

# The Architect's Column

**Nick Belderbos**, Chartered RIBA Architect and Director of Heswall based **architects-direct.com**, answers your questions and offers advice.

## Outline Planning Permission

**Q.** We have a reasonably large plot as part of the garden to the side of our house. We would like to obtain Outline Planning Permission and sell the plot for development. What level of information is required by the Planning Department?

**A.** If you are proposing to sell the land once Planning Permission has been obtained then an Outline Planning Approval is the best way forward. Outline Planning Approval secures the planning permission for the site and will therefore enable you to market the site with the benefit of Planning.

### Pre-Planning Application

For new build projects we always recommend submitting a Pre-Planning Application prior to the formal Outline Application to avoid abortive design works.

Pre-Planning Enquiries are a quick and simple way to establish the likelihood of the Planning Department supporting a proposal. This may influence your decision on the proposal that you wish to take forward at an Outline Planning Application stage.

The Pre-Planning Application will require completion and submission of the Pre-Planning Application form together with indicative drawings in plan form indicating the existing and proposed. It is best to limit the information provided at this stage to minimise costs, however it is useful to include a few options for discussion in order to get the most benefit from the Pre-App.

The planners have a fee for the Application. Based on their current fee scales this will be **£165** for minor development including a meeting.

Following the meeting, the Planning Officer will provide a written response outlining the issues, for each option, that will require consideration and if they are likely to support the proposals at Outline Application stage.

Although the Planners are not bound by the feedback they provide at Pre-Planning stage it is unusual for them to not to support a Planning Application that they have considered appropriate during a Pre-Application meeting.

### Outline Planning Applications

The National Planning Portal states the following in relation to Outline Planning Applications:

*Applications for outline planning permission seek to establish whether the scale and nature of a proposed development would be acceptable to the local planning authority.....*

*This type of planning application allows fewer details about the proposal to be submitted.*

*While some applications are straightforward and a decision can be made by the planning authority without detailed information, other proposals may need more information to be provided. Your local authority will ask you to provide further details if it is necessary.*

In the past Outline Planning Applications required little more than the proposed footprint marked on an OS map together with a description of the proposed development.

However, we are currently finding that Wirral Planning Department are requesting increased information for Outline applications.

The minimum information required by the Planning Department will be:

- OS site location plan
- Existing plan of the site
- Indicative plan of the proposed development within the site and in relation to neighbouring properties.
- Indicative elevations indicating heights and potential window locations
- Completed Application Form

### Specialist Information, Reports and Costs

In addition to the standard information, specialist information and reports are frequently requested and may include the following:

#### • **Topographical Level Survey**

A topographical survey is a detailed survey of the site identifying all the ground levels and features. This may be required to establish heights of neighbouring properties and enable an indicative street scene elevation to be prepared. For very level sites this may not be necessary.

*Topographical surveys, for single dwelling plots, typically cost circa £550 ex VAT*

#### • **Bat and Ecological Survey**

The Planning Department are now requesting bat surveys as a matter of course if there is any proposed demolition or tree work. For new build Applications it is likely that the ecological advisors at the local authority will request a full ecological appraisal

*Basic Bat surveys, for single dwelling plots, typically cost circa £250 ex VAT. Basic ecological appraisals cost circa £350 ex VAT.*

#### • **Tree Survey**

The Planning Department usually request these if there are any trees to be removed.

*Small tree surveys typically cost circa £250 ex VAT*

With increased requirements comes increased cost. It is therefore best to try and establish at Pre-Application stage the information your Planning Officer will request.

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