

PLANNING REF : 250507
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Watermoor Point (NAPC)
: Watermoor Road, Cirencester
: GL7 1LF
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Oliver Wright
DATE SUBMITTED : 03/04/2025

COMMENTS:

We are writing on behalf of the National Annexe Planning Consultancy (NAPC) in support of the planning application 250507 for 13 Cornfield Road, Woodley, Wokingham RG5 4QA, which proposes the erection of an outbuilding in the garden to be used as a self-contained annexe.

As specialists in the sector with extensive experience across the UK, NAPC strongly champions the use of annexes for ancillary residential use. We have seen firsthand the positive impact this type of accommodation provides, both at a family level and more broadly in addressing national structural challenges. We support the principle of annexe development.

PUBLIC BENEFITS OF ANNEXES

Annexes play a vital role in the wider housing supply conversation by:

- Supporting multigenerational living, easing housing pressure for younger adults and older family members alike.
- Reducing the burden on social care systems, allowing older relatives to age in place with the support of family.
- Providing a more affordable, sustainable form of housing. - Creating housing capacity without increasing pressure on greenfield development or overstretched infrastructure.

With the UK's aging demographic and increasing demand for intergenerational solutions, annexes represent a modern, adaptable, and compassionate approach to future housing.

COMMON CONFUSION OVER ANCILLARY

The use of the annexe should be reliant on the main dwellinghouse. It is important it does not constitute a separate, standalone unit of accommodation and it could not operate as such, given the site constraints and reliance on the main dwellinghouse.

Residential annexes are typically considered ancillary to the main dwelling, even if they contain all the facilities necessary for independent living (such as a kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom). The key distinction is that they are functionally linked to the main dwelling, rather than being separate, self-contained dwellings.

It is worth bearing in mind *Uttlesford v SoS (Environment & White)*. In that case, the Inspector acknowledged that the annexe, while equipped with all the facilities for day-to-day domestic life, had the potential to function as a separate dwelling. However, the Inspector emphasised that the capability for independent use did not necessarily imply that it had been used as such. Notable factors in this determination included the lack of separate utility meters, a distinct postal address, and a dedicated telephone line.

Additionally, the Inspector highlighted the absence of any separate curtilage as relevant considerations in assessing the independent nature of the annexe.

This is further supported by the case of R. (on the application of Fuller) v London Borough of Bromley [2012] EWHC 191 (Admin), where the High Court held that the Planning Inspector had correctly identified that an annexe was designed to be used ancillary to the main dwelling, even if it was capable of independent occupation.

PROBLEMS WITH ANNEXES

There are a lot of cowboy operators in the sector. There is a clear distinction between high-quality annexes and substandard developments often associated with the 'beds in sheds' issue. Poorly constructed or improperly used outbuildings can create long-term planning enforcement challenges and undermine the credibility of legitimate annexe developments.

To safeguard the integrity of annexe accommodation, we wish to highlight the importance of:

- Effective planning conditions to ensure that annexes remain ancillary to the main dwelling and are not misused as unlawful separate dwellings.
- Longevity of the structure, ensuring that buildings are fit for purpose and not simply temporary solutions.
- Compliance with full Building Regulations, which is crucial for ensuring safety, structural integrity, and future property resale value.
- Consideration of financial implications, including Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) exemptions where applicable, as well as council tax, insurance, mortgage, and finance considerations.

While design and provider-specific elements fall outside our remit, we believe that a well-regulated approach to annexe accommodation benefits homeowners, local authorities, and communities alike. More details available here:

<https://napc.uk/annexe-support/>

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you require any further information on the role of annexes in the UK housing sector, we would be happy to provide our expertise.