

**Planning Statement in Support of a Planning
and Listed Building Application for the
Conversion and Extension of a Barn to Form a
House, the Erection of 2No Garages and the
Creation of a New Vehicular Access**

Green Oak Farm, Mickfield Road, Mickfield

September 2023



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Green Oak Farm, Mickfield Road, Mickfield

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1.0 Introduction and Summary

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is written in support of an application for planning and listed building consent for the conversion of a curtilage-listed barn near Mickfield into a house, the erection of 2 garages and the creation of a new vehicular access.
- 1.2 Planning and listed building consent has already been granted for the proposed conversion under references DC/22/05201 and DC/22/05202. This application seeks to amend the extant scheme by moving the new access to the south of the barn, rather than north as previously permitted, and to relocate the garage which will serve the converted barn to the southeast of the site. The amended proposal is outside of the defined red line for the extant scheme so a new planning and listed building consent application is needed to achieve these changes.
- 1.3 The amended proposal has been designed with advice from experienced heritage consultant and historic buildings specialist John Selby. John was formerly the head of conservation in South Cambridgeshire, then at Ely and King's Lynn. He has over thirty years of experience advising on heritage projects specialising in East Anglia. John has undertaken a heritage assessment of the proposal which concludes that the revised siting of the new access preserves the historic farmstead and setting of Green Oak Farmhouse, thereby better revealing its significance. No harm to the setting of this listed building or the wider countryside is identified from the proposals.
- 1.4 The route of the access approved under the extant permissions created an unusual layout with the dual accesses located close to one another which would not positively contribute to the setting of Green Oak Farmhouse and required the removal of the outbuilding currently situated to the north. The updated proposal seeks to move the access to the South of Green Oak Farmhouse which will provide more separation between the new access and the listed building. The new access location will improve the layout of the development and it will allow for the retention of the outbuildings.
- 1.5 A highway assessment of the proposal has also been undertaken by an experienced highways consultant engineer. This assessment confirms that the visibility for the new access meets the requirements for the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and is in excess of the visibility of the new access approved under the extant schemes. The report concludes that there will be no detrimental effect on road safety for either users of the new access or the public highway in this location.

- 1.6 Only one minor change is proposed to the approved barn conversion which will provide an entrance to the barn in the south elevation. The approved plan shows this elevation with floor-to-ceiling glazed windows, the change proposed simply seeks to update this window to be a door into the house. This improves the design and outlook of the house from this direction and provides an additional entry into the property.
- 1.7 This application proposes a new access road to the permitted barn conversion which will improve the setting of the Green Oak Farmhouse, provide a more logical and attractive layout for the converted barn, and provide improved highway visibility onto the road. Therefore, the local planning authority should regard this application as an improvement on the extant scheme. There are clear benefits to this amended proposal and no adverse impacts have been identified, therefore we look forward to receiving confirmation from the Local Planning Authority that the changes are acceptable

2.0 Description of the Application Site, Surrounding Area and The Proposed Development

Description of the Application Site and Surrounding Area

2.1 The application site is a barn and land situated to the rear of Green Oak Farmhouse which is approximately 165 metres to the south of the village of Mickfield in Mid Suffolk.

2.2 The site can be seen in Figure 2.1 below.



Figure 2.1 - Application Site

2.3 The site is situated outside the settlement boundary for Mickfield and therefore is considered under planning policy as being within the countryside.

2.4 The Mid Suffolk Planning Constraints map has been reviewed for the site, this is shown in Figure 2.2 and confirms the following:

- The site is not subject to any landscape designations such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a Special Landscape Area or a Conservation Area.
- The site does not have any environmental constraints such as an Ancient

Woodland, Local or National Nature Reserve, Site of Special Scientific Interest, or any Tree Preservation Orders.

- The site is in Flood Zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding, and it is also not an area shown to be at risk of flooding from surface water.
- The site and barn are within the curtilage of Greenoak Farmhouse which is Grade II listed, therefore barn is considered curtilage listed.



Figure 2.2 - Application Site Constraints Map

2.5 The barn was granted planning permission and listed building consent under applications DC/22/05201 and DC/22/05202. This permission also granted permission for two garages and a new access to the northwest of the barn and the north of Green Oak Farmhouse.

2.6 The barn as it currently stands is shown in Figures 2.3 – 2.4 below.



Figure 2.3 - Barn Viewed from the North West



Figure 2.4 - Barn Viewed from the South East

2.7 As these photos and the submitted structural assessment confirm, the barn is currently in a state of decay and requires extensive repair work. While repair works

have been undertaken during the course of its life, many of these have been inappropriate and have not been sympathetic to its construction. This includes the use of concrete around the plinth and timbers which has been especially damaging. The repairs required are extensive and will likely require specialist contractors to complete, which will be highly expensive. This means the viability of these works is key to justifying these repairs.

- 2.8 The extant consent granted permission for the conversion and extension of the barn, and for a new access which ran to the northeast of the plot. This is shown in Figure 2.5

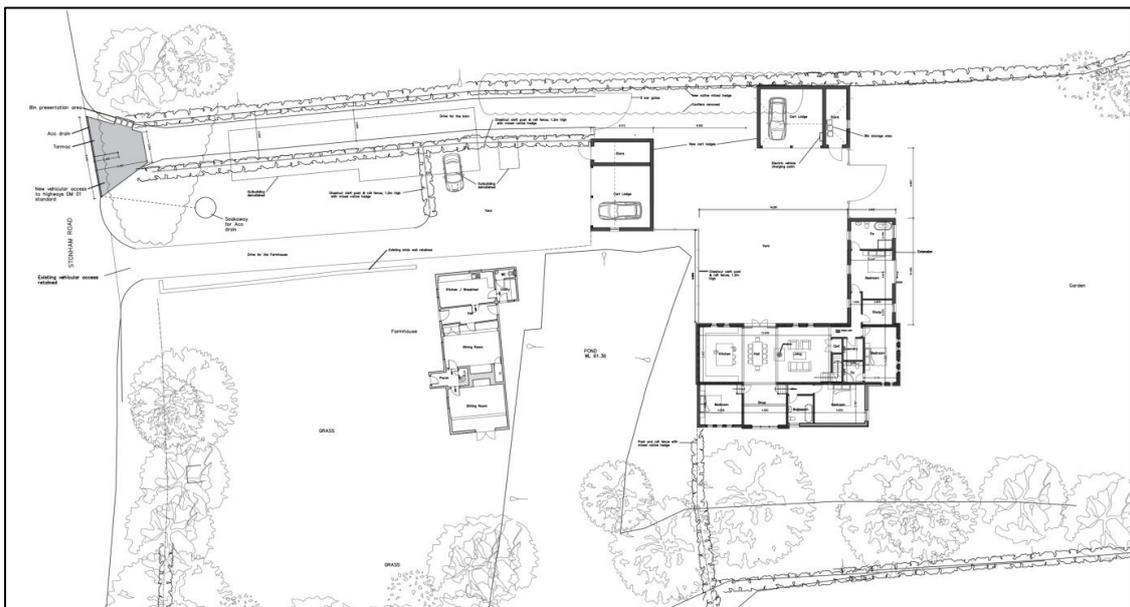


Figure 2.5 - Extant Scheme Approved Under applications DC/22/05201 and DC/22/05202 ((c) Tim Moll Architecture).

- 2.9 The new access permitted under the extant scheme ran parallel to the existing access for Green Oak Farmyard, creating dual accesses close to one another and the listed building. This would result in a usual arrangement which does not contribute positively to the setting of Green Oak Farmhouse.
- 2.10 The permitted access also required the demolition of the outbuildings to the north of Green Oak Farmyard. While these buildings are not historic, they are sited in the historic position of the bakehouse and dairy, and as such contribute to the historic setting of the farmhouse therefore their retention would be beneficial.
- 2.11 The area of the site proposed to be used for the new access is currently closely cut grass as shown in Figure 2.6 which forms part of the wider curtilage of the site.



Figure 2.6 – Proposed Access Route

Proposed Development

- 2.12 This application seeks planning permission to move the new access which will serve the converted barn to the south of the site. This application also seeks to move the cart lodge for the converted barn to the southeast of the barn and to create a new entry door on the south elevation of the converted barn in place of floor-to-ceiling glazing.
- 2.13 The proposed new access route is shown in Figure 2.6 below. As the site plan shows, this new access provides a more spacious layout to Green Oak Farmhouse and the proposed conversion as it does not seek to compress all the access roads, cart lodges and car parking to the area directly north and northeast of Green Oak Farmhouse.

in each of the Ash trees and that the Crack Willow is also in decline with large areas of crown death. These trees are all rated as BS Category U which should be removed even if the proposed development were not to be proposed. There are 6 new trees proposed to replace the diseased and dying trees on the site.

3.0 Planning Policy Assessment

3.1 This section assesses the development against the relevant national and local planning policies.

3.2 National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF), while local planning policy is contained within the Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998 (the Local Plan), the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy 2008 (the Core Strategy) and the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review 2012 (the Focused Review).

3.3 Babergh and Mid Suffolk are currently working on a Joint Local Plan (JLP). Modifications to Part 1 of this JLP have recently been assessed and an Independent Inspector has confirmed that with the proposed modifications Part 1 is now sound and capable of adoption. Therefore any relevant policies from this emerging local planning document will be considered in this assessment.

Principle of the Development

3.4 Permission for the conversion of the barn has been granted under the extant consent's DC/22/05201 and DC/22/05202, therefore the principle of the development is firmly established. These applications remain extant until December 2025.

3.5 This application does not seek any additional development above what has been permitted but simply seeks permission for an improved access design and site layout which will have an impact on the surrounding countryside and nearby heritage assets. These matters will be assessed in the following sections.

Design and Layout

3.6 The NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy also seeks to protect and conserve landscape qualities while considering the natural environment and historic dimension of the landscape. Emerging Local Plan Policy LP17 also seeks to conserve and enhance the landscape character.

3.7 Local Plan Policy H9 also requires that proposed conversions respect the structure, form, and character of the building.

3.8 The updated proposal improves the layout of the development. The new access

remains within the established domestic curtilage of Green Oak Farmhouse but moves it beyond the thick belt of trees and the moat which runs to the south and west of this property which are a well-defined boundary.

- 3.9 The proposed native tree and hedge planting between the access and Green Oak Farmhouse will help to further reinforce and define this established boundary and will contribute positively to the landscape character. Further tree and hedge planting are proposed to the south of the access which will further benefit the landscape and will screen any minor visual impact of the access from the wider countryside.
- 3.10 The access is proposed to be surfaced in gravel which is a soft, informal, and low-impact material which will not be prominent in the landscape.
- 3.11 The updated layout respects the setting of the existing barn by routing the access and parking to the rear of the property. This allows the front of the barn to remain uncluttered and free from vehicle parking which would be positioned to the south of the barn, well screened by the existing and proposed planting. This area is also well-screened from views to the south by the proposed planting and existing trees.
- 3.12 The new layout also improves the setting and design of the development with respect to Green Oak Farmhouse. The previously approved layout and design under consent's DC/22/05201 and DC/22/05202 resulted in the access for the proposed and existing properties running parallel to each other close by just to the north of Green Oak Farmhouse, increasing the prominence of the access tracks. Separating the new access from the existing access improves the impact of the development on the setting of the buildings and the countryside as it gives the properties appropriate space and a less cluttered appearance.
- 3.13 The previous consent also resulted in the area to the north of the barn and Green Oak Farmhouse having all the car parking for both properties. This would have resulted in a large number of vehicles parked close to the houses, in a prominent position. This updated proposal moves the vehicle parking for the barn to a well screened area to the southeast of the site which will significantly reduce the prominence of the car parking close to Green Oak Farmhouse.

Heritage Consideration

- 3.14 Local Plan Policy HB5 states that the change of use of historic buildings will only be approved if the proposed use preserves the building and its setting without undue

alterations.

- 3.15 Local Plan Policy HB1 seeks to protect the character and appearance of listed buildings and their setting.
- 3.16 The extant proposal granted permission for an additional highway access to the north of Green Oak Farm, resulting in the removal of the outbuildings situated in this area and the two access tracks running parallel close to Green Oak Farmhouse. As set out in the heritage assessment while the outbuildings which would be required to be removed under this consent are not historic, there have historically been outbuildings in this area so their retention is true to the layout and setting of the listed building and their retention should be encouraged.
- 3.17 The new access location is physically much further from Green Oak Farmhouse and it is well screened by a thick bank of trees. There are direct no views of the new access from Green Oak Farmhouse so this will improve the setting of this listed building. This proposal includes additional tree and hedge planting to the south of the new access. This will help screen the access from views from the south. As stated in the submitted heritage assessment; *"Its position, between an established tree belt and the new hedge ensure that its impact on the countryside is mitigated and its 'soft, informal' surfacing ensure its impact is minimised. It causes no harm to the setting of the heritage asset."*
- 3.18 The only change to the barn conversion proposed by this application over that of the extant scheme is to create an entrance on the southern elevation which will serve the new access. This elevation already had full-height windows in this location, so this change is very minor and will not result in any undue alterations.
- 3.19 This application also seeks to reposition the cart lodge which will serve the converted barn to the southeast of the site, where the new access ends. Historic maps show that there have been outbuildings around the barn in this location historically, so this position is true to previous layouts of the farmyard and respects the historic setting. This is shown in Figure 4.1 which is the 1837 tithe map included in the heritage statement which shows a building in the position of the cart lodge.

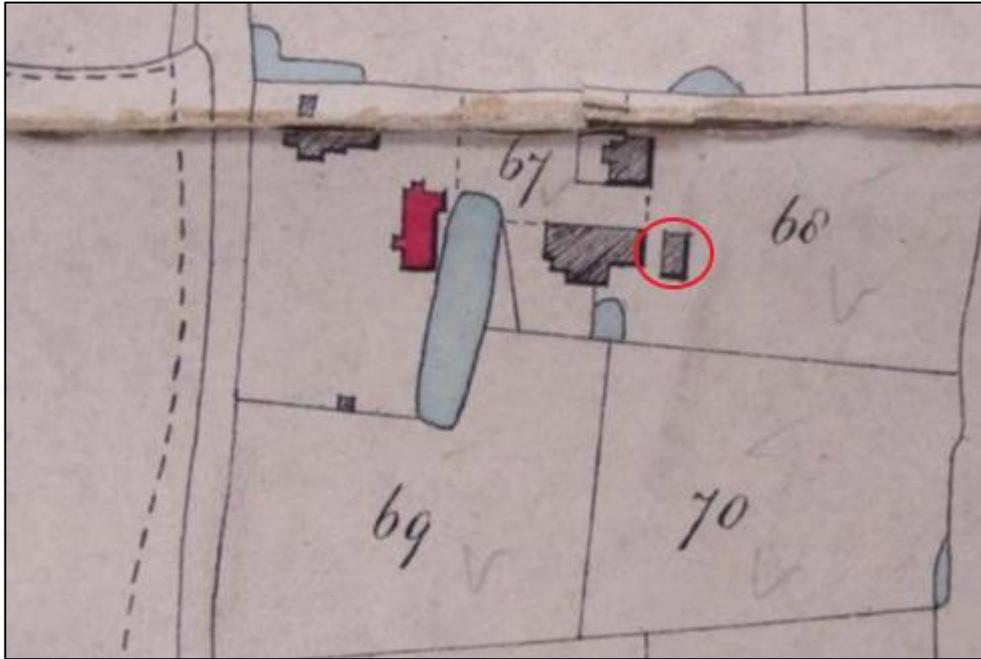


Figure 3.1 - 1837 Tithe Map

- 3.20 Emerging Local Plan Policy LP19 states that; *“the council will support the re-use/redevelopment of a heritage asset, including Heritage at Risk and assets outside settlement boundaries, where it would represent the optimal viable use and proposal preserved the building.”*
- 3.21 This application seeks permission for the viable reuse of a heritage asset which will respect its surroundings and the wider historic setting and is therefore in keeping with the aims of this emerging planning policy.
- 3.22 Therefore, this proposal is in keeping with the aims of local planning policy and the NPPF which seek to protect listed buildings and their setting.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 3.23 Core Strategy Policy CS4 states that the council will support developments that avoid areas of current and future flood risk, and do not increase flooding elsewhere.
- 3.24 The site is located in Flood Risk Zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding.
- 3.25 The site has an extant consent for the barn to be converted into a house. This application seeks a minor change to the layout and to move the cart lodge for the new house into a different location. These changes will not increase the flood risk over that of the extant scheme on either the proposed site or anywhere else.

Highway Safety

- 3.26 Local Plan Policy T09 and T10 and Paragraph 111 of the NPPF state that development should not adversely affect the highway network or its associated safety.
- 3.27 The extant permission granted under references DC/22/05201 and DC/22/05202 permitted the development of a second access to the highway to serve the converted barn. The required visibility splays which were approved for this access were 77 metres to the north and 100 metres to the south.
- 3.28 As set out in the highway assessment submitted with this application, the new access proposed in this application can achieve visibility splays of over 175 metres to the north and 100 metres to the south.
- 3.29 The highway assessment concludes that *“the proposed new access for the previously approved dwelling will have no detrimental effect on road safety for either users of the new access or the public highway in this location. The report demonstrates that there is sufficient inter-visibility between approaching and emerging vehicles and that there are no additional acceptable highway risks.”*
- 3.30 Therefore, this amended proposal should be considered a highway safety improvement over the extant scheme which is a public benefit.

Residential Amenity

- 3.31 Policies H13 and H16 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that new housing development protects the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 3.32 The updated layout and design will improve the amenity of the residents of Green Oak Farmhouse and the barn to be converted. There will be less vehicular disturbance to the residents of Green Oak Farmhouse as the new access is located further from Green Oak Farmhouse.
- 3.33 There is sufficient separation of the barn from Green Oak Farmhouse to ensure that there is a good level of external amenity for both properties. The site is surrounded by fields so there are no other residential neighbours which could impact the amenity of the development, or be affected by it.
- 3.34 Internal amenity for the future occupants of the new house will be to a good standard as required by the NPPF.

Ecology

- 3.35 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 requires that all public

bodies have regard to the Habitats Directive in the exercise of its functions.

- 3.36 This application is accompanied by an Ecology Report (MHE Consulting, October 2022) relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected species and Priority species & habitats and the identification of appropriate mitigation measures.
- 3.37 This report concludes that with the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures, a biodiversity gain can be achieved on the site.
- 3.38 This application proposes additional tree and hedge planting over that of the previous application, where post and rail fences were proposed to split the curtilage of the barn and Green Oak Farmhouse, a native hedge is now proposed in its place. Further planting is also proposed along the route of the access which will provide further habitat improvement.

Impact on Trees, Scrubs and Hedgerows

- 3.39 Local Plan Policy GP1 states that *“layouts should incorporate and protect important natural landscape features, including existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows.”*
- 3.40 This application proposes the removal of 5 trees which are positioned to the rear of the barn. As stated earlier in this report, a tree survey has been undertaken and these trees have been assessed to be of BS Category Grade U meaning that they are in poor condition and should be removed.
- 3.41 The Ash trees are all showing effects of Ash dieback and the Crack Willow is in decline with large areas of crown death.
- 3.42 This application proposes that the trees be replaced with 6 new trees along the access and that extensive new hedging be planted around the site. This new planting will mitigate the removal of the dying trees and will enhance the site, providing a further public benefit.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 This planning application seeks permission for the conversion of a historic barn into a house, the erection of two garages and the creation of a new access. This application is submitted to replace extant permissions granted under planning reference DC/22/05201 and listed building consent reference DC/22/05202. This updated application seeks to move the new access to a more logical location to the south of the site and to relocate the cart lodge which will serve the converted barn to the south of the barn.
- 4.2 This new arrangement will improve the layout of the site as the new access will be in a less prominent position further from the setting of Green Oak Farmhouse. The current access layout requires the demolition of the existing outbuildings to the north of Green Oak Farmhouse. While these buildings are not historic, historic maps show that this location has historically contained buildings in this location and therefore their retention benefits the setting of Green Oak Farmhouse.
- 4.3 A small change is proposed to the barn design which is to replace a full-height glazed window on the south elevation with a door. This will provide a back door into the new barn.
- 4.4 The cart lodge and car parking for the converted barn are also proposed to be moved to the rear of the barn. This will further improve the setting of the barn and Green Oak Farmhouse as there will be less vehicular parking to the front of the barn and cars will be moved to this more discreet location.
- 4.5 The new location proposed for the highway access will also offer better visibility onto the highway which is a safety improvement and a public benefit. The planting proposed around the access will help screen the new access for longer views, provide landscape benefits and provide a habitat for biodiversity.
- 4.6 There are no adverse effects identified by the proposed amended scheme, which will have the following benefits;
- Improved highway safety;
 - Improve the setting of the listed building Green Oak Farmhouse;
 - Improve the amenity of the residents of Green Oak Farmhouse;
 - Replacement of dying trees on the site with healthy trees;
 - Biodiversity gain and enhancement across the site;