

Planning, Design  
and Access  
Statement

Land at Bury Road, Hepworth

February 2021

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# Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Application Site	3
3	Relevant Planning Policy	4
4	The Proposed Development	7
5	Key Planning Issues	8
6	Conclusion	10

# 1 Introduction

1.1 Holland Lloyd has prepared this Planning, Design and Access Statement for and on behalf of Gary Sutton (the 'applicant'). Its purpose is to set out the planning case in support of the detailed planning application for two residential dwellings at land at the former Duke of Marlborough public house, Bury Road, Hepworth.

1.2 The description of the development proposed is:

*Erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellings, vehicular parking, landscaping and associated works.*

## Background

1.3 The application site is shown outlined in red on the submitted Site location Plan. It is a single parcel of land covering an area of approximately XX ha, with open countryside to the north and west, hardstanding previously used as car parking to the east, and residential dwellings to the south, with Bury Road beyond.

1.4 The site is a block paved area, devoid of soft landscaping features. The site's northern extent is contained by fencing with the septic tank previously used for the former public house and diner. This was installed for commercial use and far more generous than required.

1.5 Vehicular access to the site is via the existing access point to the south-east of the site and onto Bury Road (A143). The access provides safe and clear visibility in both directions and previously functioned as the access point for the public house and diner. Parking for the neighbouring properties is located in front of the dwellings.

1.6 The application site is all within the applicant's ownership, who intends to deliver the properties. All neighbouring properties are in the ownership of the applicant, as is the vacant car park adjacent to the site.

## Form and Content of the Application

1.7 National Planning Practice Guidance identifies a design and access statement as a concise report accompanying planning applications, providing a framework to explain how the proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the complexity of the application.

1.8 This Statement:

- Demonstrates compliance with the relevant policies in the adopted development plan and national planning guidance.
- Demonstrates how the proposal will relate to the local context and site use.
- Explains how any specific issues might affect the design and access for the development have been assessed.

1.9 This Planning, Design and Access Statement should be read alongside the enclosed plans and drawings, as well as the following application documents:

- Duly completed application form and certificates.
- Application Plans.
- Preliminary Ecology Survey.

## Report Structure

1.10 This report addresses the following:

- Section 2 describes the application site and its surroundings.
- Section 3 summarises the relevant planning policy framework.
- Section 4 describes the proposed development.
- Section 5 summarises the reasons why planning permission should be granted.

## 2 Application Site

- 2.1 The application site occupies a corner plot bound by open countryside to the north and west, existing residential development to the south and hard landscaping to the east.
- 2.2 The site is cleared and ready for development. Its level topography and positioning following the building line off the existing public house respond to the area's character and minimise the visual impact from Bury Road's broader views.
- 2.3 The wider land ownership by the applicant provides ample off-street parking. Bury Road includes pedestrian footpaths from the site along to The Street (to the east) and neighbouring dwellings along Bury Road.

### Surroundings

- 2.4 The site is located outside of the Hepworth settlement boundary. However, it forms a cluster of 10 dwellings along Bury Road, with four dwellings immediately to the south and within the applicant's ownership. The further six dwellings are located to the south of Bury Road and accessible by pedestrian footpath from the site.
- 2.5 The site is located 0.5 miles south of Hepworth, 1.5 miles west of Stanton village centre and approximately 2 miles north of Walsham Le Willows. The Bury Road (A143) provides vehicular routes to Diss and Bury St Edmunds. Both towns include rail stations for regional and cross-country rail travel.
- 2.6 The site is located 1.5 miles west of Stanton Community Primary School. Secondary education is accessed by dedicated Suffolk school buses and provide secondary school-aged pupils with access to Thurston Community College.

### Public Transport

- 2.7 The site is located in a sustainable location, benefiting from its proximity to registered bus stops either side of Bury Road. The services 304, 337 and 338 operate along this route and provide direct services to Bury St Edmunds and Diss.
- 2.8 Rail services from Bury St Edmunds and Diss provide regular onward travel to London, Cambridge, Norwich, Ipswich and Peterborough.

### Planning History

- 2.9 There is limited planning history relevant to this parcel of land to the north of the former public house. However, planning was approved to the south of the site for the change of use of the mixed-use class (A5/A3 and C3) to four dwellings (DC/16/1147/FUL). All four dwellings benefit from off-street parking to the front of the dwelling.
- 2.10 In 2018, planning was refused and dismissed at appeal for the outline application for up to six dwellings (including four affordable dwellings) with associated works (DC/17/2247/OUT). The red line area of the proposal did not extend onto this proposal red line area. The Inspector's decision stated that the dwellings could be designed to form a cohesive grouping around the former public house subject to a suitable degree of subservience in scale, massing and architecture, which could moderately temper any adverse impacts on the countryside. Notwithstanding a different red line area, the application for six dwellings is significantly different from this proposal for two dwellings.

### 3 Relevant Planning Policy

- 3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2 In this case, the statutory development plan comprises:
- St Edmundsbury Core Strategy (2010)
  - Rural Vision 2031 (September 2014)
  - Joint Development Management Policies Document (2015)

#### The Development Plan

- 3.3 The development plan addresses the spatial and land-use implications of economic, social and environmental change, in the form of a development strategy and planning policy framework.
- 3.4 Policy CS1 sets out that opportunities to use previously developed land and buildings for new development will be maximised.
- 3.5 Policy CS2 identifies that high-quality, sustainable environment will be achieved by designing and incorporating measures appropriate to the nature and scale of development. Including the protection and enhancement of natural resources and sustainable design of the built environment. Development should include measures to minimise energy and carbon emissions, be water-efficient, and use local materials. In addition, development should, amongst others, make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness, character, townscape and the setting.
- 3.6 Policy CS3 sets out that proposals for new development must create and contribute to a high-quality, safe and sustainable environment. The site is located outside a specific settlement and identified in Policy CS4 as 'Countryside'.
- 3.7 Policy CS7 sets out that all development will be required to provide for travel by a range of means of transport other than the private car in accordance with transport hierarchy: walking, cycling, public transport, commercial vehicles, cars.
- 3.8 Policies CS13 and DM2 identify that development outside the settlements defined in Policy CS4 will be strictly controlled, with a priority on protecting and enhancing the character, appearance, historic qualities and biodiversity of the countryside while promoting sustainable diversification. Proposals should incorporate sustainable design and construction measures and energy efficiency measures as required by Policy DM7.
- 3.9 Policies RV1 and DM1 align to the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Local Plan will be approved without delay. Where policies are silent to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.10 Policy DM5 identifies that areas designated as countryside will be protected from unsustainable development. New buildings will be permitted where it is a small residential development of a small undeveloped plot, in accordance with Policy DM27.
- 3.11 Policy DM7 sets out that all new development proposals will be expected to adhere to broad principles of sustainable design and construction and optimise energy efficiency.

- 3.12 Policy DM13 sets out that all development should be informed by and sympathetic to the landscape's character.
- 3.13 Policy DM22 sets out that all residential development proposals should maintain a sense of place by:
- Employing designs that are specific to the scheme.
  - Basing the design on an analysis of existing buildings, landscape or topography, and fully exploiting the opportunities that these present.
  - Utilising the characteristics of the locality to create buildings and spaces that have a strong sense of place and distinctiveness.
  - Creating or contributing to a coherent and legible place.
  - Creating and supporting continuity of built form.
- 3.14 Policy DM27 identifies that proposals for new dwellings will be permitted in the countryside subject to two criteria:
- The development is within a closely knit 'cluster' of 10 or more existing dwellings adjacent to or fronting an existing highway.
  - The scale of development consists of infilling a small undeveloped plot by one or a pair of semi-detached dwellings commensurate with the scale and character of existing dwellings within an otherwise continuous built up frontage.
- 3.15 Policy DM46 sets out that the authority will seek to reduce over-reliance on the car and promote more sustainable forms of transport. All proposals should make provision for car and cycle parking, plus ensure provision for emergency, delivery and service vehicles.

#### **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 3.16 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out Government planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied by local planning authorities. The policies contained within the NPPF are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 3.17 The NPPF defines the purpose of the planning system as a contributor to the achievement of sustainable development and introduces a general presumption in favour of such development.
- 3.18 Section 4 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way, with decision-makers at every level seeking to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 3.19 Themes in the NPPF of particular relevance to this planning application include:
- Delivering a sufficient supply of homes, which:
    - Support the development of entry-level exception sites, suitable for first-time buyers (or those looking to rent their first home).
  - Promoting healthy and safe communities, which:
    - Are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion.
  - Promoting sustainable transport, in that:
    - Appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be taken up.
    - Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.

- Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- Making effective use of land by:
  - Supporting the development of under-utilised land.
- Achieving well-designed places to ensure that developments:
  - Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area.
  - Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
  - Are sympathetic to local character, including surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.
  - Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate an appropriate amount and mix of development.
  - Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.



## 4 The Proposed Development

- 4.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the development of land at Bury Road, Hepworth. The proposed development consists of:

*Erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellings, vehicular parking, and landscaping.*

- 4.2 Further information is provided in the submitted application plans and supporting technical documents.

### Layout

- 4.3 The proposed development will deliver two residential dwellings, both comprising of 2-bedrooms. The dwellings will benefit from vehicular parking to the front, accessible via an existing route to the neighbouring dwellings and within the ownership of the applicant.
- 4.4 The layout proposed minimises the visual impact from the street-scene, presenting a continuation of the existing residential building line.
- 4.5 Through developing along the perimeter to the north-east of the wider parcel of land, the development provides private rear garden space for residents, consistent with the neighbouring properties.
- 4.6 The dwellings' internal layout enables modern living, with lobby area and WC, through to an open plan living, dining and kitchen space. Bifold doors will provide access to the rear garden. Upstairs is two bedrooms, a family bathroom and ensuite to the master bedroom. Both properties will exceed the nationally described space standards.
- 4.7 Access to the rear of the properties is available via side access.

### Scale

- 4.8 The proposal sits as a bookend to the existing built form, being no higher than the former public house's southern element. The property frontage presents a 1.5 storey dwelling, utilising the roof space.
- 4.9 The building line follows the existing built form to the south, creating a continuous built form. The plot includes two parking spaces and an appropriate rear garden amenity space.

### Appearance

- 4.10 The material palette has been informed by local vernacular references. The primary materials proposed are consistent with the neighbouring residential dwellings, with a red brick finish and clay pantile.
- 4.11 The pantile roof creates the impression of a lower building to the frontage, consistent with the existing local built form.
- 4.12 Soft landscaping is proposed in front of the residential dwellings, separating the properties from the parking provision. The frontage will include a vehicle charging dock for both properties, enabling the transition to electric vehicles.
- 4.13 Solar PV panels are proposed to the roof, minimising the impact on the environment.

### Access

- 4.14 The properties are accessed to the eastern elevation, with vehicular parking to the front. Vehicular access is off Bury Road. The properties have been designed to provide step-free access from the front. Both properties allow for rear access via a gate system to the side of the property.

## 5 Key Planning Issues

- 5.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the development of land at Bury Road, Hepworth. The proposed development consists of:

*Erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellings, vehicular parking, and landscaping.*

### Design Quality

- 5.2 The scale of the proposed development is consistent with the existing built form across the wider parcel of land.
- 5.3 A design-led approach has enabled high-quality development to be proposed. A detailed understanding of the local material palette, design detail, and history has delivered a traditional design that enables modern living. Both properties exceed the nationally described space standards, providing good amenity for residents.
- 5.4 The properties' design encourages sustainable methods of living from the first approach to the property, benefiting from access to public transport directly outside the site on the Bury Road, including electric charging points to both residential properties. The proposal includes solar PV panels to enable electric generation on-site, which has been sympathetically considered to minimise the visual impact from Bury Road.
- 5.5 Accordingly, it is considered that the design of the development, residential sizes and range of environmental measures meet the requirements of national and local planning policy.

### Landscape and Ecology

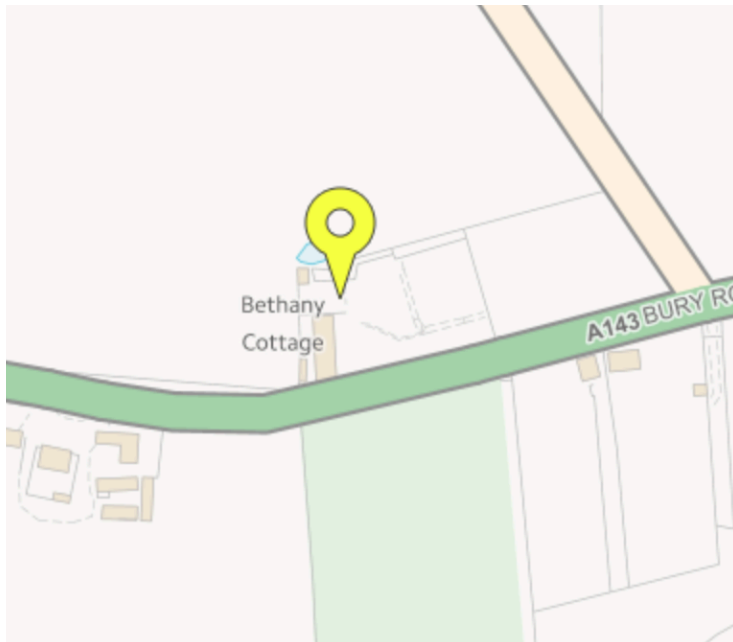
- 5.6 The proposed development will deliver a high-quality landscape for residents, with enclosed private gardens to the rear of the property. The frontage includes soft landscaping between the residential properties and resident parking.
- 5.7 A limited material pallet creates a simplicity to the proposal, which complements the neighbouring built development. The geometry of the space enables the natural movement of people, without causing conflicts.
- 5.8 The use of flowering species, where possible, and large-leaved plants will encourage insects and microscopic wildlife to the area and provide birds and bats with food.
- 5.9 The ecological assessment (December 2020) identified no evidence of amphibians on-site and the nearby pond having a low HSI score and therefore not suitable for Great Crested Newts. The ecological assessment identifies the surrounding intensive arable landscape, car park disturbance and proximity to the highway make the perimeter hedge line a hazardous and unsuitable environmental for the species.
- 5.10 The adjoining residential properties have no particular bat roost features. The proximity to the highway makes the site unlikely to form part of any flyway or feeding area for the species.
- 5.11 There was no evidence on the site for barn owls, badgers, hedgehogs, otters, water voles, hazel dormouse, birds or bird nests.
- 5.12 Accordingly, the development meets the requirements of the development plan policy.

## Transport

- 5.13 The development occupies a location within a cluster of existing residential development either side of Bury Road. Adjacent to the site is a registered bus stop providing routes to employment and leisure hubs of Bury St Edmunds and Diss, in addition to local retail provision in Stanton.
- 5.14 The site is accessible by a range of transport modes, being appropriate for cycling to neighbouring settlements, use of public transport, accessible by commercial vehicles and private cars.
- 5.15 The proposal supports policies to promote electric charging points for resident parking. The previous wider site use as a public house and diner had a greater impact on the highway network. Therefore, there is considered to be no reason to refuse planning consent on highway grounds.
- 5.16 Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal meets the requirements of the development plan.

## Flood Risk

- 5.17 The flood map for planning (gov.uk) identifies the site to be located within Flood Zone 1 (below), and to have a low probability of flooding.



- 5.18 Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal meets the requirements of national and local planning policy.

## Sustainability

- 5.19 The proposal includes a number of sustainability measures to benefit the development and wider environment. The proposal has considered means to respond to climate change, sustainable construction, low and zero carbon forms of energy generation and low carbon vehicles.
- 5.20 The approach taken has been to promote and encourage a modal shift to more sustainable methods, whilst recognising the role of the car in the overall transport mix.
- 5.21 The building fabric and design have been optimised to use less energy through low carbon methods, water minimisation measures (dual flush W/C) and lower energy consuming measures (energy saving lighting etc.).
- 5.22 Accordingly, it is considered that the development proposal meets the requirements of local planning policy.

## 6 Conclusion

- 6.1 This planning application has been prepared to address the planning issues raised by the proposed development of two residential dwellings on land to the north of Bury Road, Hepworth. The application demonstrates:
- The creation of a high-quality residential development on a brownfield site.
  - Provision of jobs during the construction phase, including using local contractors wherever possible.
  - Exceeding national space standards which contributes to the residents' wellbeing.
  - Encouraging a modal shift away from petrol and diesel cars to electric vehicle use.
  - Inclusion of low carbon energy systems, with the potential for Solar PV.
  - The proposal forms an opportunity to deliver appropriate housing adjacent to existing residential development, which accords to the development plan and the relevant material considerations within the NPPF.
  - The proposal to be an appropriate form of development in the countryside, with the delivery of a pair of semi-detached properties.
- 6.2 The proposal will help create a sense of place, increasing natural surveillance in a residential development cluster.
- 6.3 For these reasons, we commend the proposals to West Suffolk Council and request this application be approved without delay in accordance with the NPPFs presumption in favour of sustainable development.