

44C/D Station Road, Sheringham, NR26 8RG



Planning Statement
to support an application for full planning permission

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1 Introduction

This Planning Statement is provided in support of the application for full planning permission for an upward extension, internal alterations and change of use at 44C/D Station Road in Sheringham: The proposal includes the following elements:

- to construct a second floor above 44C/D to create two new one-bedroom flats;
- to change the current class E(b) use of the combined ground floor commercial premises at 44C/D to mixed-use class E(b) restaurant/café and sui generis hot food takeaway (formerly A3/A5); and
- internal alterations to the first floor of 44C to allow for the new staircase access to the second floor.

The property consists of two x two-storey, brick-built, terraced, flat-roofed, mixed-use units which form part of a 1970's retail/residential development. The first floor flat at 44D is owned separately on a long lease and in residential use. The ground floor premises of 44C and 44D are combined and currently in Class E(b) use, trading as The Mulberry Café. The remainder of the block comprises similar mixed-use units. The first floor properties within the block are mainly in residential use.

The existing first floor at 44C Station Road consists of a two-bedroom flat which will be slightly altered internally to allow for a staircase to access the second floor. A new second floor above both 44C and 44D is proposed to create two new flats. The ground floor will remain as-is, but the use class will be expanded to allow for hot food takeaway.

With regard to the proposed upward extension, a broad range of national permitted development rights now exists generally in relation to most town centre development. Specifically, the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) Class AB allows for additional stories on terraced or semi-detached shops, restaurants and flats. However, conservation areas such as that in which the current proposal site is located, are subject to stricter planning regulations which means that it is excluded from certain Permitted Development rights and it is necessary to make planning applications for some forms of development which otherwise would not need such applications. Therefore, were it not for the fact that the current proposal is located in the Sheringham Conservation Area, the proposed upward extension would be fully compliant with the GPDO Class AB even in respect of affecting only part of a terrace. The specific requirements of the GPDO Class AB although not directly applicable to the current proposal, have influenced it. However, it is worth noting that the principle of an upward extension for residential purposes is established as acceptable on a national and also local scale in order to provide much needed housing without any additional land requirement. In fact, in the Final Report, June 2017 of the North Norfolk Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), Part 1 Assessment of Housing Land, produced as evidence for NNDC's emerging Core Plan, it states in section 3.5 Windfall, 3.5.2:

“Windfall sites are sites which have not been specifically identified as part of the Local Plan process. The term covers sites that have unexpectedly become available, ranging

from large sites (for example resulting from a factory closure) to small sites such as a residential build on a small in fill plot or **a new flat over a shop**".

Sheringham is a Secondary Settlement suitable for new commercial and residential development. The Application Site lies within the Sheringham development boundary, within the Sheringham Primary Shopping Area and to the rear of Sheringham's Primary Retail Frontage. It benefits from excellent access to daily services and facilities via sustainable modes of transport.

The whole of the Application Site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is identified as having a very low risk of surface water flooding. The development proposal will not have any adverse impact on any protected species or habitats, heritage assets or the wider landscape and townscape character.

This Planning Statement and the other documents accompanying the application show that the development proposal is compliant with local and national planning policies.

2 North Norfolk Local Plan

2.1 Strategic Policies

2.1.1 Policy SS1: Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk

Sheringham is designated as a Secondary Settlement under Policy SS1, where additional development will be accommodated (approximately 25% of employment land allocations and 20% of new homes). The Application Site lies within the Sheringham development boundary and therefore complies with SS1 and is suitable for commercial and residential development in principle.

2.1.2 SS2 Development in the Countryside

Not applicable, as the site lies within the Sheringham development boundary.

2.1.3 SS3: Housing

The proposal will lead to the creation of two new one-bedroom flats in a location determined as acceptable for additional housing growth in accordance with the spatial strategy. It includes the construction of a second-floor above 44C/D to create two new one-bedroom flats and a minor rearrangement of the existing floorplan of the first floor of 44C to create space for a new stairway to the proposed new floor above.

Sheringham includes an allocation of 200-250 new homes and 164 windfall sites in the existing Local Plan. As the site is not allocated, the proposed flats should be considered acceptable as part of the Sheringham windfall allowance. Furthermore, it maximises the use of an existing building and its footprint and therefore does not require any additional land.

2.1.4 Policy SS4: Environment

The development proposal will help to contribute to the delivery of sustainable development. The extension will be both thermally and energy-efficient, meeting the latest Building Regulations standards, thus reducing energy consumption and minimising greenhouse gas emissions from energy use.

The location of the Application Site in the town centre of a Secondary Settlement ensures that carbon emissions are reduced by providing a location easily accessible via sustainable modes of transport.

As the proposal maximises the use of an existing building and its footprint and therefore does not require any additional land, no open space or greenfield land will be lost as a result of the proposal.

The site is not at risk of flooding or coastal erosion.

2.1.5 Policy SS5: Economy

The Application Site lies within the town centre of the Sheringham development boundary, within the area designated on the Proposals Maps as the Primary Shopping Area. The proposal seeks to extend the ground floor offering as a restaurant/café to include hot food takeaway.

As a backland site, it lies to the rear of the Sheringham Primary Retail Frontage. The extended provision of food offerings within the building is an acceptable use for its location within Sheringham town centre to support its role as a visitor and tourist destination.

The site is not on an identified Retail Opportunity Site, and therefore the proposal for the residential upward extension should be considered acceptable as it will not result in the loss of any shops or other main town centre uses located within a defined Primary Shopping Area.

2.1.6 Policy SS6: Access and Infrastructure

The proposal is centrally located within the Sheringham town centre and therefore will be supported by, and have good access to, infrastructure, open space, public services and utilities. As a minor proposal, there is sufficient capacity in the existing local infrastructure to meet any additional needs arising from the new development and therefore does not meet the thresholds for infrastructure requirements.

The number of daily vehicle trips generated from the two new one-bedroom flats is unlikely to have any material adverse impact on the capacity of existing road infrastructure, particularly given the site's central location and excellent access to sustainable modes of transport.

There should be no material adverse impact on the amenity or character of the area or highway safety as a result of the development. There will be no significant transport implications, such as in relation to congestion or air quality, and the scale of the proposal falls significantly below the trigger threshold in the national Guidance on Transport Assessments.

2.2 Development Control Policies

2.2.1 Policy HO1: House Dwelling Mix and Type

The application proposes two new one-bedroom flats in the second floor extension. Policy HO1 specifically seeks to promote smaller one and two-bedroom dwellings.

2.2.2 Policy HO2: Provision of Affordable Housing

Not applicable – as affordable housing is only required on schemes of 10 or more homes or site areas of 0.5ha or more in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

2.2.3 Policy HO7 Making the Most Efficient Use of Land (Housing Density)

The proposal seeks to make the most efficient use of land by maximising the use of an existing building and its footprint and therefore does not require any additional land, so no open space or greenfield land will be lost as a result of the proposal. This type of development allows for housing growth without the typical effect of increasing urban sprawl.

Policy HO7 seeks a minimum of 40 dwellings per hectare in Secondary Settlements such as Sheringham and the proposal is therefore fully compliant with this objective and provides an incredibly effective and efficient use of land. The high density proposed is acceptable in urban areas with excellent access to services and facilities via sustainable modes of transport.

2.2.4 Policy EN1: Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Application Site does not lie within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

2.2.5 Policy EN2: Protection and Enhancement of Landscape and Settlement Character

The North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment SPD (2021) defines the Application Site as within area CS – Coastal Shelf. It identifies the valued features and qualities of this landscape character area as:

- 1) Dramatic and distinctive topography
- 2) An eroding coastline
- 3) Tourism and leisure-related settlement and land use along the coast
- 4) Differing settlement character of Cromer and Sheringham
- 5) Open farmland and semi-natural habitats provide important biodiversity and visual separation between settlements
- 6) More open character at the eastern end of the Coastal Shelf
- 7) Less developed character at the western end of the Coastal Shelf
- 8) Busy road network
- 9) Trimingham Radome
- 10) Panoramic views of the coast and Wooded Glacial Ridge

Given the site's central location in an urban area, none of the above key characteristics is present within the Application Site. Therefore, the proposal will not have an impact on any of the valued features of this landscape character area.

The development considerations for this landscape character area and the impact the proposal may have on them are outlined in the table below.

Coastal Shelf Landscape Guidelines

Guidelines	Impact of Proposal
Enhance landscape integration of prominent coastal development	Not applicable as this guideline refers primarily to caravan parks.
Conserve the valuable undeveloped areas between coastal settlements, to maintain a clear sense of leaving one settlement before arriving at the next	The Application Site lies within a built-up urban area in Sheringham town centre and will therefore not affect undeveloped areas or settlement separation.
Conserve and enhance the individual character of settlements	The proposal provides additional urban housing which helps to avoid linear sprawl.
Retain the character of the skyline	The proposal will not detract from distinctive skyline features or from views across undeveloped landscapes from the Cromer Ridge to the coast or vice-versa.
Enhance public rights of way	Not applicable, as the site lies within Sheringham town centre.
Manage the impacts of climate change and coastal erosion	The site is not at risk from, nor will lead to an increased risk of, coastal erosion.

Overall, no adverse impact on the landscape is likely to arise from the proposal.

2.2.6 Policy EN3: Undeveloped Coast

The Application Site does not lie within an area of Undeveloped Coast.

2.2.7 Policy EN4: Design

The existing property consists of two x two-storey, brick-built, terraced, flat-roofed, mixed-use units which form part of a 1970's retail/residential development to the rear of the Primary Retail Frontage on Station Road.

The existing first floor at 44C Station Road consists of a two-bedroom flat. It is proposed to create two new one-bedroom flats above 44C & 44D Station Road by constructing a new second floor above the addresses and making minor internal alterations to the existing first floor flat at 44C to create a new staircase to access the new second floor. The ground floor will remain as-is.

The new second floor extension proposes a low pitch gable roof with all elevations to be clad in zinc standing seam, providing a modern contrast to the existing building. The flats are envisaged as modern, loft-style living with vaulted ceilings to create height within the open planned layout. The living/dining/kitchen area is located to the North, with large bi-folding windows on the North elevation to maximise sea views. Both of the second-floor flats will have generous sized double bedrooms to the south with smaller windows than those on the

lower floors. This will reduce the visual impact of the new structure as well as enable it to be read as a separate element.

The second floor has been carefully considered to ensure it is subordinate to the existing building. This has been accomplished by creating a smaller footprint than the below, meaning that from ground level it will not be overbearing. From Station Road, the second floor will rarely be visible from any public vantage points.

Access to the flats will be achieved via the existing staircase on the ground floor to the first floor, with a new central staircase to access the second floor to minimise the impact on the layout on the first floor.

Because of the Application Site's position perpendicular to Station Road, town centre location and standoff distances between other buildings, the proposed built development in the second storey is unlikely to have any adverse impact on amenity, such as overlooking, loss of privacy, or overshadowing.

The accompanying floor plans and elevations show that the scheme successfully preserves the town feel and context whilst providing for additional residential units within the Sheringham town centre.

The proposal will make efficient use of that land and respects the massing, scale, density and character of Sheringham within the immediate context of the Application Site. The development is appropriately proportioned to ensure that the existing relationship of buildings to space within the vicinity would not be unduly disturbed and the development proposal is very appropriate when considered in light of the characteristics of the immediate area.

2.2.8 Policy EN6: Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency

The proposed extension will provide environmentally sustainable residential accommodation as it will meet thermal and energy efficiency requirements as outlined in the Building Regulations.

In order to minimise disruption to neighbouring properties and businesses whilst also ensuring maximum energy efficiency and carbon reduction, the intention is to adopt sustainable methods of construction, including pre-fabricated units wherever possible. It is proposed to install underfloor heating and solar panels on the front/south-facing slope of the gable roof in order to improve energy efficiency. In addition, an electric vehicle charging point will be fitted at the rear.

2.2.9 Policy EN8: Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment

The Application Site lies within the Sheringham Conservation Area. In its current guise, the existing building, which dates from the 1970s, has limited architectural merits and does not make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area in its present form.

Pre-application advice was sought from the Council on a draft scheme for the upward extension with a mono-pitch form roofline. The advice was as follows:

- “1. By virtue of its overall height and mono-pitch form, the extension as proposed would introduce significant volume at high level and thus would see the host building gaining a somewhat ungainly, top-heavy appearance.*
- 2. For all of its failings visually, the existing rear wing at least has a coherent and homogenous appearance. By contrast, with the proposals only involving the central section of this block, the upstanding addition would look decidedly odd against the remaining sections of flat roof flanking it.*

For these reasons, it is difficult to see how these proposals would do anything other than harm the appearance and character of the designated heritage asset.

Moving forward, for such a proposal to be considered more favourably, the extension would firstly need to be applied across the whole of the flat roof area. Otherwise, it is never likely to relate particularly well to the rest of the existing building (including the front pile facing the road). Secondly, it would need to take the form of a diminishing attic storey addition and therefore the solution would most likely involve some kind of edged roof arrangement with a standing seam fringe and a hidden flat roof above. In so doing, it would then provide a more proportionate cap to the building, and thus would be more in keeping with the examples shown in the submitted statement.”

With respect to the advice given, a number of changes were made to the design. The mono-pitch roofline has been replaced by a softly sloped gable roof towards Station Road. The overall height was reduced significantly from nearly 9m to less than 8.5m. The design caps the existing building with materials representative of a contemporary design. This will enhance the Conservation Area through the application of some modern architecture and bring significantly more visual interest to what is otherwise a dull building.

Furthermore, the location perpendicular to the Station Road frontage within a narrow backland environment ensures that the building is unlikely to be visible from any wider public vantage points and therefore will not detract from the visual amenity of the Conservation Area.

With respect to the Council’s request for the extension to cover a greater area, unfortunately, Nos. 44B and 44E are in different ownership and it is therefore not feasible for an upward extension to be applied uniformly across the whole of the flat roof area on the adjoining neighbouring buildings.

As the Application Site is in the middle section of the terrace, the addition of an extra storey above creates a balanced, symmetrical, stepped dimension in the centre of the run of the terrace and enhances the otherwise plain, unremarkable terrace run whilst retaining the horizontal coherence at the ground and first floor levels. This also allows the proposed extension to remain subservient to the existing buildings.

The existing flat roof on the Application Site is long overdue for replacement the proposal presents an ideal opportunity to greatly improve the building's energy efficiency and, at the same time, without risking overdevelopment, add an extra storey to provide much-needed additional residential accommodation which would both maximise the potential of the site and also contribute to the vitality and sustainability of the town centre.

2.2.10 Policy EN9: Biodiversity and Geology

The development proposal is not within, adjacent to, or near to any internationally, nationally or locally designated sites of nature conservation value (or potential sites) and therefore will not adversely affect any important species or habitats within these sites.

2.2.11 Policy EN10: Development and Flood Risk

The Application Site encompasses land in Flood Zone 1 and is identified as having a very low risk of surface water flooding.

2.2.12 Policy EN11: Coastal Erosion

The Application Site does not lie within the Coastal Erosion Constraint Area and the proposal will not increase coastal erosion.

2.2.13 Policy EN13: Pollution and Hazard Prevention and Minimisation

As a residential extension in an urban town centre, the proposed development is unlikely to have any adverse impacts on the natural environment.

Emissions from day-to-day energy use and in the extended building will be low as it will meet current Building Regulations standards for thermal and energy efficiency. As a residential extension, the proposal is unlikely to increase noise or light pollution, particularly as the Application Site is set within a town centre context.

2.2.14 Policy EC5: Location of Retail and Commercial Leisure Development

The proposal lies within the Primary Shopping Area of Sheringham and to the rear of the Primary Retail Frontage. It currently incorporates a café, which seeks to expand its offering to hot food takeaway. The Mulberry is a successful business long-established for almost 40 years and operates all year round serving both the local community and tourists. As a number of their regular clientele are retired/elderly, they now prefer a takeaway/home delivery service option which supplements the existing offer and provides an ancillary business income stream.

No additional built commercial development is proposed; the application only seeks to expand the existing use class to include hot food takeaway.

Policy EC5 supports new commercial developments in Secondary Settlements such as Sheringham, and the proposal is suitable for its location and is fully compliant with Policy EC5.

The proposal will not have an adverse impact on the operation of any established weekly or farmers' markets.

2.2.15 Policy CT5: Transport Impact of New Development

The proposal is minor for only two additional flats and therefore does not meet the thresholds for infrastructure requirements. The number of trips generated is unlikely to have any material adverse impact on the capacity of the existing road infrastructure, particularly as they are likely to be extremely low due to the location of the Application Site near services and facilities.

The Application Site is well located for residents to access day-to-day services and facilities via sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport. This will help to meet the policy aim of reducing the need to travel by car and reducing carbon emissions from transport.

The proposed development will enjoy good access by sustainable transport modes to a large number of local facilities. The following list shows local services and facilities, with the distance from the Application Site:

- Shops and restaurants: 0m
- Rail Station: 100m
- Bus stops: 100m
- Public House: 125m
- Pharmacy: 200m
- Major Supermarket: 225m
- GP surgery: 400m
- Schools: 1km

The above are all within an acceptable walking distance of the Application Site and should help to reduce dependence on the use of vehicles for daily trips.

No new vehicular access points are proposed. There should be no material adverse impact on the amenity or character of the area or highway safety as a result of the development.

There will be no significant transport implications, such as in relation to congestion or air quality, and the scale of the proposal falls significantly below the trigger threshold in the national Guidance on Transport Assessments¹.

¹ APPENDIX B. Indicative thresholds for transport assessments

2.2.16 Policy CT6: Parking Provision

Parking will remain with three spaces provided to the occupants of 44C and 44D, with reallocation to allow for one for each new second floor flat and the third for the ground floor business. The town centre location ensures good access to local amenities with alternative transport links found only a short distance from Station Road.

Customers visiting the café will arrive on foot or by bicycle, as they do now, as the café does not offer any customer parking. Additionally, Sheringham town centre benefits from a number of public car parks within a short walking distance of the Application Site for café customers and the site is very accessible to the general public via walking, cycling and public transport which mitigates the need for customer parking.

3 National Planning Policy Framework

3.1 Section 6: Building a strong, competitive economy

The proposal will support economic growth in a Secondary Settlement within the designated Primary Shopping Area. The NPPF looks to enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business, such as the proposal under consideration here.

3.2 Section 9: Promoting Sustainable Transport

See earlier **Section 2.1.4** (Policy SS6: Access and Infrastructure) and **Section 2.2.9** (Policy CT5: Transport Impact of New Development).

3.3 Section 11: Making effective use of land

The proposal is for a very effective and efficient use of land. The site lies in a densely built-up urban area in the centre of Sheringham. Under the proposal, this land would be used to create two additional flats and expand the offering of an existing commercial unit, which will promote jobs growth and the local economy.

3.4 Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

See **Section 2.2.7**.

3.5 Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

The Application Site encompasses land in Flood Zone 1 and is identified as having a very low risk of surface water flooding.

3.6 Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

3.6.1 Paragraph 174

The Application Site does not form part of a valued landscape, nor does it contain or affect any sites of biodiversity or geological value. It does not lie within any area of undeveloped coast. As an already developed site with no natural landscaping features, no impacts on protected habitats, species or designated nature conservation sites are expected.

The development proposal will not contribute to or be at risk from unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution, or land instability. There are no known previous land uses that would have likely led to any form of contamination on the site.

3.6.2 Paragraph 176

The development proposal is not within any nationally designated landscape area.

3.6.3 Paragraph 180

The development proposal is not within, adjacent to, or near to any internationally, nationally or locally designated sites of nature conservation value (or potential sites) and therefore will not adversely affect any important species or habitats within these sites.

3.7 Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

See also **Section 2.2.9**.

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF indicates great weight must be given to the conservation of heritage assets irrespective of the level of harm. Hence, even minor harm stemming from the occasional views and visual relationships of any development within its setting needs to be factored into the overall planning balance. Only in the event of this harm being outweighed by any public benefits accruing from the proposal could the proposal be considered compliant under paragraph 202 of the NPPF.

To conclude, it is maintained that, considering the nature and scale of the proposed development, significant effects on its immediate locality are not likely to occur and will, at most, be less than substantial. However, any less than substantial harm will be outweighed by the social and economic benefits of much-needed additional housing within the town centre in a sustainable location.