

# Planning Statement



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**Prepared for and submitted on behalf of Brigitte Butcher**

**A full planning application for:**

- i) the conversion and extension to the existing detached holiday let to provide a dwelling, and**
- ii) the change of use for part of the existing dwelling to provide a holiday let**

**at Old Maria's Cottage, Wash Lane, Wortham, Diss, IP22 1RD.**

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## REPORT INFORMATION

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<b>Date of Statement</b>	January 2023
<b>Local Planning Authority</b>	Mid Suffolk District Council
<b>Applicant</b>	Brigitte Butcher
<b>Development Description</b>	A full planning application for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i) the conversion and extension to the existing detached holiday let, to provide a dwelling, and</li><li>ii) The change of use for part of the existing dwelling to provide a holiday let at Old Maria's Cottage, Wortham.</li></ul>
<b>Site Address</b>	Old Maria's Cottage, Wash Lane, Wortham, Diss, IP22 1RD.
<b>Our Reference</b>	3802
<b>Report Revision</b>	V1

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## 1 Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared by Parker Planning Services Ltd on behalf of the applicant to accompany a full planning application.

This application will be submitted to Mid Suffolk District Council to discuss the proposed conversion and extension to the holiday let to provide a residential dwelling as well as the change of use for part of the existing dwelling to holiday let at; Old Maria's Cottage, Wash Lane, Wortham, Diss, IP22 1RD. The purpose of this statement is to support the submission and demonstrate the appropriateness of the proposal and acceptability in respect of both local and national policy

The Client has expressed an interest in converting and extending the holiday let on-site at Wash Lane to enable it to be used for residential purposes, whilst also changing the use of the existing dwelling to holiday let thus constituting no changes in tourism provision on-site.

This planning statement is arranged in the following sections:

- Section 2 – Outlines the location and description of the site.
- Section 3 – Provides details of the planning history of the site and any other related schemes.
- Section 4 – Extensive planning policy review and outline of the proposal against the previously refused scheme.
- Section 5 – Assesses the proposed development against the adopted West Suffolk Core Strategy Policies.
- Section 6 – Concluding remarks

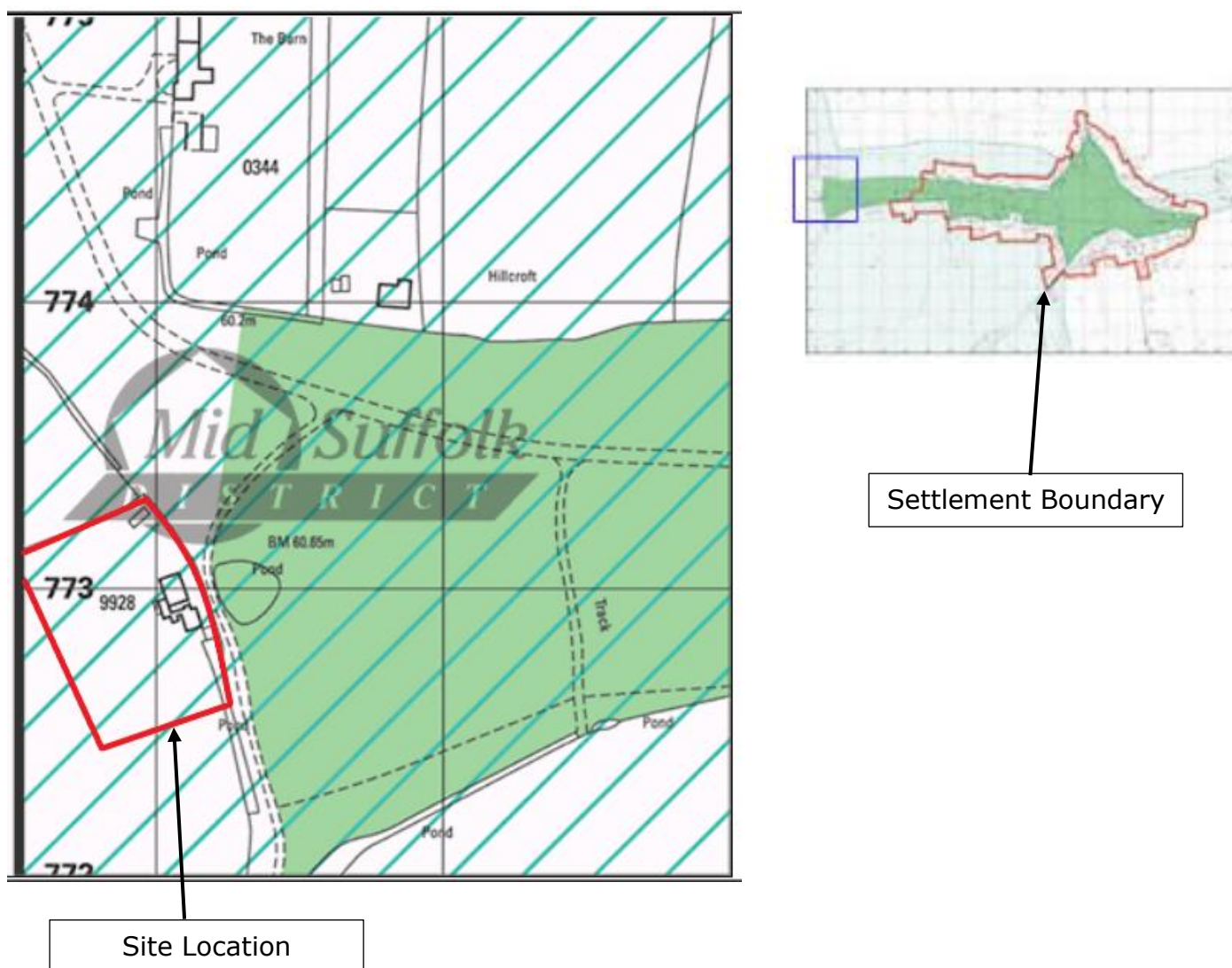
The application is supported by the following plans and documents:

- 008.23.01.pdf – Existing site block plan, elevations and floor plans.
- 008.23.02.pdf – Proposed site block plan, elevations and floor plans.
- 008.23.00.pdf – Location Plan
- Plans and elevations.pdf – Proposed floor plans and elevations.

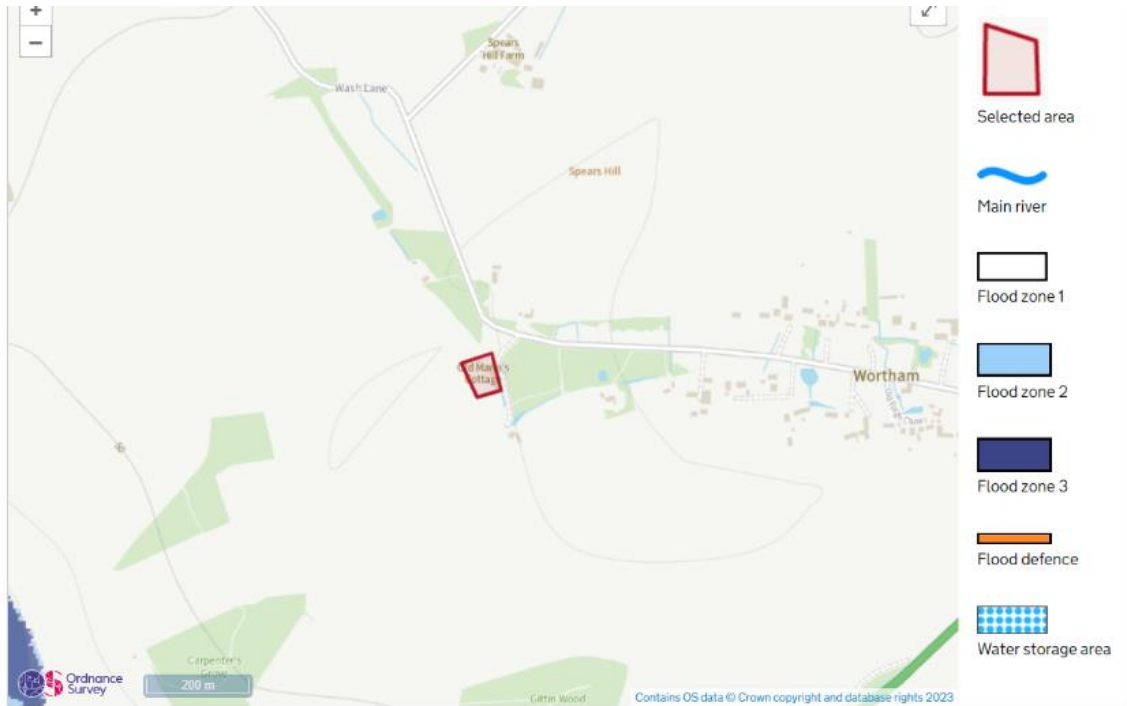
## 2 Site Location and Description

Wortham is a smaller settlement within the district of Mid Suffolk. The settlement consists of a large area defined as 'Special Landscape Area' and 'Visually Important Open Space'. The site is outside the settlement boundary for Wortham which is to the east of the site. The site is located within an area defined as 'Special Landscape Area' but external to the 'Visually Important Open Space' area that runs through the heart of much of the Wortham settlement boundary. Wortham is situated just south of Diss and is directly connected with Bury St. Edmunds via Bury Road (A143).

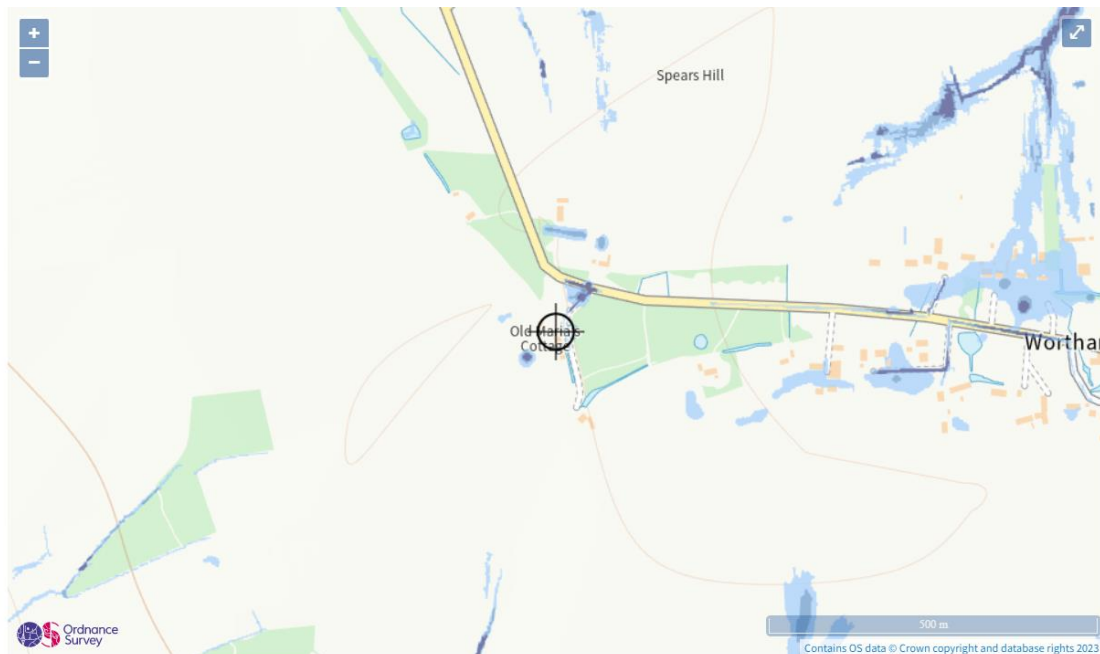
**Figure 2.1: Proposals map [Source: Mid Suffolk District Council]**



**Figure 2.2: Flood Risk Maps**

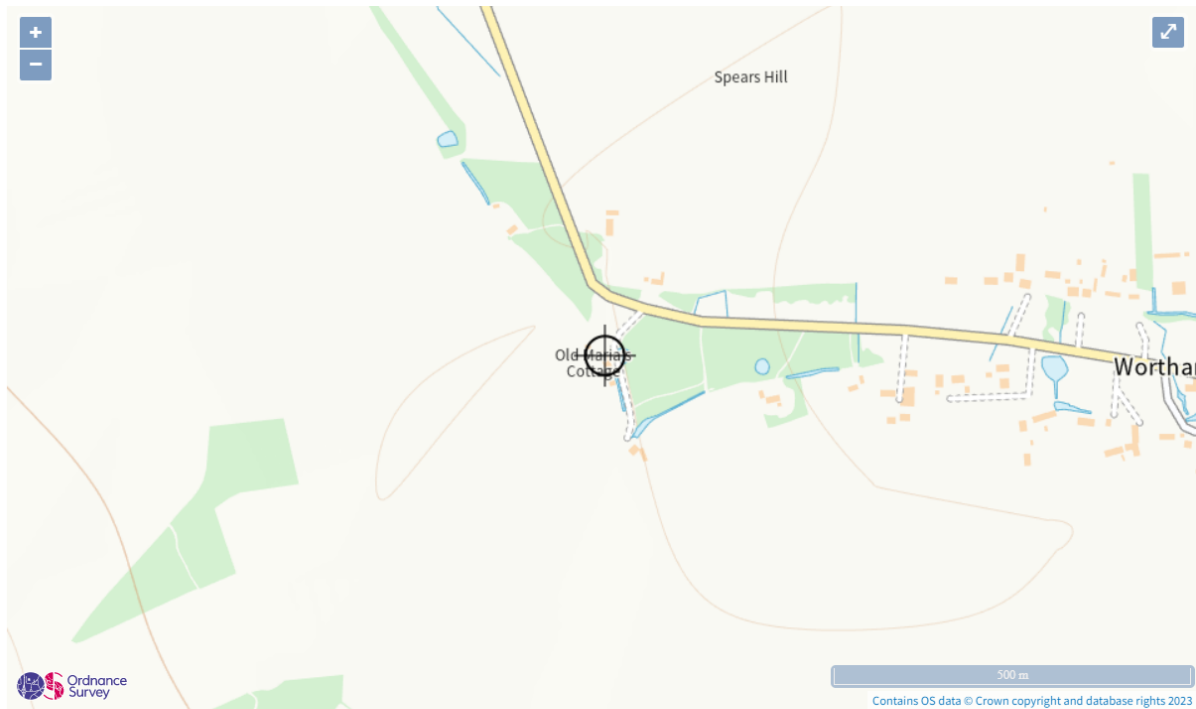


The site is considered to be at a low risk of flooding as it is situated within flood zone 1. Additionally, the site is considered to be at a very low risk of flooding from rivers and seas, and a low risk of surface water flooding.



Extent of flooding from surface water

● High ● Medium ● Low ○ Very low ⊕ Location you selected



Extent of flooding from rivers or the sea

● High ● Medium ● Low ● Very low ⊕ Location you selected

### 3 Site Planning History

Application Reference	Address	Purpose of the Application	Decision Date	Decision
<b>APP/W3520/A/13/2194099</b>	Old Maria's Cottage, Wortham	Appeal for app: 3043/12, for change of use of domestic garage to holiday let accommodation.	13th Sept 2013	Granted
<b>3043/12</b>	Old Maria's Cottage, Wortham	Change of use of domestic garage to holiday let accommodation. Retention of external cladding and insulation.	10th Dec 2012	Refused
<b>2619/12</b>	Old Maria's Cottage, Wortham	Erection of outbuilding for garaging and workshop, with office space above.	8th Nov 2012	Granted

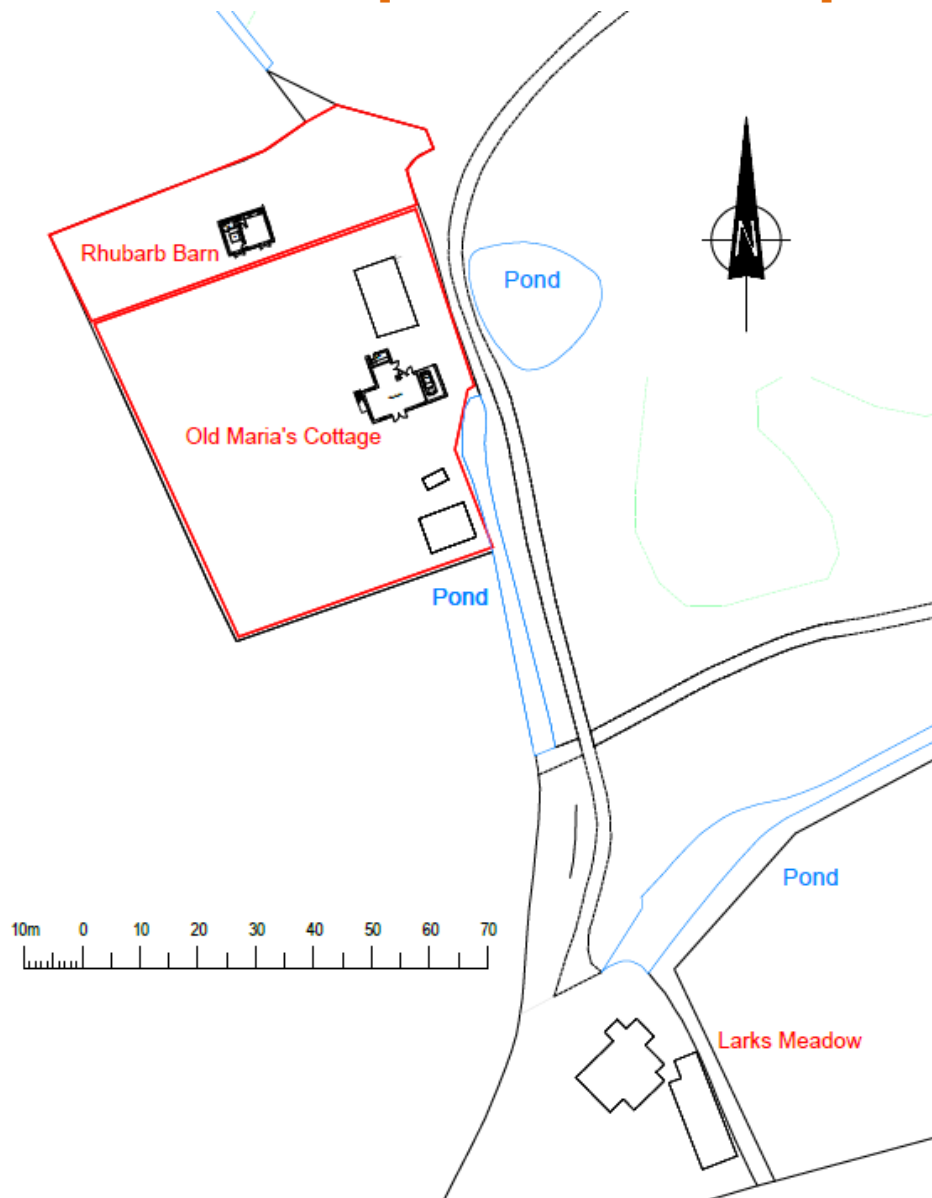


## 4 Proposed Development

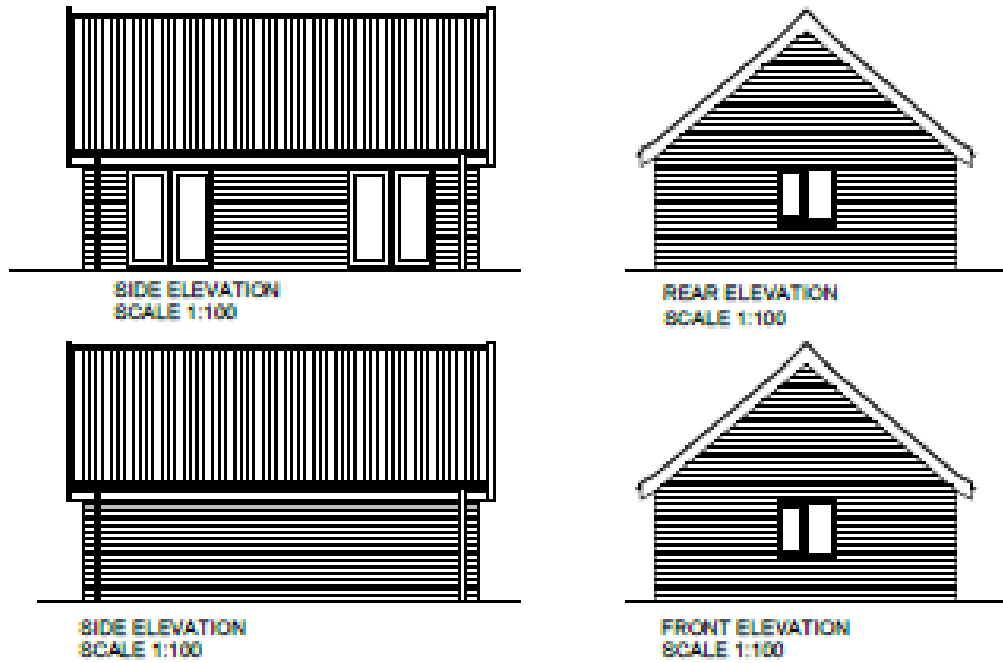
The existing site is situated off Wash Lane which is located on the periphery of the residential area of Wortham. The proposal reasonably suggests converting and extending the holiday let for residential use and changing the use of the existing dwelling to accommodate the tourism provision. Given the minimal external changes to the site, it is considered that the proposal is reasonable in form, scale and, siting for it to be deemed acceptable in this instance.

The site is within the impact risk zone for the local Burgate Wood SSSI, although there are no other designations relating to the site. Whilst there are a number of listed buildings along Wash Lane, the proposal is considered to have no impact on these assets.

**Figure 3.1 – Site Location Plan [Source: Lisa Allard MCIAT]**



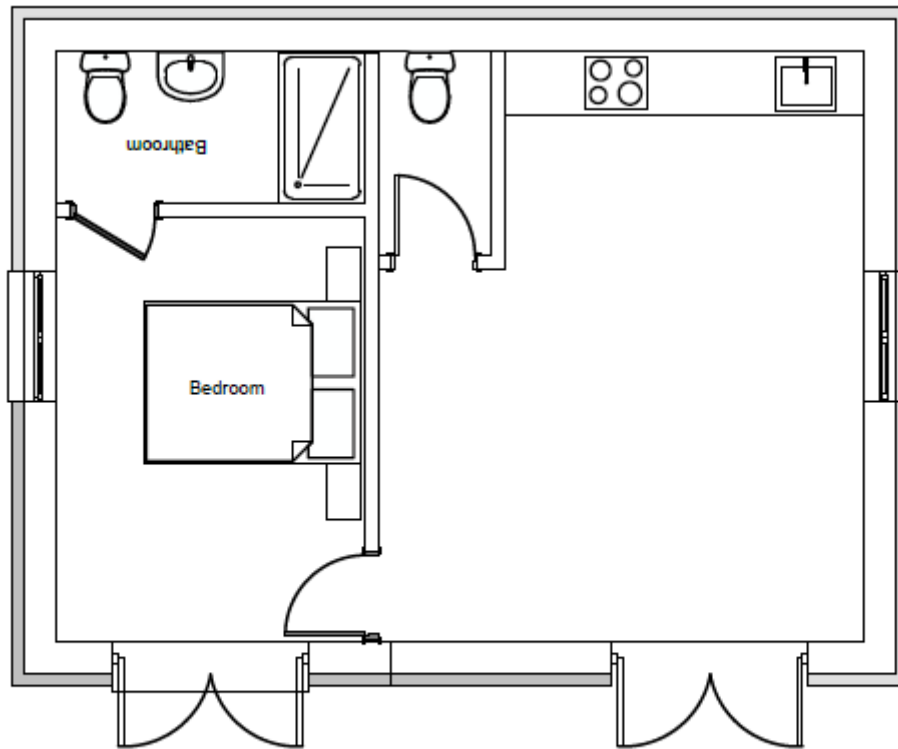
**Figure 3.2 – Existing Holiday Let Elevations [Source: Lisa Allard MCIAT]**



**Figure 3.3 – Existing Workshop/Office Elevations [Source: Lisa Allard MCIAT]**

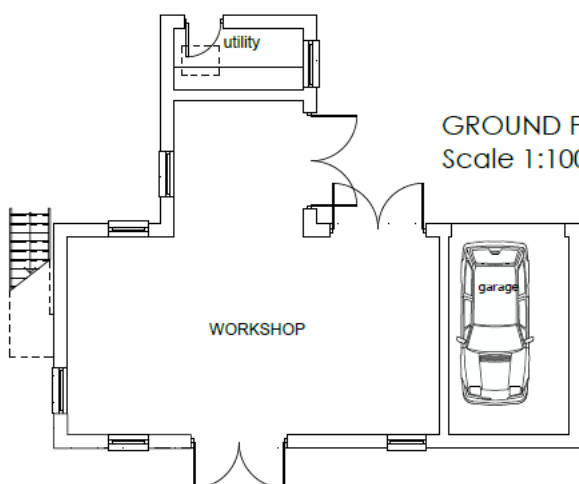


**Figure 3.4 – Existing Holiday Let Floorplans [Source: Lisa Allard MCIAT]**

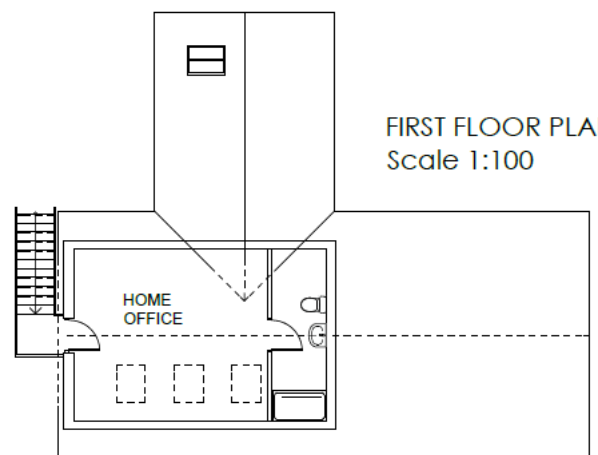


Floor Plan  
Scale 1:100

**Figure 3.5 – Existing Workshop/Office Floorplans [Source: Lisa Allard MCIAT]**



GROUND FLOOR PLAN  
Scale 1:100

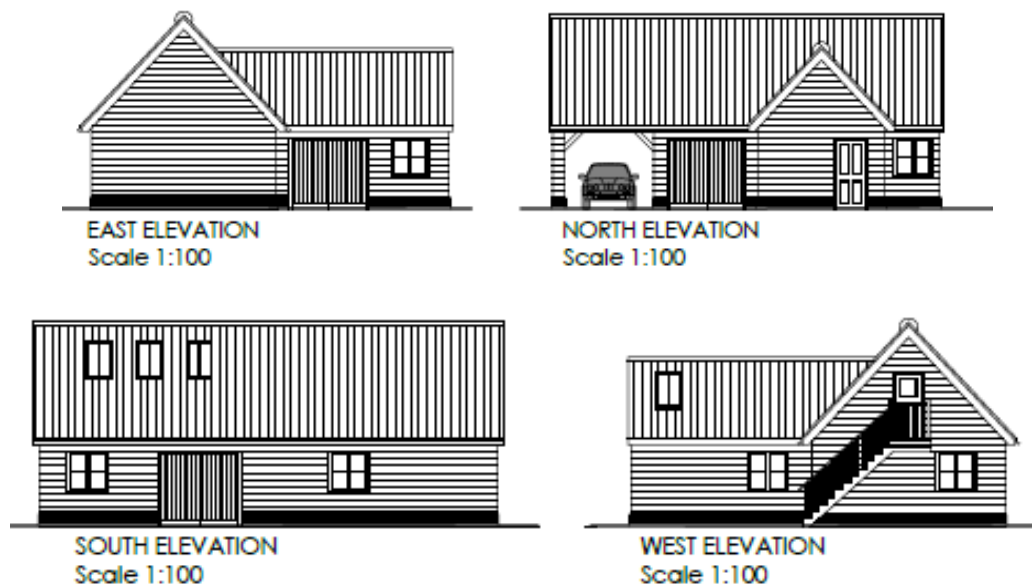


FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
Scale 1:100

The existing structures comprise an office and workshop space at Old Maria's Cottage adjacent to the holiday let at Rhubarb Barn to the north. The existing workshop and office spaces host an open plan and spacious layout with adequate living space whilst Rhubarb Barn contains a well-organised bedroom, bathroom and kitchen living area which ideally suits a holiday let use.

The proposed alterations across the entire site have been displayed below. It is noted that the extent of the changes being sought in this instance are on a minor scale and essential to support modern day living.

**Figure 3.6 – Proposed Elevations for a Holiday Let in the Original Workshop/Office Space [Source: Lisa Allard MCIAT]**



As is evident in Figure 3.6, the proposed change of use for the original workshop/office poses no exterior alterations to the structure and is inconsequential to the street scene and special landscape area.

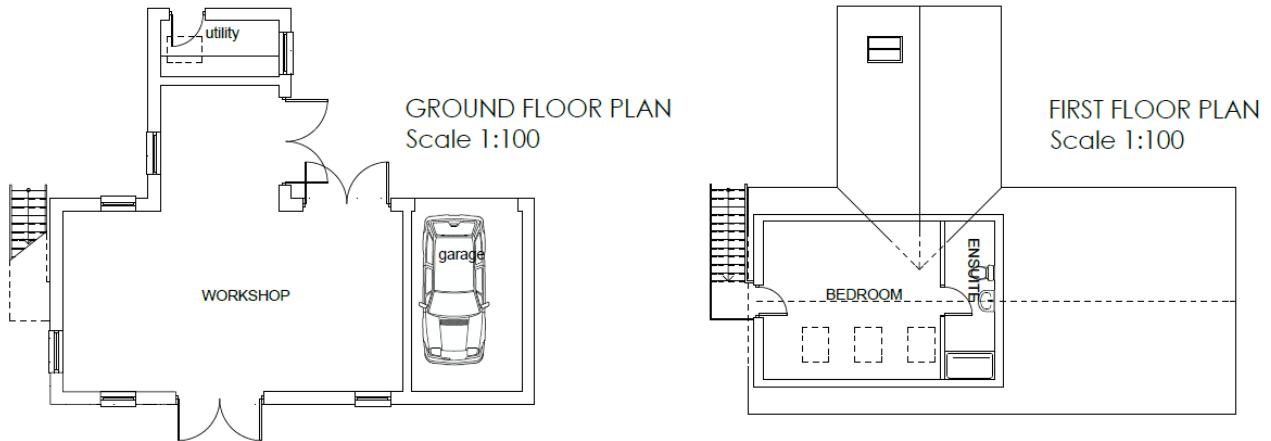
**Figure 3.7 – Proposed Elevations for a Dwelling at Rhubarb Barn, the former Holiday Let [Source: Lisa Allard MCIAT]**



These proposed elevations highlight the desired changes to be made to the dwelling on-site. It is considered that owing to the extent of the land surrounding the existing dwelling, the extension is proportionate to the private garden and amenity space and would not impact any neighboring properties or the impact of the dwelling on the street scene. The extensions would increase the internal space within the proposed dwelling providing adequate space for modern family living.

Each of the elevations have a strong solid to void ratio which will allow ample natural light into the property. Furthermore, the indicative designs displayed in this instance are of good design and visually aesthetic. The materials used complement the existing structure and the character of the site.

**Figure 3.8 – Proposed Floorplans for the Change of Use [Source: Lisa Allard MCIAT]**



**Figure 3.9 – Proposed Floorplans for the Conversion and Extension [Source: Lisa Allard MCIAT]**

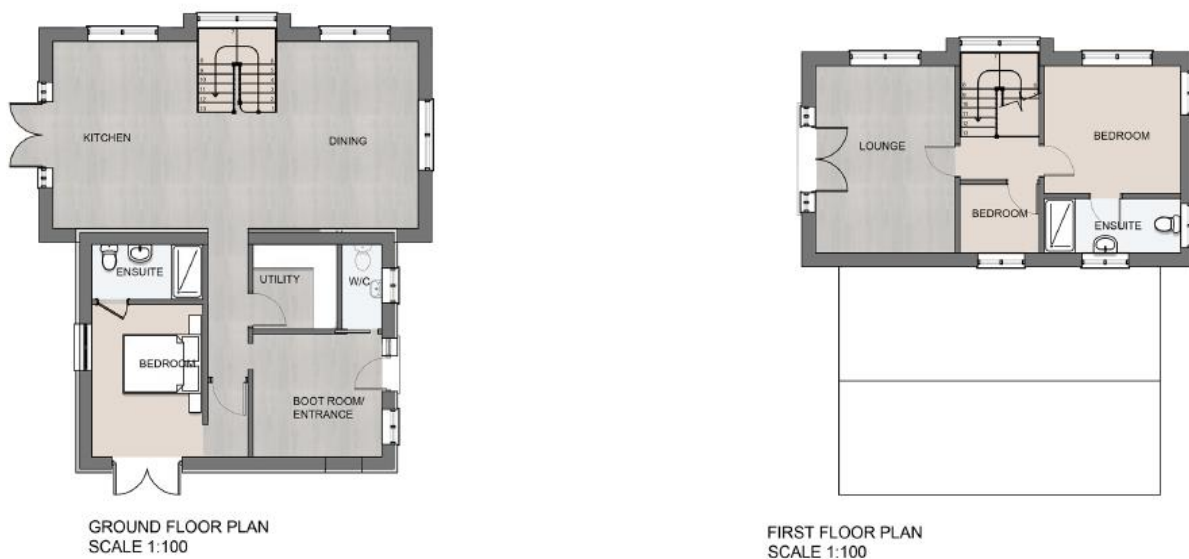


Figure 3.8 highlights the simple internal alteration which replaces the first floor office with a bedroom and retains the bathroom as an ensuite.

Figure 3.9 shows the floorspaces proposed at Rhubarb Barn which display space being used efficiently throughout the property. The proposed extension has allowed for the necessary second bedroom and additional storage spaces. The proposed layout allows for the exceptional views to the rear of the property to be visible from the first-floor lounge. Adequate living and dining space has been provided and is the central living space within the property. The boot room/entrance is considered a tasteful internal addition, given the extent of countryside accessible by foot from the site.

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## 5 Planning Policy

### **NPPF (2021)**

- 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- 4 – Decision-making
- 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998) is considered an outdated Local Plan and will subsequently be given less weight regarding this proposal. The NPPF will therefore be primarily considered in this case.

### **Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998)**

- SB1 – Directing new development to existing settlements
- SB2 – Development appropriate to its setting
- SB3 – Retaining visually important open spaces
- GP1 - Design and layout of development
- H13 – Design and layout of housing development
- H15 – Development to reflect local characteristics
- H18 – Extensions to existing dwellings
- CL2 – Development within special landscape areas
- T9 – Parking standards

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## **Policy Outline**

Sustainability is a primary consideration within the NPPF which states that development which can be demonstrated to be sustainable will be considered favourably. In order to achieve this, the proposal must demonstrate economic, social and environmental benefits to the site and the scheme that also impact positively, the wider area.

Furthermore, under Chapter 4 of the NPPF, it is stated that councils should be proactive in engaging with the planner or client to support in the approval of applications. "Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible".

The NPPF encourages the effective use of land to provide for homes and other uses. The NPPF recognises that much undeveloped land can be beneficial for "wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production" whilst also communicating that support should be given where under-utilised land and buildings currently exist.

Chapter 8 of the NPPF relates to the creation of healthy and safe communities which is an integral part of residential living. Under Paragraph 92, policies should "promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages". Additionally decisions should aim to achieve places that "are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling".

The NPPF alludes to the importance of good design under Chapter 12 where it states that a high standard of design is required to achieve the most sustainable proposals. Furthermore, the design must always ensure the retention of an area's local distinctiveness and character and should avoid detracting from these principles. "Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the



production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers”.

Under Paragraph 130, “planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).
- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks.
- Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.

Given the importance of the local landscape and environment at the site, Chapter 15 (Paragraph 174) should be considered so as to ensure that “planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).
- Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.
- Maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate.
- Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

- Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.
- Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate”.

Within the Local Plan, there is strong weight given to development within existing settlements, under Policy SB1 which suggests a reluctance for new development in rural locations or outside of settlement boundaries. Furthermore, SB2 restricts planning within settlement boundaries further stating that applications would be refused for development which “does not have form, scale or character in-keeping with the surrounding area”. Additionally, under Policy SB3, the Local Plan puts emphasis on visually important open space which adds to the character and setting of settlements. Development that could potentially harm these areas will be resisted by the council due to the impact on these important characteristics.

As alluded to within the NPPF, design and layout is integral to achieving sustainable development and as such, the Local Plan has included Policy GP1 which sets out design criteria which the council would generally support:

- “Proposals should maintain or enhance the character and appearance of their surroundings and respect the scale and density of surrounding development.
- Materials and finishes should be traditional, or compatible with traditional materials and finishes should respect local architectural style where appropriate.
- The siting of the buildings and the creation of open space between existing and proposed buildings should maintain or enhance the character of the site, with attention to the treatment of boundaries particularly on the edge of settlements.
- Layouts should incorporate and protect important natural landscape features, including existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows.
- Proposals should make proper provision for the garaging, parking and turning of motor vehicles and for footways and access in a manner that does not dominate the appearance and design of the layout.
- Landscape should be regarded as an integral part of design proposals.

- The interrelationship between buildings and open spaces in any layout should act to minimise opportunities for criminal activity, consistent with good layout and architectural design”.

Although for a more minimal extension, Policy H13 provides further expectations for design and layout of residential schemes. All residential schemes should ultimately seek to retain character, appearance and setting of all assets; trees, hedges, material character, local character, setting, scale and form, landscape features and historical, ecological and archaeological features. It is stated that conditions can be implemented alongside the grant for planning permission to ensure these criteria are upheld and achieved.

Policy H15 specifies that development proposals shouldn't impact or seek to alter the pattern of development. Neighbouring areas should consist of the same general pattern and form. Furthermore, looking specifically at Policy H18 for extensions, the Local Plan states that “applications for extensions to existing dwellings will be approved, provided that they:

- Are in-keeping with the size, design and materials of the existing dwelling.
- Will not materially or detrimentally affect the amenities of neighbours or the character and appearance of the area.
- Will not result in over-development within the curtilage.

Development within areas of special landscape must ensure that the layout, materials and landscaping of the proposed development are sensitively designed and implemented to safeguard special landscape areas, as highlighted in Policy CL2.

Under Policy T9, “development proposals, including changes of use, will normally be required to provide for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles, on the application site, in accordance with the parking standards adopted by District Planning Authority”.

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## **Policy Justification**

The proposed conversion and extension, as well as the change of use is considered to be an overall sustainable scheme that is acceptable under the relevant policies.

With regard to promoting healthy and safe communities, the proposal is considered to accord with the national policy on this matter. Given the arrangement of dwellings along Wash Lane, social interactions for residents are not widely promoted and each dwelling is visibly separate from one another. In accordance with the NPPF, this proposal would ensure that the tourism use on the site would remain, thus encouraging a mix of individuals to the site and promoting social interaction with the residents living adjacent. Additionally, the retention of two separate dwellings would help suppress anti-social behaviour by increasing the activity on-site which is especially important at this location due to the significantly inactive street frontage along Wash Lane. Furthermore, the access to extensive green space which is categorised as 'special landscape' is considered to promote healthy active living which should be deemed acceptable under national policy. The Local Plan also highlights the value of such landscapes under Policy SB3 and whilst the minimal development proposed in this instance is not considered to have detrimental impact on the landscape, residents will gain the social and environmental health benefits from the site.

Safety has also been achieved through the provision of off-street parking and turning facilities which remain unchanged by this application and are sufficient in their existing form to meet the needs of this proposal for the conversion, extension and change of use at Old Maria's Cottage. The parking provisions accord with Policy T9 and provide safe access to and from Wash Lane.

A second criteria that has been highlighted within the policy review is the design aspect relating to the proposal. The NPPF puts a high priority on good design due to its contributions towards sustainable development and ensuring the local distinctiveness and character are retained. In this instance, the character of the landscape has been highlighted as an important local feature that should be protected and the design should therefore be sympathetic to this.

It is considered that the orientation of the proposed dwelling, including the extension, utilises this asset to the fullest and the scale, bulk and height of the extended and converted proposed dwelling would not have a detrimental affect on the landscape character of the area. The materials that have been used are considered to be sympathetic to both the existing structure, as well as the setting of the area and are considered to positively contribute to national policy for design.

At a local level, the Local Plan also sets out design criteria. Under Policy SB1 & SB2, the council do not support new development outside of the settlement boundary, however, given the proposal is for an extension and conversion to an

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existing development, this proposal is not considered to be adding any significant new development to the area and the minimal extension proposed for the existing dwelling represents a minimal addition to a site only a few hundred metres outside the Wortham settlement boundary.

It is considered that the proposed development would maintain the character and aesthetic of the area and the proposed extension is of an appropriate scale and density and is constructed using materials that do not detract from the setting of the area. Furthermore, the extension is considered to maintain the character of the site and the amended layout would not harm the landscape features that exist in the locality. The provision for parking will remain unchanged as there will be no increase in footfall to the site. The parking is located a substantial distance from the highway and there is turning space for motor vehicles that allows them to enter and exit the public highway forward facing, ensuring highway safety. Under these criteria, the proposed extension and conversion as well as the change of use are deemed to meet Policy GP1.

There is a clear pattern of development along Wash Lane that is considered intrinsic to the character and setting of the area. The proposed development is considered acceptable under Policy H15 and ensures fully, that the character of the area is retained by having multiple dwellings set far back off Wash Lane with greenery and landscape along the highway.

The proposal is considered to be sensitive to the landscape character and should subsequently be found acceptable under Policy CL2.

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## 6 Conclusion

This planning statement has demonstrated that the proposed development accords with Mid Suffolk Council planning requirements as set out in Section 5 of this document.

It is considered that the proposal is acceptable in the context of the landscape character and will not negatively impact its surroundings or the special landscape area.

It is considered that the design and layout of the proposal demonstrates good design principles. Furthermore, the extension will add to the dwelling and enable the property to allow for adequate modern family living.

To conclude, we would emphasise that there is a very good case in favour of this proposal. All planning applications should be considered on their own individual merits with the basic assessment process being whether the positives outweigh the negatives. As such, we highlight that the proposal takes account of all relevant Local Planning Authority and National Planning policies. We therefore consider the benefits of the proposal far outweigh the potential harm which could be caused.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development should be found acceptable and approved without delay.

