

Describing development proposals

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1) Introduction

When submitting planning applications the national application form requires a brief written description of the proposed development. This description is then used by the council to notify neighbours and consultees. It is therefore very important that the description is sufficiently clear and precise so that every one understands what is being proposed.

The purpose of this advice note is to give helpful guidance on how to clearly, concisely and accurately describe development proposals in order to avoid unnecessary delays and costs.

2) Identify the key parts of the proposal that require planning permission

The purpose of the description is to explain what is being applied for with sufficient clarity so that a person who is not familiar with the site can understand your proposal. For example, if you want planning permission for an extension, a detached garage and a new vehicular access then these three elements should all be included in the description as shown in examples 1 and 2 below.

Example 1

Erection of single storey side extension, detached garage and new vehicular access off St Marks Road

Example 2

Erection of 9 detached dwellings (three with 4 bedrooms and six with 3 bedrooms) with integral garages and the formation of a new vehicular access off St Marks Road

For change of use applications the description should make it clear what the existing authorised use is and the new use being proposed.

Example 3

Change of use from retail shop (use class A1) to takeaway (use class A5) and the installation of extraction equipment to the rear elevation

Note how example 3 also refers to the planning use class as set out within the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). Details of these use classes can be found on the planning portal at

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/commonprojects/changeofuse/>

Demolition works also require planning permission. It is therefore essential that any works to demolish a building are included within the description as shown in the example below:

Example 4

Demolition of former retail unit and erection of 3 semi detached two bedroom dwellings with integral garages and vehicular access of St Marks Road

When a proposal includes works to a listed building and the applicant is applying for Listed Building Consent (be that a stand alone application or joint for both Listed Building Consent and planning permission) the elements of the proposed works that require listed building consent should be referred to within the description.

Example 5

Erection of single storey side extension and internal alterations to existing dwelling (including the subdivision of first floor room to provide new bath room and demolition of internal wall on ground floor), detached garage and new vehicular access off St Marks Road

Note that the internal demolition works are also referred to within example 5. It is essential that all demolition works that require listed consent are referred to within the description.

3) Include location details

The description should clarify in general terms where the key elements of the scheme will be. Example 1 above refers a “*single story side extension”* and a “*new vehicular access off St Marks Road”*. This is very helpful information that allows a neighbour to quickly understand how the proposal may affect them. There is however no need to include the address of the site within the description.

4) Applications to amend conditions, non-material amendments or minor material amendments

When applying for permission to amend an existing planning permission or a condition attached to it you should refer to that permission and condition in the description as shown below:

Example 6

Variation of condition 3 of planning permission 10/P/1234/F (erection of retail unit off St Marks Road) to allow the retail unit to open up until 11pm Monday to Friday

Example 7

Minor material amendment of planning permission 10/P/1234/F (erection of retail unit off St Marks Road) to provide 3 additional parking spaces to the rear of the three retail units (northern boundary)

Note that both examples 6 and 7 refer to the type of amendment*. You should also accurately describe the type of amendment that you propose by using one of the terms listed below.

- Non-material amendment
- Minor material amendment
- Amendment to planning permission...**
- Removal of condition
- Variation of condition

*See separate advice notes for definitions

**Use this terminology when the proposed amendment is neither “non-material” nor “minor material” but requires a new full application.

5) Applications for Advertisement Consent

It is important that applications for advertisements clearly indicate which advertisements will be illuminated and how they will be illuminated i.e. internally or externally as show below.

Example 8

Erection of one internally illuminated fascia sign over shop window and one externally illuminated free standing sign on forecourt

6) Retrospective applications

All parts of a proposal that have already been built should be clearly referred to in the description as “retrospective”. Failure to do this often frustrates local residents and results with increased opposition.

Example 9

Retrospective application for the erection of a single storey side extension and 1.5m high timber fence along the east boundary

7) Irrelevant details

Descriptions should not include irrelevant details. The following is an example of description that contains too much and irrelevant detail.

"We want to extend our property so that we have a bigger kitchen and an extra bedroom and to give us a view over the Mendips"

This should be changed to:

Example 10

Erection of a two story rear extension

8) Inaccurate descriptions

Where we consider an application form does not accurately describe the proposed development we will amend it prior to registering the application. This can result in delays in determining your application.

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Please contact 01275 888 811