

PLANNING REF : 250507
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 15 Cornfield Road
: Woodley, Berkshire
: RG5 4QA
SUBMITTED BY : Rob & Ruth Butler
DATE SUBMITTED : 26/03/2025

COMMENTS:

We live in the adjoining property to the one proposing to build the detached granny annexe in the garden, and are writing to ask that permission is not granted for the following reasons:

1) Privacy

We are extremely concerned that the proposed granny annexe, a detached building facing the existing houses, would significantly reduce our privacy because it would look straight into the back of our home.

Before writing we looked into this with the applicant - one of us stood where the door to the proposed granny annexe would be, and the other moved around the back of our home, and, unfortunately, the person standing where the annexe door would be could see straight into multiple rooms in our home. We could see them clearly from inside our house too and would overlook them as well.

Both our kitchen and lounge would be affected. These are the only rooms we have downstairs, except for the downstairs loo, so we would lose our privacy in all the social spaces in our home.

There would also be a direct line of sight into the back bedroom if the tree in the neighbouring garden were ever to be reduced in size or removed, which is a major concern, particularly with our young family.

We believe we would be significantly overlooked within our own home by this new dwelling all year round, although we have additional concerns for the warm weather when the doors and windows (ours and the annexe's) would be open and the impact would be increased still further.

We note that in s2.4.1 of the Planning, Design and Access Statement the applicant states that "the proximity of the ancillary building to the main dwelling house means that the nature of the relationship between the two would mean that it is highly unlikely that a separate dwelling would ever be achieved in the future, given the high level of mutual overlooking that would result". The reality is that a significant proportion of the high level of mutual overlooking that the applicant acknowledges would occur with our house as soon as the annexe was built. The application appears to be saying that they are only willing to accept it themselves as it is a family member who would be living there.

The owner has told us directly that she intends to use the detached annexe as a rental property for additional income once her adult child, a soon to be emergency services professional, has saved enough for her first house deposit. The timescale given was 2-3 years. Whilst the application references not splitting it into a separate

property, in reality that would be the de facto situation as soon as it was built as there would be someone living independently in the garden (it has everything required in a home within it - a kitchen area, bathroom, lounge and bed area). This is evidenced by the intention to rent it out as a separate unit in the future.

We would also like to note that the adjacent property on the other side of number 13 is currently vacant and may well also be significantly impacted. We would ask that the impact on this property is considered as well when the committee makes its decision.

2) Overbearing nature of proposed detached granny annexe

We are concerned about the proximity and size of the proposed new granny annexe in relation to us. It is proposed that it will be a detached building built on a raised base at the back of the garden, facing the existing houses and as close as it is possible to get to the boundary of our property. Our gardens are higher at the back end of the garden than the house end, so this raised base increases the impact of the proposed building still further. Based on the plans, the front of the proposed new annexe would project 5.3m forward from the back fences, which we believe will be overbearing in relation to the size of our garden & the applicants. We would value the opportunity to show a member of the planning team before a decision is made.

3) Trees - loss of privacy & biodiversity

There are multiple large mature trees at the back of the garden creating a privacy screen between the Cornfield Road gardens and the three story town houses on the road directly behind. These trees are part of a multi garden privacy hedge, and are roughly the same height as our houses. In order to build the proposed new building we have been told that these would be removed and we are concerned by the huge loss of privacy that the removal of these would have, along with the significant impact on biodiversity in the area. The location of the town houses in relation to ours, as well as the age of the existing trees, mean it would be impossible to replicate this privacy by doing anything in our own garden. We note that the application says no trees would be affected, and ask that this inaccuracy is noted by the planning team before consideration is given to the application. We would welcome a visit from a representative of the planning team to see for themselves the huge impact removal would have before deciding the outcome of this application.

4) Cars and impact on road

Section 2.5.6 of the Planning, Design and Access Statement states "In terms of parking provision, appropriate levels of parking are provided at the site and the proposed outbuilding would not affect the parking requirements". We do not believe this to be accurate. There are already 3 cars parked at the property most of the time, with a fourth regularly present from another university aged child. The third and fourth cars don't usually fit on the driveway. If rented out, this would likely result in a fifth car, with additional cars when visitors come over, negatively impacting the road.

5) Precedent

We noted the application said there were many examples of precedent, and looked at each of those given. All bar one look to be completely different types of extension (including one at the restaurant

L'Ortolan!), bearing no similarity to what is proposed here beyond the use of the word 'annexe' - two are changes of use of existing commercial use buildings, and one is a wrap around extension. The only one that is even vaguely similar in shape is completely different in terms of the impact that it has on the neighbours - the location and orientation of the building ensure it does not overlook them.

The application references precedent for building in gardens in the local area. To the best of our knowledge there are absolutely no similar buildings in this road, or those around. The difference between a pergola, shed or even office, and a home in the garden is huge in terms of the impact on the neighbours.

We ask that this total lack of precedent is considered, and that one is not set here.

For all of the reasons above, but most particularly that we desperately do not want to become completely overlooked and lose the privacy in our home, we would request that permission is not given to build the proposed detached granny annexe in our neighbour's back garden. If there is any doubt about whether or not to grant permission, please could someone from the planning team visit our home to see what the impact would be before making a decision.