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**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
ERECTION OF SINGLE-STOREY DWELLING FOLLOWING DEMOLITION
OF EXISTING BUILDINGS
MOAT FARM, WICKHAMBROOK ROAD, HARGRAVE IP29 5HY**

PLANNING STATEMENT

Ref: 2462
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INTRODUCTION

1. This statement has been produced in support of an outline planning application proposing the erection of a dwelling at Moat Farm, Wickhambrook Road, Hargrave. The proposal involves the demolition of existing buildings at the site.
2. The proposed dwelling will be a single-storey property with the appearance of a converted barn. It will be constructed of traditional materials including timber boarding to the walls and a clay pantiled roof. Being a single-storey design, it will ensure that there is no loss of amenity to Moat Farm in terms of overlooking or loss of light. With the appearance of a converted barn, the dwelling will respect and reflect the local setting.
3. The application comprises this statement together with the following documents:
 - Application Forms and Certificate;
 - Location Plan scale 1:1250;
 - Drawings 4338-01;
 - Ecology report;
 - Enviroscreen Report; and,
 - Land Contamination Questionnaire.
4. The following statement is in two parts. The first part deals with the Council's local validation requirements for planning applications. The second part is a Planning Statement which identifies the relevant planning policies and other material considerations.

LOCAL VALIDATION REQUIREMENTS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

5. The scale of the proposed development is below the Government's threshold as set out at paragraph 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

BIODIVERSITY SURVEY AND REPORT

6. The application is accompanied by a separate ecology report.

CAR PARKING

7. Adequate car parking will be provided in accordance with the Suffolk Parking Guidelines.

CONTAMINATED LAND

8. The application site is accompanied by a contamination report and a land contamination questionnaire.

DRAINAGE

9. The proposed dwelling will be connected to the mains sewer if available Alternatively a private treatment plant will be used. Surface water drainage will discharge to soakaways.

FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

10. The Environment Agency flood maps confirm that the application site is situated within Flood Zone 1 (FZ1) which means that it comprises land which is not at risk of flooding from a river or other watercourse and is suitable for all forms of development.

HERITAGE STATEMENT

11. The application site is not within a conservation area and the proposed dwelling will not affect the setting of any listed buildings. No designated heritage assets will be affected by the development.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

12. The application site does not have any special landscape designation. The scheme will not have any significant impact on the character or appearance of the wider landscape and consequently it is not necessary to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA).

PLANNING STATEMENT

13. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (As amended) requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
14. In this case, the development plan for the area consists of the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy 2010, the Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Local Plan Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015, the St Edmundsbury Local Plan Policies Maps 2015 and, the St Edmundsbury Rural Vision 2031.
15. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration.

ST EDMUNDSBURY CORE STRATEGY 2010 (CS)

16. The CS sets out the Council's strategic policies for the delivery of development across the borough. Policy CS1 sets out the Council's 'spatial strategy' and states in part "The towns of Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill will be the main focus for the location of new development supported by appropriate levels of development in Key Service Centres, Local Service Centres and Infill Villages".
17. Policy CS4 sets out the Council's 'settlement hierarchy' and identifies Hargrave as a countryside village.
18. Policy CS13 concerns 'rural areas' and states in part "*The scale of development in Key Service Centres, Local Service Centres and Infill Villages, as defined in Policy CS1, will reflect the need to maintain the sustainability of local services for the communities they serve, the diversification of the economy and the provision of housing for local needs. 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 of the rural economy*".

ST EDMUNDSBURY LOCAL PLAN POLICIES MAPS 2015

19. Hargrave does not have a settlement boundary and therefore, for planning purposes, the application site is in the countryside.

20. Policy DM5 concerns development in the countryside. It seeks to prevent new housing in the countryside unless it is for a key worker directly related to agriculture or forestry; affordable housing for local needs; small scale development in accordance with policy DM27; or, the replacement of an existing dwelling on a one for one basis.
21. Policy DM27 permits dwellings in the countryside provided that the development is within a closely-knit cluster of 10 dwellings and consists of infilling a small undeveloped plot fronting a highway by one dwelling or a pair of semi-detached dwellings. In this case, the application site does not have a direct frontage to the highway so the proposal does not wholly accord with policy DM27.
22. However, Policies DM5 and DM27 do not wholly accord with the more recent National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The way that these policies restrict new housing development in the countryside conflicts with paragraphs 77 and 78 of the NPPF and obviates the balanced approach to sustainable development which the NPPF exhorts.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK 2019 (NPPF)

23. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF describes the objectives of sustainable development as providing economic, social and environmental benefits. This proposal fulfils each of the three objectives of sustainable development for the following reasons.
24. Firstly, the development will meet the economic objective of sustainable development by helping to sustain local services. In this case, an additional family home in the village will help to sustain the local public house (The Greyhound at Chevington) and it would also help to sustain local services in other villages nearby. As paragraph 78 of the NPPF notes, "*where there are smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby*".
25. The proposal will also meet the social objective of sustainable development by providing a new modest family home in an area where there is a demand for rural homes.

26. The proposed development also accords with the environmental objective of sustainable development as it involves the redevelopment of previously developed (brownfield) land. Furthermore, Hargrave is served by bus routes 14A and 15B which provide a service between Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill. Consequently, future occupants of the dwelling would not be wholly reliant on the car for access to services and facilities.
27. As previously stated, as the site is not within a settlement boundary, for planning purposes, it is in the countryside. Paragraph 79 of the NPPF deals with rural housing and states that local planning authorities should avoid isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances.
28. The meaning of the term 'isolated' was the subject of the High Court Judgement relating to **Braintree District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Greyread Limited & Granville Development Limited [2017]**. Braintree DC had applied to the High Court to quash an Inspector's decision which had allowed a development for residential development on land which was within an established group of dwellings but outside of a settlement boundary. Braintree DC claimed that the Inspector has misinterpreted paragraph 55 of the NPPF (now paragraph 79) as the meaning which should be given to the term "isolated homes" was "homes which were remote from services and facilities". The Judgement of Mrs Justice Lang was that Braintree DC were wrong and that the term 'isolated' should be given its ordinary objective meaning of "far away from other places, buildings, or people; remote" (Oxford Concise English Dictionary). Clearly, in this case, the proposed dwelling would not be isolated and so there is no need to demonstrate any exceptional circumstances.

OTHER MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

29. Planning Appeal decisions for similar development in similar circumstances are material considerations. Appeal decision APP/E3525/W/16/3145915 related to the erection of a dwelling on a site in Great Barton which had been refused by the Council on the basis that the site did not accord with the criteria of policy DM27. In allowing the appeal the Inspector agreed that the proposal did not comply with policies DM5 or DM27 but concluded that the proposal did represent sustainable development on the basis that the dwelling would not be in an isolated location, would not adversely impact on the character or appearance of the area and, that future residents would not be wholly reliant on the use of the private car.

30. Another more recent Appeal decision is Appeal APP/F3545/W/20/3244428 which related to the LPA's decision to refuse planning permission for the erection of a dwelling on a plot in Flempton. The Flempton scheme was refused by the Council on the basis that the site did not comply with policy DM27. The Inspector agreed that the scheme was in conflict with DM5 and DM27, as the site was not within a close-knit cluster of 10 or more dwellings. However, the Inspector also opined that the main purpose of policies DM5 and DM27 was to protect and enhance the quality and character of the countryside. In allowing the appeal the Inspector stated that the proposed dwelling *"has been designed to integrate into its surroundings by reflecting the characteristics of adjacent dwellings in its design. It would be viewed as part of the existing group of dwellings and not as part of the open countryside surrounding the village. I therefore find that the proposal would not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the locality."* Those comments equally apply to this proposal.

CONCLUSIONS

31. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (As amended) requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
32. The proposed dwelling does not wholly accord with the Council's policy for infill development in the countryside. However, the policy in question does not wholly accord with the NPPF and, as illustrated by the recent appeal at Flempton, it is not the criteria of the policy that is strictly important but the objective of the policy as a whole.
33. In this case, the erection of a single-storey dwelling with the appearance of a converted agricultural building would not have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the locality. In fact the removal of the existing building and its replacement with sensitively designed dwelling would enhance the character and appearance of the locality.