



SUPPORTING STATEMENT

In respect of an outline planning application for the erection of a one and a half storey detached dwelling and garage (following demolition of existing nissen hut) together with new vehicular access from Mill Road at;

Land at Forge Barn, Mill Road, Wyverstone,
Suffolk, IP14 4SE

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement is prepared on behalf of Mr S Ruthen in support of an outline planning application for the erection of a detached dwelling and garage on land adjacent Forge Barn, Mill Road, Wyverstone. The proposal includes provision for the demolition of the existing nissen hut that is sited on the land and the provision of a new vehicular access.

1.2 It will consider the planning policy position and provide an overview of the relevant material considerations relating to the proposed development.

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

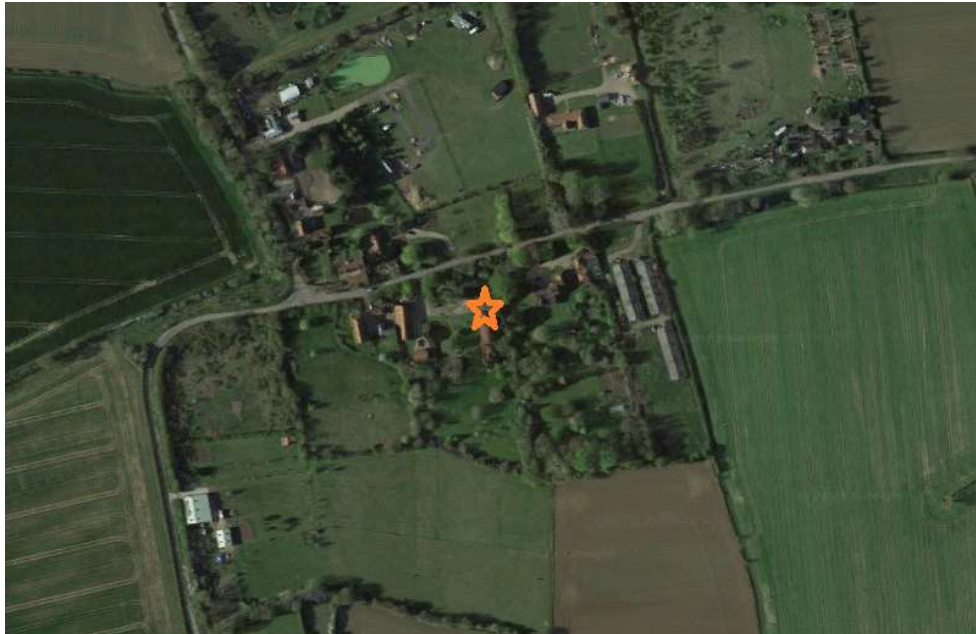


Image 1: Location Plan

1.4 The application is also supported by a Heritage Assessment (HA) prepared by Nic Joubert. This statement will refer to the HA wherever relevant, and the HA should be read alongside this statement.

1.5 In April 2021, outline planning permission was refused on this site for a development described as *“Erection of 1No dwelling and garage (following demolition of nissen hut)”* under Council reference DC/21/01257. This application thereby provides a revised scheme and seeks to address the concerns raised in respect of that previous proposal.

2.0 The Site

2.1 The site is shown in red in the site location plan which accompanies this proposal.

2.2 In considering the previous application made on this site, the Planning Officer described the site as;

“The application site is situated in the countryside and the prevailing pattern of the development is of agricultural buildings and associated farmhouses, varying in scale and style.

The proposed development is for creation of a detached dwelling following the demolition of an existing dilapidated 'Nissen hut' within curtilage of a converted barn, known as Forge Barn, under approval 0487/95/.

The structure is a prefabricated and appears to be ex-aircraft hangar consisting of sections of corrugated iron, overgrown vegetation/shrubs is observed on site.

To the west of the site is the Plough, a Grade II Listed mid to late C16 timber-framed house, to the west of the site, Shepherds Barn, a Grade II Listed early C17 timber-framed barn, now converted to a dwelling, to the north west (listed as 'Barn About 40 Metres South East of Sudbourne Farmhouse') and Sudbourne Farmhouse, a Grade II Listed early C17 farmhouse or former farmhouse further to the north, including any curtilage listed buildings”.

2.3 This provides a general overview of the site and surroundings. However, it should also be noted that the land is not the subject of any specific landscape designations and lies wholly in Flood Zone 1 and is not, therefore, at risk of flooding.

2.4 There are no trees on site protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

2.5 The HA provides further context to the site and the heritage assets that lie in proximity to it.

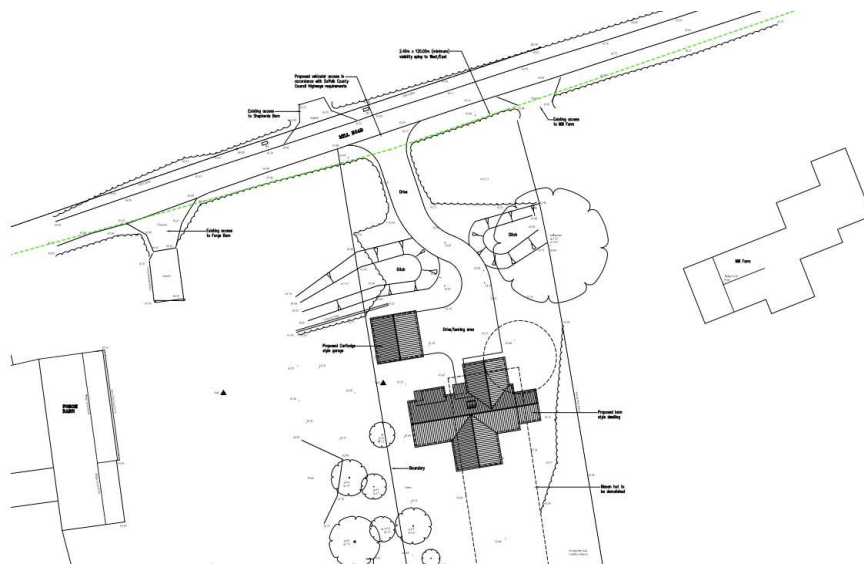
3.0 The Proposal

3.1 The proposal comprises an outline planning application for a detached dwelling in lieu of the existing nissen hut, along with a detached garage and new vehicular access.

3.2 Whilst the proposal is made in outline form, indicative details of the siting, scale and form of the proposal are submitted in support of the application to demonstrate how the site could be developed. These details include an elevation to the road which demonstrates how the dwelling would relate to the scale of Forge Barn and Mill Farm, and also to the existing mature landscaping. The nissen hut is also shown for the purposes of demonstrating the scale of the property, as shown below.



3.3 The siting of the new dwelling is also demonstrated below, with Forge Barn to the west and Mill Farm to the east depicted also.



3.4 The proposed dwelling is to be served from a new access point off Mill Road that lies to the north of the site. The access provides visibility splays of 2.4m x 120m (minimum) in both directions and would enable vehicles to enter the land, manoeuvre and park all within the confines of the site.

3.5 Whilst submitted in outline, the indicative elevation identifies a building of traditional form and comprising a palette of traditional materials also. Mature landscaping to the front of the site would be retained wherever possible, with only the minimum necessary to create the access drive removed.

3.6 Alongside this supporting statement, the applications also contain;

- Completed Planning Application Forms;
- Plans by Nick Peasland Architectural Services Limited;
- Groundsure Homebuyers Report;
- Land Contamination Questionnaire;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) prepared by Adonis Ecology Ltd
- Heritage Impact Assessment
- Flood Map for Planning Extract;
- CIL Additional Questions Form.

4.0 Planning History

4.1 As detailed above, there has been a recent refusal of outline planning permission relating to this parcel of land, dating from April 2021.

4.2 An application for the demolition of the existing poultry houses and erection of two dwellings is currently under consideration in respect of the buildings located to the east of the site (see application DC/21/04323/OUT). However, as this has not yet been determined it is not referenced further in this statement.

4.3 Of interest, however, is the recent grant of planning permission opposite the site, on the north side of Mill Road, for a development described as *“Erection of a detached dwelling (following the grant of outline planning permission DC/19/00440 for the erection of 1 no. dwelling)”* under Council reference DC/20/02099. That permission dates from July 2020 and is relevant to the consideration of this proposal.

5.0 Planning Policy Context

5.1 The revised National Planning Policy Framework was published in July 2021. It sets out the Government’s planning policy and is a material consideration when determining planning applications.

5.2 The NPPF is wide ranging and LPAs are required to be proactive in making planning decisions and apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF also sets out other key principles, including;

- the need to increase the supply of new housing in well-connected locations;
- ensuring good standards of sustainable design for new development that will function well;
- add to the overall quality of an area;
- optimise site potential;
- respond to local character and reflect the identity of local surroundings;
- create safe and accessible environments, and;
- be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

5.3 The NPPF is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which assists applicants and decision makers to interpret the NPPF.

5.4 In terms of Local Policy, the following policies are considered to be relevant to this proposal.

Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Development Plan Document and the Core Strategy Focused Review

- FC1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- FC1.1 - Mid Suffolk Approach to Delivering Sustainable Development
- CS1 - Settlement Hierarchy
- CS2 - Development in the Countryside and Countryside Villages
- CS5 - Mid Suffolk's Environment
- CS9 - Density and Mix

Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998

- GP1 - Design and Layout of Development
- H7 - Restricting Housing Development Unrelated to Needs of Countryside
- H13 - Design and Layout of Housing Development
- H14 - A range of house types to meet different accommodation needs.
- H15 - Development to Reflect Local Characteristics
- H16 - Protecting Existing Residential Amenity
- H17 - Keeping Residential Development Away from Pollution
- SB2 - Development Appropriate to its Setting
- HB1 - Protection of Historic Buildings
- T10 - Highway Considerations in Development

5.5 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 Paragraph 10 of the 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"*.

6.2 In a recent appeal in the village of Bacton (Appeal Ref: APP/W3520/W/18/3209219) dated 30th July 2019, the Inspector carried out an assessment of the relevant development plan policies pursuant to paragraph 213 of the NPPF. The Inspector found that;

“14. The main parties agreed that those policies that are most important for determining the application are cited in the Reason for Refusal. LP Policy GP1 sets out a range of criteria which relate to the layout of development. LP Policy HB1 is a heritage policy that generally reiterates the statutory duty in relation to heritage assets. LP Policy H16 is concerned with the protection of residential amenity and states that the Council will resist the loss of open spaces which contribute to the character or appearance of an area and which are important for recreation or amenity purposes. CS Policy CS5 provides that all development will maintain and enhance the environment and retain local distinctiveness.

Weight to be given to the most important policies

15. In view of advice in paragraph 11 d) of the Framework, it is necessary to consider how consistent the aforementioned policies are with the Framework, to assess what weight should be attached to them. Paragraph 213 explains that due weight should be given to relevant policies according to their degree of consistency with the Framework, the closer the policies in the plan to those in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given. For the purposes of this exercise, the Wavendon judgement confirms that “an overall judgment must be formed as to whether or not taken as a whole these policies are to be regarded as out-of-date for the purpose of the decision”.

16. The first point to make is that the LP is now of some vintage with Policies GP1, HB1 and H16 pre-dating the Framework by some considerable margin. However, as paragraph 213 makes clear, policies should not be considered out of date simply because they were adopted prior to the publication of the Framework.

17. Policy GP1 is consistent with the aims of the Framework to foster good design. However, despite its inclusion in the refusal reasoning, the Council’s opposition to the scheme does not rely on any specific allegation of poor design. This is logical given that the matters to which GP1 pertains would fall to be considered at the reserved matters stage. I do not therefore consider that GP1 passes the ‘most important’ test.

18. LP Policy H16 is concerned with protecting existing residential amenity and character of ‘primarily residential areas’. The second limb to the policy states that the ‘loss of open spaces

which contribute to the character or appearance of an area and which are important for recreation or amenity purposes' (my emphasis) will be resisted. From reading the supporting text I do not consider this policy was ever intended to be used in the context of a visually contained, arable field that has no public access to it. Even if I am wrong about that, I do not consider the appeal site is 'important' for amenity purposes given its ordinary everyday meaning. The Framework does also not contain such a blanket policy in relation to amenity. Subsequently the policy fails both the 'most important' and consistency test.

19. Whilst the general thrust of LP Policy HB1 and CSFR Policy FC.1.1 might well be consistent with the Framework, that is not enough in my view. These policies do not allow for the weighing of public benefits against any heritage harm, something which has been established practice for a number of years now. Whilst the CSFR post-dates the original Framework, as a matter of simple judgment, Policy FC1.1 cannot be seen as being in conformity with it for the above reason.

20. As I myself and other colleagues have found in the Stowupland, Woolpit and Claydons decisions, CS Policy CS5 in requiring development actually to maintain and enhance the historic environment goes beyond the statutory duty and paragraph 185 of the Framework, the latter of which requires decision makers to "take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets". Blanket protection for the natural or historic environment cannot therefore be seen as being consistent with the Framework.

21. Because of these inconsistencies and irrespective of the Council's HLS position, I consider that the policies most important for determining the application are out-of-date. The fact that the Council itself recently came to the same view in relation to Policies GP1, H16, CS5 and FC1.1 adds further weight to my findings above. As a result, the weight which can be attributed to these policies has to be commensurately reduced and the default position identified in paragraph 11 d) of the Framework is engaged".

- 6.3 It is clear that these policies, a number of which are also pertinent in this case, are out-of-date, and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out in paragraph 11(d), is engaged. What this means for decision-taking is;

“d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting 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”.

6.4 This assessment of the most important policies (which are also those which are most important in this instance) identifies these as being out-of-date where, in accordance with paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, the tilted balance (the presumption in favour of sustainable development) is engaged.

6.5 This proposal should, therefore, 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”.

6.6 Paragraph 80 of the NPPF 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”.*

6.7 A recent High Court judgment (dated 15th November 2017) has shed light on the correct interpretation of the NPPF when it comes to determining whether a development is isolated. It related to a case at Wethersfield in the nearby district of Braintree. The following is a concise summary taken from the Planning Resource website (note that reference to paragraph 55 should now be read as paragraph 79):-

“Developer Granville Developments had been refused planning permission to build the new homes off Lower Green Road, Blackmore End, Wethersfield, but successfully appealed to a planning inspector who granted consent in February this year.

He found that, even on the most favourable interpretation, the area's deliverable sites for new housing fell well below the five-year supply required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The development would not cause material harm to the character and appearance of the area and, although it was not within an established settlement boundary, there were a number of houses nearby and the bungalows could not be viewed as isolated dwellings in the countryside.

In challenging the inspector's decision, Braintree District Council argued that he had wrongly interpreted the NPPF. Given the paucity of services and amenities in the area, residents of the bungalows would be required to rely heavily on their cars and the new dwellings would clearly be isolated, it argued.

Mrs Justice Lang noted that the word isolated is not defined in the NPPF. However, in dismissing the council's appeal, she found that the council's interpretation was too restrictive.

She noted that there were existing dwellings to the north and south of the development site - which was originally home to agricultural buildings that had been demolished. There was also a home to the west, on the other side of a road.

In his decision, the inspector had also justifiably focused on the economic benefits of the scheme in providing work for local builders and the likelihood that two new households would give their custom to local businesses.”

6.8 Specifically Mrs. Justice Lang concluded (paras.28 and 29):

“28. NPPF 55 cannot be read as a policy against development in settlements without facilities and services since it expressly recognises that development in a small village may enhance and maintain services in a neighbouring village, as people travel to use them. The PPG advises that “all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas”, cross-referencing to NPPF 55, “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. NPPF 17 penultimate bullet point identifies as a core planning principle to “actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable”. But as the PPG states, NPPF 29 and 34 recognise that 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. The scale of the proposed development may also be a relevant factor when considering transport and accessibility. As Mr Dagg rightly pointed out, the policy in NPPF 17 in favour of focusing development in locations which are or can be made sustainable applies in particular to “significant development”.

29. For these reasons, I agree with the Defendants that the Claimant was seeking to add an impermissible gloss to NPPF 55 in order to give it a meaning not found in its wording and not justified by its context.”

6.9 The decision of Mrs Justice Lang was the subject of reference to the Court of Appeal by Braintree District Council, and Lord Justice Lindblom (on 28th March 2018) upheld the decision. Therefore, it follows that if the development is not isolated in the ordinary meaning of the word, paragraph 80 of the NPPF is not engaged.

6.10 In this instance, the site lies within a group of residential properties, and in an area where permission has recently been granted for a new dwelling Immediately opposite this site. As such, given the site's positive relationship with the existing residential properties, this cannot be considered to be isolated in the normal understanding of the meaning of the term. For these reasons, it can be concluded that the site is not isolated and the special circumstances required to be demonstrated by paragraph 80 of the NPPF are not engaged in this case.

6.11 This statement will thereby now go on to consider the specific impacts arising from this proposal and will not consider the principle of development further.

The Previous Refusal

6.12 The previous refusal of planning permission identified three particular issues of concern, which can be summarised as;

- The alleged impact on heritage assets;
- The impact on the character of the locality, and;
- The sustainability of the location.

6.13 This statement will, therefore, focus on these matters as the primary issues to be considered, though will also consider a number of other material considerations which all contribute to the determination of this proposal.

Heritage Assets

6.14 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local planning authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings (Sections 16 and 66).

- 6.15 Section 16 of the NPPF sets out the Government’s position on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Paragraph 189 of the NPPF requires applicants to describe the impact of proposals on the significance of any heritage asset to a level of detail proportionate to the assets’ importance. As set out above, this should be no more than is sufficient to understand the potential of that impact on the significance. Paragraph 195 requires local planning authorities to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 6.16 Paragraph 197 sets out that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 6.17 Paragraph 199 of the NPPF apports great weight to a designated asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. The NPPF highlights that significance can be harmed or lost through physical change and any harm requires clear and convincing justification.
- 6.18 Paragraphs 200 and 201 address how local planning authorities should deal with situations where the assessment of impacts has identified harm to a heritage asset.
- 6.19 At the local level, saved policy HB1 deals with listed buildings and their settings and provides a number of criteria against which to assess proposals that affect listed buildings.

- 6.20 These legislative and policy provisions thereby identify a need to assess the significance of the heritage asset in a proportionate manner, identify the impact of the proposed development on that significance, balance any harm arising against the public benefits and ensure that the special character of the building is preserved and, where possible, enhanced.
- 6.21 The application is supported by a detailed Heritage Assessment which addresses the heritage aspects of the proposal. The applicant relies upon the HA to set out their justification for the new dwelling here and the absence of harm caused by the proposal. This addresses the comments made by the Council's Heritage Officer in respect of the previous application which, in part, appears to have arisen from an absence of such an assessment with the previous application and some misunderstanding of the historic context.
- 6.22 The proposal complies with policy HB1 and the respective elements of the NPPF.

Impact on the Locality

- 6.23 Policy CS5 requires development to be of a high-quality design that respects the local distinctiveness and the built heritage of Mid Suffolk, enhancing the character and appearance of the district. Policy H13 of the Local Plan requires new housing development to be expected to achieve a high standard of design and layout and be of a scale and density appropriate to the site and its surroundings, whilst Policy H15 of the Local Plan similarly requires new housing to be consistent with the pattern and form of development in the area and its setting.
- 6.24 Policy GP1 of the Local Plan states that proposals comprising poor design and layout will be refused, requiring proposals to meet a number of design criteria including maintenance or enhancement of the surroundings and use of compatible materials.
- 6.25 In considering the previous proposal, the Planning Officer commented that;

“While many of these outbuildings have been converted to dwellings, the sense of a historically rural agricultural area, with development largely confined to sporadic farmsteads, is still readable and reasonably well preserved, including in the conversions themselves.”

As a result, a new dwelling on the site would unduly disrupt this well-established and historic pattern, it would erode the relatively undeveloped, rural setting of The Plough, Sudbourne Farmhouse and associated buildings, including Shepherd's Barn.

The proposal would introduce an obviously residential building, that would thus be experienced differently to the Nissen hut, and also introduce further residential paraphernalia, and thus constitute cumulative harm in this regard, but with no heritage benefit to consider this harm against in this case.

It is noted that design aspect is reserved at this stage. However, it is considered that harm would still occur in principle, regardless of design and style”.

6.26 The Planning Officer’s comments are noted, and the applicant does not contest that there would be a change in the way this site is appreciated resulting from the creation of a new dwelling in lieu of the nissen hut. However, they do not agree that the result is one that can only be harmful, and also consider that the change in the local environment that will occur from the permission granted opposite also needs to be taken into this context also.

6.27 The image below shows the view towards the site from the approximate location of the significant cartlodge that has been approved close to the roadside as part of the proposal approved under DC/20/02099.



6.28 The extract below shows the size and scale of the dwelling that will be sited here, along with the cartlodge which, as the image above shows, will be readily visible above the hedgeline.



6.29 As can be seen, this will be a significant new dwelling which will be seen in the context of the new build property slightly further to the east and the dwelling that can be seen in the background in the image at paragraph 6.27.

6.30 The context to the site will, therefore, be vastly different when this new dwelling is constructed, and has already seen change through the new build property adjacent as aforementioned. However, that does not mean that such change is harmful. The new properties enhance their surroundings and thereby bring benefits to the locality, with the extent of change being such that improves the surroundings rather than detracting from them.

- 6.31 The very same situation would arise here. The nissen hut is of no architectural or landscape value. In fact, it significantly detracts from the setting of the adjacent properties (a point that does not appear to have been considered at all in any of the commentary of the previous application) and has, for many years, been in a state of disrepair. It's removal would enhance the setting of the site and improve its landscape impact also.
- 6.32 The proposal follows the pattern of development in the locality, providing a linear development that respects the existing development pattern and the relationship to existing properties. It facilitates a dwelling of traditional design and vernacular materials, and there are no grounds to consider that the new dwelling would not be appropriate to this rural setting or sit comfortably in its surroundings. As evidenced by the detailed design of the dwelling, the proposal would deliver a dwelling of some character, and which is lower than the height of adjacent property.
- 6.33 The proposed manoeuvring area does not dominate the site frontage, with significant green spaces proposed to the site frontage inclusive of retained planting. Space is retained to the site boundaries, and on-site provision will be made for the storage of bins and a presentation point adjacent to the access.
- 6.34 A good sized garden is delivered to the rear of the property, set away from the road and thereby offering quality amenity space that reflects that to other properties in the vicinity.
- 6.35 The approach taken here, is, therefore, in accordance with the principles of good design set out in the NPPF, which seeks (paragraph 130) to ensure that planning policies and decisions ensure that development will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks.
- 6.36 The proposal would meet each and every one of these aims, and would thereby comply with the provisions of the NPPF and the Council's design policies.

Sustainability of the Location

6.37 In considering the application opposite the site, the Planning Officer found that;

“Furthermore, the proposal site lies within the settlement pattern of an existing settlement, with access to services and facilities, and is not considered to be isolated as per the meaning in paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

In terms of an assessment of sustainability, future occupants would have access to local services at Bacton, such as the Village Shop, Pub, Primary School, Doctor's Surgery, Garage and Church which the proposed development would in turn serve to support. In addition the village is served by a limited bus service which could be viable for employment purposes. On the basis of the above considerations, the principle of a new dwelling on the site is considered acceptable, subject to acceptability when assessed against all other material planning considerations”.

6.38 It really cannot be logical to determine that this site, which is technically closer to the bus stops than that commented on above, is unsustainable in light of those comments. Indeed, the application made for the site adjacent to this one (which is currently under consideration) reiterates the sustainability of the site and draws attention not only to the site opposite this one, but to the following cases also;

- A dwelling has been allowed on appeal on land opposite the application site (DC/19/03972).
- Planning permission has been granted for the erection of a dwelling on land to the south of Foxhollow (DC/19/03846).
- The Council has also granted planning permission for 2 dwellings in Rectory Road (DC/19/00023).

6.39 In light of the presumption in favour of sustainable development being engaged (as set out in paragraphs 6.2 – 6.5 above), the absence of robust policy grounds against which to refuse this proposal solely on the basis of it being outside a defined settlement boundary is clear. Paragraph 79 of the NPPF identifies that *“To promote sustainable development in rural areas,*

housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby". These aims are met entirely by this proposal.

Highway Safety and Parking

- 6.40 Policy T9 and T10 requires development to be delivered with safe and sufficient highways access and function.
- 6.41 Paragraph 111 of the NPPF confirms that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. The proposed splays are shown to accord with the required standards and were agreed previously within the previous application as being deliverable and suitable. The lane is lightly trafficked in any event.
- 6.42 On-site parking will be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Suffolk Adopted Parking Standards SPD (2015), ensuring future residents are provided with on-site parking provision, thus avoiding parked vehicles on the public highway. The turning space is functional and designed so as not to dominate the site and each property is indicated to be provided with dedicated garage spaces in which to park vehicles.
- 6.43 As such, the proposal can be seen to meet the requirements of the development plan and the NPPF insofar as it relates to highway safety and parking.

Residential Amenity

- 6.44 Policy H13 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure new housing development protects the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 6.45 Policy H16 of the Local Plan seeks to protect the existing amenity of residential areas.

- 6.46 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF sets out a number of core planning principles as to underpin decision-taking, including, seeking to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- 6.47 The site is of a scale that will ensure that the proposal would not give rise to any overlooking of neighbouring property. Furthermore, the spacing between the proposed dwelling and existing properties means that the proposal would not give rise to loss of light to neighbouring occupants nor would the proposal have an overbearing impact on any adjoining land.
- 6.48 Occupants of the property would benefit from private amenity space that is set away from the road and which is private. As such, the proposal would offer good quality amenity space in line with the aims of paragraph 130 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.49 The site lies wholly in Flood Zone 1 and is thereby outside the designated Flood Zones 2 and 3. Suitable drainage can be designed to ensure that the development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere by use of soakaways (if ground conditions permit) or SUDS designed systems.
- 6.50 As such, there is no identifiable restraint upon the delivery of drainage for both surface and foul water that would prevent planning permission being granted in this regard.

Land Contamination

- 6.51 The application is supported by a Groundsure report which demonstrates that the development is not at risk from land contamination.

Ecology

- 6.52 The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) prepared by Adonis Ecology Ltd which addresses the ecological impacts of this proposal and which was considered as part of the previous proposal on this site.

6.53 The PEA was found to be acceptable with the Council's Ecological Consultants raising no objections to the proposal. As there is no reason to take a differing view on this occasion, it is considered that the proposal fully address the ecological impacts and has shown to be able to deliver appropriate mitigate and enhancement.

Sustainability

6.54 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF outlines the three pillars of sustainable development that schemes should seek to deliver. The proposal is considered relative to these three objectives below.

6.55 From an economic aspect, the construction of a new dwelling on this site 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.

6.56 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".

6.57 Notwithstanding that a proposal in this location would contribute to enhancing and maintaining services in this village and neighbouring areas, including Needham market and Stowmarket, the PPG advises that "*all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas*", cross-referencing to NPPF para 80, "*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 103 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". 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.

- 6.56 Furthermore, the delivery of a new dwelling to the market would help to meet housing need in the locality and would help to boost the supply of housing required by the NPPF. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets the social objective of sustainable development. The proposal's contribution to the Council's housing supply should also not be underestimated. The applicants intend 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.
- 6.57 With regards to the environmental elements of the proposal, the proposed dwelling would 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 would be constructed utilising water efficient taps, showers and toilets, and energy efficient white goods.
- 6.58 Biodiversity improvements can be delivered (as suggested at page 25 of the PEA) on the site which will actively encourage biodiversity on the land. This will be supported by new landscape planting on the site which, coupled with the loss of the poor quality nissen hut, will bring further enhancement to the site. With this in mind, the proposal is considered to offer environmental gains that would support the environmental objective of sustainable development.
- 6.59 As such, 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.

7.0 Planning Balance

- 7.1 As identified through the course of this statement, there are a number of issues which the LPA will need to balance in reaching a decision on this proposal. This section of this statement seeks to work through these matters and balance them in a manner that is consistent with how both Planning Inspectors and the Council's Planning Officers have carried out the balancing exercise in respect of recent applications that bring about similar considerations.
- 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 Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008), its Focused Review in 2012 and the saved policies in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998). In light of this application relating to a proposal for new housing, an important consideration in determining this application is that the most important policies for determining this proposal are out-of-date and, therefore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged.
- 7.4 The proposal has, therefore, been assessed against the three objectives of sustainable development. In respect of the economic strand, the applicant recognises that there would be modest benefits from the construction of the new dwelling and from the contribution made by future occupants into the local economy. However modest that may be, the proposal is economically sustainable.
- 7.5 In terms of the social dimension, the NPPF recognises the contribution made by the delivery of housing and the vitality of rural communities to the social aspect of sustainability. The site is located in an accessible location and, in the absence of any social detriment, the proposal must also be considered to be socially sustainable. A modest increase of homes in rural areas can assist the social stimulus of a village, with Wyverstone being no different.

7.6 The matter of environmental sustainability is, as is often the case in rural areas, more complex. The PPG recognises that there is a need to take a flexible approach to considering the potential for sustainable transport modes in rural areas and the site has been found to be well located in terms of the facilities and services on offer. In this regard, and in the absence of any recognisable detriment to matters such as heritage assets, land contamination, biodiversity or flood risk, the proposal is found to be environmentally sustainable also.

7.7 This is particularly the case when the environmental benefits of the scheme are considered. These include;

- The use of renewable technologies would facilitate a low-carbon development;
- The construction of the dwelling would include significant insulation and energy efficient white goods, and would include water efficient showers and toilets;
- The provision of new landscape planting and the removal of the nissen hut will enhance the general environment around the site, and;
- The introduction of ecological enhancements is proposed on the site.

7.8 These benefits are considered to go a significant way to offsetting any limited environmental harm that may be considered to be occur (notwithstanding that this statement has found no such harm to occur in any event). As such, any harm would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme, where the delivery of a new dwelling to the market would contribute to the districts housing supply. As such, the balancing of the main issues would result in a conclusion that the proposal is sustainable and, therefore, there would be a presumption in favour of it.

7.9 In light of this, and taking account of all the considerations set out above, it is hoped that the LPA will support this sustainable development by granting planning permission in the terms requested.