



**Isle of Man**  
Government

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# Descriptions - A Guide for Applicants

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Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture  
Planning and Building Control Directorate Murray House

## **1.0 THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDANCE**

- 1.1 When submitting an application, a brief written description of the proposed development is required. This note explains how to clearly, concisely and accurately describe a development in order to avoid unnecessary delays and costs.
- 1.2 The description is used as the 'proposal' in the publication of the application and to alert/notify neighbours and consultees. It is therefore very important that the description is sufficiently clear and precise at the outset so that everyone understands what the application is for. Furthermore, the application description will become the archive detail for the property and its history and used in future property searches (in instances of property conveyance)<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.3 Please also be mindful that an application may incorporate more than one of the descriptions below, for example *Erection of replacement building for office (Class 2.1) and/or industrial (Class 2.2) and/or storage or distribution (Class 2.4)*.
- 1.4 Where we consider that a description does not accurately or concisely describe the proposed development we will reserve the right to amend and clarify it prior to validating the application, however it remains the applicant/agents responsibility to ensure that the description is accurate. Therefore, when you a site notice to display you should check the description on this carefully.
- 1.5 Should the application be later found to contain an inaccurate reflection of the proposed works, this will cause delays by the requirement to re-advertise the application, to correct the proposed works, require costs for doing so, and result in delays in determining your application.

## **2.0 TYPES OF APPLICATION**

- 2.1 This guidance relates to the following types of planning applications:
  - Planning Applications;
  - Registered Building Applications;
  - Applications to vary/amend conditions;
  - Minor Change Applications; and
  - Advertisements.
- 2.2 Additional comments are also provided in relation to:
  - Retrospective Applications; and
  - Avoiding unnecessary details.

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<sup>1</sup> Therefore, for the purposes of property searches, these notes may also assist and are relevant in the descriptions used for Building Control applications.

### 3.0 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

3.1 For a planning application you should identify the key parts of the proposal that require approval:

- New Buildings/Alterations;
- Approval in Principle/Reserved Matters;
- Change of Use;
- Demolition; and
- Replacement Buildings.

#### **New Buildings/Alterations**

3.2 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 the proposal. For example, if planning permission is being sought 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.

3.3 The description should clarify in general terms where the key elements of the scheme will be. As in Example 1 above, and reference to a "single story side extension" and a "new vehicular access off Tromode Road". This is very helpful information that allows a consultees and third parties to quickly understand what the proposal involves and how it may affect them/their policies. There is no need to include the address of the site within the description.

#### **Example 1**

*Erection of single storey side extension, detached garage and new vehicular access off Tromode 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 Tromode Road.*

3.4 Where a number of alterations are being made to a property, the description should focus on those which require planning permission.

#### **Example 3**

*Alterations including reducing window size on ground floor and changing window to bifold door on side elevation.*

#### **Approval in Principle/Reserved Matters**

3.5 The general guidance in section 2.0 is also relevant for approvals in principle and reserved matters. In addition, it is important that applications for approval in principle make it clear what elements (if any) are being applied for in full and which are reserved.

**Example 4**

*Application in Principle (Including details of siting and means of access) for the erection of two dwellings with access onto Tromode Road.*

- 3.6 It is important that applications for reserved matters make it clear which Approval in Principle they relate to and which matters they are seeking approval of. There will be a condition on the Approval in Principle which sets out the matters which need to be applied for in the Reserved Matters application.

**Example 5**

*Submission of details of siting, design and external appearance for the erection of 9 detached dwellings in relation to approval in principle **\*\*/\*\*\*\*\*/\*\*\*"**...*

**Change of Use**

- 3.7 For a change of use application the description should make it clear what the existing authorised use is and the new use being proposed, referring to the classes as existing and proposed per the definitions in the [\*\*Schedule of the Use Classes Order 2019\*\*](#)

**Example 6**

*Change of use from retail shop (use class 1.1) to takeaway (use class 1.4) and the installation of extraction equipment to the rear elevation*

**Example 7**

*Change of use of land to private garden and erection of 1.8m high close boarded timber fencing.*

**Demolition Works**

- 3.8 Some demolition works require planning permission. It is therefore essential that where any works are to demolish part of a building or the building is attached to another building the detail is included within the description as shown in the following example.

**Example 8**

*Demolition of former retail unit and erection of 3 semi detached two bedroom dwellings with integral garages and vehicular access off Tromode Road*

**Replacement Buildings**

- 3.9 In the case where the entirety of the building is to be demolished, while it is noted that it can be useful to make reference to demolition in the description to let people know that the proposed works will include these works in themselves do not require planning approval. For example if planning approval is being sought for a new dwelling where the existing one is to be fully demolished.

**Example 9**

*Erection of replacement dwelling*

## 4.0 REGISTERED BUILDING CONSENT

- 4.1 When a proposal includes works to a registered building and the applicant is applying for Registered Building Consent the elements of the proposed works that require registered building consent should be referred to within the description. A Registered building Consent application is a necessary and separate application to any required for planning permission. If a Registered Building Application is submitted at a separate time to the Planning Application, it is helpful to reference the Planning Application reference number in the description. If both applications are submitted together, that number will not have been generated and we will add it at the validation stage.

### **Example 10**

*Registered Building consent for the installation of replacement external metal railings and internal alterations (including removal of wall between kitchen and lounge, removal and replacement of architraves) (in association with 22/00NNN/GB) Registered Building Nos. NNN*  
Note for Registered Building Consent it is essential that any demolition works and or removal of any features (inside and out) are referred to within the description.

## 5.0 APPLICATIONS TO VARY/AMEND CONDITIONS

- 5.1 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 in the following example.

### **Example 11**

*Variation of condition 3 of planning permission 21/01999/A (erection of retail unit off Tromode Road) to allow the retail unit to open up until 11pm Monday to Friday*

## 6.0 MINOR CHANGE

- 6.1 An application for a minor change to an existing planning permission should make it clear which approval it relates to and what is being changed.

### **Example 12**

*Minor change to planning approval 21/01999/A (erection of retail unit off Tromode Road) to provide 3 additional parking spaces to the rear of the three retail units (northern boundary) involving alteration to rear and side elevations from brickwork to render.*

## 7.0 APPLICATIONS FOR ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT

7.1 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. This is a separate approval regime and should not form part of a planning application description.

### **Example 13**

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

## 8.0 RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATIONS

8.1 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, resulting in increased opposition.

### **Example 14 - Buildings and structures**

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

*Or*

*Retention of single storey side extension and 1.5m high timber fence along the east boundary*

### **Example 15 - Change of use**

*Retrospective application for the change of use of retail unit Class 1.1 to Class 1.3*

*Or*

*Continued use of retail unit Class 1.1 for Class 1.3 Food and drink*

## 9.0 AVOIDING UNNECESSARY DETAILS

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

### **Example 16 (avoid)**

*"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 fields"*

9.2 The above should be changed to:

### **Example 17**

*"Erection of a two story rear extension"*