



## GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Ministry of Home Affairs

### Department of Planning

## A Guide to Pre-Consultations

In an effort to improve the quality and efficiency of processing planning applications and to assist potential developers through the planning process, the Department of Planning offers a pre-consultation service wherein planning advice can be obtained free of charge. Although approval is not guaranteed should the Department support your proposal, a pre-consultation will improve the quality of a planning application and increase its likelihood of success.

A written pre-consultation is not required for general information on the planning process, such as how to submit an application, which type of application is needed or interpretation of a particular policy. In such cases, please refer to the other guidance notes on the Department's website or contact the Department's Front Desk team on 295 5151.

### **What is Achieved Through a Pre-Consultation?**

A pre-consultation is particularly beneficial for larger and more complex development proposals, such as development affecting Conservation Base Zones, Conservation Areas, Protection Areas and listed buildings and/or where it is unclear whether a proposal complies with the applicable policies.

Through the pre-consultation process, the Department aims to:

- ➔ Provide potential developers with the Department's position on a proposal and an overall understanding of the relevant planning policies and other material considerations which will govern the assessment of the application
- ➔ Identify potential issues at an early stage and suggest improvements and mitigation, where necessary, to achieve a better form of development
- ➔ Where required, collaboration with other Government Departments to identify and potentially resolve issues as early as possible
- ➔ To identify any additional information which would be useful to support a formal application

### **Arranging a Pre-Consultation**

If you have a specific proposal in mind, please submit this by email to the Acting Senior Planner, Paul McDonald ([pamcdonald@gov.bm](mailto:pamcdonald@gov.bm)) including at least the following:

- The location of the site
- A written description of the proposal
- Drawing(s) in PDF format (preferably to scale and at least in the form of sketches with dimensions) clearly illustrating the size and height of the proposed development and its distance from lot boundaries
- If known, the size of the lot and existing and proposed site coverage and hard surfacing

Once the pre-consultation has been received, it will be logged in and assigned to a planner for assessment. You will be advised which officer has been allocated your case and a response will be provided by email. The assessment may include a meeting and/or site visit and consultation with other Government Departments.

The Department of Planning aims to provide a response to pre-consultations within 28 days, however this timescale will vary depending on the nature and complexity of the case and need to consult with other Departments.

### **Next Steps**

Once the Department has provided its pre-consultation response, a formal application for planning permission is likely to be required, which will involve a full assessment of the proposal including a site visit and publicity of the application wherein members of the public may provide comments. The purpose of the pre-consultation is to provide the Department's position on the principle of development proposals and, notwithstanding any advice given by the Department, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all necessary documentation is submitted with a planning application and the proposal satisfies all policy requirements.

**Please note, the preliminary assessment of a proposal during a pre-consultation constitutes planning officer opinions only. Comments provided in pre-consultation meetings are done so without prejudice to the formal determination of any subsequent application. Planning applications can only be determined by the Director of Planning or the Development Applications Board.**

It is also important to note that the position of the Department may change between the pre-consultation and a formal application if site circumstances or policies have changed, particularly if a notable period of time has lapsed in the intervening period. In such cases, it is recommended that you contact the planning officer to ascertain whether the pre-consultation response still applies prior to making a formal application.