

DESIGN & ACCESS **STATEMENT**

**USE OF LAND FOR THE ERECTION OF
ONE DETACHED TWO-STOREY
DWELLING AND ASSOCIATED
DETACHED GARAGE**



**Land West of Hoys House, Waterhall Road, Wixoe,
Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 8UD**

For

Mr & Mrs L. Nicoll

Introduction & Site Assessment

The application site lies on the western edge of the small village of Wixoe, to the south of Waterhall Road, forming the north-western most portion of the wider residential curtilage associated with the modern detached two-storey dwelling house and substantial associated residential curtilage of Hoys House.

The village of Wixoe is designated as being within the countryside for the purposes of the development plan, albeit the settlement clearly forms a significant 'cluster' of some 60 dwellings, centred around the Grade II* Listed Church of St Leonards, which itself lies approximately 300 metres to the east of the site frontage, further along Waterhall Road.

The application site extends to approximately 0.37Ha, forming an irregular, trapezium-shaped parcel of land, with a depth of approximately 81 metres from North to South and a northern frontage width to Waterhall Road of approximately 51 metres, tapering down to a width of approximately 40 metres at the southern rear.

The application site itself is broadly level and predominantly laid to grass, inter-dispersed with a variety of domestic trees and shrubbery, including a number of overgrown fruit trees. An existing low-cut coniferous hedge encloses the site along the Waterhall Road frontage, with more substantial deciduous trees and hedging running along the western side boundary with the curtilage to the neighbouring substantial, modern, two-storey detached dwelling of 'The Paddocks'. An existing high brick wall encloses the northern-most portion of the eastern site boundary with the existing tarmacadam entrance drive serving Hoys House, with informally planted trees and hedging then partially enclose the remaining eastern and southern boundaries of the site with the wider retained residential curtilage to the host-dwelling of Hoys House, which itself lies further to the east, at a slightly elevated level. An existing single-storey Summerhouse outbuilding lies adjacent to the eastern walled boundary of the site.

Further existing residential dwellings lie to both the east and west of the immediately neighbouring dwellings to the site, fronting onto this southern side of Waterhall Road. Along the opposite, northern side of Waterhall Road, the existing cultivated agricultural land sits at an elevated level, largely screening the existing built-form of residential development along the southern side of the road from the wider rural landscape beyond.

The proposals put forward involve the use of the application site for the erection of a detached dwelling house and garage. Whilst it is considered that a detached two-storey dwelling and associated detached double garage could be comfortably accommodated on the available site, as indicatively shown upon the submitted Block Plan, the Application has been submitted in Outline, with all Matters other than Access left Reserved for future submission.

As detailed upon the submitted Block Plan, a new, independent vehicular and pedestrian access is proposed to be formed from a broadly central position along the Waterhall Road frontage of the site, in order to serve the proposed new dwelling and associated garage, with the existing vehicular access serving Hoys House proposed to be retained in its current form.

Development Plan Policy Context

The application site lies on the western edge of the small village of Wixoe, to the south of Waterhall Road, and whilst the village of Wixoe is designated as being within the countryside for the purposes of the development plan, the settlement clearly forms a significant 'cluster' of dwellings, centred around the Grade II* Listed Church of St Leonards, which itself lies approximately 300 metres to the east of the site frontage, along Waterhall Road.

At the overarching national level, the planning policy context has changed over the last decade, with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Document, published on 27th March 2012, and more recently updated (19th February 2019) replacing 44 previously existing individual planning policy documents. The NPPF states that: *"At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development"*. For decision makers this means *"approving development proposals that accord with an up to date development plan without delay"* or, where plans are out of date and the site is outside of any protected area, granting permission unless *"any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."*

Paragraph 38 underlines the positivity of the Governments intent, indicating that *"Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible."*

With regards specifically to new housing in villages and rural communities, Paragraph 78 highlights that *"To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities"*.

The clear thrust of this Government Policy is that Local Planning Authorities should be looking to say 'yes' to development wherever possible, with a presumption, across the board, of permitting 'sustainable development' which accords with Development Plan Policy without delay.

At the more detailed, local level, the Development Plan now comprises the adopted St Edmundsbury Core Strategy of December 2010, together with the more recently adopted Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan (which also applies to the former Forest Heath District) of February 2015.

The totality of these now adopted Development Plan Policies seek to encourage additional residential development within sustainable locations while making an efficient reuse of available land. Policies CS1 – 4 of the Adopted Core Strategy, together with Policies DM1, 2, 5 - 7, 15, 20, 22, 27 and 46 of the Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan are all considered to provide a degree of relevance to the proposals now put forward.

Policies CS1 and CS4 of the Core Strategy provide the spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy for the Borough, designating Wixoe as a 'countryside village' appropriate to accommodate new small-scale residential development within a cluster of 10 or more dwellings under the

requirements of Policies DM5(f) and DM27 of the subsequent Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan.

Of the remaining Core Strategy Policies, Policy CS2 focusses upon sustainable development principles, whilst Policy CS3 outlines key elements of design and local distinctiveness which all proposals for new development will need to incorporate.

At the more site-specific, detailed level, Policies DM1, 2, 5 - 7, 15, 17, 22, 27 and 46 of the Joint Development Management Policies Local Plan are all considered to be of relevance, effectively providing a more detailed basis upon which to assess the issues previously referred to above. Policy DM1 essentially reiterates the Government ethos within the NPPF of the *'Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development'* whilst Policy DM2 provides such guidance with regard to development principles and local distinctiveness within West Suffolk. Policy DM22 refers more generically to residential design, with both Policies essentially providing guidance upon ensuring that the impacts upon the existing residential amenities of others and the character and appearance of the surrounding areas are minimized.

Policy DM15 provides detailed the criteria against which to assess the impacts upon the existing settings of any nearby Listed Buildings, alongside the more strategic level guidance contained within Policy CS3 of the Core Strategy (Design and Local Distinctiveness), requiring proposals to respect the setting of any Listed Building. Policy DM20 makes reference to archaeology, indicating that where the potential for archaeological interest exists, there may be a need to undertake a watching brief before and during the initial construction stages.

Policy DM6 refers to the need to ensure adequate measures to address surface water drainage, whilst Policy DM7 refers to sustainable design and construction and energy efficiency measures. Whilst the general ethos of Policies DM7 remains relevant, it is important to note that more recent Ministerial Statements have indicated that such measures should not be mandatory, notably within smaller proposed developments, where such issues will essentially be addressed through the requirements of the Building Regulations. Policy DM46 refers to car parking, indicating the need for proposals to make appropriate provision in accordance with existing standards.

As briefly outlined above, the key Policy in this instance is that of Policy DM27, which specifically provides that within villages and groups of dwellings which technically lie within the 'Countryside' new individual or pairs of dwellings will be permitted, providing that:-

- a. *the development is within a closely knit 'cluster' of 10 or more existing dwellings adjacent to or fronting an existing highway;*
- b. *the scale of development consists of infilling a small undeveloped plot by one dwelling or a pair of semi-detached dwellings commensurate with the scale and character of existing dwellings within an otherwise continuous built up frontage,*

The following elements of this Design and Access Statement indicate how the proposals seek to comply with the overall requirements of each of the above Policies, but most notably the requirements of Policy DM27.

Evaluation of Site Assessment

The overall topographical, landscape and built features of the site and the wider surroundings (as indicated in the Site Assessment) have formed the basis for the indicatively proposed amount, layout & location, scale, visual appearance and landscaping of the development proposed. These are now outlined in more detail below.

Use & Amount of Development

The proposals now put forward involve the use of the application site for the erection of a detached dwelling house and garage. Whilst the submitted Block Plan indicatively shows how a detached, two-storey dwelling house and associated detached double garage building could be comfortably accommodated on the site, the Application has been submitted in Outline, with all Matters left Reserved for future submission apart from the details of the Access.

The indicative Block Plan provided demonstrates how a traditional, two-storey, hipped-roofed dwelling of a simple rectangular footprint, together with an associated hipped-roofed double garage building to the west, could be comfortably accommodated on the site without detriment to the character and appearance of the wider locality or to the existing residential amenities currently enjoyed by the occupants of neighbouring dwellings.

The indicative dwelling shown would measure approximately 18.4 metres in frontage width by 11.7 metres in gable-span depth, with the associated detached double garage building measuring approximately 6 x 6 metres square.

Layout & Location

As shown upon the submitted Block Plan, the new vehicular access into the site from Waterhall Road would be sited broadly centrally within the available extent of the site frontage, with the majority of the existing non-native coniferous hedging removed to facilitate sufficient visibility splays to either side.

As indicatively suggested at this stage, the proposed new dwelling would then be sited behind this access point, set back approximately 15 metres into the site, fronting and broadly parallel to the Waterhall Road site frontage, with the associated garage building likewise sited parallel to and fronting the Road, but set-back slightly less from the site frontage.

Such an indicative siting would still enable ample front, side and rear curtilage areas to be provided with the proposed dwelling and garage, with existing boundary landscaping retained to the west, south and east, together with scope for additional replacement native hedging behind the visibility splays to the northern site frontage, in order to provide visual enclosure and privacy to the site. At the same time, such measures would also negate any potential issues of additional overlooking to the either the host dwelling of Hoys House or the neighbouring dwelling of The Paddocks to the West.

As indicatively proposed, it is therefore considered that the development as shown could be accommodated on this site without any substantial impacts upon the existing amenities of neighbouring and surrounding local residents or the character and appearance of the streetscene

and surrounding locality, whilst clearly complying with the key requirements of Policy DM27 of the Local Plan.

Scale of Development

As with the amount and location of the development proposed, whilst the details are currently left Reserved for future submission and consideration, it is acknowledged that the resulting scale of the development proposed would need to be commensurate with the requirement to ensure that the existing residential amenities of the occupants of existing neighbouring dwellings within the 'cluster' of residential development along this southern side of Waterhall Road are not unduly compromised and that the existing setting, character and appearance of the surrounding locality and that of any nearby Listed Buildings are respectively maintained.

The overall design, form and scale of the existing adjacent host two-storey dwelling of Hoys House, whilst located sufficiently away from the siting of the proposed dwelling, is nevertheless likely to provide the main visual reference and determinate in influencing the intended overall indicative scale of the resulting built form of the proposed dwelling and associated garage.

Whilst left Reserved for future submission and formal consideration, it is suggested that a traditional, two-storey scale, hipped-roofed detached dwelling, set-back into the site from the Waterhall Road frontage, together with a single-storey detached garage building, with the existing side and rear curtilage boundaries remaining enclosed by high hedging and trees, could comfortably be accommodated on the site. Such a scale of built form would ensure that the resulting dwelling and associated garage would appear wholly subordinate and visually contained within the wider surroundings. At the same time, the overall levels of residential amenity currently available to the occupants of neighbouring and nearby dwellings would be similarly maintained.

Landscaping

As previously outlined, the existing application site is enclosed for the most-part by a combination of high deciduous hedging and planting, such that any public views into the site would largely be restricted to those which would be afforded from the new vehicular access into the site from the Waterhall Road frontage.

As previously outlined, by virtue of the proposed retention and supplementation of this existing boundary planting, adequate levels of privacy and residential amenity are retained and maintained between the proposed development and the occupants of existing adjacent dwellings. Notably, additional replacement native hedging is suggested to be planted behind the visibility splays along the northern Waterhall Road site frontage, in order to provide visual enclosure and privacy to the site.

Should any further particular, more detailed landscaping measures be considered necessary, they could be addressed via any subsequent submission of Reserved Matters following the grant of any Outline Planning Permission on the site.

Visual Appearance

As previously indicated, by virtue of the visually contained location of the application site, public views of the site would largely be limited to those afforded from the new vehicular access into the site from the Waterhall Road frontage, with the additional frontage hedge planting proposed likely to further limit these over time.

Such physical and landscaped constraints confirm that a two-storey, hipped-roofed detached dwelling and associated garage, set well back into the site, would visually appear very subordinate and secondary within the wider streetscene, whilst still being sited within a recognised 'cluster' of existing residential dwellings.

Whilst the detailed visual appearance of the proposed dwelling and garage is left Reserved for future submission, it is suggested that an approach utilizing a Georgian form, scale and visual appearance, akin to that of the host dwelling of Hoys House, would provide for the creation of a visually balanced and attractive dwelling, and thus be able to ensure that a very positive visual enhancement of the site and its setting within the surrounding cluster would result.

In a similar vein, whilst no definitive choices have been made regarding proposed roof and wall materials at present, it is suggested that both the dwelling and garage could be constructed utilizing a traditionally coloured cream render above soft red walling plinth, or of a red facing brick, with either a red or black plain-tiled or slate roof above, again taking reference from the materials utilised in the construction of both Hoys House to the east and the neighbouring dwelling of The Paddocks to the west.

The proposed access drive is likewise suggested at this stage to have a low-key, rural appearance, with initial thoughts that a soft, emulsion and shingle bound finish would be likely to be most appropriate.

Access

Whilst internal access and movement within and around the proposed building is largely the remit of other legislation (Building Regulations), the indicative form and layout of the proposed dwelling and the associated car parking and turning have nonetheless sought to achieve the best practical layout available to ease pedestrian movement to, within and around the resulting building.

With regard to external access to the site, as has been mentioned previously, pedestrian and vehicular access to the site would be gained via a new access from the site frontage to Waterhall Road. As previously mentioned and as is shown upon the submitted drawings, this would enable the provision of at least four off-road car parking spaces, along sufficient space for vehicular turning and occasional additional visitor parking as and when required.

Conclusion

The application site lies in a sustainable location, within a clear, recognised cluster of residential dwellings sited along the southern side of Waterhall Road, which in-turn form part of the larger countryside village of Wixoe.

The indicatively submitted proposals demonstrate the infilling of an undeveloped plot by a dwelling which could be readily designed to be of a form, scale, siting and visual appearance wholly commensurate with the scale and character of the existing neighbouring dwellings.

By virtue of the landscaped, visually secluded nature of the application site, little if any discernible impact will result upon either the character and appearance of the wider streetscene along Waterhall Road or upon the settings of any of the nearby Listed Buildings as a result of the proposals.

In such circumstances, the residential development of the site is considered to wholly comply with the requirements of Government Policy and Local Development Plan Policy, and should therefore be permitted.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1
PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS



View eastwards along the Waterhall Road site frontage (above) and westwards (below)





Views from within the Site looking North (above) and South (below)





Views of the front (above) and side (below) elevations of the existing host dwelling house of Hoys House





Views from Waterhall Road (above) and within the site (below) of the neighbouring modern two-storey detached dwelling of The Paddocks

