



PLANNING STATEMENT

In respect of a planning application for the erection of
a two storey extension and associated works at;

The Elms, Little Blakenham, IP8 4NF

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Planning Policy	3
3.0	Planning Considerations	4
4.0	Conclusions	13

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is prepared in support of an application for planning permission for the extension of the property known as The Elms, Little Blakenham, Suffolk, IP8 4NF.
- 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 statement should be read alongside the Design and Access Statement (DAS) and the suite of plans prepared by Trevor Horne Architects which accompany the proposal. The DAS and associated plans will be referenced directly within this statement wherever relevant.

2.0 Planning Policy Position

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The NPPF is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which assists applicants and decision makers in interpretation the NPPF.
- 2.3 The development plan for Mid Suffolk District Council consists of the saved policies of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998), the Core Strategy (2008) and its Focussed Review (2012). The following policies within these documents are considered to be relevant to this proposal:

Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998

- GP1 - Design and Layout of Development
- H15 – Development to Reflect Local Characteristics
- H16 - Protecting Existing Residential Amenity

- H18 – Extensions to Existing Dwellings
- HB1 – Protection of Historic Buildings
- T10 – Highway Considerations in Development

Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008) and Focussed Review (2012)

- CS1 - Settlement Hierarchy
- CS2 – Development in the Countryside and Countryside Villages
- CS5 - Mid Suffolk's Environment
- FC1 - Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable
- FC1.1 - Mid Suffolk Approach to Delivering Sustainable Development

2.4 These policies, and their relevance to the consideration of this application, are considered in detail in the following chapter of this statement.

3.0 Planning Considerations

3.1 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 here is, therefore, whether the proposed 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.

3.2 Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy (CS) identifies that outside of the defined settlements, the rest of Mid Suffolk *“will be designated as countryside and countryside villages and development will be restricted to particular types of development to support the rural economy, meet affordable housing, community needs and provide renewable energy”*.

3.3 Policy CS2 expands on this position, identifying the categories of development that are appropriate in the countryside. These categories include *“the extension of dwellings”* such that there can be no objection in principle to the extension of a residential dwelling in a countryside location.

3.4 Policy CS5 requires all development proposals to maintain and enhance the environment, including the historic environment, and retain the local distinctiveness of the area. This relates directly to the aims of saved policy GP1 of the 1998 Local Plan (LP) which provides criteria relating to the design and layout of all development and which forms an important policy in the consideration of this proposal.

3.5 The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of any planning application. Whilst the NPPF does not deal specifically with extensions to existing dwellings, it includes a number of paragraphs relating to design quality, with the following paragraphs being most relevant:

“126. 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. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process”.

“130. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) 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; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.

“134. Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or

b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings”.

“135. Local planning authorities should seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used)”.

3.6 The aims and aspirations of these NPPF paragraphs will be considered through the development plan policy assessment which follows.

3.7 As a proposal seeking to extend an existing residential dwelling, the most relevant policy in determining this application is saved LP policy H18. This states that:

“Applications for extensions to existing dwellings will be approved, provided that they:-

- are in keeping with the size, design and materials of the existing dwelling;

- will not materially or detrimentally affect the amenities of neighbours or the character and appearance of the area;

- will not result in over-development within the curtilage.

The cumulative effect of a number of extensions to the existing dwelling will be regarded as a material consideration”.

- 3.8 The criteria within policy H18 provide useful headings against which to assess this proposal, and such assessment will be made shortly. However, prior to doing so, the approach taken to bringing forward this proposal and the engagement between the applicant and the architects is also of particular relevance and forms important context to the development and evolution of this proposal.
- 3.9 The applicant engaged Trevor Horne Architects to carry out a robust assessment of the site and the surroundings to inform the detailed design proposals that are now presented through this application.
- 3.10 Initial discussions with the applicant identified a desire to make use of an underutilised area to the north of the house that currently contains a courtyard with a lean-to inset from a two storey extension, and which includes a red brick range that links the property with the adjacent annexe. The applicant also wished to make better use of some areas within the existing dwelling, where having lived in the property for a number of years, opportunities to enhance the available spaces, increase natural light to certain areas and to improve circulation, have been identified.
- 3.11 The architects thereby undertook a robust assessment of the property and its grounds, and an appraisal of the setting of the property within the wider countryside. Outside of the applicant’s brief, following assessment of the site, three main considerations were identified, namely:
- the importance and quality of the existing building, including its architectural features;
 - the need to ensure that the proposal was not prominent in the landscape, particularly related to the setting of the site in an isolated and elevated position in the countryside, and;
 - that the inclusion of contemporary aspects to the proposal would ensure honesty in the evolution of the building.

- 3.12 The design approach has resulted from that assessment, where the proposal replicates the form and detailing of the main building but includes contemporary elements, is recessed within the building line of the existing elevations and where the extension would be sited such as to read as a contained part of the built form on the site which will not intrude into wider views of the site from the open countryside beyond.
- 3.13 The approach taken here, is, therefore, in accordance with the principles of good design set out in the NPPF. Having established that the proposal results from a detailed understanding of the site and its context, attention now turns to the criteria within policy H18 in making a more detailed appraisal of the proposal relevant to the development plan policy considerations.

Policy H18 a) "...are in keeping with the size, design and materials of the existing dwelling"

- 3.14 The DAS identifies that the new extension will *"continue the rhythm of the existing façade with matching sash windows. A larger glazed opening for sliding doors will provide views out to the countryside. These contemporary additions remain linked to the existing aesthetic by matching the proportions of openings and utilising a white lintel above, as existing"*.
- 3.15 The choice of materials has also been carefully considered, with the DAS advising that:

"The proposed materials will be white/cream brick to match existing, reclaimed Suffolk 'Woolpit whites' depending on availability. The existing red clay brick extension will be limewashed/bag rendered cream/white to match the original 3 brickwork. New grey slate roof tiles match existing. Windows to be timber sash (double glazed) to match existing. Large sliding panels from kitchen to garden will be slimline aluminium framed".

- 3.16 The extension replaces the existing red brick range and lean-to and provides a physical break between the old and new through the recessing of the footprint of the extension and the roof form where the extension can be read as a separate addition rather than a simple elongation of the proportions of the main house. Whilst it is a sizeable extension to the property, the existing dwelling can readily accommodate this with the extension being contained within an area of the property that is not readily prominent and where the extension would enable the

original form of the house to remain readily understandable. Many such houses have been extended in a similar way and it is not unusual that a property of this size and scale would be extended in a manner that reflects the characteristics of the period of its construction. By retaining a contemporary element to the extension, this will appear as part of the evolution of the building rather than a purposely designed addition.

3.17 Good quality materials (as listed above) will be used and will be carefully sourced to ensure that they are respectful of the materials in the existing building. The scale of the new extension is proportionate to the existing building with matching ridge line and depth to connect to the adjacent building. The front façade is pulled back to provide a clear distinction from, and respect for, the existing building. The rear façade steps back to reduce the upper floor mass against the existing rear extension.

3.18 In light of the above, it is considered that the proposal demonstrates compliance with the first criterion of policy H18.

Policy H18 b) "...will not materially or detrimentally affect the amenities of neighbours or the character and appearance of the area"

3.19 The site is located in an isolated location with no immediate neighbours. The proposal would, therefore, have no impact on neighbouring amenity.

3.20 In this regard, not only would the proposal comply with this part of policy H18, but it would also demonstrate compliance with policy H16 (which deals expressly with residential amenity) and paragraph 130 (criterion f)) which requires that a high standard of amenity for existing and future users should be secured in all decisions.

3.21 The second element of this criterion relates to the character and appearance of the area. These aims are supported by paragraph 174 of the NPPF, which seeks to ensure that planning decisions recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.

3.22 There are public rights of way (PROW) to the east and west of the site, as shown on the definitive map extract below.



3.23 The character of the area is notably rural, with The Elms set amongst agricultural fields but within a well defined, tree-lined, site. As the aerial image below shows, the property sites well within the site boundaries and there is a cluster of buildings in this part of the site.



- 3.24 The proposal would not negatively impact on the character or appearance of the area. The character would remain as it is, namely a residential dwelling set within a rural context, with limited external impacts resulting from this extension. The appearance of the dwelling would change in certain vistas, but these views are incredibly limited and are significantly screened by the mature landscaping that provides the setting of the property.
- 3.25 As such, compliance with the second criterion of policy H18 has also been demonstrated. Furthermore, in the absence of detriment to the character of the area, the proposal also complies with policy CS5.

Policy H18 c) “...will not result in over-development within the curtilage”

- 3.26 The image exhibited at paragraph 3.23 above demonstrates clearly that this proposal would not be an overdevelopment of the curtilage of the property (NB. The image does not show the tennis court that has been installed following a grant of planning permission in 2017. This lies to the south of the house so does not affect the area of the extension).
- 3.27 Indeed, the proposal demonstrates none of the traits of overdevelopment, with good spacing retained to site boundaries, development contained in a small part of the overall site, significant garden retained for the dwelling and space for parking and circulation all retained.
- 3.28 The applicant considers, therefore, that this proposal complies fully with the provisions of policy H18.
- 3.29 The proposal thereby gains support from development plan policies GP1, H16, H18, CS2 and CS5.

Other Matters

3.30 **Flood Risk and Drainage –**

The property is sited wholly in Flood Zone 1 such that it is not at risk of flooding. It is also located in an area that does not show any history of surface water flooding issues. As an

existing residential dwelling, existing drainage on the site will be utilised to serve the new accommodation.

3.31 Highway Safety/Parking –

The proposal is sited in an area that is set some distance from the vehicular access to the property and would not affect the existing parking on the site. There is, therefore, no detrimental impact on highway safety or parking, such that proposal demonstrates compliance with the provisions of saved policy T10 and paragraphs 108 and 109 of the NPPF.

3.32 Land Contamination -

The site of the extension is set within the existing residential garden of the property. There is no evidence of historical uses here that would lead to a conclusion that the land is likely to be contaminated and, therefore, no further action is required in this regard.

3.33 Efficient Use of Land -

Paragraph 119 of the NPPF 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. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land”*. The proposal seeks to make use of existing underused garden space such that the proposal would demonstrate efficient use of land in the manner envisaged by paragraph 119.

3.34 Heritage Impacts -

The property dates from 1841 and appears on the 1902 map extract (below left) and 1924 (below right) in a similar form to that which currently exists. The property is not a listed building nor is it sited within a Conservation Area. The setting of the building has changed over time, with the building to the north converted to an annexe (planning permission exists for this to be used as holiday lets) and a further building located to the northeast of the dwelling. The aforementioned tennis court was installed within the grounds following permission in 2017. The proposal would remove the rear range and replace it with an extension of appropriate design and scale that seeks to reflect the character of the dwelling, enhance the accommodation and make better use of some of the existing internal spaces. There are no detrimental impacts resulting to aspects of historical importance here.



3.35 In light of all of the above, it is considered that there are no material considerations that weigh against this proposal. As the proposal gains support for the development plan, it can be concluded that this is a sustainable development.

4.0 Conclusions

4.1 This application seeks planning permission for extensions and alterations to The Elms. The property is not listed, is not set within any designated landscapes and is not within a Conservation Area.

4.2 Policy CS2 provides support for the extension of rural dwellings as a matter of principle. Policies GP1 and CS5 provide generic requirements for the design and layout of development and how proposals that impact on the environment of Mid Suffolk to be assessed. These policies have been assessed, primarily through a detailed consideration of the criteria within policy H18 which deals expressly with extensions to dwellings, and it has been found that the proposal meets with the requirements of these policies. In particular, the following conclusions are drawn:

- The proposal results from a robust assessment of the site and surroundings and from detailed consideration of the extent of extension that the host dwelling can accommodate;
- The above assessment enabled a proposal to be designed based on key issues that were highlighted in respect of the character of the dwelling and its impact in the landscape;
- That the use of good quality materials and appropriate detailing is essential to delivering a high quality addition that will stand the test of time relative to the quality and form of the main dwelling;
- That the site is well contained and the extension can be accommodated without harm to landscape character or the amenity of any nearby properties;
- That the proposal is a sustainable development that gives rise to no concerns in respect of land contamination, flood risk, highway safety, parking, overdevelopment or heritage impacts.

4.3 In finding support from the aforementioned policies and form policy H18 directly, the proposal thereby compiles with the development plan. In the absence of any material considerations that indicate otherwise, the proposal should be approved 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.

4.4 It is thereby respectfully requested that the local planning authority support this sustainable development by granting planning permission in the terms requested.