



Monday 21 January 2013

Duke and Duchess of Cambridge 'plant trees around new country estate for privacy'

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge appear to have taken steps to ensure total privacy in their new country estate, as an application was lodged to shroud the property in trees and shrubs.



Anmer Hall in Norfolk. Photo: REX

By Telegraph reporters

10:06AM GMT 20 Jan 2013

Plans submitted by the Queen for Anmer Hall on the Sandringham estate include the proposed extensive planting of trees and shrubs to shield the 10 bedroom house from prying eyes.

An estate worker said: "The planting of young trees and large ground-cover shrubs will mean that the hall will become virtually invisible.

"Kate and William are known to fiercely guard their privacy and they do not want to give anyone the opportunity to peer into their new home."

William and his pregnant wife are thought to be keen on living at the house as it is surrounded by the Queen's private 20,000 acre estate, giving them the maximum possible privacy.

The detailed planning application, described as a 'major development' in council papers, cannot be seen on the website for King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council for security reasons.

But a reporter was allowed to view the documents at the council office under the supervision of a planning officer after being vetted by police.

The plans also involve moving the main gates for the property further down a lane away from the house so members of the public will not be able to get so close to it.

The new longer private driveway will sweep across an existing field used as grazing land before reaching the front of the house which has its own swimming pool and tennis court.

Some of the new planting will be done on the existing driveway which is to be ripped up to form part of the front garden.

The re-routing of the driveway will involve the loss of a sycamore tree and two smaller trees, but the other 58 trees on the site will not be affected.

There are also plans for a new garden room to be built on the kitchen, alongside a pergola made of stone columns with oak beams for plants to grow through and provide shade on a patio.

It is also proposed to turn external buildings into 'accommodation', leading to speculation that they could be used by police guarding the couple.

The decision on whether to approve the planning application is set to be made before March 11 by council officers using delegated powers.

No local residents have objected to the plans which have been submitted by the Sandringham estate on behalf of the Queen.

Anmer Hall is one of the 150 properties owned by the Queen on her estate in north Norfolk and is only two miles east of Sandringham House.

The hall which largely dates back to 1802 was reportedly one of the houses where Prince Charles and Camilla used to enjoy secret trysts, when it was rented by the prince's friend Hugh van Cutsem.

Prince William who is a friend of the van Cutsem sons is said to have enjoyed many happy visits to the hall as a child.

The hall was earlier leased to the Duke and Duchess of Kent as their country house from 1972 until 1990.

The village of Anmer has no pub or shop and had a population of just 63 in the 2001 census, but it has a social club which is open on Friday evenings and Saturday lunchtimes.

The club is home to darts and dominoes teams and is the headquarters of the Anmer Mere Yacht Club, which has a Latin motto translating as "Never make me sail".

Its web page says: "As the only open water in Anmer is the village pond, aquatic pursuits are somewhat restricted, but the club undertakes a wide range of other activities, often involving liquids of more alcoholic nature."

William and Kate currently live in a rented farmhouse on Anglesey, where the prince is an RAF Search and Rescue helicopter pilot.

When they are not on Anglesey, they live at Nottingham Cottage, in the grounds of Kensington Palace in West London, which has just one bedroom and has been described as 'cosy'.

However, later this year they will move into the newly renovated Apartment 1A inside the palace itself, which was Princess Margaret's home, while Prince Harry will have the cottage.

The new apartment will suit the couple's growing family, as it boasts five bedrooms and three reception rooms.

Anmer Hall is currently leased until March 2017 to James Everett, who owns a kitchen and timber company.

He moved into the property in 2000, but would not comment on whether he planned to stay

The Sandringham Estate has been owned by the Queen since her accession in 1952 and by the Royal Family since 1862.

Although much of the land is open to the public, the paparazzi are no longer allowed to photograph the Royal family relaxing there.

Buckingham Palace has declined to comment.