



SUPPORTING STATEMENT

In respect of a planning application for the conversion and alteration of existing buildings to form a residential dwelling at:

Greenway Farm, Ipswich Road,
Gosbeck, IP6 9SG

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement is prepared in support of an application for planning permission for works to convert existing buildings at Greenway Farm to form a residential dwelling.

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.

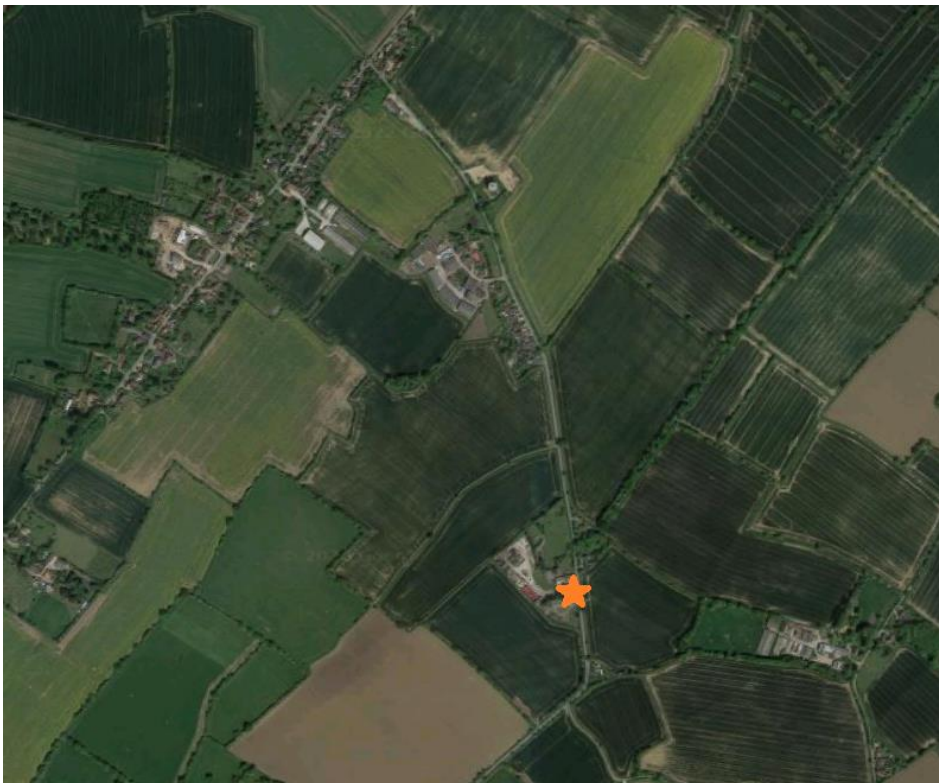


Image 1: Location Plan

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

- Plans by Ian Smillie Architectural Services
- Groundsure Homescreen Report
- Contaminated Land Questionnaire
- Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning

2.0 The Site

- 2.1 Greenway Farm lies to the east side of Ipswich Road and to the southeast of the village of Crowfield, almost equidistant between Crowfield and Gosbeck.
- 2.2 The farmhouse sits back from the road and is accessed off an established access that comes in from the east of the property. There are many buildings on the wider site, and permissions exist for a range of commercial uses. One building, to the south of the farmhouse, has been converted to a separate dwelling following a grant of planning permission in 2011.
- 2.3 The existing dwelling sits in good sized grounds with areas of maintained grassland to the north.
- 2.4 The subject buildings take the form of a brick outbuilding most recently used by a company which produces soap. They lie to the southeast of the farmhouse and close to Ipswich Road, as shown below.



- 2.5 There are no specific landscape designations affecting the site, and the site lies in Flood Zone 1 where the proposal would not be at risk of flooding.
- 2.6 The buildings are not listed (nor is the farmhouse) and the land is not within a Conservation Area. However, the buildings are known to be of some date and can be evidenced, in part, in plans dating back to 1904.

3.0 The Proposal

3.1 The application seeks planning permission for the following works;

- Conversion and extension of the existing buildings to a single-storey three-bedroom dwelling;
- Internal and external alterations, including new windows and doors, to facilitate such use;
- Formation of new curtilage and associated cycle storage;
- Reuse of the existing parking area to the south of the building for dedicated parking for the new dwelling.

3.2 The proposed block plan (ref. 2021208/02) identifies the varying elements of the proposal and how these would be laid out on the site. This clearly delineates the extensions to the buildings, which lie to the south side of the structures and which partly replace existing structures.

3.3 Please refer to the elevation plans 2012208/07 and 2012208/08 for details of the proposed changes, the finished appearance of the new dwelling, the proposed materials and sectional details through the buildings.

3.4 A total of three parking spaces are proposed to be utilised for the new dwelling, and these are accessed from an existing access to the south of the buildings.

4.0 Planning History

4.1 There is no planning history on the site within the last 10 years. Prior to that, there are applications relating to the use of buildings on the site for commercial and residential uses.

4.2 Wherever, relevant, these will be referred to within chapter 6 of this statement.

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 At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It identifies that *"For decision-taking this means:*

- *approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay;*
or
- *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".*

5.3 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 the NPPF.

5.4 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 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

Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998

GP1 - Design and Layout of Development

H9 – Conversion of Rural Buildings to Dwellings

H13 - Design and Layout of Housing Development

H15 - Development to Reflect Local Characteristics

H16 - Protecting Existing Residential Amenity

T10 - Highway Considerations in Development

5.5 These policies will be referred to wherever relevant to 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.

6.4 This provision is also repeated at the local level, where saved policy H9 of the Local Plan states;

“In the countryside, the conversion and change of use of agricultural and other rural buildings whose form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings, will be favourably considered, subject to the following criteria:-

- the proposed conversion must respect the structure, form and character of the original building and retain any important architectural features. Existing openings should be utilised wherever practicable and new openings kept to a minimum;

- where proposed extensions are essential they should not dominate the original building in either scale, use of materials or situation. Proposed extensions should not detract from the appearance or character which warrants the original building being retained as a feature in the countryside. Domestic features, such as porches and chimney stacks, unrelated to the

traditional appearance of the building will be considered inappropriate. The creation of a residential curtilage around a newly converted building should not impose adversely on the character of the surrounding countryside;

- the extent to which any residential conversion detracts from the original character of the building or its rural surroundings will be treated as a material consideration. In order to protect the character and appearance of the converted building or the amenity and appearance of the surrounding countryside the district planning authority may impose conditions removing permitted development rights under the general permitted development order 1995”.

- 6.5 This policy sets out some detailed criteria by which a proposal such as this should be considered. As such, what follows is such assessment carried out in direct consideration of the proposed development.

Design and Layout

- 6.6 It is clear that the provisions of policy H9 relate heavily to the impact of a conversion on the existing building in terms of the scale, form and character of the proposal relative to the existing structure.

- 6.7 The proposal retains the scale and form of the existing buildings, utilising the existing structures and providing a dwelling that is wholly characteristic of the existing buildings. The proposal would utilise good quality materials that would compliment the existing buildings and the character of properties in the locality of the site, thereby providing a new dwelling that would be reflective of local distinctiveness.

- 6.8 The extracts below are taken from the proposed elevations, and show how the new dwelling would appear from the north and south respectively.



Elevation E to North



Elevation A to South

- 6.9 As can be seen, the proposal would provide an attractive conversion retaining the appearance of converted farm buildings in a contemporary form. The new windows and door openings are of appropriate scale and the largest areas of glazing fall within areas that are internalised. The finished appearance would, therefore, be entirely appropriate to the countryside location in which it is located.
- 6.10 Whilst some extension is proposed, this in part replaces existing structures and are located so as to be set within the confines of the buildings such as not to extend the external dimensions of the buildings to any significant degree. The proposal thereby demonstrates compliance with the second criterion of policy H9.
- 6.11 In this regard, the proposal demonstrates an attention to detail and a design approach that ensures that the proposed works are compliant with policies GP1, H9 and H15.

Landscape Impact

- 6.12 The buildings are sited in a prominent position adjacent to the roadside. However, they set against the backdrop of larger buildings that are significantly more dominant and prominent in the landscape.
- 6.13 The buildings are contained within a grouping of buildings and the proposal would not extend their height, form or physical prominence. The tidying up of the buildings, and the use of attractive materials, will bring betterment to the site and enhance the character and appearance of the immediate area.

Highway Safety

- 6.14 The proposal seeks to make use of the existing access and parking area that has previously been utilised by the soap production company that previously operated from the site. Whilst the buildings are currently vacant, the previous users had access to three parking spaces immediately adjacent to the buildings and the same arrangement is now proposed.
- 6.15 According to www.crashmap.co.uk, there have been no recorded accidents in the immediate vicinity of Greenway Farm identifying that the existing access does not give rise to highway safety concerns. The intensification of the use of this access would not, therefore, give rise to any particular highway safety issues.
- 6.16 The proposal is, therefore, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 110 of the NPPF, which identifies that in assessing specific applications for development it should be ensured that safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users.

Land Contamination

- 6.17 Submitted with this application is a Groundsure report and the Council's land contamination questionnaire which demonstrate that the land is not known to be, or likely to be, contaminated.
- 6.18 The proposal is therefore in accordance with paragraph 183(a) 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.

Residential Amenity

- 6.19 The proposed dwelling is sited some distance from other residential properties whereby the impacts on residential amenity would not be such that would weigh against this proposal. Furthermore, given the single storey scale of the proposal, there is no risk of overlooking resulting from the proposal.

6.20 The proposal is, therefore, in accordance with policy H16.

Biodiversity and Ecology

6.21 The buildings have been occupied until recently as offices and storage and there is no evidence of bats or barn owl occupation in the buildings.

6.22 The site is, therefore, not such that would provide habitat for protected species or significant wildlife havens.

Sustainable Development

6.23 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF outlines the three objectives of sustainable development that schemes should seek to deliver. The proposal carries the following sustainability benefits.

6.24 From the economic aspect, the proposal would generate a benefit for local trade before, during and after construction. Furthermore, there will be a positive benefit through the support to local amenities, facilities and services resulting from future occupiers. The proposal can, therefore, be seen to be economically sustainable.

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, the PPG advises that *“all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas”*, cross-referencing to NPPF 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 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 therefore to be sufficiently flexible to take account of the differences between urban and rural areas.

- 6.27 The delivery of a new dwelling 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 also meets the social objective of sustainable development. Furthermore, the proposal's 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. 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.
- 6.28 With regards to the environmental elements of the development, the proposal would make reuse of existing buildings in a sustainable manner. Good quality materials and finishes are proposed, and the development will include the use of water efficient taps, showers and toilets, and energy efficient white goods. These elements would deliver further benefits in terms of significantly reducing the impacts of the development, and these benefits would be accentuated by the use of sustainable construction techniques that will be employed in the build.
- 6.29 The proposal would also build in biodiversity enhancements, through the delivery of onsite habitat, bird boxes and swift bricks. With this in mind, the proposal is considered to offer environmental gains. 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).

6.30 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.

7.0 Heritage Impacts

7.1 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).

7.2 Whilst there are no listed buildings on the site, and the buildings are not within a Conservation Area, it is recognised that within an application made in 2011 for the conversion of a differing building on this site, a Heritage Asset Assessment was provided in support of that application which addressed the history and significance of that building. A copy of that document is appended to this statement as Appendix 1.

7.3 The buildings that are the subject of this proposal appear to form part of the farmyard group, appearing on the 1904 map but having been amended since that time and not being evident on earlier maps. It is likely, therefore, that the brick built building here forms part of the original farm group and may qualify to be a non-designated heritage asset.

7.4 Paragraph 197 of the NPPF 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.

- 7.5 Paragraph 193 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.
- 7.6 Paragraph 203 identifies that *"The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset"*.
- 7.7 The buildings which are proposed to be converted form part of a subservient group of buildings relative to the scale of the farmhouse. Indeed, other buildings here have already been subdivided from the farmhouse with the 2011 application permitting the conversion of a barn to a separate dwelling. The impact of this proposal on the historic significance of the site is, therefore, limited. The proposal seeks to find a suitable reuse for these buildings that retains their form and scale, and which does not affect the historic integrity of the site given that there has been significant change, reduction and conversion of the existing buildings which has changed their character significantly from the historic position.
- 7.8 Thereby, in carrying out the weighing exercise suggested by paragraph 203, the positive reuse of these buildings, the continued upkeep and maintenance which results and the limited changes proposed are such that all weigh in favour of this proposal. The scale of any harm resulting would not outweigh these positive benefits.

8.0 Planning Balance

- 8.1 The proposal seeks permission for the conversion of existing buildings on the site to form a new dwelling with associated parking space.
- 8.2 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.

- 8.3 The development plan includes the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008) and its Focussed Review (2012) and the saved policies in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998). In accordance with paragraph 79 of the NPPF and policy H9 of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan, the proposal seeks to make reuse of underused buildings in the countryside where there can be no 'in-principle' objection to the proposed use.
- 8.4 The material considerations that are relative to the determination of this application have been satisfactorily addressed (including design and layout, highway safety, biodiversity, land contamination and residential amenity) such that they have been found to comply with the provisions of the NPPF and the relevant development plan policies.
- 8.5 The proposal would make efficient use of existing buildings on the site, and the applicant considers that, for all of the reasons given, the proposal is not harmful in any event.
- 8.6 As such, the proposal is found to be a sustainable development and the LPA is requested to support this proposal and enable the reuse of these buildings in the manner set out in this application.