



# PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

on behalf of Mr A Chaplin

Conversion of barn to residential dwelling

Rook Hill Farm, Offton

Prepared by: Amber Slater BSc MA  
Checked by: Paul Clarke, Head of Planning

For and on behalf of Brown & Co.

*Brown & Co is a leading provider of agency, professional and consultancy services across the whole range of rural, commercial, residential, and agricultural markets.*

Date: May 2022

Reference: 19/118

## 1. INTRODUCTION

**1.1** This Planning Statement has been prepared by Brown & Co to support a planning application submitted on behalf of Mr Andrew Chaplin for the conversion of a barn to a single dwelling, at Rook Hill Farm, Offton.

**1.2** The purpose of this statement is to set out the background to the Applicants' proposal and the key planning issues raised by this. The statement is structured as shown below:

- **Section 1:** Introduction
- **Section 2:** Describes the physical characteristics of the site and its surroundings;
- **Section 3:** Outlines the proposed development;
- **Section 4:** Summarises the relevant national and local planning policy context;
- **Section 5:** Provides a planning assessment of the key considerations raised by the proposal; and
- **Section 6:** Sets out in brief our overall conclusions on the proposal.

**1.3** This statement should be read in conjunction with the following documents submitted as part of the change of use application:

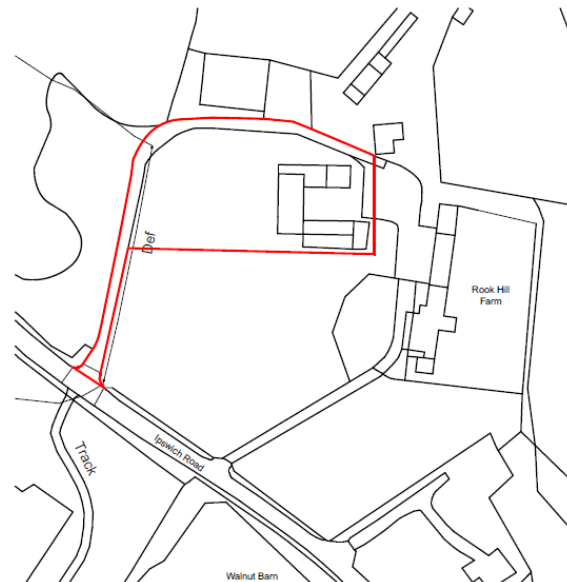
- Application form;
- Site Location Plan;
- Survey Drawing;
- Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations;
- Structural Inspection Report; and
- Ecological Assessment (To follow)

## 2. SITE & SURROUNDINGS

**2.1** The application site comprises a redundant brick and tiled barn within the grounds of Rook Hill Farm. The site area measures approximately 0.26 ha.

**2.2** Rook Hill Farm sits in extensive grounds with the barn lying at right angles to the main Farmhouse with its attached associated outbuildings. The site is bounded on all sides with countryside and agricultural land, interspersed with residential properties.

**2.3** An access exists for the site off Ipswich Road and would serve both properties.



Site location (source: Google Maps)

### 3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

**3.1** It is proposed to convert a traditional style barn to the north of the Rook Hill Farm site, off Ipswich Road, Offton.

**3.2** The existing access off Ipswich Road will be used to provide access and parking on a new driveway. New steps and a ramp will provide access to the new entrance door due to the difference in ground levels between the east and west sides of the barn.

**3.3** The conversion will provide a comfortably sized dwelling, without extensions, to provide 4 double bedrooms, with 3 being on the ground floor bedroom wing. Both the single storey stable wings will be utilised, with bedrooms to the north and south wing providing additional self contained home office, external store and covered garden seating area.

**3.4** The western glazed entrance will lead into a vaulted height kitchen/dining space with a staircase providing access to the first floor. This cylindrical design has been used as a nod to the silo currently within the building. Similarly, a circular staircase leads down to a wine cellar.

**3.5** Externally, a courtyard to the east will be enclosed by a new wall and the barn to the south wing will be re built on the same footprint, albeit reduced in depth. This space will provide a home office with external access doors, an external store with doors, and a covered open seating area.

**3.6** A new driveway is proposed to the west of the barn conversion, accessed off the existing access drive, providing parking for several cars. The eastern wings will be enclosed to the east with a new wall with access gate, forming a new landscaped courtyard space.

**3.7** In terms of materials, the black stained traditional bargeboards will be repaired or replaced with like for like. The clay pantiles will be re used where in good condition and matching replacements sourced for any beyond repair.

**3.8** New windows with traditional arched headers will be installed on the northern bedroom wing, bringing in light. The existing open cart shed will be enclosed with timber cladding and large glazing to maximise light.

**3.9** The southern wing will be re built with traditional Suffolk red brick, black timber cladding and pantile roof to match the existing.

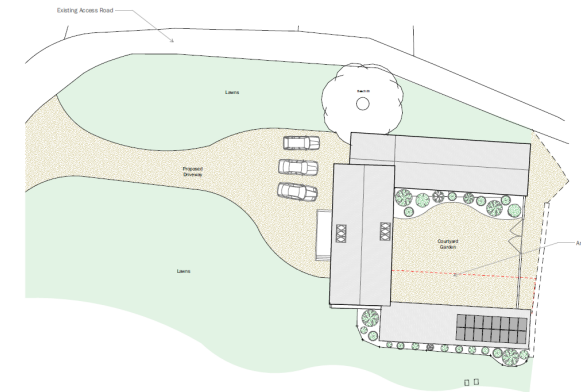


Figure 1: Proposed site plan



Figure 2: Proposed elevations

## 4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

### Development plan policies

**4.1** Planning law requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Consequently, the development plan is the starting point for the assessment of all planning proposals.

**4.2** For the purposes of this application, the Development Plan for Mid Suffolk District Council comprises:

- Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998);
- Mid Suffolk Local Plan First Alteration (2006);
- Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008); and
- Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review (2014).

**4.3** Policies of relevance to this application are listed in the inset box to the right.

### Emerging Local Plan

**4.4** Mid Suffolk District Council, together with Babergh District Council, is currently preparing the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Local Plan for the period 2016 - 2036. The Plan has been submitted to the Secretary of State and is currently going through the Examination process.

**4.5** Of particular relevance to this application is

#### Core Strategy Policies

Policy CS02 – Development in the Countryside and Countryside Villages

Policy CS03 - Reduce Contributions to Climate Change

Policy CS06—Services and Infrastructure

#### Local Plan Policies

Policy GP01—Design and Layout of Development

Policy H13—Design and layout of housing development

Policy H15—Development to reflect local characteristics

Policy H16—Protecting residential amenity

Policy H9—Conversion of Rural Buildings to dwellings

Policy T09—Parking standards

#### Emerging Joint Local Plan Policies

Policy LP03— Residential Extensions and Conversions

emerging Policy LP03—Residential Extensions and Conversions, the aims and objectives of which are similar to the policies relating to conversions in the current Local Plan. Additional criteria include impact on trees and hedgerows, safe vehicular access and heritage assets impact.

## National Planning Policy Framework

**4.6** The Government’s planning policies, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), are also a significant material consideration in deciding planning applications.

**4.7** The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies and how these are expected to be applied, and advises that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Three objectives of sustainable development are identified: economic, social and environmental.

**4.8** Economic considerations include ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth. Social considerations include supporting healthy communities by creating high quality environments with accessible local services. Environmental considerations include protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environments.

**4.9** Other guiding principles set out in the NPPF of

particular note in relation to the development proposed include that planning should:

- seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all;
- support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking account of flood risk, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings;
- contribute to conserving the natural environment; and
- conserve heritage assets.

**4.10** At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-making this means approving developments which accord with the development plan without delay, or where there are no relevant development plan policies or those most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the NPPF as a whole.

**4.11** In order to create sustainable development the NPPF requires isolated development in the countryside to be avoided, unless it would re-use redundant or disused buildings and would enhance its immediate setting.

## National Planning Practice Guidance

**4.12** The NPPG provides a web-based resource of national planning guidance covering a wide range of topics. Of particular relevance to this application is the guidance relating to design, the natural environment, conserving historic assets, flood risk, and contaminated land.



### Principle of development

**5.1** The site falls within an area designated as countryside. Core Strategy Policy CS02 allows for development in these locations where specific development management policies allow.

**5.2** Local Plan Policy H9 allows for the conversion of buildings in the countryside to residential use where the proposal would respect the structure, form and character of the original building and retain any important architectural features, is appropriate in scale and form to the original building and not result in a residential conversion that detracts from the original character of the building or its rural setting.

**5.3** The buildings are not currently in agricultural use, nor are they considered suitable for such hence their redundant status. Though somewhat run down, the building is structurally sound (see accompanying Structural Inspection Report by J P Chick) and would be converted without extension and with relatively minor alterations to the external elevations. The scale and form are appropriate to the existing site and building and is in keeping with the local character of the setting, as discussed below.

**5.4** As such the proposal would be compliant with the requirements of Policy H9 of the current Local Plan.

### Impact on local character

**5.5** Local Plan policies seek to ensure that new developments respect the landscape character of their surroundings and are designed to a high standard. Careful consideration has therefore been given to how the proposal would affect the surrounding area.

**5.6** The current structure, materials and condition of the building diminishes the contribution that it would otherwise make to the appearance of the area. The proposed development would see the building restored to its original character and would enhance the appearance of the building and its setting.

**5.7** The use of large, simple openings with extensive glazing would ensure that the overall traditional agricultural character is retained and restored. The restoration of the barge boards in addition to the traditional Suffolk red brick will further add to this.

**5.8** On this basis, it is considered that the proposal would accord with Local Plan policies, which seek to ensure that development positively contributes to local distinctiveness and landscape character through high quality design.

### Heritage impacts

**5.9** The nearest Listed property is situated some distance to the south of the site. By virtue of the distance between the heritage asset and the site, intervening buildings and landscaping, and the nature of the development proposed it is not considered that the proposal would adversely affect their significance or setting.

**5.10** Indeed, it is considered that the building in its current condition does not contribute positively to the wider setting and this is only likely to deteriorate the longer it remains unused.

### Residential amenity

**5.11** The proposed development has sought to ensure the proposed dwelling will retain adequate private amenity spaces and that there are no issues from overlooking.

**5.12** The orientation of windows, doors and private spaces have been largely dictated by the existing orientation of the barn.

**5.13** No properties are located within a distance that would give rise to any issues of overlooking..



## Access

**5.14** Access to the site will be via the existing access into Ipswich Road, for access and parking on to a new driveway. New steps and a ramp will provide access to the new entrance door, given the difference in floor levels on this side.

**5.15** Though the proposed development would potentially generate some additional traffic movements on the local road network, it is not considered that this would be at such a level that it would cause harm to the highway safety.

## Ecology

**5.16** An Ecological Assessment of the site and its surroundings has been completed by Greenlight Consultancy, a copy of which is anticipated shortly. Other species of conservation concern were scoped out due to the site location and associated habitat.

**5.17** There are no designated sites within 1km of the site. Given the nature of the proposal the chances for ecological enhancement are small but bird and bat boxes may be introduced in to the garden.

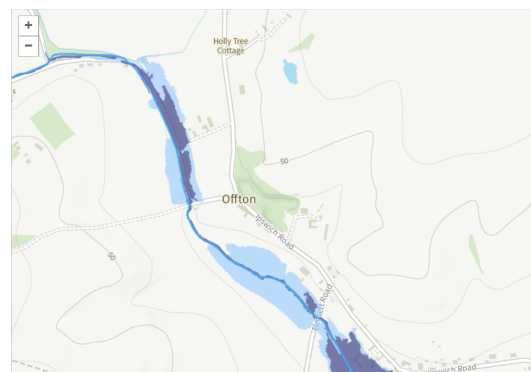
## Ground conditions

**5.18** The building has not been used in the past for the storage of agricultural chemicals or fuel oil. The

current owners are not aware of any chemical or pollutant spills having taken place in the past.

## Drainage

**5.19** The application site falls within Flood Zone 1 and so is at low risk of fluvial flooding. There are no areas at risk of surface water flooding in the immediate locality, as shown on the Environment Agency's flood maps.



**6.1** It is proposed to convert the barn to a residential dwelling.

**6.2** The proposal would allow for the conversion of an existing building which would constitute an improvement to its appearance and the wider landscape character, that is in accordance with the policies in the adopted Local Plan and emerging Local Plan.

**6.3** Careful consideration has been given to the possible amenity impacts of the development and landscape character. The plans would provide suitable private space and outlook so as to ensure there are no detrimental impacts and the development proposal would improve the appearance of the barn and would be compatible with the character of the surrounding area.

**6.4** For these reasons, and those outlined above it is considered that the proposal complies with both local and national policies, and would amount to sustainable development to which the presumption in favour applies.