonstrated that an extension or conversion cannot be achieved

4.1. As described above, the policy approach supports applicants to consider whether a proposed annexe can be provided as either an extension to the existing dwellinghouse or through conversion of an existing outbuilding within the plot. If these approaches are not feasible, consideration will be given to a new detached purpose-built annexe. However, such a proposal **would be seen as a departure from the local plan policy approach**. In all cases, a detached annexe building would need to accord with Criterion 3c. Planning officers will need to consider the same matters of functionality as before (see para. 2.6) and in addition, whether a proposed annexe is designed and located in such a way as to avoid the potential long-term possibility of becoming a separate dwelling, particularly in the **Countryside Policy Area**.



Example 3 (opposite): Shows a new detached annexe in the rear garden of a semi-detached dwellinghouse, where there is no existing outbuilding for conversion and an extension to the existing dwellinghouse, at the scale required, is likely to negatively impact the residential amenity of the neighbouring dwellinghouse.



Example 4 (opposite): shows an inappropriately designed and located detached annexe, that Policy HOU6 is unlikely to support. Where the new building is of an excessive size being comparable to the main dwellinghouse, which could also be subdivided from the main dwellinghouse as shown. With the creation of a new access, the annexe could function independently from the main dwellinghouse in the future.

When is detached annexe accommodation more likely to be refused? (Example 4 above)

- When full self-containment is proposed, both physically and functionally.
- When the proposed annexe has a footprint and/or scale of a comparable size to the existing dwellinghouse.
- When the proposed annexe has a separate access, parking, bin storage, garden, and utilities.

5. Checklist of key considerations relevant to annexed accommodation when applying for planning permission

Will the proposed annexe have an appropriate physical relationship to the existing dwellinghouse?

- Is the scale subservient (smaller) to the size of the existing dwellinghouse and garden?
- Is the proposed scale/ height subservient to the existing dwellinghouse?
- Is the proposed annexe in the residential curtilage/ garden plot of the existing dwellinghouse and will it share the same address?
- Where a detached annexe is proposed, is it located within an acceptable distance from the existing dwellinghouse and not remote from it, particularly where there is a sizable curtilage area.
- Will the proposed annexe share its access and facilities (i.e. garden) with the existing dwellinghouse?
- Has additional waste and recycling provision been considered?

Will the proposed annexe ensure a high quality of design?

- Will the proposed annexe respect the design and character of the existing dwellinghouse and its plot?
- Will the size of the proposed annexe be appropriate for the intended use?
- Will the proposed annexe have a detrimental impact on any existing natural features on the site or neighbouring land (i.e. existing trees and hedges)?

Will the proposed annexe ensure good standards of residential amenity for existing and future occupiers?

- Will any new windows be positioned to prevent potential impacts such as overlooking or light spill to any neighbouring properties?
- Will the proposed annexe be single storey in height?
- Is any plant or equipment proposed that could adversely affect the neighbours, for example through noise pollution?

Other things to think about

- Has the long-term future of the proposed annexe been considered once it is no longer required for the proposed purpose?
- Will there be shared utility and services, which would demonstrate a level of dependence?
- Will there be shared access and adequate on-site parking?
- Will there be reliance on the facilities of the existing house, which would demonstrate a level of dependence?
- Are there any measures in place to prevent an increase in flood risk from increased development within the curtilage?
- Is there an opportunity to include ecological design features, such as a green roof, to reduce or slow rainwater run-off through sustainable drainage solutions (SuDS)?

Submission of supporting evidence from Applicants

- Personal circumstances (where relevant).
- Demonstration of why an extension to the existing house or conversion of an existing outbuilding are not feasible, where appropriate.
- How physical and functional dependency between the proposed annexe and the existing house will be maintained.

6. Key Assessment considerations for Officers

When using Policy HOU6 each proposed annexe should be determined on its own individual merits

- 6.1. As highlighted above, Policy HOU6 supports proportionate well-designed annexe accommodation preferably through an extension or conversion of an existing outbuilding within the curtilage of an existing dwellinghouse. As highlighted in paragraph 1.4, case law has stated that whether the use of an annexe would involve the creation of a separate ‘planning unit’ and independent unit of occupation will be a matter of fact and degree in any particular case. Even if the accommodation for a relative provides facilities for independent day to day living, it would not necessarily be considered a separate planning unit from the main house; instead, it would be a matter of **fact and degree. Each case must therefore be determined on its own individual merits.**

Level of physical dependence

Location: the annexe should be within the curtilage (boundary) of the existing dwellinghouse and be either attached or within an appropriate distance of the main dwellinghouse (in comparison to the size of the plot).

Subservience: the annexe should be physically smaller and ‘subservient’ to the main dwellinghouse, whether as an extension or detached building.

Design & Amenity: the design should respect the character of the main dwellinghouse and not cause significant amenity concerns, such as being overbearing or overshadowing, for neighbours.

Shared Infrastructure: the annexe should share access, parking, and the garden and ideally share all utilities.

Level of functional dependence

Ancillary Occupation: the annexe should typically be occupied as ancillary residential accommodation by dependant family members of the main dwellinghouse, or a carer of a family member.

Using Conditions: to control occupation to family members and/or their carers to ensure that an annexe remains an ancillary part of the main house. See Appendix C for suggested condition.

Appendix A: Useful link and Glossary of terms

Link to: [North Norfolk Local Plan](#) to find all of the planning policies and supporting text.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS	
Annexed accommodation	A building joined to, or separate, to provide additional accommodation for the main house, but contained within the curtilage, to accommodate a person in the same way as they would live within the main house, for habitable uses.
Ancillary use	Habitable accommodation for a person associated with the residential dwelling.
Incidental use	Non-habitable space for use in association with a residential dwellinghouse such as, garaging, storage, home office or home gym.
Curtilage	The area of land within the boundaries of a property surrounding the main dwellinghouse and used in connection with it.
Primary use	In the case of annexes, the existing dwellinghouse and its residential use will be the 'primary use'.

Appendix B: Policy HOU6 - Criteria 3 Extract

3. *Proposals for annexed accommodation will be supported provided that the proposal:*
- a. is physically attached to, and comprises an extension to, an existing dwelling; or*
 - b. is for the sympathetic conversion and restoration of an existing building; and,*
 - c. in both cases, provides a scale of accommodation which is subordinate to the existing dwelling and clearly designed for the intended purpose.*

Appendix C: Example Condition to control occupation

Occupancy

The [detached/attached] annexe building hereby permitted shall not be occupied as living accommodation except by a dependant relative (or other member of the household) of the occupants of the dwelling known as [INSERT HOST DWELLING ADDRESS IN FULL, INC POST CODE]. Except insofar as the building is so used as living accommodation, the building shall not be used other than for purposes incidental to the use of [INSERT HOST DWELLING NAME/NO] as a dwellinghouse.