



PLANNING STATEMENT

(Incorporating Design and Access Statement)

In respect of a planning application for the formation
of a new conservation pond at;

Buxhall Vale, Buxhall, Suffolk, IP14 3DH

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is prepared in support of an application for the formation of a new conservation pond at Buxhall Vale, Buxhall.
- 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 This Planning Statement/Design and Access Statement should be read alongside the suite of plans provided by Last and Tricker Partnership that also accompany this application. The submitted Heritage Statement will also be referred to within this statement, such that the heritage matters arising from this proposal will not be repeated here.

2.0 The Site

- 2.1 Chapter 3 of the Heritage Statement provides details of the site.
- 2.2 The applicants rely on that commentary to provide description of the site and its history.
- 2.3 The site falls within a Special Landscape Area and lies partly within Flood Zone 2.

3.0 The Proposal

- 3.1 The proposal seeks planning permission for the construction of a conservation pond to the northeast of the property.
- 3.2 The application is accompanied by an assessment of the proposal prepared by Miles Water Engineering which provides a detailed appraisal of the proposal and its context.

4.0 Planning Policy

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (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. The NPPF is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which assists applicants and decision makers in interpretation of the NPPF.

4.2 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

CS5 - Mid Suffolk's Environment

Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998

GP1 - Design and Layout of Development

CL2 - Special Landscape Areas

CL8 - Protecting Wildlife Habitats

H16 - Protecting Existing Residential Amenity

HB01 - Protection of Historic Buildings

HB07 - Protecting Gardens and Parkland of Historic Interest

SB2 - Development Appropriate to its Setting

T9 - Parking Standards

T10 - Highway Considerations in Development

4.3 The above policies will be considered in the 'Planning Considerations' chapter of this statement, wherever relevant to the consideration of this proposal.

5.0 Relevant Planning History

- 5.1 The site has been the subject of a number of previous applications. However, none of these are directly relevant to the proposal now brought forward.
- 5.2 The applicants have engaged in pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority. The responses provided will be referred to at the relevant chapters of this statement.

6.0 Planning Considerations

Principle Of Development

- 6.1 In responding to the pre-application advice request, the Planning Officer identified that;

“The principle of the proposal is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's national planning policy for the conservation of the historic environment. One of the core land-use principles of the NPPF is that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Conservation is the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

When considering the impact of works to the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Significance can be harmed by works within the setting, and any harm requires clear and convincing justification.

Where works will lead to harm to significance, LPAs should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve public benefits that outweigh that harm.

Chapter 12 of the NPPF relates to the determination of planning applications which affect the significance of heritage assets. In particular paragraphs 131 - 136 are most relevant to the determination of this application.

The local plan policies echo this ethos, policy HB1 provides that “The district planning authority places a high priority on protecting the character and appearance of all buildings or architectural or historic interest. Particular attention will be given to protecting the settings of listed buildings.”

Policy HB 1, together with policies HB3, HB4, HB6 and HB7 reiterate the importance of preserving the character, appearance, and landscape features of heritage assets.

Although the principle of development is acceptable, the overall acceptability of the scheme hinges on its ability to satisfy all material considerations simultaneously”.

- 6.2 In summary, therefore, the Planning Officer found the principle of creating a new conservation pond to be acceptable, and recognised that the impacts of the proposal need to be considered relative to the respective planning policy position. As such, an assessment of the key issues is undertaken below.

Landscape Impact

- 6.3 The site lies within a Special Landscape Area (SLA) where the impact on the character of the site and the wider area will be considered relative to the provisions of saved policy CL2. This policy states;

“Within Special Landscape Areas, particular care will be taken to safeguard landscape quality, and where development does occur it should be sensitively designed, with high standards of layout, materials and landscaping”.

- 6.4 The proposal seeks to provide a natural feature in a well contained context. The pond is designed to encourage biodiversity and is supported by detailed information including site sections which demonstrate that there will be no unnatural landscape features formed to support it.

- 6.5 The submission made by Miles Water Engineering that accompanies the application provides an assessment of the landscape impacts such as to address the requirements of policy CL2. As such, the proposal is found to have no harmful impacts on the SLA.

Heritage Impacts

- 6.6 The consideration of the impacts on heritage assets is a very important matter in the determination of this application.

- 6.7 These impacts are considered in the Heritage Statement (HS) that accompanies this application. The HS concludes that;

“The proposed works have been found to result in no harm to the character and significance of the heritage asset. The creation of a pond in this setting would see a change in the character of this land, but has been designed to be an appropriate landscape response that takes advantage of the land levels to this aspect of the property and provides a conservation pond that will bring significant ecological benefits to the site”.

- 6.8 For these reasons, there are no heritage impacts that would weigh against this proposal.

Biodiversity

- 6.9 The pond will assist and support conservation and biodiversity by providing a natural habitat for insects, amphibians and birds which require access to good quality aquatic systems, as well as for a range of native aquatic and semi-aquatic plant species.

- 6.10 The proposed pond would have excellent water quality and would provide a natural habitat for breeding amphibians and wetland invertebrates such as dragonflies and water beetles, as well as providing a source of drinking water to birds and mammals.

- 6.11 The proposal would, therefore, deliver significant biodiversity benefits that weigh in favour of this application.

Other Matters

- 6.12 The proposal does not give rise to any detrimental impacts to residential amenity.
- 6.13 As no unnatural features are being provided to support the pond, such as bunds or ditches, there would be no physical impacts resulting from the pond itself above ground level. The boathouse proposed is a modest feature that will have no external impacts beyond the immediate area of the site.
- 6.14 The proposal would give rise to no impacts on highway safety.

7.0 The Design and Access Statement

The Design Approach

- 7.1 Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's aims to achieve well-designed places.
- 7.2 It states (paragraph 126) that;

"The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities".

- 7.3 The above has formed the basis of the design approach taken in respect of this proposal. The applicants, supported by Last and Tricker Partnership, have given consideration to a number of material considerations in the design of this proposal with the overall aim of achieving a high quality proposal that would complement the surroundings and ensure the pond sits comfortably in its environs.

7.4 The following sets out how each of the various design matters have been addressed in this instance.

Use

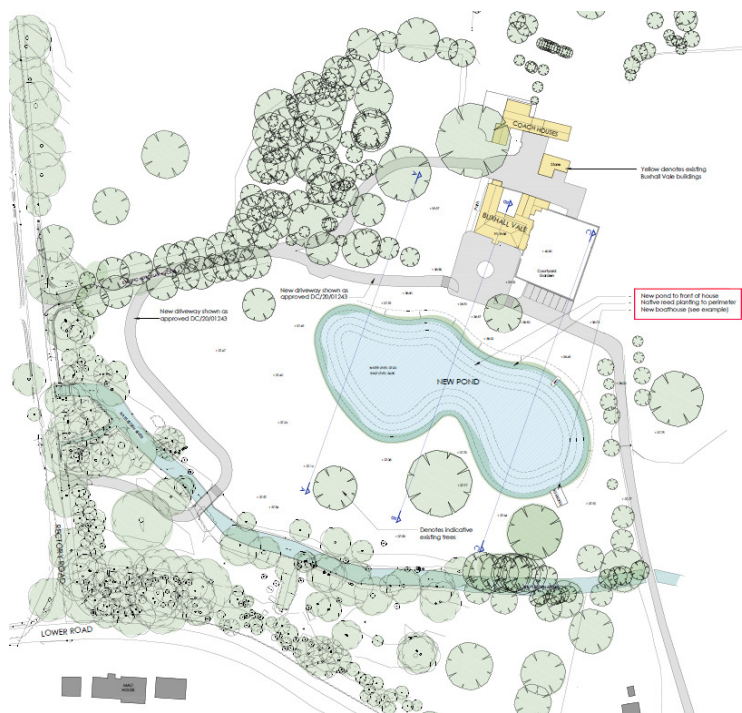
7.5 The proposal seeks to make efficient use of land, in line with the aims of paragraph 119 of the NPPF which identifies that *“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions”*.

7.6 The use of the land would be consistent with the use of Buxhall Vale. It would provide a feature that will compliment the property and give rise to significant ecological benefits.

Layout

7.7 The new pond has been designed to respond to the pre-application advice offered by both the Council’s Planning and Heritage Teams.

7.8 The image below shows the pond in the context of Buxhall Vale and the existing landscaping.



- 7.9 The proposal responds to the specific constraints of the site through the use of the existing landform, the retention of important boundary landscaping and by ensuring that the development would have a positive relationship with the existing dwelling and its setting.
- 7.10 The architects have fully considered the site context, including any possible views from outside the site. They have walked the land and seen the contours, and sought to make use of these in a manner that will deliver an appropriate response to delivering this conservation pond and not give rise to harm. 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 and optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development.
- 7.11 As such, the proposed layout is considered to be an appropriate form of development given the character of the locality and the proposed layout has, therefore, been developed following an appraisal of the site and its surroundings, and thereby constitutes good design.

Amount

- 7.12 The proposal is for a single conservation pond. Precise details of this are shown within the plans, including the site sections, that accompany the proposal.

Landscaping

- 7.13 Commentary as to the landscape impacts is provided above (see paragraphs 6.3 – 6.5).

Appearance

- 7.14 The proposal is for a conservation pond set within the grounds of Buxhall Vale.
- 7.15 The image below shows how the pond would appear in the context of the property.



Access

- 7.16 The formation of the conservation pond requires no change to the access arrangements to the property.