

Barn Conversion at Bedfield House

Design, Access and Heritage Statement

June 2022

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This report sets out the detailed proposals for the conversion of a c.20th barn at Bedfield House into a light, spacious and sustainable family home for the 21st century.

Bedfield House and Barn

The Barn at Bedfield House is a c.20th century building which falls within the setting of Bedfield House, a grade II listed c.16th farmhouse with later c.19th alterations. Both buildings form part of the same overall property, in single ownership.

Dr and Mrs Scott, have lived at Bedfield House for over three years and have undertaken a sensitive light-touch programme of restoration and redecoration works to the house, which is now in excellent decorative order. Dr and Mrs Scott intend to carry out an equally sensitive conversion of the nearby barn, which is an under-utilised, structure constructed in the late 1980's to replace entirely a former barn complex destroyed in gales.



Top: Photograph of barn from kitchen garden (east)

Bottom: Photograph of Bedfield House (south)



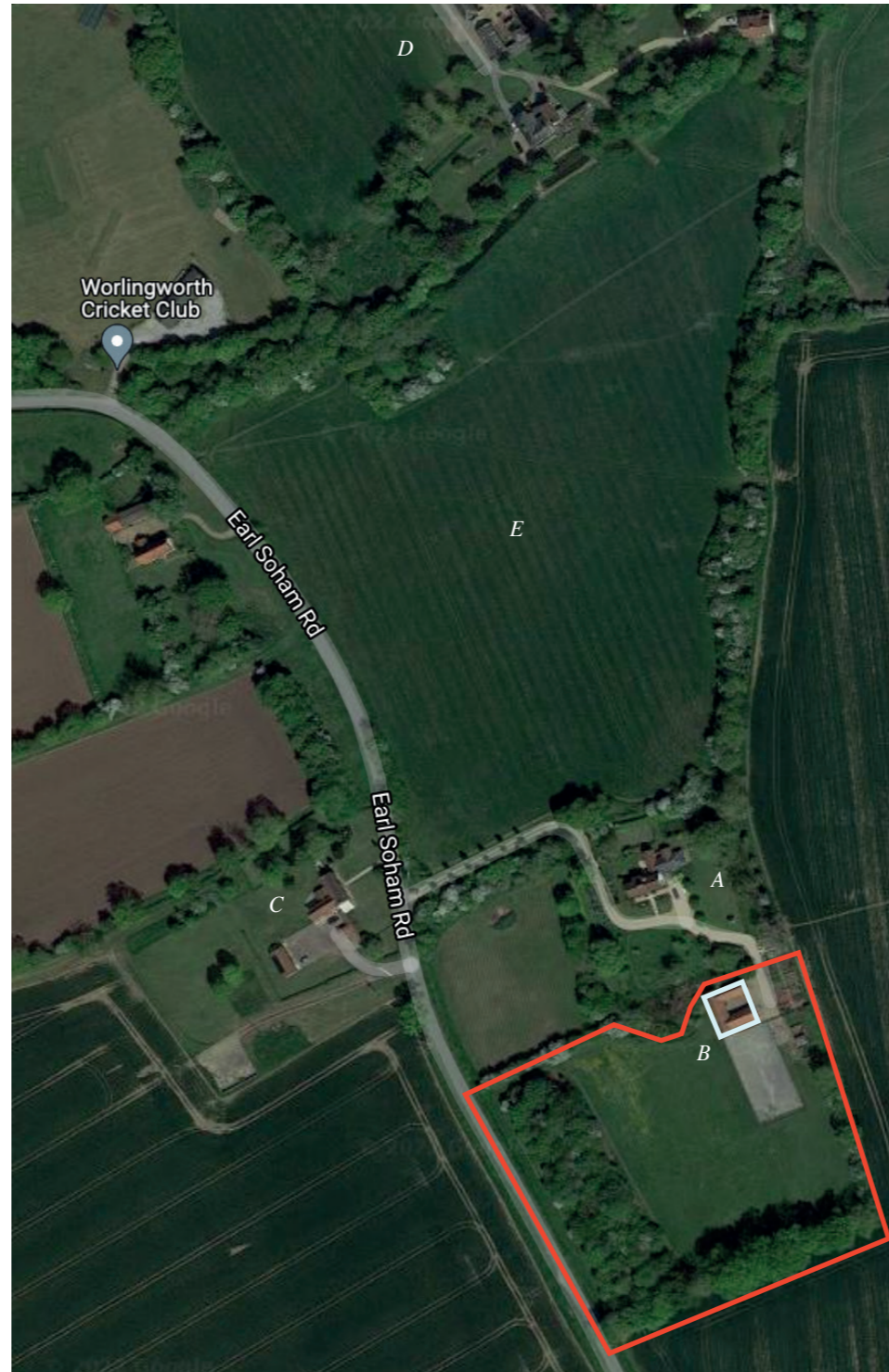
I.0 - Introduction

Location

Bedfield House and barn is located in the small village of Bedfield Little Green, 1.5 miles to the north of Earl Soham, a picturesque and well-served village in the heart of East Suffolk.

Earl Soham, Suffolk, is centrally located with the market town of Framlingham approximately 4 miles to the East, and Ipswich 30 miles to the South. The nearest trunk road is the A12 which links Lowestoft (north) to London (south), and the A14 (and M11 London) is accessible to the west. Saxmundham railway station is 11 miles to the east of Earl Soham, on the line to Ipswich, which has fast direct connections to London (70 minutes).

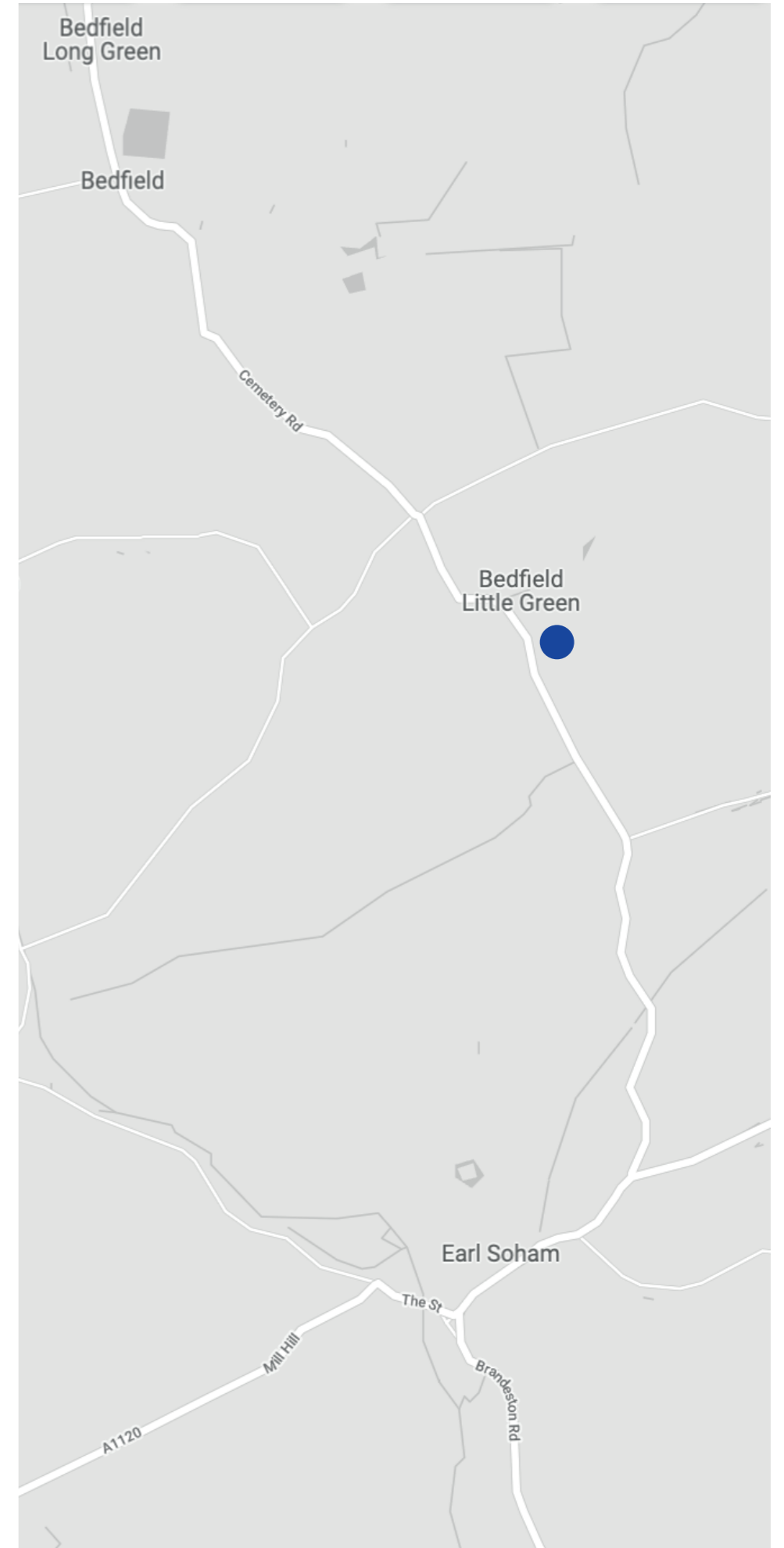
The barn is located to south east of Bedfield House, and directly to the east of Earl Soham Road which leads to Bedfield (north), and Earl Soham (south). The barn and house together form part of a cluster of houses and agricultural buildings surrounding Bedfield Little Green (E) - to the north is White House Farm (D), to the west is Red House (C), and; to the northwest another period farmhouse and Worlingworth Cricket Club.



Top left: Site location map showing barn at Bedfield House in context.

Top right: Google map showing location of Bedfield House to the north of Earl Soham

- A Bedfield House
- B Barn (and application site in red)
- C Red House
- D White House
- E Bedfield Little Green



I.0 - Introduction

Site Analysis

The barn appears separate to the Bedfield House, and is naturally divided from the house by the large pond which is immediately to the north, further still, a garage building forms an additional sense of separation between the two properties.

The barn is regularly planned and orientated north/south east/west across its primary axes. The entrance to the main barn building is via a gated courtyard to the east. Currently the only vehicular access to the barn/courtyard is via the driveway to the house. The courtyard gives access to the kitchen garden, and menage and paddocks.

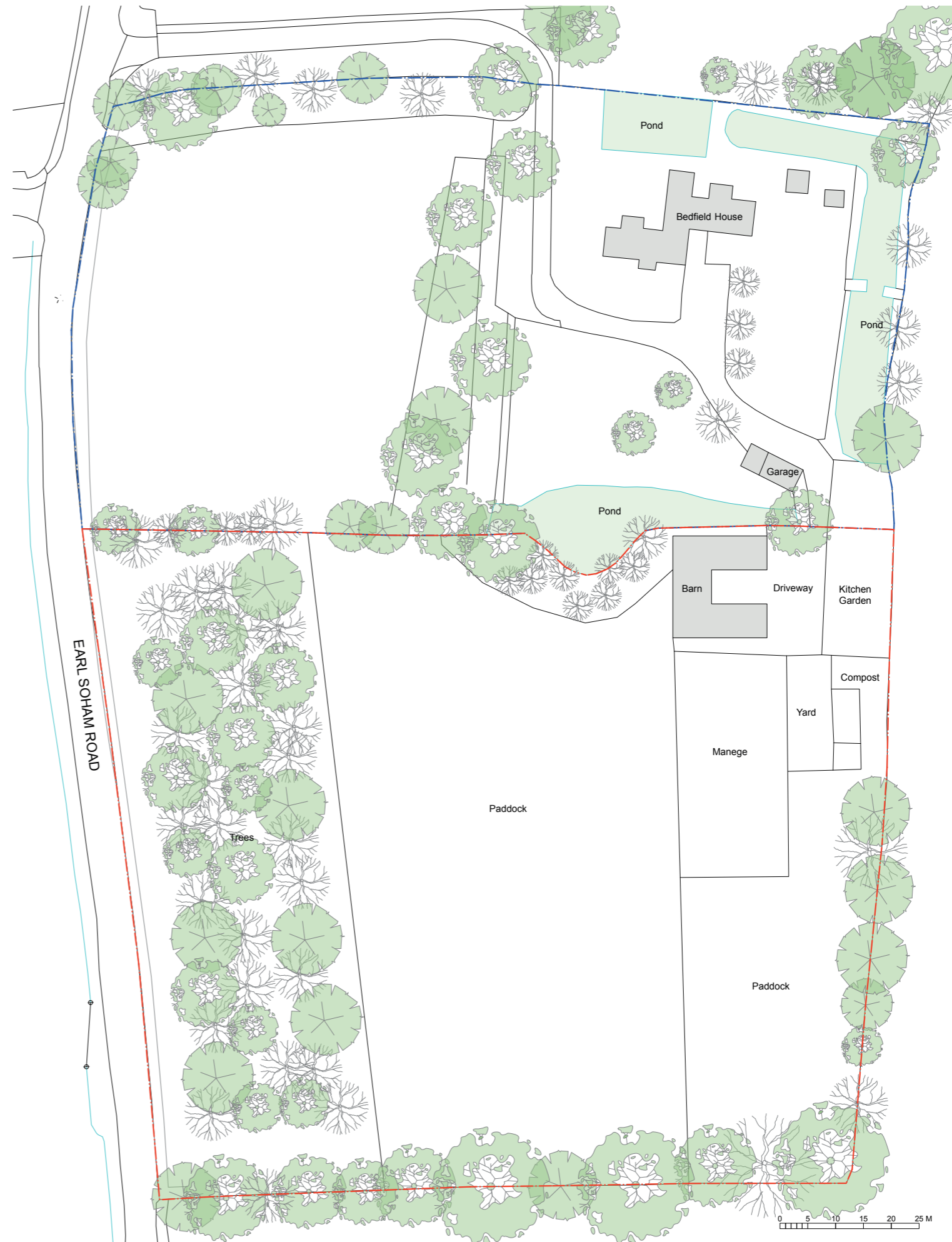
A gravelled track leads around the south of the barn and in turn; to the south of the barn are paddocks and an area of young woodland (combined approximately 4 acres in area) which is bordered by Earl Soham Road to the west; farmland to the south and east; and, Bedfield House grounds to the north. To the south and east boundaries are several mature trees and hedging creating a high degree of privacy and together with the woodland to the west, screening from the highway.

The site has views to east and south over farmland; westwards over woodland; and, to the north over the neighbouring pond and meadowland.



Right: Site map showing Bedfield House and barn in immediate context.

Above: Aerial photograph showing the high degree of separation between the two buildings.



I.O - Introduction

Context Photos

Photographs on this page show the context of the barn, and its relationship to Bedfield House and surroundings.

The barn is separate from Bedfield House, and totally screened from all nearby dwellings.

The top image shows the two properties viewed from the adjacent footpath across the field to the east, with Bedfield House (right) within its own established grounds surrounded by mature trees, and the barn (left) focusing away from the house with open views over the countryside to the east.

Along the boundary between the barn and house, there are very limited views from one to the other as they are naturally screened by the large natural pond and trees. The only direct view of Bedfield House is from the land immediately to the west of the barn, over the natural pond (centre left image). The bottom left image shows the return view from the house to the barn, and the very limited visibility of the barn.

To the south of the barn are well screened paddocks, the centre right image is the view from the southwest corner of the barn looking south to the boundary of mature oaks and farmland beyond. The bottom right view shows the barn from the same meadow, viewed from the southwest looking northeast.



Top: View from east;

Centre left: House viewed from south edge of natural pond looking north;

Centre right: Paddock looking south;

Bottom left: View of barn from Bedfield House, looking south;

Bottom right: View of barn from south paddock, looking northeast;

2.0 - Statutory Consents

Planning & Listed Building Consents

Bedfield House and barn falls within the borough of Mid Suffolk, it does not fall within a built-up area of a settlement and therefore is deemed to be in the countryside. Bedfield House is listed grade II. The barn was constructed after 1947 the barn is not curtilage listed.

Certain permitted development rights may apply to this building. Any proposals to convert the barn to a dwelling, will require full planning consent.

Early consultation was carried out with Mid Suffolk planning department, and a full pre-application submission in January 2021, details of which are included later in the report.

Party Wall

If you are extending near your boundary or need access through your neighbour's property in order to build the extension, you will need to check your rights and responsibilities under the Party Walls etc. Act 1996.

A building owner proposing to start work covered by the Act must give adjoining owners notice of their intentions in the way set down in the Act. Adjoining owners can agree or disagree with what is proposed. Where they disagree, the Act provides a mechanism for resolving disputes.

A (downloadable) booklet is available from the Department of Communities and Local Government website, which includes sample letters with which to serve notice on affected neighbours. Please note that the legislation is enforced by the courts and not the Local Planning Authority.

For more information see:

<https://www.gov.uk/party-wall-etc-act-1996-guidance>

Building Control

The Building Regulations 2010 cover the construction and extension of buildings. Planning permission and building regulations are separate consents and approval under one does not convey or imply consent under the other. Most householder development requires building regulation approval and you are advised to check whether you need to apply for your proposal by contacting the Building Control department.

For more information see:

<https://www.gov.uk/building-regulations-approval/how-to-apply>

Construction, Design and Management

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations came into force in Great Britain on 6 April 2015.

They set out what people involved in construction work need to do to protect themselves from harm and anyone the work affects. Whatever your role in construction, CDM aims to improve health and safety in the industry by helping all involved to:

- sensibly plan the work so the risks involved are managed from start to finish;
- have the right people for the right job at the right time;
- cooperate and coordinate the work of all parties;
- have the right information about the risks and how they are being managed;
- communicate this information effectively to those who need to know; and,
- consult and engage with workers about the risks and how they are being managed

You will have responsibilities as a client, and we will as designers. If the project warrants a 'principal designer' then we will advise you of this and likely carry out this role (for an agreed fee) or this can be carried out by an adequately qualified and experienced person.

For more information on CDM, and a summary of the responsibilities of all parties involved, please refer to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm/2015/summary.htm>

The following link provides a free download regarding client's responsibilities under CDM:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg411.htm>

3.0 - Existing Building

Description

Understood to have been built shortly after the 1986 gales to replace a former agricultural building, the barn at Bedfield House is of modern construction with a brick plinth supporting concrete block walls clad in black-stained weatherboarding, under a pitched clay pan-tiled roof. A main range (17.8m x 5.6m) runs north-south with two large central openings east and west, with two smaller wings (10m x 5.5m) running eastward to the north and south of the courtyard (east of the main range).

The condition of the barn is very good, albeit repair works are required to prevent minor deterioration to the external cladding and barge-boarding.

Bedfield House is grade-II listed (see listing text below). The barn is not necessarily considered to be within the curtilage, but within the setting of Bedfield House. As it was constructed after 1947 the barn is not curtilage listed.

BEDFIELD LITTLE GREEN
TM 26 NW
2/24 Bedfield House
29/7/55

II

Former farmhouse. C16 with C19 alterations. Timber framed, the front rough-cast-rendered, the remainder plastered. Roof plain-tiled to front, the lower half of the slope retaining old tiles; pantiles to rear. Probably 2-cell form. storeys and attic. 3 windows, mid-late C19 small-paned casements with shallow cinquefoil-cusped heads to the lights. Wooden hoodmoulds. To left the windows are larger and the upper one is set higher.

Lobby entry: C19 gabled porch and 4-panel door, the upper panels glazed in matching style to the windows. Internal stack, placed almost centrally, with plain oblong shaft; the lower part of the shaft is original, the upper part C19. Left gable end has matching windows. Interior not examined.

3.1 - Photographic Survey



Exterior photographs



Top left: North Elevation viewed from Bedfield House driveway;
Top right: North Elevation, oblique view from NE;
Centre left: East elevation, showing courtyard from veg. garden;
Centre right: South elevation from manège;
Bottom left: West elevation from SE;
Bottom right: West elevation, with pond boundary hedge to left;

3.1 - Photographic Survey

Exterior photographs



Top: South Elevation of North wing, from courtyard;
Centre: East Elevation from Courtyard;
Bottom: North Elevation of South wing, from courtyard;

3.1 - Photographic Survey

Interior photographs



Top left: Internal view of main barn looking north;
Top right: Internal view of main barn looking south;
Bottom left to right: Tack room; Boot Room; Stable 1; Stable 2; Stable 3; Stable 4;



4.0 - Historic Analysis

Historic Overview

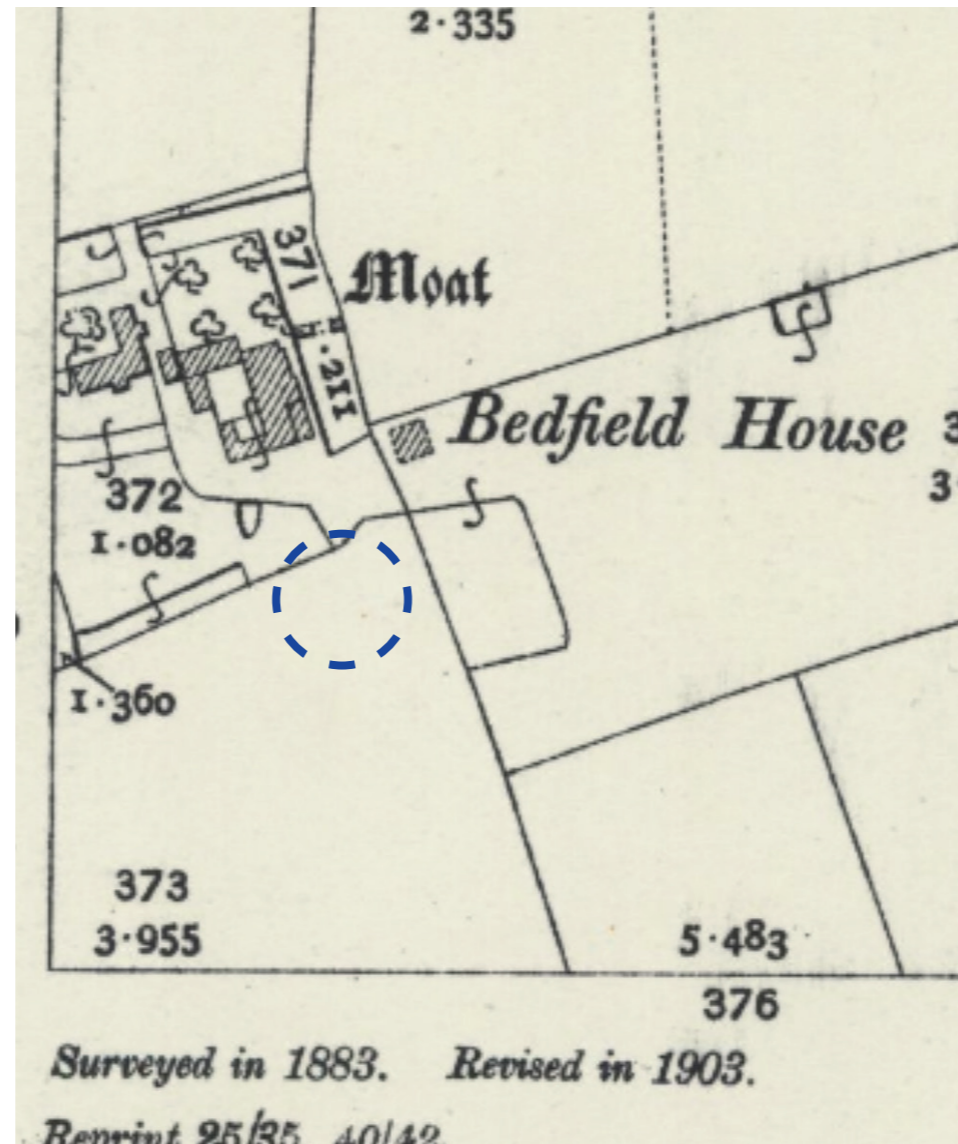
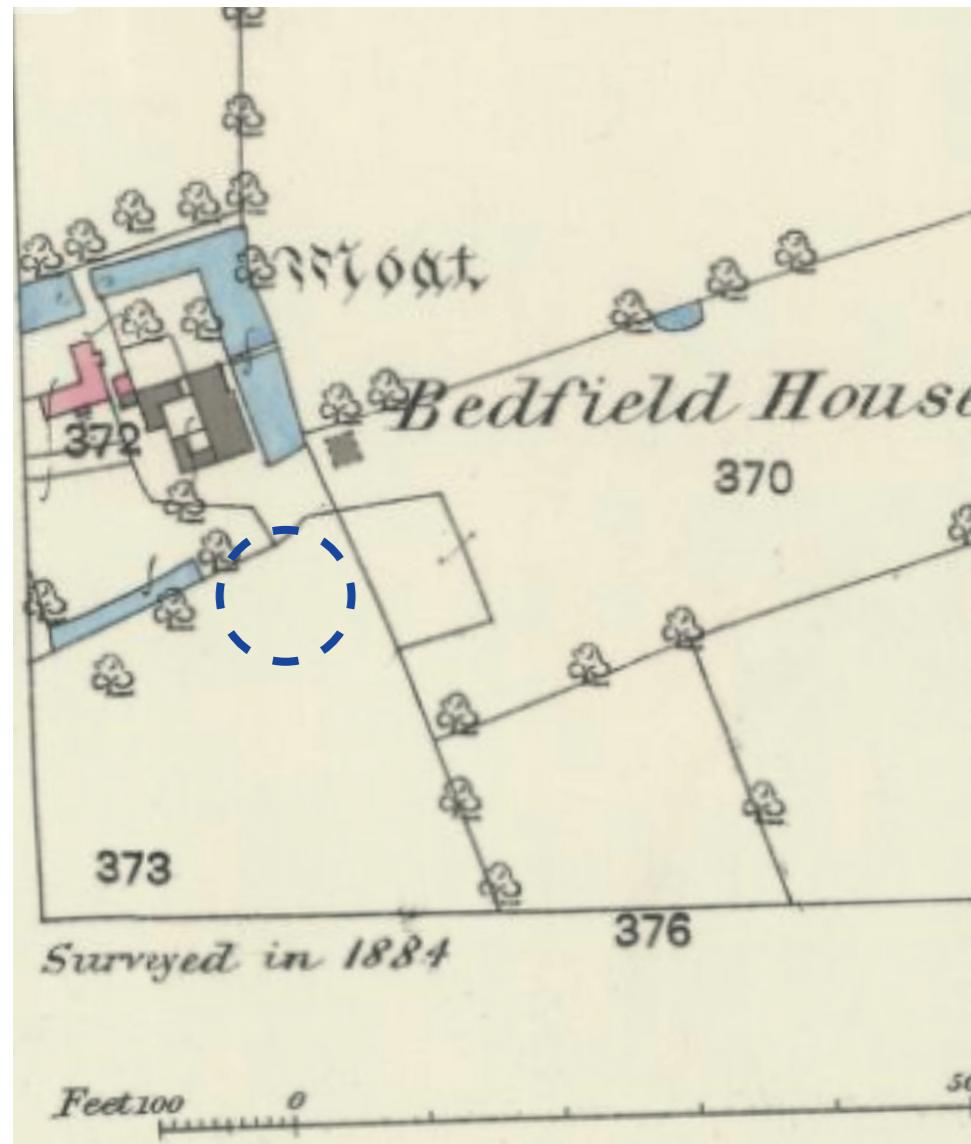
The barn forms part of the setting of Bedfield House, although arguably does not fall within the curtilage of the house which is defined by the historic moat, and within which the historic barns (since demolished) associated with the house were located (see next page). The house is listed as grade-II and is described further on page 9 of this report. The barns were constructed since 1947, and therefore are not curtilage listed.

Understood to have been constructed in during or shortly after 1986, the barn is of a traditional form and construction, save for the use of blockwork for the ground floor walls (clad in a traditional black boarding externally).. The buildings are in sound condition, and can be simply converted without need for extension of significant alteration internally or externally. The proposed conversion of the barn would not result any material change to the setting of Bedfield House, nor would it harm the character the listed building.

4.0 - Historic Analysis

Historic Progression

Historic maps from 1883/4 and later revisions up to 1957 clearly show a large cluster of agricultural outbuildings to the southeast of Bedfield House, within the curtilage of the house, as defined by the moat. There were no barns or any outbuildings on the site of the current barn to which this application pertains (circled in blue) in 1957, nor anywhere outside the moated curtilage as far as any historic maps available show.



Bottom Left: Map - 1885 - showing an empty site at the location of the barn, but with large range of barns located to the immediate SE of the Bedfield House;
Middle: Map - 1903 - as above;
Bottom Right: Map - 1957 - as above;

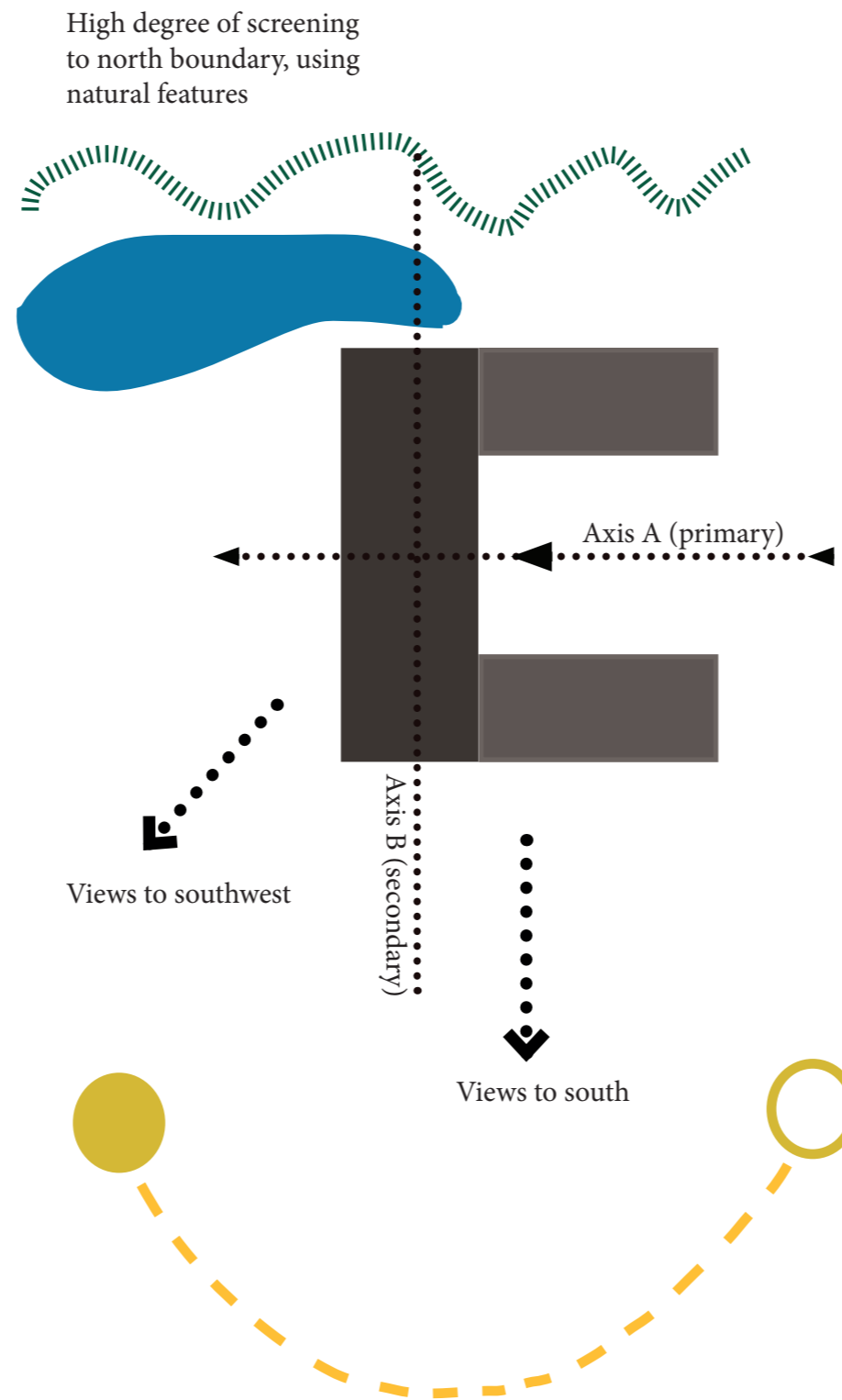
5.0 - Proposal

Brief

The brief is to sensitively and creatively convert the barn at Bedfield House into a flexible, practical, light, and environmentally sustainable home for retirement — a ‘lifetime’ home, with space for a returning family and hobbies workshop. The aim is to minimise alterations to the fabric of the building and convert the barn to residential use in as simplistic manner as possible, and in doing so retain its character and therefore the setting and character of Bedfield House as an historic asset.

Key Design Considerations

- Ensure a respectful approach is adopted towards Bedfield House as an historic building, and its setting;
- Brick plinth kept intact to all elevations with the exception of French doors provided to the kitchen breakfast room to the south elevation (not visible from Bedfield House) to maintain integrity;
- No change to fenestration to north elevation, to retain current relationship to with Bedfield House in terms of character and setting, and minimise any sense of over-looking;
- Limited fenestration — existing openings utilised to maximum potential;
- Barn to be ‘wrapped’ in insulation and re-clad in materials to match existing;
- Material palette to match existing, with new materials to compliment;
- Strength of existing north-south and east-west axis expressed in layout and treatment of elevations;
- Large, south-facing open-plan living / dining / kitchen space overlooking gardens (away from Bedfield House);
- East courtyard with pedestrian and vehicular access leading to main entrance and secondary entrance provides maximum privacy to both properties, with close proximity to secondary entrance and service zone;
- Key living spaces and bedrooms look away from Bedfield House;
- Use of natural boundary markers (pond and trees) minimises need for any new boundary treatments, and new vehicular access and driveway separates the barn from Bedfield House;



Description of Works

General:

Strip back and make necessary repairs to the existing fabric — remove exterior cladding and roof tiles (set aside) and repair brick and flint plinth and timber frame where necessary; form new openings in blockwork walls and plinth as indicated on drawings; make alterations to north and south courtyard-facing elevations as indicated on drawings; and, carry out preparatory ground works to include new incoming services and drainage (including installation of klargester).

Main Barn:

Line main barn structure externally with 200mm natural fibre insulation board and re-clad with black weather boarding above plinth (as existing); construct openings for fenestration to south and west and connecting openings to north and south wings; form internal non-structural partitions; lay DPM to connect with DPC; lay insulation, slab and screed and finish with solid floor (brick or concrete); spray roof structure; line externally with birch face plywood and insulate as per walls (with 100mm additional insulation) and form roof lights (as indicated on drawings) and re-tile in clay tiles to match existing (re-used where possible); internally, form ceilings to bedrooms to north; glaze all openings as indicated on elevations;

North wing:

All treatment to north wing as per main barn, with exception of: excavate ground within covered cloister and form new slab to match existing before applying DPM to connect to surrounding DPM/C, insulation and finishes as described to main barn above; create bat roost zone within existing vaulted roof space to satisfy requirements as set out in preliminary ecological appraisal; install PV array to internal south-facing roof;

South wing:

All treatment to north wing as above, with the exception that the kitchen breakfast room is to be fully vaulted, as bat roosts not applicable to south wing;

5.1 - Design and Access Statement

Use

The existing building is an ancillary building to Bedfield House, and the proposal seeks to change the use to single dwelling - residential (C3).

Amount

The proposals do not exceed the existing external envelope of the barn. The proposed areas are as follows:

Existing (ground): 174 sq.m. (GIA)

Existing (first floor mezzanine): 18 sq.m. (GIA)

Existing Total: 192 sq.m. (GIA)

Proposed (ground): 201 sq.m. (GIA)

Proposed (first floor mezzanine): n/a

Proposed Total: 201 sq.m. (GIA) (Total + 9 sq.m. net gain GIA)

Layout

The existing plan lends itself to conversion to a dwelling.

The overall layout of the building remains unchanged externally. Internally, the main barn layout is largely unchanged, providing a vaulted central dining hall and living room to the south, and two double bedrooms to the northernmost end (with the existing south mezzanine accommodation relocated above to provide storage).

The two existing wings provide distinct accommodation. The north wing provides further bedrooms and therefore retains its cellular plan with the external cloister being in-filled to provide circulation to each bedroom. The south wing provides a large kitchen-breakfast room (extended to in-fill the cloistered walkway as per the north wing opposite). The kitchen is located to the south wing to connect to the living room at the south of the main barn, and open out onto the private south-facing gardens. A secondary entrance, utility room and WC is located within the easternmost cell of the plan, and a portion of the external cloister is retained to provide covered access.

Scale

The proposed works increase the size of the barn by a very small proportion only due to the external insulation (described on page 25). The form, scale and massing of the proposed conversion responds carefully to the existing structure and does not exceed the footprint of the barn.

Landscape

There are adequate adjoining grounds to create an ample private garden and driveway. There are no proposed works to the boundaries beyond the reformation of the roadside access gate. The south paddock will be used as private garden, with associated domestic planting.

Appearance

Materials and finishes have been carefully selected to match those of the existing building — all clay tiles will be re-used with new tiles to match the main barn (to be re-roofed); weather-boarded walls will match the existing. Alternatively, materials and finishes have been carefully selected to compliment the existing building — i.e. oak doors; and windows are to be dark stained timber-framed casements or powder-coated aluminium to blend into context.

Access

Bedfield House and barn is conveniently located 4 miles west of Framlingham, with a wide range of facilities easily accessible by car (or foot). A detailed description of the location and transport links is set out on page 5 of this report. Accessibility from the grounds to the barn, and within the barn itself will be designed for level access throughout.

5.2 - Proposed Details

Access

Existing access to both Bedfield House and barn is via a shared entrance from Earl Soham Road. It is proposed that a new entrance to Earl Soham Road is created to the very south-westernmost corner of the site to create a driveway with good visibility onto a straight stretch of Earl Soham Road, 4.5metres in width (compliant with Highways standing advice). Refer to the plan, bottom right.

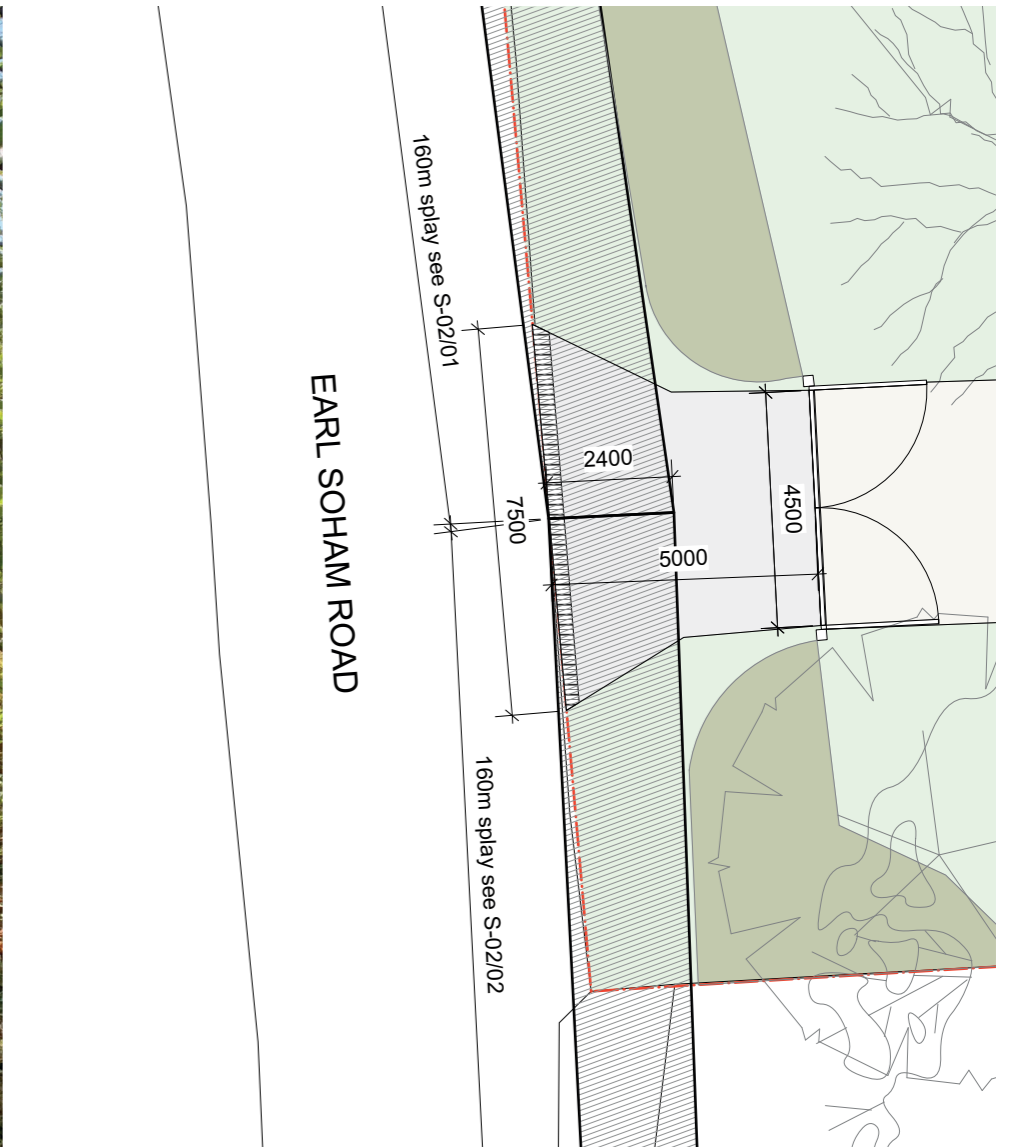
Minimal ground works will be required to create the proposed level entrance, and no trees will be required to be removed as there is a natural break between the boundary of established oak trees (south) and the more recently planted woodland directly north of the proposed entrance (refer to photograph bottom left and centre). Only a small portion of mixed hedge will be required to be removed to form the entrance (centre photograph below).



Above: View standing at the location of the proposed new entrance looking east to the south paddock - a natural break provides space for the new driveway without any tree removal.



Above: View standing between the south paddock and the location of the proposed new entrance looking west to Earl Soham Road (beyond the mixed boundary hedge)- a natural break provides space for the new driveway without any tree removal.



Above: Part plan showing proposed entrance to Earl Soham Road and visibility splays.

5.2 - Proposed Details

Indicative Floor Build-up

The existing floor is in-situ concrete slab. Areas of new slab (beneath covered cloistered areas to courtyard) will be set to the same level, to structural engineer's design and specification.

- Finish (TBC);
- 75mm sand cement screed;
- Nuheat zoned underfloor heating system;
- 200mm Celotex XR4000
- RIW 75mm sand cement screed sheetseal will be applied to the top of all concrete slabs, connected to the existing DPC;
- Existing concrete slab (including newly formed where stated);

The build-up will provide a well insulated floor to the barn which will protect it from long-term damage caused by interstitial condensation, and vastly improve the thermal efficiency of the building.

Indicative External Wall Build-up

The existing timber frame is to be treated and left exposed internally.

Suggested build-up using Steico products:

- Oak weatherboarding;
- Drained and vented cavity (battens and cross battens);
- Tyvek breather membrane;
- 200mm STEICO Protect insulation boards;
- Existing concrete blockwork;
- Savolit board on treated SW battens, with lime plaster finish internally;

The above build-up will produce an approximate total build-up of 400mm, from the outside face of the existing timber frame. It will provide a breathable, well insulated wrap to the historic fabric which will protect it from long-term damage caused by interstitial condensation, and provide a very thermally efficient home .

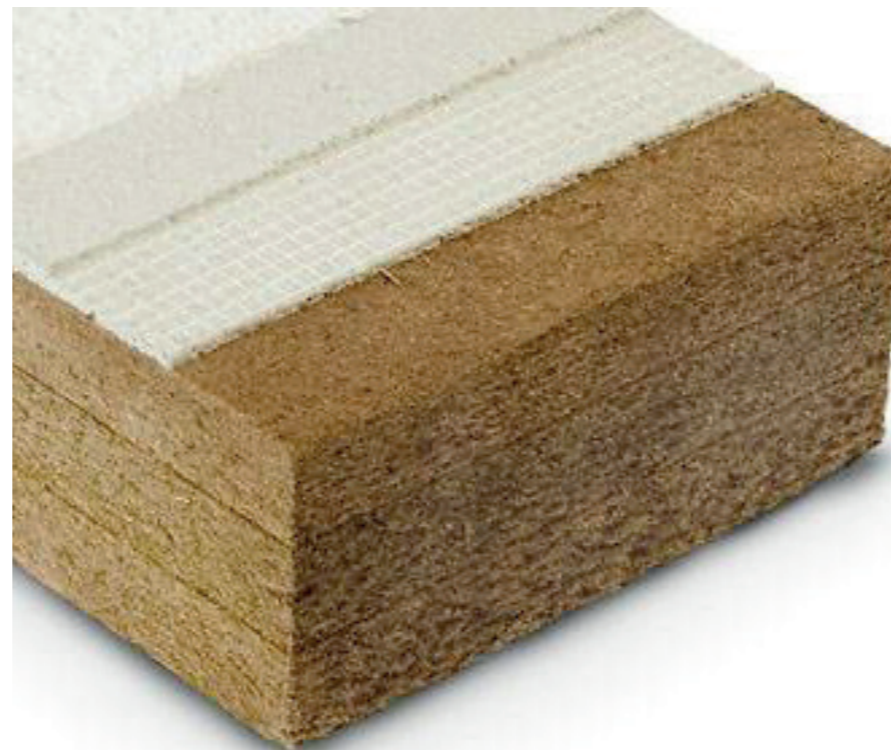
Indicative External Roof Build-up

The existing timber frame is to be treated and left exposed internally.

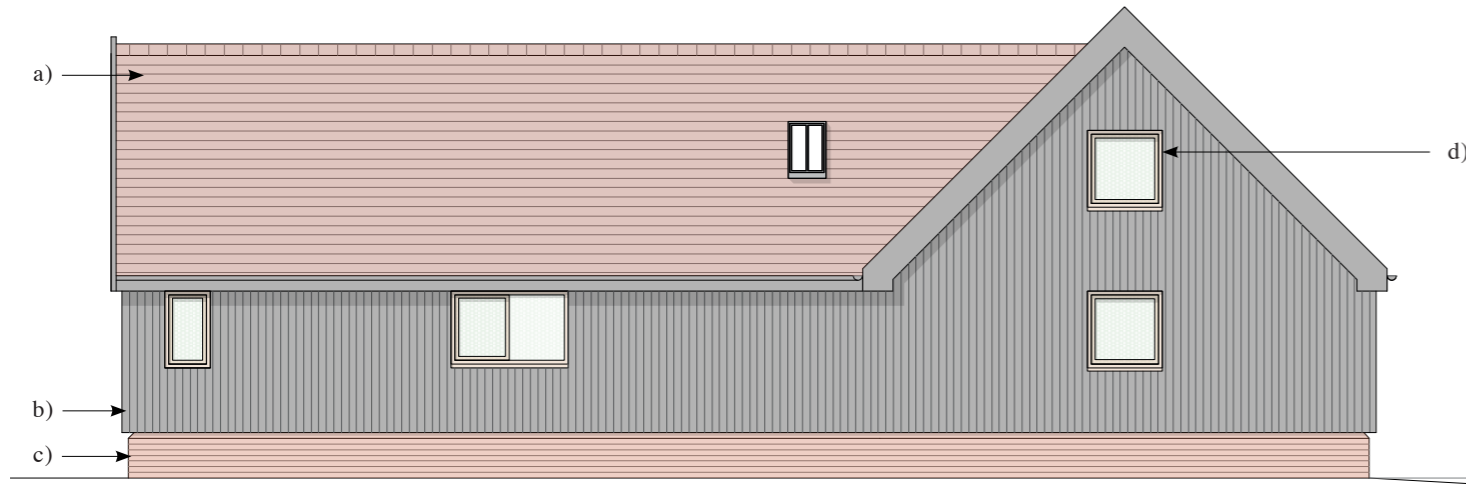
Suggested build-up using Steico products:

- Tiles on appropriate substrate/battens;
- Drained ventilation gap;
- Tyvek breather membrane;
- 100mm 'STEICO Universal Dry' T+G sarking-boards;
- 200mm STEICO Therm T+G boards;
- 18mm oiled WBP plywood (where visible, structural OSB where not);
- Existing structure left exposed internally (where applicable);

The above build-up will produce an approximate total build-up of 400mm, from the outside face of the existing timber frame. It will provide a breathable, well insulated wrap to the existing fabric which will protect it from long-term damage caused by interstitial condensation, and provide a very thermally efficient home .



5.3 - Proposed External Treatment



North Elevation as Proposed



South Elevation as Proposed



East Elevation as Proposed



West Elevation as Proposed

- a) Main Roof: Pan tiles reinstated;
- b) Main Walls: Black weatherboarding as existing;
- c) Soft red brick plinth retained;
- d) Oak framed double-glazed windows;
- e) Solid oak side door;
- f) Double-glazed linear conservation skylight within fine-profile steel frame (powder-coated black);
- g) Oak framed double glazed doors;
- h) External oak louvres to south glazed gable;

6.0 - Planning and Heritage Statements

Pre-Application Advice

Pre-application advice has been sought from Mid Suffolk prior to this planning application. On 25th January 2021, Phil Cobbold (planning consultant) met with Sian Bunbury, and the following is a summary of the subsequent written feedback received:

- The principle of conversion was deemed to be appropriate and the scheme appeared to comply with the relevant policies;
- Local plan policy H9 permits the conversion of agricultural and other rural buildings which are in keeping with their surroundings, and which respect the structure, form and character of the original building.
- Core Strategy policy CS2 lists the conversion of rural buildings to dwellings, as one of the exceptional forms of development acceptable in the countryside.
- The elevational treatment was not illustrated at the pre-app stage but should retain the character of the building.
- It was advised that particular attention would need to be paid to the extent of the existing pond, the need for ecological surveys, and the provision of suitable boundary treatments.

Pre-Application Design Response

Following the pre-application advice received, the proposed scheme has been developed taking into account all points raised, and responding positively. A summary of the further considerations now demonstrated in the current scheme are as follows:

Sustainability:

- The proposal will add to the housing stock and contribute to the local economy during construction and as a result of its future inhabitants;
- The proposal has been designed to retain the form, scale, massing and materiality of the existing building, with minimal landscaping changes, and no notable fenestration changes to the north elevation (facing Bedfield House) in order to protect the natural and historic environment;
- Further investigations have been made with regards to the ecology of the site, and these are factored in to the design (including a bat roost), and changes to the boundary - protecting the pond adjacent to the north boundary (now left intact);
- Minimising the use of energy and resources has been considered as an integral part of the design, ensuring the application constitutes sustainable development. The building will touch lightly on the environment with a fabric-first approach to conserving energy (refer to page 18 of this report), supplemented by on-site energy production via the large PV array (concealed on the internal south-facing courtyard roof) which together with a highly insulated envelope, will generate sufficient electricity for the buildings demand, including the required provision of an air-source heat pump for heating and hot water;

Design + Historic Environment:

- The elevational treatment, specifically the choice and size of doors and windows have been designed to be in character, and appropriate to the simple style of the building;
- The boundary treatment has been carefully reviewed in terms of the historic environment and the setting of Bedfield House as well as the ecological considerations outlined. The northern boundary is now protective of the existing pond (part of former moat) which will be retained in its entirety by Bedfield House;
- The character and setting of the listed building has been carefully considered, as set out in the Heritage Statement within the report;

Natural Environment:

- Investigations have been undertaken to establish whether the site and its surroundings are of value for wildlife and plant life, and a preliminary ecological survey accompanies this application;

Highways, Access and Parking:

- The proposed new access will serve the new dwelling only, and is positioned on a straight stretch of Earl Soham Road, with visibility splays shown on the drawings;

Landscaping

- In accordance with Core Strategy policy, CS5 is of general relevance to this proposal. The proposed site does not have a wide landscape impact, but all new hedging or tree planting will be of native species.

Residential Amenity, Safe and Secure Communities

- Protecting Existing Residential Amenity - Policy H16 - the proposal is deemed to be in accordance with policy. The proposal will not have an impact on the residential amenity of the Bedfield House due to the distances involved and that the existing building is single-storey. Further still, with the use of natural boundary features (pond/moat), existing hedging and trees, simple post-rail fences, the provision of a separate driveway and entrance, and gardens which face away and are screened by the barn itself, the proposed scheme has been carefully designed to mitigate any potential harm to Bedfield House and its setting.

6.1 - Planning and Design Statements

Planning Statement

The owners of Bedfield House wish to enable a sensitive and sustainable conversion for their own use as a home for retirement. The proposed scheme would be well-suited for this use providing a low-energy and single-storey home (with flexible layout for the long-term).

The proposals have been carefully considered under the relevant national and regional policies, as set out at pre-application stages (also refer to previous page).

A covering letter and statement has been prepared by Phil Cobbold, planning consultant.

Structural and Services Assessment

The barn was constructed in the last 40 years, to meet the regulations at the time and remains structurally sound. The barn is structurally sound, and capable of conversion without extension or alteration or reconstruction. This can be seen in the proposals as detailed within this report — the perimeter brick plinth is in good condition and provides good separation from damp with contiguous DPC, and as such the blockwork walls internally, and timber roof structure of the barn all remains in very good condition. The clay pan tile roof are in very good condition with no signs of movement. All internal floors to the barn are concrete ground-bearing slabs and appear to be stable, and dry.

The scale and layout of the barn, as described in previous paragraphs, lends itself to conversion for residential use. Little alteration is proposed to the main structure. The general approach to insulation — external to the blockwork walls, means that the structure is left largely intact, with weatherboarding being re-applied over insulation to ensure the character of the barn is preserved externally.

The size and configuration of the building is such that it would lend itself to residential use. The footprint of the barn is clearly defined by the external walls of the main barn and attached wings, and walled courtyard to the east (which is directly attached, and of the same period and construction). The building footprint would not require extension, nor would the building need to be significantly altered or reconstructed.

Mains electricity already runs to the building. Waste drainage will be via a Klargest, as per the house. Potable water is already connected to the building. The intention is that the building will be extremely efficient and environmentally sensitive, as to allow it to be as ‘off-grid’ as possible both in terms of energy use/production and waste treatment.

Design Statement

The proposed design for the conversion of the barn at Bedfield House has been developed over a lengthy period and is of an appropriately high-quality, resulting in an imaginative, sustainable home which is respectful of the integrity of the building. Consideration has been paid to the manner in which the character and setting of the adjacent grade-II listed historic building, Bedfield House, and other nearby listed buildings, would be affected, such that the character and appearance of the barn has been carefully handled — a sympathetic approach to fenestration; retention of existing fabric; like-for-like replacement materials; the considered use of new materials to compliment the existing; and, adherence to existing perimeter walls and roof forms, would all result in the barn remain largely unchanged.

The sympathetic approach adopted in the design of the external envelope results in a discreet conversion which conceals the more noticeable interventions (ground floor south elevation, and courtyard elevation) from the most public vantage points. The position of the barn adjacent to the east boundary and away from Earl Soham Road, with paddock to the south and west, and enclosed courtyard to the east means that the curtilage will be formed by existing elements (road, walled courtyard, and hedged paddock) rather than new fencing (which will be minimal and limited to the separation of the existing driveway only). A natural boundary exists between the house and barn by way of the natural pond (moat) and established planting. Parking for the barn would be located to the east, south of the established kitchen garden (to be retained) which would not be visible from Bedfield House or the road. With this in mind, the conversion of the barn to residential use would not result in the expected ‘domestic paraphernalia’ being visible and therefore the proposals would not impact negatively on the setting of Bedfield House, other nearby homes. By maintaining the original form and materiality of the building; designing limited and considered fenestration; and making negligible changes to the existing boundary conditions to form the new

curtilage — the conversion serves only to enhance it’s immediate setting. The conversion and preservation of this building will enhance the curtilage of Bedfield House, and the setting of the nearby listed houses and outbuildings in the immediate vicinity (north and west) which complete the wider settlement of which this building is a part.

The nature and intensity of the proposed use as a single family dwelling is compatible with the rural location of the barn, as the existing access and road links provide adequate connection to nearby Framlingham and services beyond, and will not put undue strain on the existing infrastructure. The proposals will not lead to unacceptable levels (or types) of traffic, nor create problems regarding road safety. Earl Soham Road is a primary (albeit quiet) access road to Earl Soham and it is understood that the road is capable of accommodating this development without the need for upgrades that might harm its character. Note - it is considered that the road may not be suitable for higher volumes or types of traffic which may be generated if the building were to be used for commercial or tourism purposes.

It is proposed that a new driveway entrance will provide sole access to the barn in a manner that allows for a permanent and natural divide between the two properties, as set out on page 17. No extensions are proposed to the barn that exceed the footprint of the building.

Summary:

The barn would make a suitable conversion into a family home; the nature and intensity for the proposed use is compatible with the rural location (within a small cluster); the proposals will not have an adverse affect on the setting or character of the locality nor put strain on the existing infrastructure. The pre-application advice received has been carefully reviewed and design developed to reflect specific comments received.

The conversion will enhance the setting of the building, and preserve the character, site and setting of the nearby historic Bedfield House.

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Description of Works

The brief, description of works and concept are described on pages 15, 16 and 17.

Impact

The proposed conversion of the barn at Bedfield House, an under-utilised out building, into a family home has limited impact on the form and appearance of the building, and therefore aside from the necessary impact on the function (from stable block to residence), the greatest impact to consider is that on the character and setting of the nearby grade-II listed house, Bedfield House.

The proposed conversion has been designed to minimise the alteration of the external fabric and appearance of the building (particularly the north elevation visible to Bedfield House; celebrating the simple utilitarian form of the structure; and, responding to the agricultural nature and character of the building — so that the impact upon the character of the barn will be a positive one., and importantly the impact on the character, site and setting of Bedfield House will be neutral.

The form and plan of the existing barn makes it well suited for conversion to a residence — the proportion of the main barn is such that it can be elegantly divided to make comfortable rooms while preserving the readability of the space; the two east wings around the east courtyard provide very efficient and concealed bedroom accommodation (north) with windows focusing on the internal courtyard, and kitchen and utility space (south) with views over the private grounds to the south and direct access to parking to the east. The existing east-west axis runs from the entrance to the east courtyard, through the main doors of the barn, through existing double doors and out toward the south paddock. The proposals respond to this strong axial plan with the layout centred on preserving this key view through the building and out to the countryside beyond. This has a positive impact on the barn, and retaining the characteristics of the building ensures there is no negative impact on the setting of Bedfield House.

Internally, effort has been made to retain the agricultural character of the building by expressing the structure within the main space. The division of the main space has been carefully handled with the insertion of a dividing fireplace which creates a double height central space (on the principal axis) and makes the division of the space to the north appear balanced and natural, and a storage mezzanine above the north bedrooms will allow the main volume to be read as a whole — ensuring the integrity of the building is preserved. The wings require little intervention to be transformed into bedrooms (north) and a live-in kitchen (south) with direct views over, and access to the south paddocks — exposed roof structure and ceiling rafters will be maintained, and a series of discrete roof lights will drop natural light into spaces such as bathrooms to minimise the addition of windows to the external elevations (north).

As much as is possible, the proposed scheme aims to retain the character of the agricultural building internally as well as externally, protecting the character of main house, and in doing so ensuring the conversion has a positive impact on the building, and site and setting of Bedfield House.

Externally, the impact upon the building has been carefully managed — by retaining, adapting and replacing like-for-like the current fabric; choosing appropriately sensitive materials; not increasing the original mass or footprint of the building; limiting fenestration; and carefully orchestrating windows and skylights to fit within structure and compliment the massing and agricultural nature of the building — the interventions are of a sensitive nature, and compliment (and do not detract from) the original building, neighbouring buildings, and the wider setting.

Once insulated with high-performance natural fibre board, above plinth height the barn will be re-clad in black or natural oak weatherboarding (walls) and clay pan tiles (roof) as existing. The impact will be that the walls will be thicker resulting in the barn becoming proportionately wider and taller overall. The brick plinth is stepped at the top which creates a strong delineation between brick and weatherboarding which will be retained (albeit reversed) as the newly clad walls above the brick plinth overhang. this change has no impact on the character of the building, nor the site and setting of Bedfield House.

A PV array has been included as a significant part of the conversion strategy to ensure the barn conversion creates a truly sustainable home for 21st century living (see subsequent section ‘Justification’). The PV array is fixed to the south-facing roof of the north wing, facing the east courtyard which serves to provide a very good yield in passive energy and has the advantage of minimising the visual impact due to the south wing which obscures the array from view from outside the courtyard.

Roof-lights have been kept uniform, linear and aligned with both structure and each other as to avoid the ‘peppering’ effect that can occur as a result of irregularly planned barn conversions. Patent glazing has been proposed for the strip roof-light to the main barn which is largely concealed from view. For more prominent roof-lights to the main barn and the east wings, conservation roof-lights have been proposed to complement the agricultural character of the building, and compliment the site and setting of Bedfield House

Fenestration to the north elevation has been minimised, retaining all existing windows to serve bedrooms, with bathroom spaces served by conservation roof lights, which means that the visual impact upon Bedfield House is negligible, as the conversion does not cause overlooking or any negative impact upon its amenity nor its site and setting as a grade-II listed house.

The curtilage of the barn is naturally formed by a road and hedgerow to the west, and a natural pond (part of former moat) and garaging building (ancillary to the house) to the north, which forms a natural division between the two properties — the curtilage of Bedfield House being demarcated by the historic moat and formal gardens. The existing entrance to the barn, which is an extension to the driveway to Bedfield House will be terminated in line with the moat and existing garaging block which will form a natural terminus and will not negatively impact the setting, or amenity of the house. with the creation of a new driveway to serve the barn from the south, both properties will be independent with a high degree of privacy, while retaining their relationship of principle dwelling and ancillary building in character and setting.

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Because the conversion of the barn will utilise existing boundaries and not result in the creation of any additional curtilages defined by additional fencing, gates and/or associated structures, the impact upon the setting of Bedfield House, nearby houses and character of the road and surrounding countryside will be minimal, and it can be argued that any impact will be a positive one.

Summary of Impacts:

The proposed designs for the sensitive conversion of the barn at Bedfield House responds to the strong axial forms and agricultural character of the building — carefully handled modern details that compliment the historic fabric and setting of the building mean that the impact is positive — the conversion detracts nothing from the building, nor Bedfield House and serves to enhance the value of the building within the site and setting of a protected historic asset.

Justification

The barn at Bedfield House is an under-utilised ancillary building that is surplus to requirements as the house has more suitable outbuilding buildings in closer proximity which meet its requirement (including garaging for several cars, garden storage, wood storage etc).

Presently the barn is structurally sound, and capable of being converted. The scale, form, layout and location of the barn make it well suited for conversion to a dwelling.

The existing curtilage; natural separation from the adjacent Bedfield House; and opportunity for new and separate access from Earl Soham Road render the barn appropriate for conversion to a single dwelling (access discussed further below). The conversion of this building, in close proximity of a grade-II listed Bedfield House will enhance the building and its setting — guaranteeing the buildings ongoing maintenance for the foreseeable future, protecting the site and setting of Bedfield House.

Entrance:

It is proposed that the existing shared entrance be terminated as already explained, and a simple natural woven fence of 1800mm in height be constructed to block the existing driveway between the two buildings. The fence would run from the bottom two corners of the moat, respecting the natural, and historic curtilage of the house. A new vehicular access is proposed to be formed from Earl Soham Road to allow a separate driveway to serve the barn, which will not be visible from the house, and not impinge on its amenity, nor negatively impact its character, site and setting.

Plan:

The layout of the proposed conversion makes most practical and efficient use of the space, responds to the existing form and strong east-west axis, and takes advantage of the character and features of the barn, celebrating the readability of the original form and structure. Spaces have been kept as open plan and as true to the original series of volumes as possible.

The proposed division of living spaces has allowed for the minimum intervention to the external appearance — the roof form of the main barn, including east wings, all remain readable both externally and internally. No new penetrations are made to the brick plinth (save for the south openings not visible from the main house), nor north walls facing Bedfield House.

Envelope:

Having established the principal of converting the barn for use as a single family dwelling, it is implicit that the fabric will be upgraded to ensure it is safe and habitable. The proposed methods for upgrading the envelope have been designed with the intention of enhancing the building and its setting — through the careful use of materials and modern, robust detailing that compliments the historic structure, and for creating a super-efficient building with a minimal heat demand.

High levels of breathable, natural fibre insulation to the walls, roof and floor (where possible) can be achieved without the loss of integrity to the existing fabric, and will ensure that the design is as sustainable and ecologically responsible as it can be, and by lowering running costs it will help ensure the buildings use, repair and maintenance in the future.

Proposed external materials are to be as existing with the exception of the linear strip roof light to the main barn; and, the proposed PV array (not visible from beyond the east courtyard).

Sustainability:

The conversion has been designed with the aim of creating a super-efficient, low energy building which will be warm and low cost to maintain, and sensitive to the environment. An air-source heat pump, strategically located will generate heat, adequate to heat the entire building now insulated effectively. A PV array to the uninterrupted south-facing east wing (north) will generate on site electricity which can be used to provide adequate supply, and with battery back-up sufficient to power the air-source heat pump, meaning that the building has the potential to be off-grid for it's power, heat and hot water demands.

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A fabric-first approach is being adopted which means that by discreetly but efficiently insulating the envelope and ensuring a draught-free construction, and designing in passive solar-gain (through the large glazed area to the South elevation and roofs) the heat demand of the building will be as low as is achievable for a conversion project. The justification for this is clear — it serves to protect the environment, and future proofs the building in the context of a listed building, as a comfortable, affordable home for generations to come.

Fenestration (including doors and roof-lights):

The fenestration and placement of roof-lights has been designed to align with the structure. To the main barn, openings are limited to the west and south elevations. The windows proposed are set at a height as to avoid penetrations to the brick plinth, except for where French doors are created from the living room and kitchen onto the terrace. All other windows to the external elevations are of a smaller proportion to provide privacy, and only one existing window to the north is increased in width (to serve a bedroom) and is not visible from bed field house. large glazed windows are placed within the internal courtyard elevations to provide good levels of natural light, and cannot be seen from outside the courtyard.

The south elevation is completely private, and faces away from Bedfield House and the windows here serve the living room and kitchen — as such larger windows can be accommodated with no negative impact on the amenity of setting of Bedfield House, and have the benefit of providing panoramic views over the meadow and wooded boundary beyond. Glazing is to be set within slender blackened timber frames. Externally, openings have been carefully set out externally to align with horizontal weatherboard banding.

Existing fenestration is utilised in the north elevation and natural light increased by way of roof lights (Conservation roof lights) aligning with the proposed replacement structure, and a single fixed roof light to the ridge of the main barn will drop natural light into the double-height central living space while being invisible to Bedfield House, and complimenting the agricultural aesthetic of the building.

East courtyard:

The subtle adaptation of the east courtyard and adjacent wings plays an important part in the success of the proposed conversion, as it not only provides a concealed entrance, and serene quiet courtyard onto which all main spaces can over-look, but it also allows for the inclusion of renewable technologies, all without impacting on the character, site and setting of the adjacent Bedfield House — meaning that external elevations (viewed from the wider context) are to be kept free from all but the minimum required fenestration, and little other domestic indicators.

Summary

The proposed scheme preserves the integrity of the building with all interventions being designed to respect and compliment the form, materiality and detail of the existing building, with due consideration to it's site and setting. The conversion to a beautiful, functional and sustainable family home will protect and enhance the building as part of the context of a grade-II listed historic asset; have a positive impact on the environment; and future-proof the building as a usable and well-maintained structure for years to come.