

Residential annexes

Residential annexes, sometimes called a “granny annexe”, are a common form of development that is generally proposed in order to allow relatives to live with their family with a degree of independence. In many cases, such proposals are considered to be acceptable by the council. However, when an annexe is proposed outside of adopted settlement boundaries caution needs to be exercised to ensure that this does not result in proposals which are effectively the same as creating a new independent dwelling, which would not normally be acceptable.

Do annexes need planning permission?

Planning permission is normally required for the erection of a new building in the garden that is not attached to the main house and which will be used as an annexe to provide living accommodation. Planning permission is also required for any new building to provide an annexe associated with a flat.

Planning permission is normally not required* to convert an existing residential out-building within the garden of the main house, such as a garage, to be used for ancillary accommodation provided that the unit is not self-contained and not used as a separate independent dwelling. An example of when accommodation is not self-contained includes where no kitchen or cooking facilities are provided.

Other types of residential annexe may benefit from ‘permitted development’ rights and do not require planning permission. However, planning law in this area is complicated and whether planning permission is required often depends on the facts of each case. This means that we can’t provide clear advice about the need for permission over the telephone. Applicants are therefore advised to employ the services of a planning agent or to use our written advice service well in advance of any works so that advice can be given on the need for planning permission.

Will permission be granted for my annexe?

When planning permission is required for a residential annexe we would consider how it complies with policy DM43 of the Sites and Policies Plan – Part 1, Development Management Policies, policies CS32 or CS33 and CS/10 and CS/11 of the North Somerset Core Strategy and policies H/7 or H/8 and RD/3 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (depending upon where the property is located).

In addition, it would have to comply with our normal residential design guide standards and parking standards in Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). These include a requirement to provide adequate parking for the occupants of the main house and the annexe.

Proposals for residential annexes will be permitted within settlement boundaries provided that they are of a good quality design and do not cause significant adverse impacts on the living conditions of adjoining occupiers.

Outside settlement boundaries annexes will only be permitted where they are clearly a physical extension to the main dwelling, do not exceed 50% of the size of the existing dwelling and can be incorporated into the main dwelling once there is no longer a need for the annexe. Proposals which are not designed as an integral part of the house will not be permitted.

In addition, the council will, in broad terms, normally expect a residential annexe to:

1. be within the garden of the main dwelling
2. have a functional connection with the main dwelling (e.g. the occupant should be a dependent relative of the residents of the main dwelling or employed at the main dwelling)
3. be used in conjunction with the main house
4. be in the same ownership as the main dwelling
5. be designed in such a way as to easily allow the annex to be used at a later date as an integral part of the main dwelling
6. have no boundary demarcation or sub division of the land between the main dwelling and the annexe

Statement of use

When submitting a formal planning application for an annexe please include a written statement to explain who it will be used by, their relationship with the occupants of the main house and how the use of the annexe will comply with items 1-6 listed above.

Building Regulations

You may also require consent under Building Regulations legislation. To find out if your proposal requires consent visit our Building Regulations Service.

* Provided that there is no condition attached to a previous planning approval that would prevent this. For example, if the approval for the garage has a condition stating that it shall only be used for parking vehicles and domestic storage then planning permission would be required to convert this building. You can view many planning approval notices on this website for free by using the planning map. If you can't find the approval notice you are looking for on the planning map then you can order a copy online.