

Heritage Impact Assessment & Planning Statement



**Greenfields, Church Lane
Hepworth**

On behalf of Mr Betts

January 2021



Project Information

Site Address	Greenfields, Church Lane, Hepworth
Development Proposal	Replacement dwelling following demolition of existing bungalow
Client	Mr Paul Betts
Local Authority	West Suffolk District Council
Type of report	Heritage Impact Assessment- desk based and Planning Statement

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Report Revision:

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Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Brief history of Hepworth	2
3	Brief history of site	3
4	Heritage Assets	5
5	Proposed development	8
6	Impact Assessment	11
7	Planning Policy Statement	13
8	Conclusion	15
9	Site photos	16
10	Legislation, Policy and Guidance	1

1 Introduction

This Heritage Impact Assessment and Planning Policy Statement has been prepared in support of an application by Mr Betts to redevelop his site at Greenfields, Church Lane, Hepworth.

The development proposal includes a replacement dwelling following the demolition of the existing bungalow. The existing outbuildings are to remain.

Relevant national and local policies and legislation can be found in Section 10.

2 Brief History of Hepworth

Hepworth is a village and a parish in the district of Thetford and county of Suffolk. The village stands 3½ miles SW of the Little Ouse river at the boundary with Norfolk. Hepworth was a settlement in Domesday Book, in the Hundred of Blackburn and the county of Suffolk.

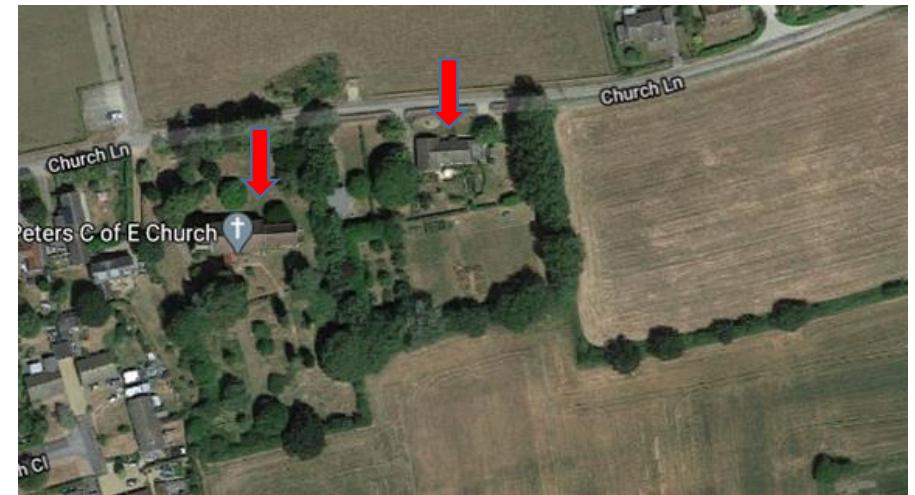
3 Brief History of the site

The site is located east of the Grade II* Church of St Peter and west of Grange Farm (undesigned heritage assets) along Church Lane, a single-track road. It is also to a Grade II War Memorial. The immediate area is agricultural farmland, with the bulk of development in the village located along The Street.

Located within the site is an archaeological 'Find Spot' where a Small Palaeolithic hand-axe was found. This indicates that the site may contain additional historic remains and it is suggested that an archaeological condition be considered in case of any further finds being discovered.

The existing plot is large and includes the existing dwelling, an outbuilding and a small orchard with the remaining area of the plot landscaped. There is mature landscape screening on the west, north and east elevations, with the south remaining mainly open to the agricultural fields. The character of the area is rural.

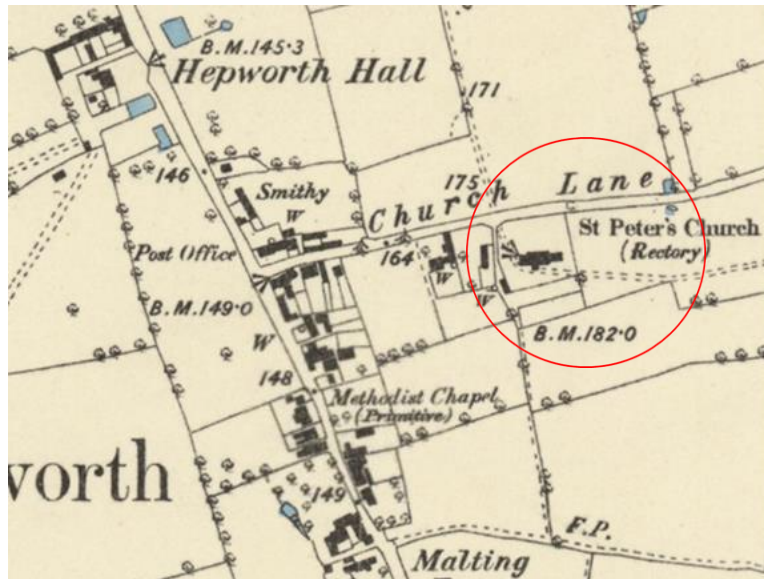
The existing dwelling is of no architectural or historic interest or value. The site is not located within a Conservation Area.



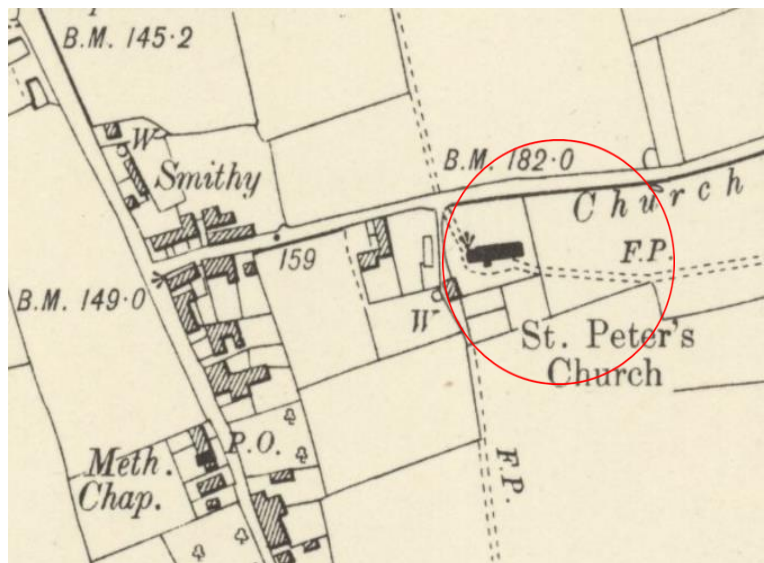
Existing aerial- the left arrow denotes the Church and the right arrow denotes the site's dwelling (Google)

Note: the aerial does not accurately indicate the exact location of the mature screening around the site, especially along the northern boundary.

The land originally formed part of the curtilage associated with the Church as demonstrated on 19th and 20th century maps. The land was eventually sold off and developed in the late 20th century when the existing bungalow was built. The historic maps show a footpath running through the Churchyard into the site.



1882 OS map © NLS maps website



1903 OS map © NLS maps website

Even up until the mid-20th century the site was still part of the extended curtilage to the Church.

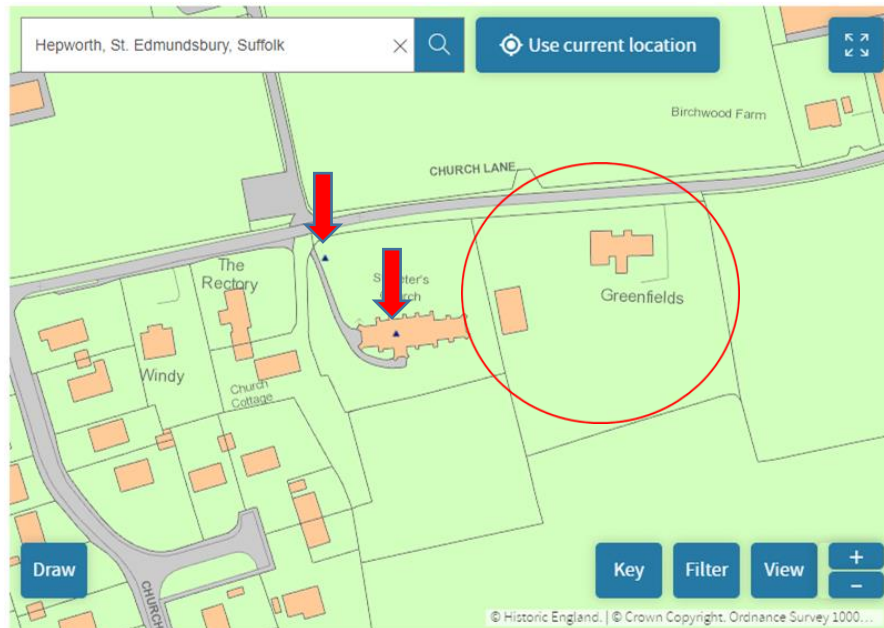


1967 OS map © NLS maps website

The site is located outside the village development framework, which is 'Open Countryside'.

4 Heritage Assets

The designated heritage assets immediately adjacent to the site are the Grade II* Listed Church and the Grade II Listed War Memorial.



LIST DESCRIPTIONS

Hepworth War Memorial

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1454146

Date first listed: 22-Mar-2018

Statutory Address: St Peter's Churchyard, Church Lane,
Hepworth, Suffolk

Reasons for Designation

Hepworth War Memorial, which is situated in St Peter's churchyard, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Historic interest:

* as an eloquent witness to the tragic impact of world events on this local community, and the sacrifice it has made in the First World War.

Architectural interest:

* a well-executed Latin cross memorial.

Group value:

* with the Grade II*-listed Church of St Peter.

History

The aftermath of the First World War saw the biggest single wave of public commemoration ever with tens of thousands of memorials erected across England. This was the result of both the huge impact on communities of the loss of three quarters of a million British lives, and also the official policy of not repatriating the dead which meant that the memorials provided the main focus of the grief felt at this great loss.

One such memorial was raised at Hepworth as a permanent testament to the sacrifice made by the 13 members of the local community who lost their lives in the First World War. The memorial was erected by Messrs H L Perfitt (stonemasons) of Diss. It was unveiled on 16 May 1920 by Brigadier-General Lord Playfair and dedicated by the rector, Reverend C E Green.

Details

First World War memorial, 1920.

MATERIALS: grey granite, Portland stone base

DESCRIPTION: Hepworth war memorial is located in the churchyard adjacent to the entrance, to the north of the Church of St Peter (Grade II*-listed).

It is of grey granite and takes the form of a plain Latin cross set in a rough-hewn, rock-like plinth. This surmounts a single-stepped square base of Portland stone.

The main inscription and names are in leaded lettering on a smooth, inset panel on the west face of the plinth, IN

GLORIOUS MEMORY OF THE MEN/ WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR./ (13 NAMES)/ 1914-1918.

CHURCH OF ST PETER

Listed Building Grade: II*

List Entry Number: 1031214

Date first listed: 14-Jul-1955

Statutory Address: CHURCH OF ST PETER, CHURCH LANE

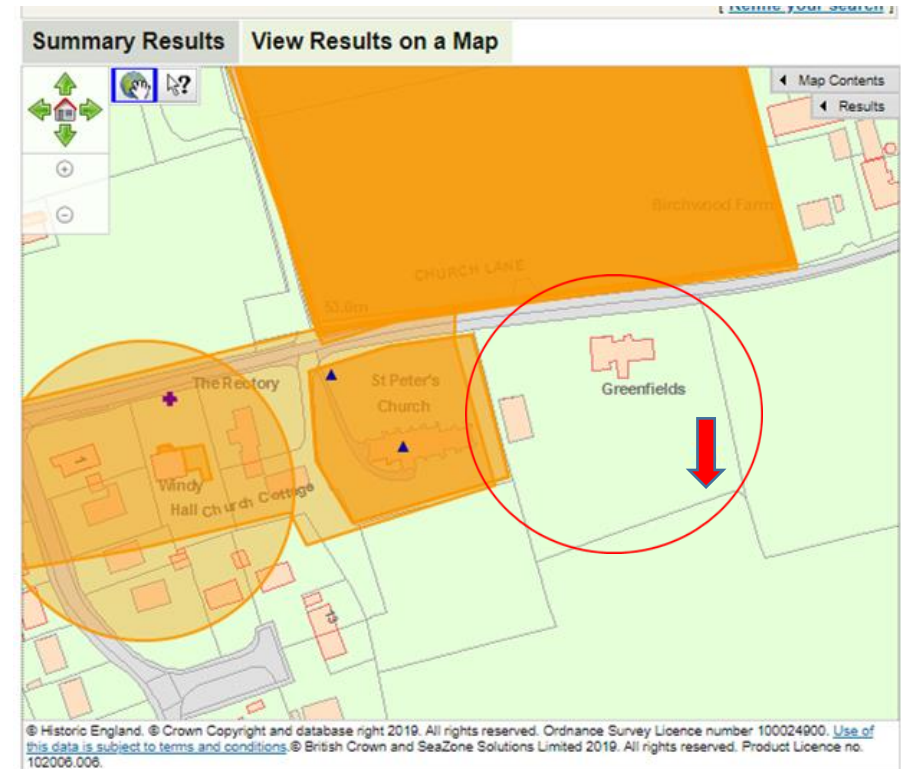
Parish church. C13 and later: seriously damaged by fire in 1898, and extensively rebuilt by J.S. Corder of Ipswich. Nave, chancel, south porch and west tower, all in rubble flint, partly covered with old render. Plaintiled roofs. 2-light windows in Perpendicular style to nave; C14 windows in Decorated style to chancel; in the south wall, a traceried low-side window, and a 3-light east window with reticulated tracery. South porch, largely reconstructed, contains fragments of an earlier Norman church, and the open roof has some reused C16 moulded timbers. An empty niche with trefoil head above the south door. Plain tower with large diagonal buttresses, partly faced with panels of large black knapped flints. Plain parapet, with conical roof rising above it. Plain west doorway with hood mould over. A small quatrefoil window to each face of the middle stage, and a window with semi-circular arched head to each face of the top stage. Across the upper part of the west face is the date 1677 in large cast iron figures: this may well be the date of the top stage windows. The lower part of

the tower and the western buttresses have been extensively tied together with ironwork: an entry in the Diary of Thomas King of Thelnetham records: 'Hepworth Steeple screwed together with irons by Mr. Bloomfield of Thelnetham, November 1828'. The interior fittings, including the double hammer-beam roof, date from the post-fire restoration of 1899. Beside the pulpit is the blocked door to the former rood stairs, and on the south wall of the nave the remains of a much-damaged piscina with cusped head. 6 C15 poppy head bench ends survive in the chancel. The one outstanding feature of the church is the late C14 pinnacled font cover, octagonal, and 12ft 6 inches high. The ornate carving is unusual, and much-damaged, in 3 tiers, with a 3-tier pinnacle above; the lowest stage has a miniature building on each face, with windows and doorways in which little figures stand.

Listing NGR: TL9874874854

Suffolk Historic Environment Record

Located within the site is an archaeological find. Consult Suffolk CC Archaeological Advice Service for more info.



MSF11880

UID	MSF11880
Name	East of Hepworth Church, Hepworth, (Palaeolithic)
Record Type	Find Spot
Character	Small Palaeolithic hand-axe. Formerly recorded as HEP MISC

5 Proposed Development

The site contains a 20th century bungalow and several 20th century outbuildings. The plot is large and includes a small orchard. There are three access drives into the site along Church Lane.

The proposed development includes the demolition of the existing bungalow and replacement dwelling and landscaping of the site.

The site is located outside of the Village development boundary and is therefore considered to be on land classified as 'Countryside' for planning purposes. The only other major constraint is its adjacency with the Grade II* Church.

The demolition of the existing modern dwelling is considered permitted development and therefore consent is not required. Based upon feedback from the Council, the demolition is not contentious. However, permission is required for the new dwelling.

A new contemporary two storey dwelling is proposed in a similar location to the existing bungalow but set back from Church Lane.

A **pre-application** was submitted to the Council to gauge views on this proposal and the following comments were made by the Case Officer:

Principle of Development

- *Policy DM5(g) states that developments within designated countryside where the proposal is for a one for one replacement dwelling will be allowed providing that the replacement respects the scale and floor area of the dwelling it replaces. Therefore, the principle of replacing the existing dwelling with a single new build dwelling is considered acceptable, subject of course to an assessment in relation to scale and floor area, and consideration of any effects arising.*
- *With the internal floor area of the existing dwelling being approximately 175m² and the liveable floor area (including the four balconies) of the replacement dwelling being approximately 745m²; it is considered that the proposal is contrary to policy DM5.*

Therefore, it would seem the principle of development needs to be adequately demonstrated, as the Case Officer stated: It may be that in support of any formal submission you may wish to elaborate in more detail on the degree of works that can take place under any permitted development rights, as this may assist your justification. It is also fair to say that this failure to meet the provisions of DM5 is only part of the argument, with the Authority still being required to judge any consequential impacts arising to the character and appearance of the area as a result of the substantially enlarged dwelling.

The basic principle of a replacement dwelling is considered acceptable if the new dwelling meets with the above criteria.

Design and Impact of proposed development

The pre-application response continues to discuss the design of new building and the impact on the local character.

The Case Officer mentions **Policy DM2**, which states that proposals for all development should recognise and address the key features, characteristics, landscape/townscape character, local distinctiveness and special qualities of the

area and/or building; maintain or create a sense of place and/or local character.

The site is currently well screened by soft landscaping and through views into and out of the site are minimal, despite its elevated position. The Case Officer, however, believes the additional bulk and mass of the proposed new dwelling including its 'expansive elevations' has the potential to be harmful to the character of the area.

The applicant has taken onboard the Officer's comments and has amended the design, scale and massing accordingly. As a result, the proposal in its current form better addresses their concerns and is more contextually appropriate.

6 Impact Assessment

A pre-application submission was made to West Suffolk Council seeking advice on the proposed replacement dwelling and freestanding garage unit. The Case Officer wrote back to the client confirming that the **principle for a replacement dwelling on the site is considered to be acceptable**. Therefore, the Council has already accepted the principle and deemed any potential impact to the setting and character of the Church would be less than substantial and therefore acceptable.

The client has responded to the Case Officer's comments and the amended plans, which are included in this submission.

At the time the existing bungalow was built, it is unknown if the impact to the adjacent Church was acknowledged or even assessed. Despite this, its construction is more likely to have resulted in moderate harm to the setting and character as the land had been part of its curtilage since the 13th century.

Obviously the concern over impact to the special architectural and historic interest of the Church has already been affected to some degree.

Therefore, now that the precedent has been set, a replacement single dwelling built within this large plot would result in less than substantial harm to the setting and character of the church.

In addition, a more considered impact to the setting and significance of the Church is the density of development to the west between the Church and The Street. The views to and from the Churchyard are much stronger and have more of an impact visually.

The proposed new dwelling will indeed be larger than the existing bungalow, however, the plot is of sufficient size that it remains contextually appropriate. Moreover, the property will house two generations instead of one: the client and his wife's parents.

Please refer to the Planning Policy Statement in Section 7 for more details on the pre-application, the officer's response

and how this latest submission seeks to overcome the concerns raised.

Included in the response from the Conservation Officer on the pre-application they state:

'Greenfields is neither listed nor located within a conservation area, the site is however adjacent to St Peter's Church a grade II listed building. The acceptability of development in this location will very much depend on what impact, if any, it has on the significance of the church. Setting can contribute towards significance so it will be down to the applicant to assess what, if any, contribution is made by the current arrangement and if the proposed development will in any way affect that setting and any contribution towards significance.'*

The Grade II* Listed Church adjacent to the site is of high significance and the Grade II War Memorial is of moderate significance. The existing mature landscape screening around the site more than adequately prevents through views from the Churchyard into the site.

The proposed new dwelling will be set back from the road, which will reduce its impact from the north along Church

Lane. The overall scale and mass of the proposed building has been reduced in response to the pre-application response. There may be additional mitigation the applicant can take to further minimise any through views or impact on the setting and character of the Church, which can be conditioned.

In assessing the proposal against the principle of the NPPF relating to harm versus benefit, the proposal provides position benefits to enable two families to live together, the new build sits comfortably within the existing large plot, the site is well screened and seeks to maintain the rural landscape character, and finally, the replacement dwelling will be of higher architectural and eco-value through the innovative design, contextually appropriate materials and green roof.

Therefore, the impact of the proposed development on the Grade II* Listed Church is less than substantial and will not result in harm to the setting or character of the Church or its special architectural and historic interest.

Interestingly, an application (ref DC/20/1588/HH) was submitted earlier last year for the conversion of the existing outbuildings on the site to an annexe. These outbuildings are

located along the western boundary of the site and sits closest to the Church. In response, the Conservation Officer stated,

'The outbuilding to be converted is however along the boundary between the house and Church Of St Peter a grade II listed building. The impact on its setting is therefore a material consideration. Existing planting in the form of high mature hedges and trees currently exist along the boundary between house and church. Whilst both hedging and trees could potentially be removed exposing the proposed annexe this could similarly be said for the existing outbuilding. The proposed annexe will therefore prove no more harmful than the existing outbuilding. A southern porch and a western doorway provides access to the church with the eastern elevation backing onto the proposed development to the east. The proposed development will not therefore significantly affect how the asset is appreciated on approach largely screened by existing planting and located so as not to interrupt views which contribute towards its significance. The proposed development will not adversely affect the significance of the heritage asset I therefore have no objections.'*

Again, if the conversion of an outbuilding to an annexe closer to the Grade II* Listed Church than the existing or proposed dwelling was deemed to be acceptable by the Conservation Officer, then a replacement dwelling set further away surely must result in the same conclusion of impact to the heritage asset.

Conclusion

The proposed new dwelling will not significantly or negatively impact the setting or character of the Grade II* Listed Church or the adjacent Grade II War Memorial. If anything, there will be a low-moderate impact based upon the above assessment.

Serious consideration should be given to the proposal as the precedent has already been accepted via the approval for the conversion of the outbuilding.

Despite the new building being two-storey, it will be sufficiently away from the boundary that the impact will be minimal.

7 Planning Policy Statement

Planning History of site

DC/20/1588/HH | Householder planning application - conversion and single storey front extension to existing outbuilding to create 1 no. detached single storey annexe | Greenfields Church Lane Hepworth IP22 2QE

This application was withdrawn, but it is noted that Historic England had no comments to make on the impact of the application on the existing Grade II Church.*

E/74/1671/P GREENFILDs CHURCH LANE HEPWORTH EXTENSION TO EXISTING BUNGALOW

E/74/2194/P PART OS 209 GREENFILDs CHURCH LANE HEPWORTH EXTENSION TO EXISTING BUNGALOW

Planning Policy Assessment

The most relevant local planning policies for the determination of the proposal, which are not heritage related are:

- Policy DM5: Development in the Countryside
- Policy DM15: works affecting the setting of a listed building.

- Policy DM22: Residential Design
- Policy DM2 and CS3, relating to Residential Amenity.

Policy DM15 has been dealt with as part of the Heritage Assessment of the proposal and is concerned with ensuring that the proposal would not result in an unacceptable impact to the setting of a listed building.

Policy DM5 relates to 'Development in the Countryside'. As the application site is located outside of a settlement boundary, it is regarded as being within the countryside in terms of the local plan. However, gardens in rural areas are regarded as 'brownfield' sites. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also suggests that brownfield sites should be 'prioritised for development' and that there should be 'efficient use of land' and the provision of a range of housing types to offer diversity of accommodation. As the site is already occupied by an existing dwelling, the principle of a replacement dwelling would be considered acceptable as part of the NPPF and Local Planning Policies, unless the building itself was of any historic merit. In this case the building is not considered to have any historic merit and its replacement should therefore be considered acceptable, in principle.

The other aspects of Policy DM5, in respect of a replacement dwelling, requires that:

- i. the proposed replacement dwelling respects the scale and floor area of the existing dwelling, and,
- ii. the curtilage of the development is only greater than the curtilage of the existing dwelling where it can be justified with reference to Policy DM25".

This is a typical policy found in most Local Plans. Careful consideration has been given to the overall massing and scale of the existing dwelling as well as the overall massing, scale, bulk and positioning of the proposed dwelling. The siting of the proposed dwelling is such that it is located further back within the site and would be less prominent than the existing dwelling in terms of its positioning further forward within the site, as shown within figure 7.1.

Whilst the proposed dwelling results in a larger footprint than the existing dwelling, it is only marginally wider and would be screened by existing mature vegetation to the side boundaries of the site. As such, the dwelling would only be visible when almost standing directly in front of it. When consideration is also given to what could be achieved under

permitted development rights, which includes various extensions to the property. The proposed dwelling is not considered to be disproportionate to the scale and visual appearance of the existing dwelling whilst taking into account the 'fallback position' of what could, in theory, be achieved without the need for planning permission.

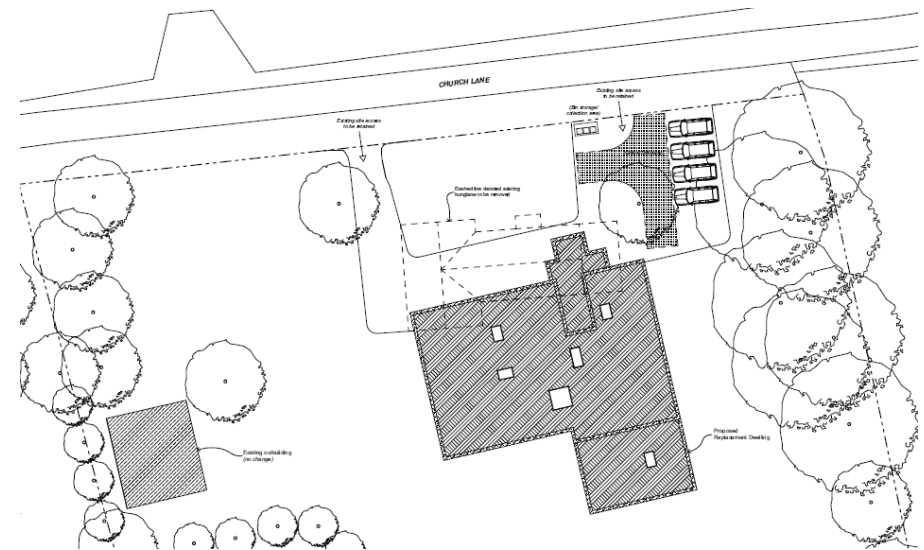


Figure 7.1 – Proposed Site Layout (Dotted Line denotes the existing dwelling)

When determining proposals for replacement dwellings consideration is often given to the scale of the plot and surrounding character of properties. In terms of surrounding

character, there is no sense of conformity in relation to dwelling types and scales of properties within the surrounding area, as the site is very much separate from nearby more urban development.

In terms of the character and scale of the plot, the plot size is quite substantial and as such the dwelling would appear less

dominant than if contained in a smaller plot size. There is ample side and rear separation space from the dwelling and boundaries of the site, which would result in an attractive and open appearance of the plot and that the dwelling would not appear cramped or dominant.

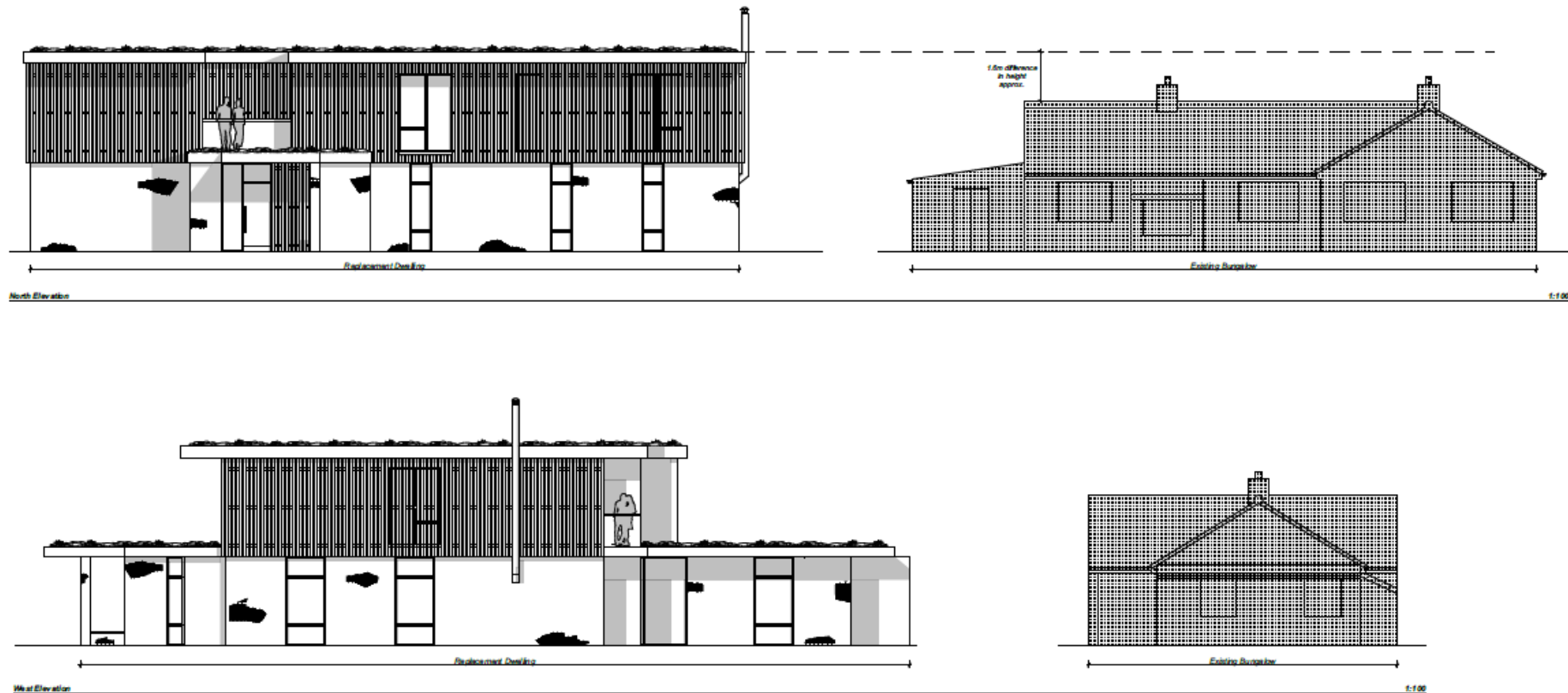


Figure 7.2 – Extract of the massing comparison submitted with the application.

The overall scale of the proposal has been significantly reduced from that of suggested plans submitted as part of a pre-application submission to the Council. The comments received in relation to the scale of the proposal have been taken on board and the dwelling reduced in scale.

Figure 7.2 shows an extract of the massing comparison plans submitted with the application. Whilst the proposed dwelling is larger, it should be expected that any application for a replacement dwelling would result in a larger dwelling.

Figure 7.3 shows an extract of the massing comparison plans, taking into account extensions which could be achieved under permitted development rights. An accepted principle in relation to decision taking is referred to as a 'fall back

position'. The fall back position should take into account what 'could be achieved' under permitted development rights, as opposed to what is likely to be achieved. This principle establishes the point that Local Planning Authorities should take into consideration the impacts of what is achievable against the impacts of the proposal. Permission should only be refused in the situation that the impacts are significantly demonstrable when compared to what could be achieved.

The extensions that could be achieved under permitted development rights would result in a property which looks extended and, in our opinion, would be less attractive than the proposed dwelling. The flat roof design of the proposal, together with the individual sectioning of the property means that the property is broken up in terms of its visual appearance

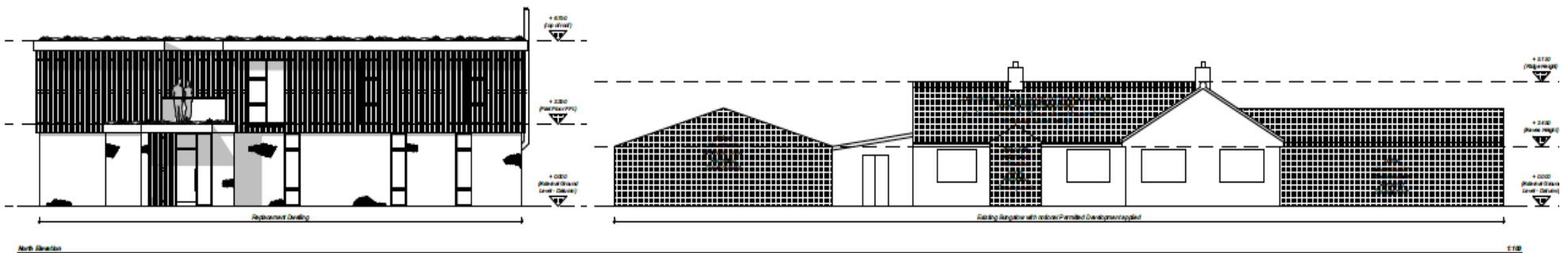


Figure 7.3 – Extract of the massing comparison submitted with the application.

and that the height of the property is kept to a minimum with the use of the flat roof design.

Careful examination of the plans should be undertaken to understand that the property would not be one large mass, but parts of the building would be set further back in different sections, helping to break up the appearance of the building and introduce interesting design features.

Policy DM22 relates to 'Residential Design' and states that proposals should maintain or create a sense of place. As mentioned, there is no sense of conformity in terms of dwelling types and character and the existing property is very much separated from nearby more urban designed development. The proposal would replace an existing dwelling with an attractive new dwelling and maintains the character of the site being for one dwelling. Characteristics including, landscape features would be maintained. Landscaping could be secured by planning condition if the retention of landscaping or enhancement is required.

Policies DM2 and CS3 relate to residential amenity considerations for the occupiers of the property as well as any nearby properties. The application site is located away from any neighbouring properties and wouldn't therefore have an

unacceptable impact to the amenities of any nearby properties in relation to overlooking or overshadowing. The proposed dwelling would provide good outlook and levels of natural light for all rooms and as the site is already in residential use there are no concerns in relation to adverse impacts upon the residential amenities to the potential future occupiers of the proposed dwelling.

8 Conclusion

Harm versus Benefit

The existing bungalow in the site is of no architectural or historic interest. It is a non-descript design and is neutral in its the setting.

The proposed replacement structure will enable a two-generation family to live together sharing this accommodation. It will be a new build element within the site, but has been carefully considered in context through the use of larch wood cladding on the first floor and a green roof to minimise and mitigate the impact to the setting and character of the adjacent Grade II* Listed Church.

The plot size is substantial and more than adequate to accommodate the new dwelling, which has also been set back from the road even further than the existing.

The rural landscaping and setting will be retained and enhanced through the above-mentioned mitigation.

Whilst the new building is larger than the existing, it remains proportionate to the site, which could easily accommodate a

larger building as well as the possibility of several dwellings.

This clearly provides public benefit to the site and therefore should be supported.

Impact to the setting and character of the Listed Church

As shown above, the impact of the proposal on the setting and character of the Church results in less than substantial harm. The building of the original dwelling in the late 20th century would have had more impact as the land had traditionally formed part of curtilage of land of the Church.

Additionally, the building up of the residential area west of the Church would also have resulted in more harm due to the proximity to the Church, the density of the plots and the variance of architectural styles.

9 Site Photos



View of north east corner with screening



View of north elevation screening along Church Lane



View of south boundary screening- note less dense screening to allow through views



View from within site along west boundary with church in background



View of rear of bungalow



View of existing outbuildings



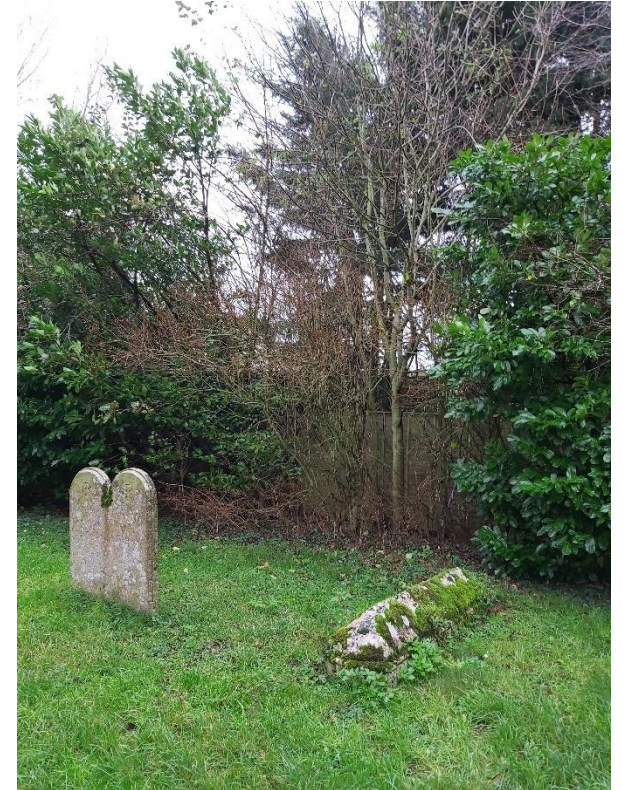
View of front of bungalow



View of orchard



View looking at the space between the Church and the west boundary screening of the site



View from churchyard looking into site, through boundary screening



View between west boundary screening and edge of Church



View down Church Lane heading east

10 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

West Suffolk Policy DM15 states that- developments affecting the setting of a listed building will be permitted where they demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the building and/or its setting, alongside an assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on that significance; contributes to the preservation of the building and is not detrimental to the building's character respect the setting of the listed building, including inward and outward views.

The level of detail of any supporting information should be proportionate to the importance of the building, the works proposed and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance and/or setting.

Policy DM5: Development in the Countryside

Areas designated as countryside will be protected from unsustainable development. A new or extended building will be permitted, in accordance with other policies within this Plan, where it is for:

- a. purposes directly related to agriculture or forestry;
- b. affordable housing for local needs in accordance with other policy;

- c. development relating to equine related activities and the horse racing industry;
- d. essential small scale facilities for outdoor sport or recreation or other uses of land which preserve the openness, appearance and character of the countryside, leisure activities, and new tourism facilities;
- e. a dwelling for a key worker essential to the operation of agriculture, forestry or a commercial equine-related business in accordance with the requirements of Policy DM26;
- f. small scale residential development of a small undeveloped plot, in accordance with policy DM27; or
- g. the replacement of an existing dwelling on a one for one basis where it can be demonstrated that:
 - i. the proposed replacement dwelling respects the scale and floor area of the existing dwelling, and,
 - ii. the curtilage of the development is only greater than the curtilage of the existing dwelling where it can be justified with reference to Policy DM25.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act

1990 states that in considering applications for development which affects a heritage asset or its setting, local planning authorities shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting.

Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework

(2019) states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

