



# PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**Erection of Rural Workers Dwelling  
Gibsons Farm, Little Green, Burgate, Diss IP22 1QG**

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## Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared by Durrants on behalf of the Applicant and supports an outline planning application for a Rural Workers Dwelling at Gibsons Farm.

The purpose of this report is to demonstrate that the proposal accords with both local and national policy relating to rural workers dwellings.

The application includes a demonstration as to the functional need for a new dwelling.

The application is accompanied by:

- Location and Site Layout Plans

- Proposed Plans, Elevations

- Confidential Business Accounts

1.0 Agricultural Justification Statement

1.1 Gibsons Farm Burgate comprises an arable farm of around 200 acres growing a range of cereal crops and sugar beet in a traditional rotation. The applicant lives with his Father in Gibsons Farmhouse.

1.2 The applicant is aged 31 and began their separate business in 2015 purchasing a sprayer and beginning contracting operations for neighbouring farmers. The business has been profitable since its creation and seven years audited accounts are available if required. The business has grown over the years and now provides agricultural services such as drilling cultivation and hedge cutting to landowners across South Norfolk and North Suffolk.

1.3 Expansion has seen new machines being purchased and additional services offered. The applicant now regularly sprays multiple passes over 2000ha per annum as well as spreading fertiliser and whole farm contracting over 200ha. The majority of this work is undertaken within 5miles of Burgate.

The sprayer annually clocks up 2,200 hours spraying over 15,000-20,000ha.

As the business has grown so additional operators have been taken on to help in busy periods. There are currently three part time self employed operators who work in the business.

1.4 Much of the spraying that is undertaken by the business needs to be undertaken in the right conditions and this is often early in the morning or late at night when temperatures and wind levels are lower and therefore chemicals can be applied effectively and safely.

1.5 In addition to the contracting operations 3,000 partridges are reared annually from day old chicks through to 16-20 week old poults. The chicks arrive in the middle of June and leave the holding between July and the end of September. During this time the birds need to be regularly checked at least 4-5 times per day together with administering drugs and medication as may be necessary. The daily checks will include checking feed and water supplies and topping up where necessary. The pens require regular maintenance and vermin control needs to be monitored to protect the birds.

1.6 Based on the standard man day calculations for the business included within the appendix to this report we can demonstrate a need for 3.03 workers on the holding.

1.7 In conclusion the applicant has started and maintained a profitable business based around their farming operations. They have diversified into alternative income streams that dovetail in with contracting operations. There is a functional need to be onsite to ensure that livestock health and welfare is maintained. The contacting operations often need to be carried out at un-social times at the beginning and end of the day. By living close to the machinery and chemical stores it enables the smooth and safe operation of machinery and inputs when compared to a situation whereby the applicant lived away and were forced to commute some distance to the farm. We have investigated alternative provision of accommodation within the village and there is no suitable affordable accommodation.

## 2.0 Site Location

- 2.1 It is proposed to construct the new dwelling to south east of Gibsons Farm. This location has been chosen as it is close enough to the main farm buildings to be able to work efficiently and manage stock safely whilst not detracting from the aesthetics of the Grade II listed farmhouse. The site adjoins other residential properties and this grouping reduces the impact of additional development in the countryside by being an extension to the built landscape.

### 3.0 Pre- Application and Planning Policy

3.1 The applicant has already requested a Pre-Application report from the local authority and this is included within the appendices to the report. We have not repeated the policy details in this report save to say that the proposal meets the criteria of Local Plan Policy H10 which permits new dwellings where essential need can be demonstrate. Furthermore the proposal is also in accordance with NPPF(paragraph 80) a) where ***there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside***

3.2 development which is , as well as through planning decisions.

3.3 Paragraph 80 of the NPPF seeks to avoid the development of isolated home in the countryside, but recognises their necessity in order to accommodate rural workers 'to be at or near their place of work in the countryside'. The NPPF is clear that Local Plan policies should support rural communities, and that this should include enabling the 'sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings' (NPPF, 2021, para. 84). This section specifically references supporting the 'development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses'.

3.4 The NPPF is clear that 'in rural areas, planning policies and decisions should [...] reflect local needs' (NPPF, 2021, para. 78), including the needs of rural workers. , providing examples of the types of proof of necessity These include the need to 'deal quickly with emergencies that could cause serious loss of crops or products', where there would be 'a serious risk to human [...] health or from crime'.

3.5 The NPPF goes on to recognise that local businesses may need to be supported 'beyond existing settlements' (NPPF, 2021, para. 85), even if the location is not served by public transport and would otherwise be considered unsustainable.

### 3.6 Final assessment against MSDC Policy HL10 and NPPF 2021

Proposals for permanent dwellings in the Countryside for rural workers where they are to support existing and viable rural business will only be permitted where:

There is a clearly established functional need and this could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling or accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for the occupied worker or could be converted to do so. There are no buildings on site suitable for conversion.

The need relates to full-time worker, or one who is primarily employed in the rural sector, and does not relate to a part time requirement. The applicant works full-time running his business on site. The business operates within the rural/agricultural sector.

The unit and the rural activity concerned has been established for at least three years, and has been profitable for at least one of them and is financially sound and has a clear prospect of remaining so.

Confidential accounts accompany this application and demonstrate that the business is profitable.The approval of this application will secure the future of the business.

The proposed dwelling sensitively designed, landscaped and located to fit in with its surroundings and of a scale that reflects its functional role to support the agricultural activity.

The dwelling is of a modest and affordable scale, and has been designed with rural family living in mind. It is of traditional design and has been carefully considered to enhance the site and its surroundings.

#### 4.0 Alternative Dwellings

- 4.1 A search of Rightmove shows that the average house price in the area is £450,000, this is un-affordable based on the turnover of the business. The only viable alternative is for the construction of a modest 2-3bedroom bungalow as per the enclosed proposal.

At the time of preparation of this report there are only two properties on the market within 1 mile radius of the property both offered at in excess of £500,000.

## 5.0 Design & Access Statement

### 5.1 Design, Character and Appearance

The proposed dwelling is set over one storey and comprises family accommodation along with an office, boot room, WC and downstairs fourth bedroom with en-suite.

The dwelling is of traditional design, and includes the use of materials typical of the surrounding area, with wooden windows, pantile roof, traditional red brick and render. Decorative detailing adds character and interest to the property.

The house has been carefully designed to make efficient use of the available land, whilst providing private garden space for the family, an attractive visual screen between the neighbouring properties and the road for passers-by and improving the road frontage.

### 5.2 Noise Impacts of the Development

The proposed residential use is unlikely to give rise to any nuisance relating to noise.

### 5.3 Access and Highway Safety

The site will be accessed from the public highway from a new access meeting MSDC requirements. The new access is subject to the National Speed Limit. There have been no recorded road accidents within the village or the wider area. The point of access benefits from good visibility by virtue of its position on the apex of a slight bend. Operations have been carried out on this site for several years, including numerous large vehicle movements, without any traffic incidents.

The proposed dwelling is likely to result in a very small increase in vehicle movements per day. It is therefore unlikely that the proposed dwelling would have any significant highway impact, and access is deemed suitable for the proposals.

### 5.4 Wildlife and Ecology Considerations

The application site is currently an area of arable farmland. It is therefore very unlikely that the site houses any wildlife habitats.

A new hedge will be planted surrounding the property creating an enhanced environment and additional habitat for a variety of species

### 5.5 Amenity Considerations

The proposed dwelling includes spacious internal accommodation and the provision of a garden and parking for up to three cars. There are no immediate residential neighbours and therefore any amenity impact on other properties is negligible.

### 5.6 Contamination Risks on Site

The application site is believed to have only ever been arable farmland and therefore the likelihood of contamination is minimal.

### 5.7 Flooding Risks on Site



The Environment Agency Flood risk map identifies the site as being Flood Zone 1 and therefore at low risk of flooding.

## 6.0 Conclusion

The applicant has started and developed a thriving rural business. The business has achieved a profit continually and its rapid growth and consistent profitability is largely by virtue of the excellent service offered to its clients, a service which would no doubt be compromised if the Applicant could not live on site or very close by.

The local housing market is challenging and competitive, and are significantly in excess of the Applicant's budget.

The proposed home is of modest scale, and has been sensitively designed to enhance the immediate area and to reflect the local vernacular. It has been designed for both family and business functionality.

Recent planning decisions relating to rural workers dwellings in Mid Suffolk demonstrate that animal husbandry is not the only acceptable indicator of functional need. The proposals are in accordance with Paragraph 80 of the NPPF and PPG guidance on rural workers dwellings, and respond positively to numerous Mid Suffolk Local Plan policies, particularly HL10.

The Local Plan makes provision for new homes in Smaller Villages such as Burgate, and the proposed dwelling will be built for a specific, local, business-related need.

Approval of the proposed dwelling would secure the future of this successful rural business, contribute positively to the local landscape, reduce the carbon footprint of the business and improve the wellbeing of the Applicant.