



SUPPORTING STATEMENT

In respect of 2no. planning applications for;

1. the erection of a new detached residential dwelling (following demolition of existing garage)
and
2. the erection of a new cartlodge at;

The Forge, Church Street, Groton,
Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 5HD

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement is prepared on behalf of Mr Gerald Becker in respect of a planning application for the erection of a new detached dwelling in lieu of the existing garage at The Forge, Church Street, Groton, and a separate application for the construction of a new cartlodge to the north side of the property.

1.2 This statement will consider the planning policy position and provide an overview of the relevant material considerations relating to the proposed developments. Whilst the proposals are made separately, this statement will address the respective issues resulting from these proposals comprehensively.

1.3 The extract below shows the location of the site relative to nearby development.



1.4 In respect of the proposed dwelling, there is recent planning history that relates to proposals to convert and extend the existing building on the site. That history will be referred to wherever relevant to these proposals.

2.0 The Site

2.1 The Forge is a detached two storey property located to the east side of Church Street. The property is shown in the image below and lies opposite and adjacent to agricultural fields.



2.2 To the south of the dwelling is an enclosed garden area, beyond which is a detached double garage set back with a forecourt adjacent to the road. This garage building is that which is proposed to be demolished and is shown below in the context of its relationship with The Forge.



2.3 The site is unconstrained by any specific landscape designations and is not within a Conservation Area. The property is not listed and nor are there any listed buildings in the vicinity of the site.

2.4 The building lies wholly in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore not at risk of flooding.

3.0 The Proposals

3.1 Planning permission is sought for two separate elements, being;

1. The erection of a detached single storey dwelling to the south of The Forge following the demolition of the existing garage, and;
2. The erection of a detached cartlodge building to the north of The Forge.

3.2 The new dwelling sits in a slightly recessed position to the existing garage, and would enable frontage parking and turning space to be provided adjacent to the road. The dwelling is of attractive, traditional, form, with the extract below showing the frontage of the property to the road.



3.3 As can be seen, the proposed dwelling fronts onto the road and consists of traditional materials comprising black boarded facades set over a red brick plinth and under a tiled roof. An oak porch provides a feature to the frontage that brings interest to the streetscene.

3.4 Internally, the proposed dwelling would provide two bedrooms (one ensuite), a bathroom, a kitchen/lounge area, study and a utility room. It is a modest unit of accommodation that would provide practicable living space with doors opening up to the rear onto the garden which is already an established and separate garden area.

3.4 A good sized garden area would be created to the eastern side of the property, and parking for two vehicles can be accommodated on the site.

- 3.5 With respect to the new cartlodge, this is a simple building comprising two open parking bays and an enclosed bay for secure parking/storage.
- 3.6 The existing parking area to the north of the house would be extended to provide access to the new cartlodge through the formation of a new driveway. Existing landscaping to the eastern and western boundaries of the site would be retained.
- 3.7 The cartlodge is sited on land that sits at a significantly lower level than The Forge, such that the impacts of the building would be lessened through the natural topography of the site.
- 3.8 The applications are supported by the following plans and documents;
- Completed Planning Application Forms
 - Supporting Statement
 - Plans by Patrick Allen Architects
 - Land Contamination Questionnaire
 - Groundsure Homebuyers Report
 - Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning Extract

4.0 Planning History

- 4.1 The Council's website identifies the following planning history for The Forge;
- [Outline Planning Application \(all matters reserved\) - Erection of 1No detached dwelling.](#)
Ref. No: DC/19/01026 | Status: Refused
 - [Full Planning Application - Conversion of and extension to existing outbuilding to form 1No dwelling \(including extension to existing parking area to the north of The Forge\).](#)
Ref. No: DC/20/01628 | Status: Refused
 - [Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for a Proposed use or development - Alteration and extension of existing garage to form one bedroom annexe](#)
Ref. No: DC/20/03623 | Status: Was Not Lawful
 - [Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for a Proposed use or development - Alteration and extension of existing garage to form one bedroom annexe](#)
Ref. No: DC/20/05422 | Status: Was Not Lawful
- 4.2 These applications and decisions will be referred to wherever relevant to these proposals.

5.0 Planning Policy Context

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) contains the Government's planning policies for England and sets out how these are expected to be applied. Planning law continues to require that applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The policies contained within the NPPF are a material consideration and should be taken into account for decision-making purposes.
- 5.2 The NPPF is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which assists applicants and decision makers in interpretation the NPPF.
- 5.3 The development plan for Babergh District Council consists of the saved policies of the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 (2006) and the Babergh Core Strategy (2014). The following policies within these documents are considered to be relevant to this proposal.

Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 (2006)

- CN01 – Design Standards
- CR07 – Hedgerows
- HS28 – Infilling
- TP15 – Parking Standards

Babergh Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Settlement Pattern Policy
- CS15 – Implementing Sustainable Development in Babergh
- CS18 – Mix and Types of Dwellings

5.4 Where relevant to the consideration of this proposal, these policies will be referred to within the 'Planning Considerations' section of this report.

6.0 Planning Considerations

6.1 As this statement relates to proposals respectively for a new dwelling and, separately, a new cartlodge building, these matters are considered in turn below.

The New Dwelling

Principle of Development

6.2 Paragraph 10 of the Revised NPPF states *"So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development"*.

6.3 Paragraph 219 of the NPPF identifies that existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of the Framework, and that due weight should be given to them according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.4 Recent reports to the Council's Planning Committee provides standardised wording in respect of policy CS2 of the Core Strategy, as follows;

"Policy CS2 requires that outside of the settlement boundary, development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances subject to a proven justified need. The site is outside the settlement boundary and therefore Policy CS2 applies.

The Core Strategy adopted in 2014 expressly anticipated, and stated within the document, that the District settlement boundaries would be reviewed and sites allocated for development following the adoption of the Core Strategy. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) produced in 2012 advised that a new combined LDS would commence in autumn 2012 and stated it was

not possible to provide an up to date programme for site specific allocations. It is noted that in the original LDS in 2007 it was anticipated that the Site Allocations document would be adopted within 6 months of the Core Strategy having been adopted. This has not to date happened. The current LDS, published in July 2018, now indicates that the Joint Local Plan, including site allocations, will be adopted in February 2020.

The exceptional circumstances test at Policy CS2 applies to all land outside the settlement boundary. This blanket approach is not consistent with the NPPF, which favours a more balanced approach to decision-making. The NPPF does contain a not dissimilar exceptional circumstances test, set out at paragraph 79, however it is only engaged where development is isolated. For the reasons set out in this report, the development is not isolated. Paragraph 79 of the NPPF is not engaged.

Having regard to the material delay in the review of settlement boundaries and in the allocation of sites, and the absence of a balanced approach as favoured by the NPPF, the statutory weight to be attached to Policy CS2 is reduced. The fact that the site is outside the settlement boundary is therefore not a determinative factor upon which the application turns.

A momentum towards securing development that is founded upon sustainable principles and the need for a balanced approach to decision making are key threads to Policy CS1, CS11 and CS15 of the Core Strategy. Unlike Policy CS2, these policies are consistent with the NPPF, carry full statutory weight and provide the principal assessment framework applying to the subject application”.

6.5 It is clear, therefore, that the weight to be given to policy CS2 is vastly reduced, and it cannot be relied upon as a reason to refuse planning permission as a matter of principle simply because a proposal is outside the settlement boundary.

6.6 Indeed, this position was considered in a recent appeal dated 11th March 2020 in the Babergh District (Appeal Ref: APP/D3505/W/19/3240526 - Greenlawns Bonsai Nursery, Hadleigh Road, Boxford, CO10 5JH) for a development of four new dwellings on a site which the Inspector found to be;

“..... located outside of any defined settlement boundary and is thus designated as countryside in local planning policy terms. The site contains a now closed plant nursery and garden centre business as well as an associated single dwelling. The site makes up part of a linear row of development that runs the southern side of Hadleigh Road and that is typically comprised of residential properties. Other than nearby bus stops, I did not observe any facilities or services to be in place within the site’s immediate locality. Boxford, the nearest Core Village, contains a range of facilities, including a primary school, shops and public houses, and is located relatively nearby”.

6.7 The Inspector went on to find that;

“7. The route between the site and Boxford is not served by footway, nor any specific facilities for cyclists (such as a defined cycle lane). Furthermore, part of the route is made up of a main road (the A1071) that accommodates regular traffic flows. The journey to/from Boxford would thus be unlikely to appear attractive to future occupiers of the proposal to either navigate on foot or by cycle. This is not least due to the not insignificant distance involved.

8. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the site is served by bus stops that are situated a realistic walking distance away, along Hadleigh Road to the west. I am of the understanding that buses typically run from these stops at fairly frequent intervals to a range of destinations including Boxford, Hadleigh, Sudbury and Ipswich. Whilst the walking route to these stops is not lit nor served by footway, I noted very few traffic movements along Hadleigh Road during inspection. Indeed, it has the character of a quiet rural road that would appear to be navigable on foot in a safe manner. However, this option may not suit all future occupiers of the development who may not be conveniently able to depend upon these bus services to serve their day-to-day needs.

9. It has been suggested by the appellant that buses can be flagged down upon request along Hadleigh Road, which would further promote bus travel as a realistic option. Whilst the rural nature of the road could potentially allow for buses to pick up and drop off on an impromptu basis, no formal arrangements in this regard have been clearly evidenced. My considerations are thus based on the signposted stops that are in place. In this context, particularly when

noting the lack of walking opportunities, the site's location would be likely to promote private modes of transportation.

10. That said, the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) (the Framework) recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and states that this should be taken into account in decision-making. Indeed, relatively short journeys (by private car or otherwise) would be required in order to access the various facilities and services that are on offer in Boxford. Furthermore, the bus stops that serve the site would offer future residents a genuine option to utilise local bus services as an alternative to private car travel should they desire to do so”.

6.8 In setting out his reasoning for allowing the appeal, the Inspector elaborated further, stating;

“24. I have identified conflict with Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy. However, this is a restrictive policy that offers support to development in the countryside only in exceptional circumstances. It is not wholly consistent with the Framework in terms of its approach to rural housing. Indeed, the Framework is less restrictive and sets out that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and that planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Thus, the fact that the site is located outside of any defined settlement boundary is not a determinative factor in this case and I apportion limited weight to the proposal's conflict with Policy CS2.

25. Nevertheless, there would be some limited harm arising by virtue of the site's lack of accessibility to local facilities and services and that this would lead to some conflict with Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy, which is broadly consistent with the Framework in terms of its aim to promote walking, cycling and public transport use.

26. Turning to the scheme's benefits, whilst the Council has confirmed that it is currently able to demonstrate a 5.67 year supply of housing land and the appellant has not challenged this assertion, it would deliver 4 additional housing units within a District where the housing land supply surplus is marginal. Indeed, the Framework reaffirms the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. The proposal would also promote an effective use

of land through the redevelopment of a redundant former business premises. Jobs would be created during the construction phase and support to the local economy and local community facilities would be provided once occupied. These benefits outweigh the identified harm and the policy conflict therewith.

27. There are material considerations that indicate that the proposal should be determined otherwise than in accordance with the development plan in this case”.

6.9 The commentary here references the marginal nature of the Council’s land supply position and states categorically that the location of the site outside the settlement boundary is not a determinative factor in the appeal. The very same position would exist here.

6.10 In another recent appeal, consideration was also given to the weight to be given to policies CS1, CS11 and CS15, as well as CS2. In that appeal (Appeal Ref: APP/D3505/W/20/3246576 The Mane Riding Centre, Old London Road, Copdock and Washbrook IP8 3JF) the Inspector found that;

“36. Policy CS1 of the CSP only unnecessarily duplicates what was in paragraph 14 of the 2012 version of the Framework, so is out-of-date and thereby carries reduced weight. I have not found in relation to Policy CS1 of the CSP, however, I address whether the proposal would amount to sustainable development below.

37. The blanket approach to the application of settlement boundaries, in isolation of other considerations, would not be wholly aligned with the more flexible and balanced approach implicit in the objectives outlined in the Framework. Furthermore, exceptional circumstances for development in the countryside beyond settlements, found in Policies CS2 and CS11 of the CSP, are not wholly consistent with the Framework, which only applies to isolated development. However, Policy CS2 is consistent with the aim of the Framework to direct housing to locations where it is supported by local facilities and services through an established pattern of distribution; and Policies C2, CS11 and CS18 respond to local circumstances as required by the Framework. In light of this I have regarded the underlying objectives of the policies, as being consistent with the revised Framework but I have afforded reduced weight to the conflict of the proposal with Policies CS2 and CS11 in the light of their approach to

exceptional circumstances for development in the countryside, which lessens the magnitude of that conflict.

38. I have been referred to an appeal decision in neighbouring Mid Suffolk in relation to the wording of Policy CS2 of the CSP. I am aware of the circumstances of that case, as I was the appointed Inspector, and that appeal referenced others in Mid Suffolk where development plan policies had been assessed in relation to their consistency with the Framework. In that case, a policy was multifaceted and required consideration against different parts of the Framework. Policy CS2 is not such a policy, as it only refers to the spatial distribution of development.

39. Such an approach would apply to Policy CS15 of the CSP, which is multifaceted. Although it is consistent with the Framework in terms of its aims to achieve well designed places and the accessibility of services and facilities, it fails to acknowledge the balancing exercises required by paragraphs 195 and 196 of the Framework. Whilst the Council did not find harm in respect of heritage, a policy should be assessed as a whole. Accordingly, Policy CS15 is out-of-date for the purposes of the Framework. Hence, I attach only moderate weight to the conflict of the proposal with this policy, which lessens the magnitude of that conflict.

40. The Council has suggested that it can demonstrate in excess of five-years supply of deliverable housing land within Babergh. The appellant has pointed to the potential fragility of the Council's position, particularly in light of the implications of COVID-19 on the economy. I am also mindful that the presence of a five-year supply does not represent a ceiling on the delivery of housing, as the Framework supports the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of homes. Clearly should I determine that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, paragraph 11 of the Framework would be engaged. Nevertheless, it is engaged as a policy most important for determining the appeal is out-of-date, in this case Policy CS15 of the CSP. This requires that permission should be granted, 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 11(d)(ii) of the Framework)".

- 6.11 The findings of that appeal categorically find policies CS1 and CS15 as being out-of-date, and policies CS2 and CS11 as being in conflict with the NPPF. The Inspector engages paragraph 11,

as did the Inspector making the decision on the appeal reference APP/D3505/W/19/3242769 at Land off Clay Hall Lane, Acton, CO10 0AQ. This is an important decision, as it makes clear that the Council must engage the presumption in favour of sustainable development in reaching their decisions on development engaging these policies (or any combination of them).

- 6.12 The saved policies from the Local Plan Alteration No.2 (2006) are now 14 years old, and the Core Strategy was adopted in 2014. Paragraph 33 of the NPPF identifies that;

“Policies in local plans and spatial development strategies should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Reviews should be completed no later than five years from the adoption date of a plan, and should take into account changing circumstances affecting the area, or any relevant changes in national policy. Relevant strategic policies will need updating at least once every five years if their applicable local housing need figure has changed significantly; and they are likely to require earlier review if local housing need is expected to change significantly in the near future”.

- 6.13 Babergh District Council were made aware of the issues with policies in the Core Strategy, namely the interpretation of policies CS2 and CS11 in the case of *R(East Bergholt Parish Council v Babergh DC [2016] EWHC 3400 (Admin)*, where a successful judicial review was brought against the Council on this very matter. Furthermore, despite their continued recognition of the conflict between policy CS2 and the NPPF, they have carried out no review of the policy or the Core Strategy as a whole in the terms required by paragraph 33 of the NPPF and the legal obligation imposed by (Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012).

- 6.14 It is abundantly clear, therefore, that this proposal should be determined in line with the flexible approach taken in the NPPF, and should be considered in light of the three objectives of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental). For these reasons, in taking a decision on the proposal, the LPA should grant permission unless:

*“i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
ii. 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”.*

Sustainability and Accessibility

6.15 Paragraph 80 states that;

“Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;

b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;

c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting

d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or

e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:

- is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and

- would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area”.

6.16 It is not necessary to rehearse the findings in the Wethersfield case relating to the term ‘isolation’ here. This is a site that lies immediately adjacent and between other residential development and the Council’s decision making in respect of the previous proposals on this site demonstrate that they do not consider the site to be isolated in the terms envisaged by the NPPF. As such, it can be concluded that the site is not isolated such that the special circumstances required to be demonstrated by paragraph 80 of the NPPF are not engaged in this case.

6.17 Furthermore, the emerging Joint Local Plan (JLP) provides, at policy LP01, that;

“LP01 - Hamlets and Clusters of development in the Countryside.

1. Within the settlement boundary of identified hamlets the principle of development is acceptable.

2. Proposals for new dwellings located within small clusters of housing may be acceptable, subject to satisfying the following criteria:

a. Where it would not be detrimental to the character of the surroundings;

b. The scale of development consists of infilling by one dwelling or a pair of semi-detached dwellings within a continuous built up frontage;

c. It would not cause undue harm to the character and appearance of the cluster or any harmful visual intrusion into the surrounding landscape; and

d. Particular care will be exercised in sensitive locations such as conservation areas and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and any other designated land.

3. Proposals which would consolidate sporadic or ribbon development or the infilling of large gaps or extending edges, will be resisted. The cumulative impact of proposals will be a major consideration as development should be proportionate to the location and context, having regard to the level of local infrastructure provision”.

6.18 As can be seen, the intent of the JLP is that sensitive infill development can be provided within clusters of housing in the countryside. The plan is becoming more developed and, therefore, the weight to be given to it will increase as the plan moves forward. However, even at the current time it has been recognised in appeal decisions as the ‘direction of travel’ for the Council and considered accordingly, and examples are now being seen of the Council referring to the JLP in their decision making.

Local Needs

- 6.19 The proposal offers the opportunity to deliver a much needed 2-bedroom unit on an infill plot. It can be delivered whilst ensuring that the character of the village, and this cluster specifically, is not detrimentally affected. The quality of the build and the proposed design would ensure that this is wholly characteristic of existing development, and the applicant considers that this proposal is consistent with the scale of the local housing need in the village, as evidenced below.
- 6.20 The Groton Housing Needs Survey was carried out in 2013 and identified a need for 2/3 affordable dwellings. No consideration appears to have been given to market housing, including starter homes or properties for people of retirement age and beyond who may wish to downsize. As such, the Housing Needs Survey is of limited use in assessing a proposal such as this.
- 6.21 The Groton Parish profile was updated in 2019 and demonstrates that from 2013- 2018 there were no new properties constructed in the village. It also states that *"...the 2014 Suffolk Housing Survey shows that, across the Babergh district:*
- *12% of all existing households contain someone looking for their own property over the next 3 years (mainly single adults without children). The types of properties they are interested in are flats / apartments, and smaller terraced or semi-detached houses. Although this is not their first preference, many accept that the private rented sector is their most realistic option.*
 - *25% of households think their current property will not be suitable for their needs in 10 years' time.*
 - *2 & 3 bed properties are most sought after by existing households wishing to move.*
 - *Suitable housing options for more elderly people are less available within the current housing stock. 6% of all households have elderly relatives who may need to move to Suffolk within the next 3 years".*

6.22 This reflects the up-to-date survey data sourced in the nearby village of Boxford as part of the production of their neighbourhood plan. The Boxford HNS responses were published in October 2019 and identify that;

“The majority would prefer to see affordable housing and smaller family homes (2-3 bedrooms)”, and;

“The main desires are for sheltered housing and dwellings for young people”.

6.23 Policy CS18 supports residential development that provides for the needs of the District’s population, particularly the needs of older people where such local needs exist, and at a scale appropriate to the size of the development. The mix, type and size of the housing development will be expected to reflect established needs in the Babergh district (see also Policy CS15).

6.24 The proposal offers the opportunity to provide much-needed single storey accommodation that would be attractive to those wishing to downsize, those moving into their older years and those who have specialist needs to live in single level accommodation. Given its scale, it would also be an ideal starter home for young people looking to buy their own property. The proposal can be seen to comply with the expectations of policy CS18 and would meet a local need in the terms envisaged by both policy CS2 and CS15 also.

6.25 The proposal is one, therefore, that would meet a local need.

Sustainable Development

6.26 Turning directly to the sustainability considerations set out in the NPPF, paragraph 8 of the NPPF outlines the three objectives of sustainable development that schemes should seek to deliver. The proposal carries the following sustainability benefits.

6.27 From an economic aspect, the construction of a new detached dwelling would provide much needed jobs for local people, and there would be a modest economic benefit from the

purchase of materials also. Occupants of the property would contribute to the local economy through the purchase of goods, their employment and involvement in community activity. It is, therefore, considered that the economic objective of sustainable development is met by this proposal.

- 6.28 The social aspects of new housing are embedded in the NPPF which states that *“supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being”*.
- 6.29 The PPG advises that *“all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas”, cross-referencing to NPPF 79, “and so blanket policies restricting housing development in some settlements and preventing other settlements from expanding should be avoided...”*. Moreover, in rural areas, where public transport is limited, people may have to travel by car to a village or town to access services. At paragraph 105 of the NPPF, it identifies that *“The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making”*. However, as the PPG states, and paragraph 105 recognises, the general policy in favour of locating development where travel is minimised, and use of public transport is maximised, has to be sufficiently flexible to take account of the differences between urban and rural areas.
- 6.30 This site would perform precisely as any other infill development within a countryside cluster would in respect of accessibility. It is located close to the Core Village of Boxford with its many facilities and services, and equidistant between the market towns of Hadleigh and Sudbury. It would therefore support, and have access to, the many facilities in each of these settlements. As Hadleigh and Sudbury play a significant role in the delivery of services in the Babergh district, proximity to these towns is highly beneficial.

- 6.31 The delivery of a new 2-bedroom dwelling here would help to provide the supply of housing required by the NPPF and, therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets the social objective of sustainable development. Furthermore, the proposal's contribution to the Council's housing supply should not be underestimated. The applicant intends to carry out the development in a short timescale should permission be granted. In this regard, the site should be considered deliverable in the terms set out in the NPPF and should thereby be afforded further weight in terms of its sustainability credentials.
- 6.32 With regards to the environmental elements of the proposal, the proposed dwelling would, as a minimum, be built to current Building Regulations standards which embed positive measures to reduce carbon emissions and energy usage. The proposal would also offer opportunities to provide an environmentally sustainable development through the incorporation of renewable energy provision (including air source heat pumps and solar pv), and would be constructed utilising water efficient taps, showers and toilets, and energy efficient white goods.
- 6.33 Biodiversity improvements can be offered in terms of the provision of log piles, swift bricks and bird boxes on the site which will actively encourage biodiversity on the land. This will be supported by new native landscape planting, with the boundary hedging/trees to the side boundary also being retained and reinforced where necessary. Indeed, the applicant has recently installed a new pond with a specific focus on biodiversity. The proposed site contains a mature Wild Cherry Tree and Walnut Tree which would be retained. With this in mind, the proposal is considered to offer environmental gains that would support the environmental objective of sustainable development and continue the work already undertaken by the applicant to encourage biodiversity on the site.
- 6.34 In light of all of the above, it is felt that the proposal demonstrates a cohesive approach to sustainability that complies with the NPPF and is in line with the way in which the dimensions of sustainable development are applied by Planning Inspectors and the Planning Officers alike

CS15 Assessment

6.35 Notwithstanding the above assessment of the sustainability of the proposal, this application submission also provides a detailed assessment of the expectations of policy CS15.

i) respect the landscape, landscape features, streetscape / townscape, heritage assets, important spaces and historic views;

6.36 The applicant has sought to engage with the landscape character of the site through the design of this proposal, taking the character and layout of adjacent development as a positive feature to be incorporated into the design.

6.37 Views of the site from the wider countryside would be taken in the context of the existing dwellings in the cluster. These views are broken up by the significant landscaping that exists to the boundaries, and the modest scale of the development.

6.38 The proposal would not give rise to any detrimental impacts to listed buildings or Conservation Areas and thereby is acceptable in heritage terms. There are no known environmental elements that would weigh against this proposal. It is well related to existing dwellings and there are no contamination, flooding or biodiversity issues arising from this proposal.

6.39 As such, the proposal can be found to be acceptable in respect of this element of policy CS15.

ii) make a positive contribution to the local character, shape and scale of the area;

6.40 As detailed above, the proposal would make a positive contribution through the infill nature of the proposal and the absence of any harmful external impacts. It is wholly consistent with the shape and scale of the area.

6.41 Saved policy CN01 of the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 also provides generic design expectations for all development proposals to address. The Forge lies to the northern end of the cluster of properties, and whilst the main dwelling is of two-storey scale, there is a significant and prominent element lying adjacent to the road that is of single-storey scale. The

properties to the south are a terrace of properties that have been altered over the years, and further south there is a detached property that was constructed as a replacement dwelling, replacing the original bungalow that existed here. Beyond this, turning the corner, is a bungalow that lies immediately adjacent to, and runs parallel with, the road.

6.42 Furthermore, these properties include garage buildings located just a short distance back from the road and which also form part of the streetscene. The first image below shows the scale and position of the existing garage building within the streetscene, the second shows the building's appearance within the context of adjacent buildings.





6.43 The forecourt of the building has been, and continues to be, used for vehicle parking such that the proposal offers the opportunity to improve this position and enhance the streetscene by siting vehicle parking fully in line with the new dwelling.

6.44 The site is not constrained by any specific landscape designations. However, there is a public footpath to the east of the site which runs along the eastern boundary of the field that adjoins the site. The image below shows the view back towards the site from this footpath, at its junction with the road.



6.45 As can be seen, the site would only be seen in the context of the larger properties which already exist in this view, and would be screened by existing trees in the curtilage of The Forge

such that there would be no direct line of sight to the property. The proposal would not, therefore, affect longer views taken from the wider countryside to the east.

6.46 Another footpath lies immediately opposite the site, running west and then south towards the church. Views of the building from this path would be limited to views in the context of the existing properties and with the backdrop of existing trees. The roadside hedge that runs along the western side of the road would also screen the building for much of the route along the path if walking from the village towards the site.

6.47 For these reasons, it is considered that the proposal accords with the provisions of policy CN01 and this element of policy CS15 also.

iii) protect or create jobs and sites to strengthen or diversify the local economy particularly through the potential for new employment in higher skilled occupations to help to reduce the level of out-commuting, and raise workforce skills and incomes;

6.48 As a proposal for new residential development, there is limited opportunity to meet this criterion and it is not entirely relevant to the proposal. However, there would be benefits delivered through construction and through intensified occupancy of the site.

iv) ensure an appropriate level of services, facilities and infrastructure are available or provided to serve the proposed development;

6.49 These matters have already been addressed in the sustainability and accessibility section above.

v) retain, protect or enhance local services and facilities and rural communities;

6.50 These matters have already been addressed in the sustainability and accessibility section above. The proposal accords with this criterion and the aims of paragraph 79 of the NPPF also.

- vi) *consider the aspirations and level and range of support required to address deprivation, access to services, and the wider needs of an aging population and also those of smaller rural communities;*
- 6.51 The proposal delivers a modest two-storey unit that would help meet the needs of an aging population.
- vii) *protect and enhance biodiversity, prioritise the use of brownfield land for development ensuring any risk of contamination is identified and adequately managed, and make efficient use of greenfield land and scarce resources;*
- 6.52 The proposal would enhance biodiversity through a range of measures, as already set out.
- viii) *address climate change through design, adaptation, mitigation and by incorporating or producing sources of renewable or low-carbon energy;*
- 6.53 The design of the proposal has accounted for renewable energy provision and highly sustainable construction such as to meet with this aspect of policy CS15.
- ix) *make provision for open space, amenity, leisure and play through providing, enhancing and contributing to the green infrastructure of the district;*
- 6.54 Whilst these issues are not such that would be delivered on site due to the scale of this proposal, the proposal will contribute to the Community Infrastructure Levy. Furthermore, the dwelling would have a private garden area in line with the historic development pattern, enabling outdoor recreation and opportunities for self-sufficiency.
- x) *create green spaces and / or extend existing green infrastructure to provide opportunities for exercise and access to shady outdoor space within new developments, and increase the connectivity of habitats and the enhancement of biodiversity, and mitigate some of the impacts of climate change eg. enhancement of natural cooling and reduction in the heat island effect, provision of pollution sequestration for the*

absorption of greenhouse gases, and through the design and incorporation of flood water storage areas, sustainable drainage systems (SUDs);

6.55 These issues are not directly relevant to a proposal of this scale, though commentary has already been given on the biodiversity enhancements that can be achieved.

xi) minimise the exposure of people and property to the risks of all sources of flooding by taking a sequential risk-based approach to development, and where appropriate, reduce overall flood risk and incorporate measures to manage and mitigate flood risk;

6.56 The site lies wholly in Flood Zone 1 and there would be no risk to future occupants from flooding.

xii) minimise surface water run-off and incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) where appropriate;

6.57 The proposal can incorporate suitable drainage solutions and there is no impediment to achieving this.

xiii) minimise the demand for potable water in line with, or improving on government targets, and ensure there is no deterioration of the status of the water environment in terms of water quality, water quantity and physical characteristics;

6.58 The proposal can and will incorporate water efficient taps, showers and white goods.

xiv) minimise waste (including waste water) during construction, and promote and provide for the reduction, re-use and recycling of all types of waste from the completed development;

6.59 The Council can secure a detailed construction management plan including details of waste management and recycling opportunities via a condition of any planning permission granted here.

xv) *minimise the energy demand of the site through appropriate layout and orientation (passive design) and the use of building methods, materials and construction techniques that optimise energy efficiency and are resilient to climate change (eg. resilience to high winds and driving rain);*

6.60 These matters have been fully taken into account within the design of the dwelling, with the sustainable construction of this property set out in preceding sections of this statement.

xvi) *promote healthy living and be accessible to people of all abilities including those with mobility impairments;*

6.61 The design of the dwelling meets with the respective disability standards and would provide an accessible dwelling that could accommodate a range of occupant needs.

xvii) *protect air quality and ensure the implementation of the Cross Street (Sudbury) Air Quality Action Plan is not compromised;*

6.62 This proposal would have no impact on air quality.

xviii) *seek to minimise the need to travel by car using the following hierarchy: walking, cycling, public transport, commercial vehicles and cars) thus improving air quality; and*

6.63 These matters are considered within the sustainability and accessibility section of this statement. The Council are actively supporting development in clusters such as this.

xix) *where appropriate to the scale of the proposal, provide a transport assessment /Travel Plan showing how car based travel to and from the site can be minimised, and proposals for the provision of infrastructure and opportunities for electric, plug-in hybrid vehicles, and car sharing schemes.*

6.64 These issues are not directly relevant to a proposal of this scale.

Highway Safety

- 6.65 The proposal includes changes to the existing parking space adjacent to the garage to provide for an acceptable level of parking for the host dwelling, in accordance with the adopted Parking Standards.
- 6.66 The proposal would not result in an intensification of use given that the existing access to the building is already in residential use. The proposal would, therefore, simply consolidate the use of this access to the newly formed dwelling, with the parking area to the north being allocated solely for use by The Forge.
- 6.67 According to www.crashmap.co.uk, there have been no recorded accidents in the immediate vicinity of the access. The existing access does not give rise to highway safety concerns in its current form/use and given that no changes are proposed to be made to it in terms of how it accesses the road then it can be seen that the proposed use of this access would not give rise to any particular highway safety issues.
- 6.68 The proposal is, therefore, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 110 of the NPPF, which identifies that, in assessing specific applications for development, it should be ensured that safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users.

Land Contamination

- 6.69 Submitted with this application is a Groundsure Homebuyers Report and the Council's land contamination questionnaire. The Homebuyers Report identifies the use of the site as a former forge, and it is considered that any ground contamination issues can be addressed as a planning condition given that the proposed works relate primarily to conversion of any existing residential building.
- 6.70 The proposal is therefore in accordance with paragraph 178 of the NPPF which states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination.

Residential Amenity

- 6.71 The design of the proposed dwelling has focussed the main aspects to the east and west such that the building would not have direct views into the private amenity space of neighbouring properties.
- 6.72 Furthermore, the scale of the building and the provision of the accommodation all at ground floor level will ensure that there is no overlooking which occurs.
- 6.73 The proposal is, therefore, acceptable in terms of its impacts on residential amenity.

The New Cartlodge

- 6.74 Current local plan policy in Babergh does not include a policy dealing expressly with outbuildings at residential dwellings. As such, the provisions of saved policies CN01 (general design) and HS33 (Extensions to Existing Dwellings) are often considered as the most appropriate policies for considering such proposals. The criteria in policy HS33 are particularly relevant.
- 6.75 Policy HS33 states;

“Planning permission will be granted to extend a dwelling if:

- the scale, mass, external materials and architectural details of the proposed extension blend in with those of the dwelling and its wider setting;*
- the extension reflects and respects the relationship of the site and its setting, and those of adjoining dwellings;*
- the proposal does not reduce the level of amenity enjoyed by occupants of neighbouring property;*
- the proposal would not cause the felling of, or damage to any significant trees that contribute to the environmental quality and visual amenity of the locality; and*
- a safe vehicular access can be achieved and sufficient space remains available to park vehicles in the curtilage of the dwelling”.*

- 6.76 The policy thereby provides five specific criteria against which this proposal can be considered.
- 6.77 In respect of criteria 3 and 4, the proposal would have no impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties given it's siting, and would not remove any trees to facilitate it's siting. As such, compliance with these criteria has been demonstrated.
- 6.78 In respect of criterion 5, there is nothing within this proposal that seeks to amend or intensify the use of the existing access to the north of The Forge. Changes to the layout are all set well within the curtilage of the property and include facilities to enable vehicles to urn on site, enhancing the safety of the access. Compliance with criterion 5 is also demonstrated.
- 6.79 This leaves consideration of the first two criteria, with these addressing the impacts of the proposal relative to the landscape setting, character of the host dwelling and those in the immediate locality of the site.
- 6.80 The proposed building is of limited scale and has a traditional form that would compliment the existing dwelling. Use of the existing garage is limited by the lack of manoeuvrability space in front of it, meaning that manoeuvres have to be carried out in the road.
- 6.81 The proposed cartlodge would enable covered parking significantly closer to The Forge, providing enhanced practicality of use and sits in a location that is unassuming and which benefits from naturally reduced land levels enabling the building to be accommodated with limited impacts.
- 6.82 As the image below shows, there are already a number of outbuildings sitting to the rear of the properties that lie to the south of The Forge. The proposal would not, therefore, be out of character with the existing arrangement of ancillary buildings located to the rear of properties here.



6.83 For these reasons, this proposal complies with policy HS33 and the respective elements of policy CN01 also.

7.0 Planning Balance

7.1 The proposals seek permission for the erection of detached dwelling in lieu of the existing garage building and the erection of a new cartlodge at The Forge, Groton.

7.2 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The consideration is, therefore, whether the development accords with the development plan and, if not, whether there are material considerations that would indicate a decision should be taken contrary to the development plan.

7.3 The development plan includes the Babergh Core Strategy (2014) and the saved policies in the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 (2006), though the Council are working on delivering a new Joint Local Plan which is due to start examination shortly.

7.4 The material considerations that are relative to the determination of these applications have been satisfactorily addressed (including design and layout, highway safety, biodiversity, land

contamination, heritage impacts, residential amenity and drainage and flooding) such that both of these proposals have been found to comply with the provisions of the NPPF and the relevant development plan policies.

- 7.5 Furthermore, the proposal for a new dwelling would deliver a modest unit of single storey accommodation that would meet a local need in accordance with policies CS2, CS15 and CS18. That proposal would offer a new unit of accommodation without erosion of the countryside and would enable the sustainable expansion of this part of the village in a manner that would offer opportunities to first time buyers, those looking to downsize and those in need of single level living accommodation.
- 7.6 The proposals have been considered in the light of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and have been found to be sustainable development. For all of the above reasons, the LPA is requested to support these proposals and grant planning permission in the terms requested.