

PRE-APPLICATION ENQUIRY DC/20/04905



Southolt Hall Noth Barns, Southolt Hall, Southolt Road, Southolt Eye Suffolk

Pre-application Enquiry

This advice is provided as part of the Council's pre-application advice service.

The advice provided here represents a professional officer opinion based on the material submitted and is given in good faith. The Council as Local Planning Authority must consider every planning application on its own merits after having regard to all material planning considerations. The advice provided here is not in respect of a planning application, has not been subject to public consultation or appropriate statutory consultations and is not necessarily accompanied by all the required supporting material and on that basis the advice is not binding on the Council as the Local Planning Authority.

This Advice does not pre-determine the outcome of any subsequent planning application based on the submitted material and/or the Advice provided.

In providing this Advice the Council is seeking to proactively and constructively provide support to potential applicants seeking to deliver sustainable development as encouraged by the Government within the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] and National Planning Practice Guidance [NPPG]

The Council is permitted to charge for this advice under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2003. The intention is to recover the cost of providing the service and not to deter applicants and their agents from engaging in pre-application discussions.



The Proposal

The proposed development is for:

Conversion of heritage barn to dwelling. Erection of 4 bay cart lodge with loft over to north of barns.

The supporting material comprises:

Defined Red Line Plan 503_01 - Received 02/11/2020
 Block Plan - Existing 503_02 - Received 02/11/2020
 Existing Site Plan 503_02 - Received 02/11/2020
 Floor Plan - Existing 503_03 - Received 02/11/2020
 Elevations - Existing 503_04 - Received 02/11/2020
 Proposed Site Plan 503_06 - Received 02/11/2020
 Floor Plan - Proposed 503_07 - Received 02/11/2020
 Elevations - Proposed 503_08 - Received 02/11/2020
 Roof Plan - Proposed 503_09 - Received 02/11/2020
 Plans - Proposed Cart Lodge 503_10 - Received 02/11/2020

Design and Access Statement - Received 02/11/2020

Heritage Statement - Received 02/11/2020

The Proposed Development and Site

The application site comprises a farmstead with a redundant set of barns. The main timber barn runs east-west and has a large surviving timber frame with midstray and barn doors facing south onto the foldyard. East and West single storey Victorian ranges contain this foldyard. The barn is considered to have significance as a heritage asset. Southolt Hall to the south is a two-storey Grade II listed building. There are no nearby neighbours. The wider surrounding area is agricultural fields.

The application seeks Officer advice regarding the conversion and extension of the existing barn to a dwelling and erection of a cart lodge. The proposed works include the following:

- Renovating and converting main barn
- Renovating and converting foldyard wings
- Erection of North cart lodge in position of earlier barns built between 1904 and 1970 (now lost)
- Enhanced landscaping of the site and native species planting



Relevant Planning History

REF: DC/19/01663	EIA Scoping Opinion for 12 proposed poultry sheds.	DECISION: EIA 08.05.2019
REF: 0484/81	Erection of single storey front extension to dwelling	DECISION: GTD 13.07.1981

Planning Policy

Emerging Local Plan – New Joint Local Plan

The Council is currently in the process of drafting the new Joint Local Plan. However, policies are not currently so sufficiently advanced as to be given much weight. However, as the plan emerges and undergoes the stages of consultation, the weight given to these policies will increase and may affect the considerations outlined within this advice. You are advised to review the progress of the Local Plan as it comes forward with regards to any impacts new policies may have on this proposal. Details are available on the link below.

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/new-joint-local-plan/>

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF was revised in 2019, and includes, at its heart, a presumption in favour of sustainable development, however this does not affect the statutory status of the development plan (Local Plan) as the starting point for decision making. However, it is still a material consideration in decision making.

Five year housing land supply statement

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF requires the approval of proposals that accord with an up to date development plan; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or where the policies which are most important for determining an application are out of date, granting permission unless the NPPF provides clear reasons for refusing the proposal, or adverse impacts outweigh the benefits.

Footnote 7 confirms that with regards to 'out of date' this includes demonstrating a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

The Council currently do have a five-year housing land supply such that the Local Plan and Core Strategy Policies are not considered to be out of date, and applications will be determined accordingly.

The report detailing the five-year land supply can be found on the links below

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/evidence-base/annual-monitoring-report-amr/>

However, Local Plan Policies can also be considered out-of-date where Local Plan Policies are not consistent with the requirements of the NPPF. Assessment of this with respect to relevant policies will be included in the assessment of the principle of this proposal.

The Council's Adopted Development Plan is:

- The Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008) and Focused Review (2014)
- The Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998) and Proposals Map

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/adopted-documents/mid-suffolk-district-council/>

Relevant Policies include:

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework
CS05 - Mid Suffolk's Environment
FC01 - Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable Development
FC01_1 - Mid Suffolk Approach To Delivering Sustainable Development
GP01 - Design and layout of development
HB01 - Protection of historic buildings
HB03 - Conversions and alterations to historic buildings
H09 - Conversion of rural buildings to dwellings
H15 - Development to reflect local characteristics
H16 - Protecting existing residential amenity
T09 - Parking Standards
T10 - Highway Considerations in Development

Constraints

The application site is outside the defined settlement boundary (Built Up Area) for Eye and is therefore designated as Countryside.

Southolt Hall to the south is Grade II listed.

Consultation Responses

Heritage Team

Site and surroundings

In the entry in the Historic Environment Record, the waterways around the farmhouse are described as the remains of a two-part moated system, with the present Hall occupying the eastern part and an orchard the western part. At the time of the 1904 OS sheet parts of the moat had been enlarged, possibly by clay workings according to the HER.

Although the moat is likely to date from the high middle ages, and the 1904 OS sheet marks the Hall as a monument, the existing building appears from the list entry to show no evidence of a date before about 1600, and it is therefore unlikely to be the first building to occupy the site. The scale of the moated enclosure, if such it is, would suggest a substantial building, compared with the more modest scale of the existing building.

The Hall consists of a main range and a slightly later service wing to the north. The east end of the Hall may have been jettied originally as it now appears to have underbuilding in brick.

I would expect the Hall to be accompanied by a good-sized barn of similar date, but the barn in question does not appear to be that barn. The existing farmstead is in two parts, each of which comprises a main block with single-storey wings forming a courtyard. This layout reflects the development of the 'model farm' system of farming in the mid-1800s, which required enclosed shelter yards. Many historic barns were extended to function in this way, and a few sites have a complete new farmstead of this date.

On the evidence of the photograph submitted the barn in question may be of 1800s date, but is probably not earlier than 1700. The wall construction displays primary bracing in a rather crude manner, suggesting either rebuilding of an earlier building, or simply use of reclaimed timbers in a new building. The central storey posts does not appear to show evidence for raking braces, suggesting a date after 1800 when barns were built with knee-braces so as to maximise headroom. The doors to the south are typical for a traditional threshing barn, but are currently installed with the low 'leap' doors at the top, suggesting they are re-used from an older building and that the present building was not used for traditional threshing.

The two wings to the south are marked on the 1884 OS sheet as being open-fronted to the courtyard and are shaded pink indicating masonry construction.

In my view the significance of the building as a heritage asset is modest as the main structure appears to be a relatively late timber-frame. Nonetheless it forms part of a redevelopment of the farm business on 'model farm' principles, along with the farm buildings to the south east. The presence of two such farmsteads is unusual and must give evidence for the nature and scale of farming at the site from the mid-1800s.

Assessment

The proposal is to convert the building to residential use. The proposal includes adding a lean-to extension to the east of the north porch, matching the existing addition to the west.

Some elevations have openings of a rather haphazard and domestic appearance. These would be replaced with a more sympathetic arrangement. The open-fronted character of the single-storey wings would be retained by extensive glazing.

The internal space of the barn is already divided in one end by a first floor. The proposal is to insert a matching floor in the other end with a full-height void space in the central area. This will satisfactorily retain the barn's spatial character.

The proposed cartlodge and store would be in keeping in scale and design, and although extending the area of built development, would relate well to the barn and would provide a foil between the residential use and countryside beyond.

Conclusion

I would support the scheme as proposed.

I would expect an application to indicate the proposed landscaping treatment.

An application for conversion of a traditional farm building should normally be accompanied by a Heritage Asset Assessment prepared by a buildings historian, which will subsequently often serve as

an archaeological record of the building prior to conversion works. I would expect in this instance that the record required will be at Level 1 as described in Historic England guidance: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/understanding-historic-buildings/heag099-understanding-historic-buildings/>. As this is essentially a visual record, I would recommend that it is made at application stage so that it can serve also as a Heritage Statement.

A description of the nature and extent of works to the existing building should be provided in a Schedule of Works, based on a report by a Structural Engineer.

Advice:

Principle of Development

As a full application for the conversion and extension of the barn to a dwelling and erection of a cart lodge, the application would be assessed under Local Plan policies HB01, HB03, H09, H15, H16, T09, T10, Core Strategy (2008) policy CS05 and the NPPF. The policies are for the conversion of rural buildings to dwellings, design standards, protecting existing residential amenity and ensuring the environment is maintained and enhanced with consideration to the existing landscape and design of the local area. Subject to compliance with the aforementioned policies the proposal would be acceptable in principle.

The starting point for any planning decision is the development plan, as identified in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Determination of any application must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. A key material consideration regarding the principle of development is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019.

Local Plan Policy H9 allows for the conversion and change of use of agricultural buildings whose form, bulk and general design are in keeping with the surrounding area, subject to meeting the following criteria:

- The proposed conversion must respect the structure, form and character of the original building and retain any important architectural features Existing openings should be utilised wherever practicable and new openings kept to a minimum;
- Where proposed extensions are essential they should not dominate the original building in either scale, use of material or situation. Proposed extensions should not detract from the appearance or character which warrants the original building being retained as a feature in the countryside. Domestic features, such as porches and chimney stacks, unrelated to the traditional appearance of the building will be considered inappropriate. The creation of a residential curtilage around a newly converted building should not impose adversely on the character of the surrounding countryside;
- The extent to which any residential conversion detracts from the original character of the building or its rural surroundings will be treated as a material consideration. In order to protect the character and appearance of the converted building or the amenity and appearance of the surrounding countryside the District Planning Authority may impose conditions removing permitted development rights.

The proposed conversion includes a lean-to extension to the east of the north porch, to match the existing addition to the west. The existing openings are to be replaced with a sympathetic arrangement and extensive glazing is proposed to the open-front character of the single-storey wings. The barn benefits from an existing first floor and it is proposed to insert a matching floor in the other end. The Heritage Officer considers that this would satisfactorily retain the barns spatial character. The

proposed conversion is considered to respect the structure, form and character of the original building, in compliance with Local Plan Policy H9. The Heritage Officer is also supportive of the design as proposed. Officers consider the proposal to be acceptable in principle.

Design

The pre-application submission includes a full suite of detailed drawings. The proposed development would comprise the extension and conversion of the existing barn to create 1no. family dwelling and the erection of a cart lodge. The following works are proposed:

- Renovating and converting main barn
- Renovating and converting foldyard wings
- Erection of North cart lodge in position of earlier barns built between 1904 and 1970 (now lost)
- Enhanced landscaping of the site and native species planting

The proposed dwelling would be 'U' shaped with a central courtyard area. Both wings would be single storey with the main barn being two-storey. The proposed dwelling would have five bedrooms.

Local Plan Policy H9 requires proposed conversions to "respect the structure, form and character of the original building and retain any architectural features". If a proposed conversion detracts from the original character of the building or its rural surroundings, the extent of which is treated as a material consideration.

As detailed above, both the Heritage Officer and Planning Officer are supportive of the design as proposed. Whilst being large, it retains the existing architectural features and form of the existing barn. The proposed materials would reflect a traditional barn style appearance to retain its rural character. The proposed lean-to extension is modest in size and provides a welcomed symmetry to the building.

The proposed cart lodge would measure approximately 11.6m x 6m. It would have a pitched roof with a ridge height of 5.1m and an eaves height of 2.2m. The proposed cart lodge would comprise of four bays, two of which are open, and a store above. It is considered that the proposed cart lodge is in keeping with the scale and design of the barn.

As detailed above, Officers are supportive of the design proposed; it complies with H9 and GP01 of the Local Plan.

The Historic Environment

A proposal that includes the curtilage or setting of a Listed Building or works to a Listed Building must respond to this significant consideration. The duty imposed by the Listed Buildings Act 1990 imposes a presumption against the grant of planning permission which causes harm to a heritage asset. A finding of harm, even less than substantial harm, to the setting of a listed building must be given "considerable importance and weight*" (*Bath Society v Secretary of State for the Environment [1991] 1 W.L.R. 1303).

Southolt Hall is a two-storey detached Grade II listed building. The Hall consists of a main range and a slightly later service wing to the north. The east end of the Hall may have been jettied originally as it now appears to have underbuilding in brick. The existing farmstead is in two parts, each of which comprises a main block with single-storey wings forming a courtyard. This layout reflects the development of the 'model farm' system of farming in the mid-1800s, which required enclosed shelter

yards. Many historic barns were extended to function in this way, and a few sites have a complete new farmstead of this date.

The Heritage Officer considers the significance of the building as a heritage asset to be modest as the main structure appears to be a relatively late timber-frame. It forms part of a redevelopment of the farm business on 'model farm' principles, along with the farm buildings to the south east. The presence of two such farmsteads is unusual and must give evidence for the nature and scale of farming at the site from the mid-1800s.

The Heritage Team have reviewed the pre-application enquiry and have made comments on the proposed conversion. Their full comments can be found above. In summary, the Heritage Officer is supportive of the design and proposed.

It is recommended that any future application is accompanied by a landscaping plan, indicating landscaping treatment, and a Heritage Asset Assessment, which will subsequently often serve as an archaeological record of the building prior to conversion works. In addition, a description of the nature and extent of works to the existing building should be provided in a Schedule of Works, based on a report by a Structural Engineer.

The Heritage Team would be consulted on any future proposal where a full assessment would be made. Should any harm to the heritage assets be identified, it would need to be outweighed by public benefits generated by the proposal (i.e. additional housing, employment opportunities, etc.). Given that the proposal is for one dwelling the benefits would be minor. In this case, compliance with Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998) policy H9 will be imperative.

The Natural Environment

A Preliminary Ecology Appraisal (PEA) should be carried out to assess the likely impacts of development on designated sites, Protected Species and Priority Species & Habitats, as well as setting out any mitigation and enhancement measures required. Given the age and location of the barns, there is potential for them to host suitable habitat for bats and birds.

Any future application will consult Place Services Ecology. Should any objections be raised, this may warrant refusal of the application.

Highways, Access and Parking

The enquiry submission proposed to create a new access from the existing farm track which joins Southolt Road to the north. In respect of Policy T09 and T10 and Paragraph 109 of the NPPF, development should not adversely affect the highway network and associated safety.

The Highways Authority will be consulted on any future application where the impact on the highway will be assessed. An assessment would be made regarding the intensification of the farm track. The proposal will need to ensure that the parking provision from the proposed dwelling is met, in accordance with the parking standards set out within SCC Guidance for Parking. (<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-development-advice/Suffolk-Guidance-for-Parking-2019-Adopted-by-SCC.pdf>).

An objection from the Highways Authority would be sufficient to warrant refusal of the application.

Landscaping

The proposed site plan illustrates the area for outside amenity space and soft and hard landscaping. In compliance with Local Plan Policy H9, the residential curtilage proposed would respect the existing boundaries and maintain the character of the area. The Heritage Officer requests that any future application indicates the proposed boundary treatments for consideration.

Residential Amenity, Safe and Secure Communities

There are no nearby residential neighbours, and the application site is set back significantly from the highway. On this basis, Officers do not perceive that the proposal would have a significant impact of the residential amenity of any nearby neighbours. Sufficient distance is considered to be afforded to Southolt Hall to the south. A full assessment would be conducted at application stage via a site visit. The proposal is likely to be acceptable in this regard.

Conclusions/ Planning Balance

The proposal for the conversion and extension of a historic barn to form a dwelling and erection of a cart lodge is acceptable in principle under the provisions of Local Plan Policy H9. Whilst being large, it retains the existing architectural features and form of the existing barn. The proposed materials would reflect a traditional barn style appearance to retain its rural character. The proposed lean-to extension is modest in size and provides a welcomed symmetry to the building. The proposed conversion is considered to respect the structure, form and character of the original building, in compliance with Local Plan Policy H9. The proposed cart lodge is considered to be in keeping with the scale and design of the barn. Overall, Officers are supportive of the design proposed; it complies with H9 and GP01 of the Local Plan.

The Heritage Team would be consulted on any future proposal where a full assessment be made. Should any harm to the heritage assets be identified, it would need to be outweighed by public benefits generated by the proposal (i.e. additional housing, employment opportunities, etc.). In this case, compliance with Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998) policy H9 will be imperative.

A Preliminary Ecology Appraisal (PEA) should be submitted with any future application, setting out any mitigation and enhancement measures required. Any future application will consult Place Services Ecology. Should any objections be raised, this may warrant refusal of the application.

The application submission will need to demonstrate that the visibility splays and on-site parking requirements can be met. The Highways Authority will be consulted on any future application where the impact on the highway network and safety will be assessed. Should an objection be raised in this respect, this would be sufficient to warrant refusal of the application.

Consideration will be necessary as to the impact on the neighbouring properties in terms of loss of privacy and amenity. However, it is envisaged that sufficient distance is afforded and vegetative screening is adequate so as to not have a significant impact.

Any future application would be subject to a site visit as part of the formal application process where material considerations would be assessed in full.

On the basis of the above considerations and conclusions, should you wish to proceed with an application a full planning application would be required.

Expected Supporting Material in the Event of a Planning Application

Our Joint Local Validation Checklist sets out the details required for each application and this is available at <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/planning/development-management/apply-for-planning-permission/national-and-local-validation-requirements/> However on the basis of the information provided I would particularly draw your attention to the need to provide:

- Red Line Site Plan
- Land Contamination Questionnaire and Report
- Structural Survey
- Ecological Report
- Planning Statement
- Heritage Asset Assessment
- Design and Access Statement
- Existing/Proposed Block Plan
- Proposed and Existing Elevations
- Proposed and Existing Floor Plans
- Highway & Access Drawing
- Landscaping Plan
- CIL Form

This is not an exhaustive list of all documents and information which need to support your application, as mentioned above please consult the Joint Local Validation Checklist.

- For all types of development you can submit electronically via the Planning Portal https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200232/planning_applications (please note that applying via this site may incur a submission charge)
- For all types of development you can download the relevant application form from the Planning Portal and send to us by email or post https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200126/applications/61/paper_forms

Contributions

Community Infrastructure Levy

Applications for development are subject to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

All new build development over 100sqm (internal), including residential extensions and annexes and all new dwellings regardless of size must pay CIL.

CIL is payable on Permitted Development as well as Planning Permission development

CIL is payable when the development is commenced and you must notify of commencement using the appropriate forms

Failure to submit a Form 6 Commencement Notice and give a minimum of 1 days notice of commencement will result in the loss of exemptions, relief and/or the right to pay CIL by instalments.

As part of any application you will need to submit the appropriate CIL form. Further information is available on our website: <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/community-infrastructure-levy-and-section-106/community-infrastructure-levy-cil/>

The CIL forms are also available online:

https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200126/applications/70/community_infrastructure_levy/5

Building Control

Pre-application advice is also available from our Building Control Team. Find information online: <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/building-control/> or contact the Building Control Manager, Paul Hughes, on 01449 724502. We can offer specialist support, local knowledge and a quality service with expert independent and impartial advice.

Charges include access to the surveyor appointed for any query that may arise before or during construction as well as a tailored inspection regime including inspections which only need to be booked by 10am on the day the inspection is required.

We can also provide carbon emission / fabric energy efficiency calculations at pre-application stage to support planning applications and the necessary Part L calculations and Energy Performance Certificates for Building Regulations compliance and our partners at LABC Warranty can offer a very competitive warranty for all new dwellings which we would be happy to provide further details for / liaise with on your behalf.

NOTES

Please note that any advice provided by the Council's Officers is informal opinion only and is made without prejudice to any formal determination which may be given in the event of an application being submitted. In particular, it will not constitute a formal response or decision of the Council with regard to any future planning applications, which will be subject to wider consultation and publicity. Although the Case Officer may indicate the likely outcome of a subsequent planning application, no guarantees can or will be given about the decision.

This advice is based on the information provided, background details and constraints at the current time. These circumstances can change and this may affect the advice you have received. You may wish to seek confirmation that the circumstances have not changed if you are considering submitting an application and any substantial amount of time has passed since the date of this advice.

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Any questions please contact us

