

Design, Access & Planning Statement

Demolition of existing agricultural barn and new replacement dwelling in its place at: 1 Popenhoe Cottage, Station Road, Emneth, Wisbech, PE14 8DJ



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1.0 Executive Summary

This document has been developed to assist a full planning application for the demolition of existing agricultural barn and new replacement dwelling in its place at 1 Popenhoe Cottage, Station Road, Emneth, Wisbech, PE14 8DJ.

The barn in question to be demolished sits with permission to convert into a dwelling under application reference 21/01889/PACU3. The existing barn has been deemed not suitable for conversion due to its poor quality and operational inefficiencies. As a result, it is proposed that a new residential development will be constructed in its place. The proposal includes introducing a first floor which will accommodate sleeping and sanitary space. The use of the site will be residential and, as it is only for one dwelling as per the previous planning approval, there will be no harmful impact on neighbouring residential amenity in terms of noise and substance. A flood risk assessment was carried out to justify the previously approved barn conversion. As a result of the proposed new development, an updated FRA has been carried out which outlines further measures. This is attached with the planning application.

The existing access will be utilised as approved and will therefore cause no issues with regard to highways safety.

2.0 Design Components

2.1 Existing Site & Planning History

The site of the old Popenhoe Farm, 1 Popenhoe Cottage consist of the converted granary barn two farm cottages and the barn in question. The site has been in the present owner's farming family for two generations. Its planning history is relatively brief, comprising (starting with the oldest);

- Barn conversion including alterations

Ref. No: 2/99/0997/CU | Received: Thu 29 Jul 1999 | Validated: Thu 29 Jul 1999 | Status: Application Permitted

- Conversion of existing single storey garage to living space and downstairs bathroom, with further extension for guest bedroom. Erection of new garage forward of the front elevation of existing dwelling (never undertaken)

Ref. No: 16/02124/F | Received: Tue 06 Dec 2016 | Validated: Thu 08 Dec 2016 | Status: Application Permitted

- The most recent and regarding the barn in question (proposed to demolish) – Notification for prior approval: Change of use of agricultural building to one Dwellinghouse (schedule 2, part 3, class Q) at 1 Popenhoe Cottages, Station Road, Walsoken, Wisbech, Norfolk.

Ref. No: 21/01889/PACU | Registered: 29th September 2021 | Status: Application Approved

The approved plans from the prior approval application to change the use of the agricultural barn to a residential dwelling can be seen below. The plans show a modest dwelling. However upon closer inspection of the building, it is obvious that it is not fit for purpose and development would result in the need to demolish the building and start afresh. It is therefore suggested that a more suitable single dwelling be constructed in the barns place. This dwelling would still house a single family, but serve as a far more practical unit with sleeping space to the first floor.

The drawings submitted within this application demonstrate that the site can comfortably accommodate the new dwelling together with the required amenity space, parking and turning. The below shows the previously approved barn conversion.



Figure 1 – Prior approval barn elevation.

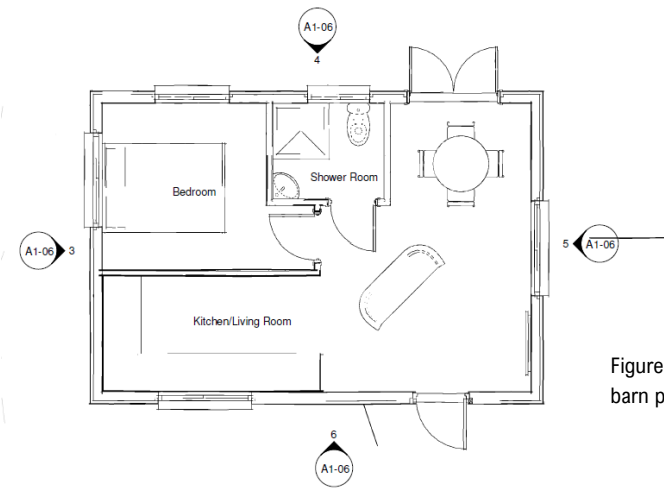


Figure 2 – Prior approval barn plan.

The adjacent map is taken from a 1970 plan. The red circle indicates the barn in question at a far larger size than it is currently presented. Parts were demolished during the 1990's as a result of safety concerns.

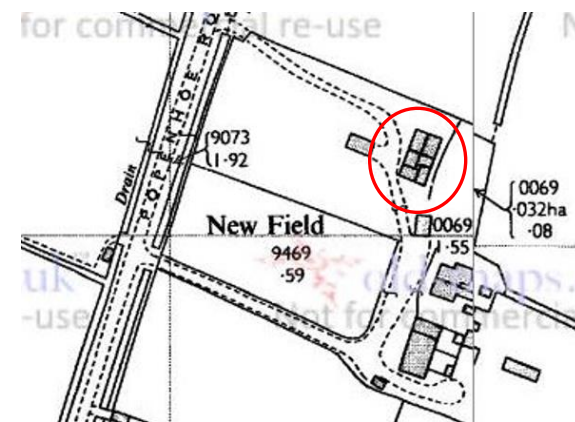


Figure 3 – 1970 map.

2.2 Relevant Policies

There are a number of policies at both national and West Norfolk Council level that align with the proposed development. Some of these are outlined in brief below:

King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council - Local Development Framework - Core Strategy. Policy 6.1.9 outlines Emneth as being a larger village that provides significant local facilities but, because of its proximity to the main towns and particularly areas with potential for urban expansion, its importance as a rural service centres is very much modified.

Policy 7.2.13 touches on the regional special strategy and the local plan. It highlights Emneth parish as being contiguous with the town of Wisbech and therefore a significant service centre for the area it is appropriate to support this function with additional growth. Policies CS01 and CS09 note the intention to support growth adjacent to Wisbech of at least 550 houses but the ultimate scale is dependant on further work lead by Fenland District Council.

West Norfolk Council Site allocations and developments management policies plan. Policy DM5 highlights Enlargement or Replacement of Dwellings in the Countryside. This policy states 'Proposals for replacement dwellings or extensions to existing dwellings will be approved where the design is of a high quality and will preserve the character or appearance of the street scene or area in which it sits. Schemes which fail to reflect the scale and character of their surroundings or which would be oppressive or adversely affect the amenity of the area or neighbouring properties will be refused.'

The proposal complies with this statement in that the dwelling will be built of high quality local materials that reflect the nature of its predecessor. The proposed barn sits in such a position that when viewed either from map, road or site, it is clear to see its place as a permanent part of the surroundings. The tree lined avenue driveway on approach to the new dwelling, hide it by large from the road.

Policy DM15 looks for development to 'aim to create a high quality environment without detrimental impact on the amenity of new and existing residents. With the fallback position of a dwelling in this location anyway, there will be no further impact on nearby residents amenity. The amenity of the occupants of the proposed building will in turn be more comfortable in a more fitting, purpose built dwelling that the original redundant barn.

Policy DM17 makes a case for parking provision within new development. This scheme, as the previous addresses adequate parking, accessed from an existing safe driveway entrance off Station Road.

Local Development Framework - Core Strategy. Policy CS06 outlines rural areas and development within these. It states how rural development can be justified in certain areas as a result of a number of factors. It seeks to 'promote sustainable communities and sustainable patterns of development to ensure strong, diverse, economic activity; maintain local character and a high quality environment; focus most new development in key rural service centres selected from the Settlement Hierarchy Policy CS02'. Emneth is part of this settlement hierarchy.

Policy CS08 of the Core Strategy looks to provide sustainable development within proposals. The policy sets out to protect the historic environment. Although none of the units on site are listed, the main adjacent granary building which is now a dwelling, does hold a certain amount of heritage value. The new dwelling is designed in such a way as to mirror aspects in terms of shape, scale and material.

The policy upholds the right to 'optimise site potential, making the best use of land including the use of brownfield land'. The proposed barn replacement makes best use of the site by replacing a small redundant barn on a large site, with a larger dwellinghouse that will house families for many years to come.

There is a need to 'enhance community wellbeing by being accessible, inclusive, locally distinctive, safe and by promoting healthy lifestyles, achieve high standards of sustainable design.' Both the approved and proposed building are just a 20 minute walk or 5 minute cycle ride from the centre of Emneth, including all of its amenity and public transport facilities. This in turn feeds back to Policy CS11 – Transport. The proposed building itself will be designed to a high quality, high efficiency standard. This would be enabled far more so in a new build than in the conversion of the existing barn.

3.0 Design Development

As ever, approval will also be subject to assessment of all other material planning considerations; those considered most relevant to the proposed development are listed below:

3.1 Design, Layout and Impact on Landscape Character

The proposed siting of the building is considered appropriate, mirroring the sites other barn – The Granary - orientation and placing on site. The proposed dwelling is sited on top of the existing barn. This is set back 80 meters from Station Road, with the view from the road mostly shaded by a tree lined driveway. The building is traditional in form, mirroring that of the already established barn conversion. A lower roof line on the new build than the existing barn conversion and cottages will detract attention from the development and let the existing houses keep priority from street view.

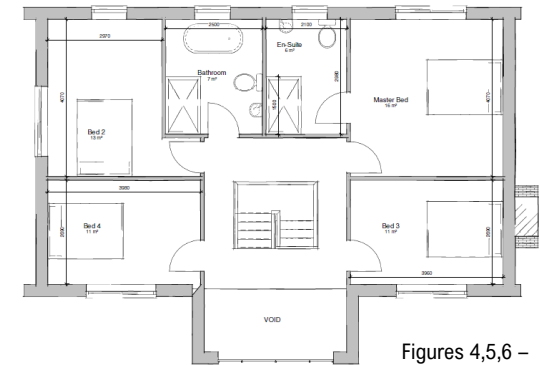
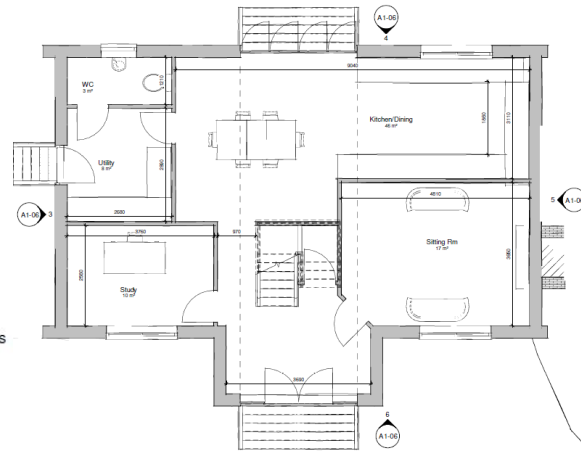
The elevations feature regularised openings and traditionally pitched gables to suit that of a barn style building. The materials are proposed as traditional red brick as per the adjacent converted barn. The proposed dwelling will house contemporary features such as corner wall end returns and grey windows.

The proposed level of accommodation and the scale and massing of the building is conveyed on the submitted drawings. It is considered that this is a suitable level of redevelopment for a site of this size. The proposal reflects the agricultural nature of the site and its surroundings, while providing a more sustainable and high quality scheme than that of the currently approved barn conversion.

It is noted that a new dwelling in this position on Station Road would be development within the countryside. However it is a material consideration that there is a fallback development which could be implemented at the time of this application, being the barn conversion. The status of a fall-back development as a material consideration is not a new concept and has been applied in court judgements such as ‘Samuel Smith Old Brewery v The Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government, Selby District Council and UK Coal Mining Ltd’. This decision states that for a fall-back position to be a ‘real prospect’, it does not have to be probable or likely: a possibility will suffice. It is also noted that ‘fall back’ cases tend to be very fact-specific and are a matter of planning judgement.

Further to the above, if the extant planning permission was implemented and the barn was then replaced with a more fit for purpose dwelling, Policy DM5 of the SADMPP would be relevant which states that ‘proposals for replacement dwellings or extensions to existing dwellings will be approved where the design is of high quality and will preserve the character or appearance of the area in which it sits.’

The below images show the suggested elevations with material palettes, and floor plans with the dwelling layouts.



Figures 4,5,6 – Proposed dwelling elevation, ground and first floor plans.

3.2 Precedents

The below images show two East Anglian barn conversions of very similar shape, form and material to the proposed at Popenhoe. Both of these are barns within the grounds of a farmhouse.



Figures 7 & 8 – barn conversions

3.3 Flood Risk Assessment

The site in question is located within flood zone 3 (benefiting from flood defences) as per the adjacent flood map taken from the Environment Agency. As such, a flood risk assessment was undertaken by Engineering Support Practice Ltd for the previously approved barn to dwelling scheme, and an updated version has been undertaken for this proposed replacement dwelling scheme.

Both FRA's concluded that development was viable, in accordance with the following main conditions:

- Ground finished floor level to be raised to 600mm above ground level.
- Sleeping accommodation to the first floor.
- Surface water drainage dealt with using SUDS scheme.

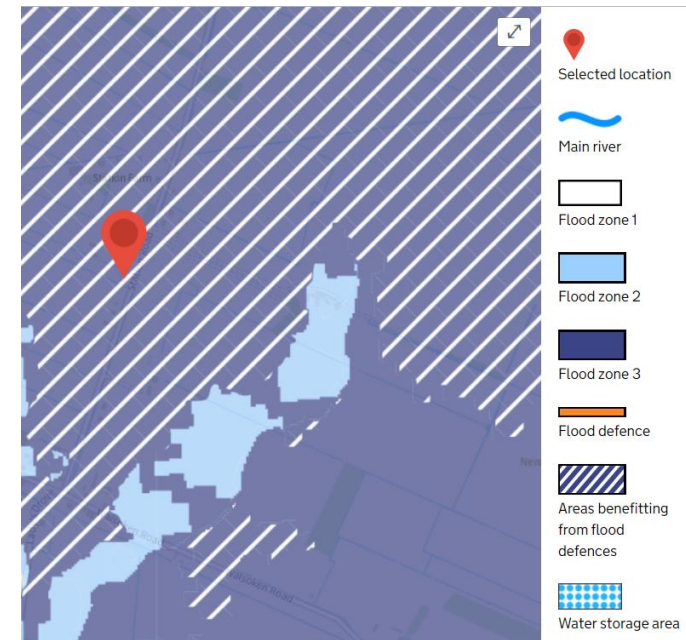


Figure 9 – Flood Risk Map

3.4 Landscape

The nature of the existing barn/ proposed dwelling positioning is such that it lends itself to an individual dwelling in terms of privacy for its occupants and neighbours. The existing driveway from Station Road leads straight to the barn and there is ample parking space provided. The site consists mostly of grass lawns and established trees, none of which are to be removed for the development. All trees will be protected during development with fencing until construction is complete.

As a result of the above mentioned trees and shrubs, the proposed dwelling is screened from the public view at Station Road. This, paired with an updated planting scheme along the driveway and Station Road boundary will ensure that the proposal will not adversely harm the form and character of the area.

4.0 Access

4.1 Local Amenity

The site sits within the well regarded village of Emneth, 3.3 miles from Wisbech in the West Norfolk area. The Popenhoe Cottage site sits along Station Road which is to the north end of the village. Amenities within Emneth include; post office, parish church, village hall, public house, shops including takeaways and hair salons. The village has a population of approximately 2500 people.

The existing barn and proposed dwelling is detached by 40 meters to the closest building, which is a cottage under the applicants ownership. The next closest site is to the north west of Station Road, 110 meters away.

Access to the site is via Station Road. The entrance gives an unbroken splay along a straight road. Along the established tree lined driveway will sit a generous gravel driveway with space for at least 5 cars. The close proximity of the road and private driveway allows easy access to the Fire Brigade should the event of a fire take place.

The site and its main features seen in plan view are highlights on the adjacent map. Street view images looking at the driveway from Station Road can be seen below.

1. Barn existing building
2. Approved highway entrance
3. Avenue driveway
4. Cottages
5. Existing barn conversion



Figure 10 –
Aerial view



Figure 11 – Station Road site entrance (trees are now far larger as seen adjacent)



Figure 12 – Driveway from site.

5.0 Conclusion

To summarise the above, we believe that this is a viable development that speaks for itself when viewed from either aerial, map or street view. The site sits well placed, established and convenient to local amenities. Although this is a rural development, the existing use of the barn and site lend themselves to residential use, especially given the fallback position of the development.

The client is committed to a policy of good design and equality and this document outlines the provisions made in the design of this new dwelling for inclusion and accessibility whilst achieving a high standard of design.

The material palette will blend with the existing site with a red brick facade topped with slate roof tiles and clean gables. A contemporary glazed gable and grey windows will bring the development into the modern day. Newly installed air source heating and high insulation values will ensure that the building surpasses modern building standards and is suitable for generations to come.

The ground floor level will sit at 600mm above ground level, with sleeping and sanitary accommodation to the first floor, to omit any flood risk issues.

The proposal will be screened from Station Road via the established tree lined driveway. The submitted drawings demonstrate that the site can comfortably accommodate the dwelling together with the required amenity space, parking and turning. The proposed level of redevelopment is considered to be sympathetic to its surroundings, while providing a realistic modern day living space. It reflects the agricultural nature of the site and is considered the best use of the site, as directed by national government.