



## SUPPORTING STATEMENT

In respect of a planning application for the conversion and alteration of an existing workshop building to a single residential dwelling at;

Greensleeves, Ipswich Road, East Bergholt, Suffolk,  
CO7 6PQ

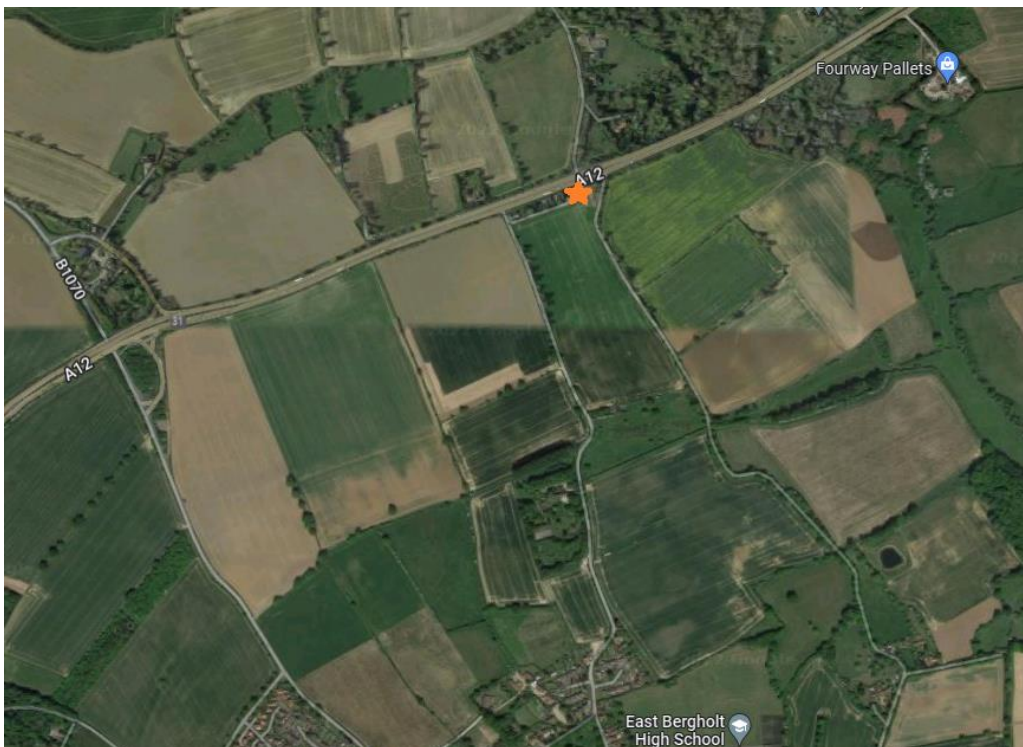
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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement is prepared in support of an application for planning permission for works to alter and convert an existing storage building to form a residential dwelling at Greensleeves, Ipswich Road, East Bergholt. It will consider the planning policy position and provide an overview of the relevant material considerations relating to the proposed development.

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



**Image 1: Location Plan**

1.3 Further to this Supporting Statement, the application is supported by a suite of plans and documents including;

- Plans by RGP Building Design and Energy Consultancy;
- Envirosearch Report;
- Contaminated Land Questionnaire;
- Flood Map for Planning;
- CIL Additional Questions Form.

## **2.0 The Site**

- 2.1 The subject building is a storage building lying adjacent to the property Greensleeves. It is constructed of weatherboarded facades set under a tiled roof.
- 2.2 The building lies to the south side of the A12 and at the north-eastern end of a run of buildings including the dwelling known as Greensleeves
- 2.3 The building opens to the south with a solid face onto the A12. It is of pitched roof construction and sited on land that sits higher than the adjacent road. Cutlers Lane runs to the west, with access to Greensleeves taken from Woodgates Road, to the east.
- 2.4 The site is unconstrained by any specific landscape designations and is not within a Conservation Area.
- 2.5 The land lies wholly in Flood Zone 1 and there are no listed buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site.

## **3.0 The Proposal**

- 3.1 The application seeks planning permission for the conversion and alteration of the building to form a detached dwelling.
- 3.2 The proposed layout plan (plan ref. 77021-PL02) and floor plans (plan refs. 77021-PL04 and 77021-PL05) identify how the building would be converted into a three bedroom dwelling with living accommodation set at ground level and bedrooms at first floor level within the existing roofspace.
- 3.3 To the south side, the building opens out onto patio and grassed lawns beyond. Parking and turning space is provided adjacent to the property and a new fence is proposed to the top of the bank adjacent the A12 to provide additional screening from the road.

- 3.4 Where new windows and doors are proposed, these are primarily located in existing openings with supplementary insertions kept to a minimum. However, on the south side, more glazing is included so as to offer an attractive and light aspect to the main living spaces in the dwelling.
- 3.5 The finished appearance is one that delivers an honest conversion, where the materials retain an appearance of a converted rural building similar to many seen in the Babergh district.
- 3.6 The existing hedging to the north is retained, providing a soft green edge to the site and, when coupled with the hedging to the rear of properties to the west, provides a continuous screen to the main road.

#### **4.0 Planning History**

- 4.1 There is no planning history on the site for over 10 years. Permission was previously granted for extension to the house at Greensleeves, the building that is the subject of this proposal and for the storage of building materials associated with the applicant's business.

#### **5.0 Planning Policy Context**

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 The NPPF is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which assists applicants and decision makers in interpretation the NPPF.
- 5.3 The Development Plan for Babergh consists of the Babergh Core Strategy (2014) and the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 (2006). As this site lies in the parish of East Bergholt, the

development plan also includes the East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan. The following policies from these documents are considered relevant to this proposal;

Babergh Local Plan (2006)

- CN01 – Design Standards
- CR07 - Hedgerows
- CR19 – Buildings in the Countryside – Residential
- TP15 – Parking Standards

Babergh Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Settlement Pattern Policy
- CS03 – Strategy for Growth and Development
- CS12 – Sustainable Design and Construction Standards
- CS13 – Renewable / Low Carbon Energy
- CS15 – Implementing Sustainable Development in Babergh

East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan

- Policy EB1: Housing Numbers
- Policy EB2: Development Size and Location
- Policy EB4: Housing Type, Tenure and Sizes
- Policy EB6: Landscape and Views
- Policy EB9: Housing and Non-Residential Design
- Policy EB12: New Developments, Parking
- Policy EB13: New Developments, Walking and Cycling
- Policy EB19: Conversion of Agricultural Buildings

5.4 These policies will be referred to within the “Planning Considerations” section of this statement, wherever relevant to the consideration of this proposal.

## 6.0 Planning Considerations

### Principle of Development

6.1 Paragraph 10 of the revised NPPF states *“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”*.

6.2 Whilst the site lies in the countryside for the purposes of planning policy, Paragraph 80 of the NPPF identifies 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, 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.”*

6.3 There is, therefore, in-principle support for the re-use of rural buildings in the countryside for housing, such that this proposal would meet the aims of the NPPF in this regard. Furthermore, the provision to convert rural buildings is also repeated at the local level, where saved policy CR19 of the Local Plan states;

*“Proposals for the conversion of barns or other redundant or under-used buildings in the countryside into dwellings or holiday accommodation will only be permitted if:*

- it can be demonstrated that the alternative uses for business, community and leisure uses have been thoroughly explored and can be discounted;*
- the building’s location makes it unsuitable for conversion to other uses;*
- the building is of architectural or historic merit and is capable of conversion without significant rebuilding or extension;*
- the method of conversion retains the character of the building and, in the case of barns, retains the single open volume with minimal change;*
- the scheme is acceptable in terms of highway safety;*
- the building is not at risk of flooding;*
- there is scope for connection to a suitable drainage system; and*
- there is no material adverse impact on protected species, particularly bats and barn owls”.*

6.4 It is also repeated in the Neighbourhood Plan, where policy EB19 states;

*“The reuse of redundant farm and other rural buildings 15 or more years old may be permitted for residential use, business, or tourism purposes, including the provision of tourist accommodation, provided that the proposed use meets all the following criteria:*

- 1. The buildings in question can be converted to a high standard using local materials, where appropriate, compliant with the Housing Design Guidance (Section 5.3.1) and to Historic England’s guidance for the conversion of traditional farm buildings;*
- 2. Make a positive contribution to the surrounding landscape;*
- 3. Would not have an unacceptable impact on the local highway network;*
- 4. Would have an acceptable relationship with agricultural and other land based activities;*
- 5. Would maintain or enhance the amenities of adjoining or nearby occupiers;*
- 6. The conversion should be sensitive to the setting of the building and its relationship with its immediate surroundings and landscape character; and*
- 7. There would be no material adverse impact on protected species, particularly bats and barn owls”*



6.5 It can be seen, therefore, that these policies provide similar criteria against which to consider proposals such as this. As such, what follows is an assessment of the proposal relative to the collective aims/requirements of these policies. In order to do this, the requirements of policy EB19 are utilised as headings.

*The buildings in question can be converted to a high standard using local materials, where appropriate, compliant with the Housing Design Guidance (Section 5.3.1) and to Historic England's guidance for the conversion of traditional farm buildings;*

6.6 The applicant proposes to deliver a sensitive conversion of this building that has fully considered the Housing Design Guidance set out within the Neighbourhood Plan. The works utilise materials that are sensitive to the rural setting in which the building is located, including the continued maintenance of the existing timber weatherboarding.

6.7 New window and door openings are proposed, with the primary change being to the south elevation, away from public viewpoints, where the opportunity has been taken to insert vertical glazing and dormer windows to enable natural light into the building and to provide an attractive aspect as you approach the dwelling.

6.8 However, even where those changes are made, the building retains its form and appearance and appears as an honest conversion of the building that enables its original form and use to be understood and recognised.

*Make a positive contribution to the surrounding landscape;*

6.9 The building lies within a group of dwellings and associated outbuildings alongside the A12. It is visible in views from Cutlers Lane but is seen against the backdrop of the existing dwellings and outbuildings that lie to the west.

6.10 The proposal offers the opportunity to deliver an attractive dwelling that retains the important landscape features by reusing the existing building and would deliver an enhancement to the overall character of the site. The dwelling would bring interest to this part of East Bergholt and

to the wider landscape without resulting in a dwelling that would intrude into the rural context.

- 6.11 These latter points are important, as paragraph 80 of the NPPF recognises that the reuse of redundant rural buildings such as this can be permitted where they enhance the immediate setting. The proposal therefore demonstrates compliance with this strand of paragraph 80, as well as this criterion of policy EB19 and the provisions of policy CR19 which address landscape impacts.

*Would not have an unacceptable impact on the local highway network;*

- 6.12 The proposal would make use of the existing established access to the frontage of the site.
- 6.13 The access onto Cutlers Lane is as previously approved and provides good visibility in both directions. The change of use of this access would not give rise to additional traffic beyond a negligible level, and the site has no restriction on the amount of traffic that can use this access given rise to movements associated with larger and more numerous vehicles than would result from this proposal.
- 6.14 There would, thereby, be no identifiable highway safety issues resulting from this proposal, such that the proposal complies with this element of policy EB19 and paragraph 111 of the NPPF which seeks to ensure safe and suitable access is available for all users of developments.

*Would have an acceptable relationship with agricultural and other land based activities;*

- 6.15 There is nothing to suggest that the residential use of this building would have any detrimental effect on the surrounding land uses, nor that the adjacent uses would cause disturbance to the proposed dwelling either.
- 6.16 The proposal does not result in the erosion of, for example, a large agricultural field such that it would no longer be viable for farming, and can be converted without prejudicing the use of adjacent land during and after the construction process.

Would maintain or enhance the amenities of adjoining or nearby occupiers;

- 6.17 Whilst there are some residential properties within a reasonable distance of the site, the proposed use would sit comfortably alongside these and would have little effect on the amenity of existing properties.
- 6.18 Furthermore, whilst not a requirement of the policy, the proposal also offers good sized, useable and private amenity space for future occupants.

The conversion should be sensitive to the setting of the building and its relationship with its immediate surroundings and landscape character;

- 6.19 As considered above, the proposal would offer an attractive and sensitive conversion of this building, bringing with it an enhancement to the setting of the building and the surrounding landscape.
- 6.20 The manner of the conversion, respecting the form and scale of the existing building, not seeking disproportionate extension, utilising appropriate materials, retaining and managing hedgerows and trees on the land and generally tidying up the site in a way that will facilitate its continued maintenance going forward, will ensure that the resultant dwelling will be wholly respectful to its setting and will sit comfortably here without reduction in the quality of the environment.

There would be no material adverse impact on protected species, particularly bats and barn owls

- 6.21 Regulation 9(5) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Implemented 1st April 2010) provides that all "competent authorities" (public bodies) to "have regard to the Habitats Directive in the exercise of its functions". There are no recordings of protected species or their habitats within the site or likely to be affected in the immediate area. It is highly unlikely that any protected species would be found within this site and as such this proposal is not considered to be harmful in terms of biodiversity issues.

- 6.22 Guidance on the conservation of protected species is given in ODPM Circular 06/2005. At Paragraph 99 the Circular advises that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent to which they might be affected by the proposed development, must be established before planning permission is granted. Existing hedgerows are not being affected by the proposal and, therefore, it is clear that the proposal is not such that would give rise to loss of habitat for protected species.
- 6.23 It is thereby considered that there are no protected species issues resulting from this proposal.

#### Sustainable Development (Three Objectives)

- 6.24 From an economic aspect, the conversion of the building would provide much needed jobs for local people, and there would be a small economic benefit from the purchase of materials also. Occupants of the property would contribute to the local economy through the purchase of goods, employment and involvement in community activity. It is, therefore, considered that the economic objective of sustainable development is met by this proposal.
- 6.25 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”*.
- 6.26 Notwithstanding that a proposal in this location would contribute to enhancing and maintaining services in this village and neighbouring areas, including Capel St Mary, Copdock, Colchester and Ipswich, the PPG advises that *“all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas”*, cross-referencing to NPPF paragraph 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.
- 6.27 At paragraph 105 of the NPPF, it identifies that *“The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused*

*on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making".* 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

- 6.28 In that regard, paragraph 80 of the NPPF, policy CR19 of the Local Plan and policy EB19 of the Neighbourhood Plan do not, at any point, require rural buildings to be located in close proximity to a wide range of services. Indeed, to do so would run somewhat contrary to the principle of reusing buildings that previously served rural purposes, most/many of which are located in remote locations. The Government's continued support for the reuse of agricultural buildings, in particular, is demonstrated through the rights available through Class Q of the General Permitted Development Order, which also requires no sustainability/accessibility assessment to be undertaken.
- 6.29 In this case, the site lies in a rural location but there would be opportunities for residents to engage in community activity and to enjoy the social benefits that brings. The proposal also delivers accommodation of a type demonstrated to be needed within the Neighbourhood Plan, offering opportunities for those looking to downsize, those of older years and those who may need accessible accommodation due to health reasons. The proposal would, therefore, bring tangible social benefits.
- 6.30 The delivery of a new dwelling to the market would help to provide the supply of housing required by the NPPF and, therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets the social objective of sustainable development. Furthermore, whilst the Council considers it has a robust supply of housing land, the proposals contribution to the Council's housing supply should not be underestimated. The applicant intends to carry out the development in a short timescale should permission be granted and the site should be considered deliverable in the terms set out in the NPPF and thereby be afforded further weight in terms of its sustainability credentials.

- 6.31 With regards to the environmental elements of the proposal, the proposal makes reuse of an underused building in the countryside where there is no detriment recognised to environmental aspects such as flooding, contamination, landscape impacts and biodiversity. On the contrary, the proposal would bring about an enhancement to the local environment, and would secure the management and maintenance of the existing trees and hedgerows in a manner that would secure their longevity. There are, therefore, environmental benefits resulting from the proposal also.
- 6.32 As such, it is felt that the proposal demonstrates a cohesive approach to sustainability that meets with the aspirations of the NPPF and is in line with the way in which the dimensions of sustainable development are applied by Planning Inspectors and Planning Officers alike.

#### Land Contamination

- 6.33 Submitted with this application is an Envirosearch Report and the Council's land contamination questionnaire which demonstrate that the land is not known to be, or likely to be, contaminated.
- 6.34 The proposal is therefore in accordance with paragraph 178 of the NPPF which states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination.

#### Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.35 Bullet points 6 and 7 of policy CR19 seek to ensure that proposals are not at risk from flooding and that there is scope for connection to a suitable drainage system. The Groundsure Report submitted with the application, accompanied by the extract from the Environment Agency "Flood Map for Planning" which is also submitted with this proposal, demonstrate that the proposal is not at risk of flooding. There is also scope to provide a suitable drainage system to the property, both in terms of surface water and waste, such that the proposal would accord with the provisions of bullet points 6 and 7 of policy CR19.

#### Heritage Impacts

6.39 The site lies some distance away from any listed buildings and is not within a Conservation Area. As such, there are no heritage impacts resulting from this proposal.

## **7.0 Planning Balance**

7.1 The proposal seeks permission for the conversion of an existing building on the site to form a new dwelling with associated parking and turning space.

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

7.3 The development plan includes the Babergh Core Strategy (2014), the saved policies in the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 (2006) and the policies within the East Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan (2016).

7.4 In accordance with paragraph 80 of the NPPF and policies CR19 of the Babergh Local Plan and EB19 of the Neighbourhood Plan, the proposal seeks to make reuse of an underused building in the countryside where there can be no 'in-principle' objection to the proposed use given that these policies exist to provide support for such reuse. As such, the specific criteria set out within these policies has been assessed in detail within this statement.

7.5 The proposal has been found to accord with the specific provisions of policy EB19, being a sensitive and appropriate conversion of this building which seeks to secure an enhancement to the surroundings, does not detract from the surrounding landscape and which would have no detrimental impacts on important factors such as highway safety, biodiversity and the amenity of nearby properties.

- 7.6 Furthermore, the proposal has been demonstrated to be acceptable in terms of land contamination, flood risk, drainage and the absence of impacts on heritage assets.
- 7.7 As such, the proposal has been found to comply with the aforementioned policies and can thereby also be seen to comply with policies CS15 and CN01 which address, respectively, the implementation of sustainable development in the Babergh area and the design principles against which all development should be considered.
- 7.8 For all of the above reasons, the proposal is considered to constitute sustainable development and the LPA is respectfully requested to support this proposal and enable the reuse of this building in the manner set out in this application.