



Annex Design Guidance

In Letchworth Garden City

**Letchworth
Garden City**
Heritage Foundation

Revised October 2020

Introduction

This leaflet is part of a series of documents (www.letchworth.com/your-home/altering-your-home) to assist with changes to your home for in Letchworth.

Changing family circumstances mean there is a greater tendency for families to live together for longer. We recognise the pressures and demands that can be associated with this, along with the benefits of family members being able to support one another.

If this applies to you, we would like you to speak to us to start with so that we can advise you what could be possible before you start making your plans.

The aim of this leaflet is to assist with the adaption of properties to accommodate these needs. The guidance gives an indication of what may and may not be acceptable. It also explains the best way to progress your annex ideas and what we may be looking for.

Each annex proposal will be considered on its own merits and we would like you to meet with us and other organisations, who may be able to help, at an early stage to progress ideas through to the best possible outcome.

Here to Help

If you are thinking of creating an annex at your property, please contact the Heritage Advice service as soon as possible (01462 530335 or home@letchworth.com).

We can meet with you to talk about your needs, ideas, options and what is achievable.

We can advise you on the best way to progress your proposals and guide you through the application process.

Annex Principles

An annex must be used in association with the principal property, to provide contained, subordinate living space for an individual with a strong family or domestic connection with the principal property. As such it should enable strong integration with the existing home and must not be architecturally nor physically distinct from it; rather it should be seen as a suite as part of an existing home.

This means that an annex should be linked to the main house by way of shared facilities such as a bathroom, kitchen or living room and be part of the main household. An annex cannot be let or sold as a separate dwelling as this would contravene the legal covenants on your property. This is also the case for Homes of Multiple Occupancy, which also contravene these covenants.

Starting Point

Prior to commencing a discussion with us, please provide details of the circumstances and needs that you are trying to accommodate and the number of people that will be living in your entire home as a result of your proposals. This will help us understand your needs and ensure that the level of occupancy will not cause significant disturbance or a loss of amenity to your neighbours.

Guidance

Before starting the process, please investigate the points below and ensure you have exhausted all these possible factors. Please provide written justification explaining why these alternatives could not work on your property as we will need to understand this in our initial discussion.

1. What are the needs that you are seeking to accommodate?
2. Can the additional accommodation be provided within existing property, for example through the conversion of rooms?
3. If the use of the existing property is not feasible, consideration should be given to an extension or use of the roof space. Where this approach is taken, and it leads to external alterations, reference should be made to the Design Principles with respect to extensions and roof alterations (www.letchworth.com/your-home/altering-your-home).
4. Where this is not possible, the conversion of existing outbuildings should then be considered, which may include an existing garage or garden room. In some cases, the building could be linked to the host dwelling by way of an enclosed walkway, but this will be carefully considered against the impact on the existing property and neighbouring occupiers.
5. Where the reuse of an existing building is not feasible or where it will have a harmful impact, a detached annex can then be considered.

Guidance

The starting point for designing this type of annex proposal is reference to the applicable Design Principles for outbuildings (www.letchworth.com/your-home/altering-your-home) along with several key issues:

- The outbuilding should be in the rear garden and not exceed a cumulative area of more than 10% of the area of the rear garden and a maximum of 20 square metres, in combination with other garden buildings, such as sheds and outbuildings. It should not exceed 3 metres in height. Annexes that exceed these dimensions may be accepted if their size is not out of proportion to the house, they do not dominate the rear garden or have a significant impact on neighbouring properties, including their back gardens. It should be at least 0.6 metre from any boundary.
- The annex should have facilities that are shared with the main dwelling and should not form, nor be capable of forming an entirely separate unit of accommodation.
- The annex should not lead to an over-development of the property and its gardens.
- Its design should be appropriate to its location and not harm the setting of nearby properties.
- It, by reason of its size, windows and doors should not give rise to a loss of amenity or privacy to neighbouring occupiers.
- Enough parking should be provided to meet the needs of the whole property.

In the Heritage Character Area, a traditional design approach is preferable. In many cases, a pitched roof design, which respects the character of the existing property can lead to an attractive and complementary building, particularly for Homes of Special Interest. However, in some cases the height of these buildings can dominate the main property and lead to a loss of amenity to neighbouring occupiers. An alternative may comprise a flat or parapet roof.

Contemporary design approaches, including 'pod' styles, are more suited to the Modern Character Area. This approach may also be acceptable in the Heritage Character Area where the proposed annex is of a high-quality design, which complements the principal property and will be visually subservient.

In some cases, a link from the existing property to the annex may be acceptable, but only in cases where this will not lead to an extension of excessive size and bulk, be harmful to the appearance of the main property or be detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

Please refer to our Design Principles for further guidance:
www.letchworth.com/your-home/altering-your-home

Other Considerations

All building works must adhere to planning and building regulation legislation: officers at North Hertfordshire District Council can assist in this respect.

Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation's approval of any works does not constitute a grant of planning permission and you are responsible for contacting North Hertfordshire District Council in this respect.

In some cases, a Disabled Facilities Grant may be available from North Hertfordshire District Council. Further information can be found at: www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/housing/advice-homeowners/housing-grants.

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Contemplating changes?

We're here to help, call us now
on: 01462 530335