

Planning Statement for Alterations and Repairs to a Residential Outbuilding at The Old Rectory, The Street, Drinkstone

August 2023



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The Street, Drinkstone

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Content Amendment Record

This report has been issued and amended as follows:

Issue	Revision	Description	Date	Signed
1	0	Draft	07.08.23	SST
1	0	Reviewed	14.08.23	DB

Reference: E895.C1.Rep02

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1.0 Introduction and Summary

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is written in support of a Householder Planning Application which seeks permission for repair works, improvements and alterations to a barn outbuilding in Drinkstone. The barn is in the grounds of the Old Rectory and is used as a workshop and for domestic storage. The barn was also used as a stable for horses by previous owners. The building is, however, underutilised due to its poor condition, dampness, and lack of weatherproofing. This application seeks permission for changes to the barn to improve the building and create a space which can be used as a home office and studio.
- 1.2 The barn is an attractive building built from coursed flint fieldstones with red brick detailing. It is not a listed building, nor is it within the curtilage of the Old Rectory which is a Grade II* listed building. Pre-application consultation with Mid-Suffolk Heritage Officers and Historic England Heritage Officers confirmed the building is not considered to be curtilage listed. It is, however, a historic building and is in the setting of the Old Rectory and so care has been taken to ensure that the proposed external changes do not harm the setting and the proposals have been altered to reflect the pre-application advice which was received.
- 1.3 A structural survey of the barn has been recently undertaken which has identified cracking all around the building's brickwork. It is not insulated and has bare walls and floors. The first floor is a self-supported timber construction with a temporary timber staircase and is not suitable for regular use and may become dangerous. The roof is open and the purlins are undersized which has resulted in roof spread. This application seeks permission to undertake essential repairs and to improve the building to make it a long-term usable building which will help to secure its ongoing upkeep. While the repair of many of these elements could be undertaken without planning permission, the works proposed in this application include creating a new first floor to replace the existing free-standing mezzanine and the installation or replacement of doors, windows and roof lights which require planning permission. As such the full range of repairs, changes and improvements are described in this statement.
- 1.4 The changes put forwards in this application are as follows;
- Repair work to the building walls and roof;

- Installation of in-line roof lights on the east and west roof slopes;
- Installation of a timber glazed screen with horizontal louvres above the entrance on the west elevation;
- Replacement of the ground floor timber door with new timber framed glazed doors on the entrance on the west elevation;
- Installation of timber framed ground and first-floor windows with horizontal cladding between;
- Replacement of the existing first-floor timber door at first floor level with a timber door on the east elevation;
- Replacement of the ground floor timber door with a timber framed glazed door on the east elevation;
- Installation of an air-source heat pump on the east elevation;
- Reconfiguring the internal layout to create an open plan ground and first floor;
- Installation of an insulated floor and drylining to the walls and roof;
- Creation of a fully structurally supported first floor;

1.5 The proposals put forward in this application will rectify the structural issues identified in the barn and will create a comfortable space which will allow this building to be used as a home office and studio by the owners and occupants of the Old Rectory.

1.6 A heritage assessment of the changes proposed has been carried out and this has concluded that the small loss of fabric proposed is outweighed by the improvements which will provide the barn with a long-term viable use consistent with its conservation. The repair works and improvements to the barn will give it a long term use which will ensure that it remains in a good state of repair, which will improve the setting of the nearby listed building; The Old Rectory.

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

Description of the Application Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The outbuilding is located in the village of Drinkstone in Mid Suffolk. It is located just off The Street and is accessed from the main entrance to The Old Rectory, to which the barn is an ancillary outbuilding.
- 2.2 The location of the outbuilding can be seen in Figure 2.1 below.



Figure 2.1 - Barn Location

- 2.3 To the north and east of the building are the grounds of the Old Rectory. To the west is a stable building and to the south is The Cottage, as residential property which adjoins the barn. Beyond The Cottage are further houses.
- 2.4 The outbuilding is an attractive traditional agricultural building, likely to have originally used as a threshing barn. It is constructed of flint walls with brick quoins and a masonry plinth. The roof is covered with red pantiles. An image of the north elevation of the barn can be seen in Figure 2.2.



Figure 2.2 - North Elevation of Barn

- 2.5 The barn is split into two sections, this application only seeks to make changes to the northern section of the barn which is used for storage and as a workshop by the owners of the Old Rectory.
- 2.6 Access to the barn is from the main access to the Old Rectory which is to the north of the barn. This provides safe vehicular access to The Street. As the building is ancillary to The Old Rectory, car parking is not required for this building as there is ample car parking at the Old Rectory and elsewhere on its grounds.
- 2.7 The application site is free from constraints, Figure 2.2 below shows the Mid Suffolk Planning Constraints Map. This Confirms that the site is:
- 2.7.1 Not within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - 2.7.2 Not an Ancient Woodland;
 - 2.7.3 Not within Flood Zone 2 or 3;
 - 2.7.4 Not a listed building or curtilage listed;
 - 2.7.5 Not within a Local Nature Reserve;

2.7.6 Not a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Conservation Area, or Conservation Area;

2.7.7 Within the Drinkstone Settlement Boundary.

2.8 The site is approximately 67 metres to the southwest of The Old Rectory which is a Grade II* listed building. Pre-application advice from Mid Suffolk Heritage Officers confirmed that they would not consider the application site to be curtilage listed as it is historically separate from the grounds of the Old Rectory.

Proposed Development

2.9 This Planning Application proposes repairs and improvements to the building which will make it a usable office and studio space and will help to ensure the building is maintained into the future.

2.10 This application seeks to introduce new glazing around the building to provide a high provision of natural light and to install insulation and the utilities required which will allow it to be comfortably used throughout the year.

2.11 This application also seeks to replace the existing first-floor mezzanine which is weak and potentially unstable with a structurally sound permanent 1st floor.

2.12 The changes put forward in this application are as follows;

- Repair work to the building walls and roof;
- Installation of in-line roof lights on the east and west roof slopes;
- Installation of a timber glazed screen with horizontal louvres above the entrance on the west elevation;
- Replacement of the ground floor timber door with new timber framed glazed doors on the entrance on the west elevation;
- Installation of timber framed ground and first-floor windows with horizontal cladding between;
- Replacement of the existing first-floor timber door at first floor level with a timber door on the east elevation;
- Replacement of the ground floor timber door with a timber framed glazed door on the east elevation;
- Installation of an air-source heat pump on the east elevation;
- Reconfiguring the internal layout to create an open plan ground and

first floor;

- Installation of an insulated floor and drylining to the walls and roof;
- Creation of a fully supported first floor;

2.13 The glazing has been carefully considered to respect the wider setting, especially that of the Old Rectory. Pre-application discussions were undertaken with Historic England and Mid Suffolk Heritage Officers. Through these discussions, it was suggested that the roof lights proposed would give a *'residential and visually busy effect.'* It was suggested that; *'areas of patent glazing might relate better to the scale of the building, as well as to its original semi-industrial function.'* This suggestion has been considered and as shown in Figure 2.2 below, the roof lights have been replaced with in-line rooflights.

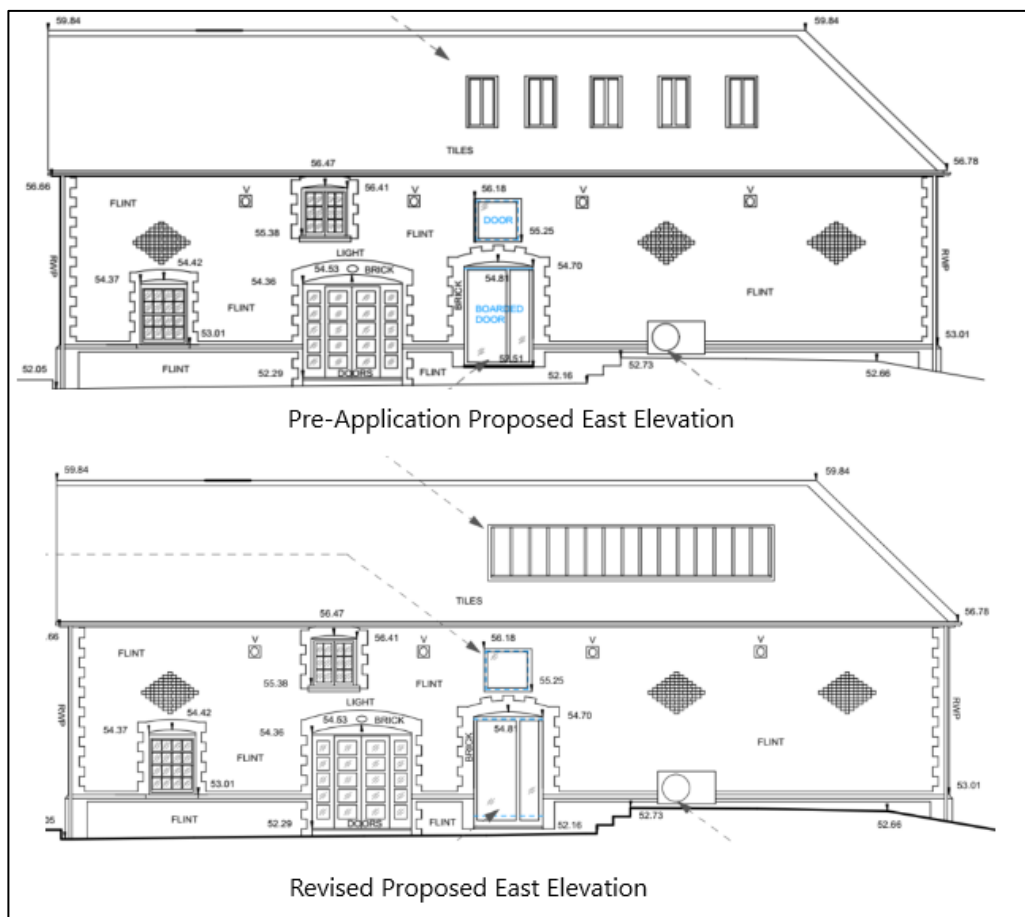


Figure 2.3 - East Elevation Comparison

2.14 Care has been taken to preserve the distinctive diamond brick patterns in the East Elevation which provides ventilation holes. This application proposes sliding panels behind the diamond brick patterns to retain the external appearance of the brick patterns.

- 2.15 The existing openings at the ground floor and 1st floor level on the east elevation are proposed to be utilised, the ground floor door will be extended to meet the floor level and replaced with a glazed door. The first-floor door will be replaced with a glazed window. This is a sensible reuse of these existing openings which will improve the appearance and functionality of the barn.
- 2.16 On the west, or front, elevation it is proposed that a single section of in-line roof lights will be installed to provide additional light into the first floor of the barn. The front entrance is also proposed to be improved, with the replacement of the solid timber doors with timber framed glazed doors. The cladding above the front doors will be replaced with a glazed screen with horizontal louvres which will provide additional light into the barn.
- 2.17 On the Eastern Elevation, it is proposed that the existing window on the first floor is replaced and expanded with new timber-framed glazed windows with a matching window to be created on the ground floor. Between the windows will be a horizontal cladding panel. Brick banding will be created around the windows to match the existing brickwork. This will provide an attractive façade to the building while providing much-needed natural light to the ground floor and first floor.

3.0 Planning policy

3.1 National Planning Policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF). While the local development plan is made up of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998 (Local Plan), the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy 2008 (Core Strategy) and the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review 2012 (CSFR). The Drinkstone Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in May 2021 and therefore forms part of the local development plan for applications in Drinkstone Parish.

Principle of Development

3.2 The NPPF states in Paragraph 11 sets out that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and that planning authorities should *“approve development proposals which accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay”*.

3.3 The Mid Suffolk Focussed review echoes this national planning policy in Policy FC 1 which states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development will apply for development, and that *“planning applications accord with the policies in the Local Plan will be approved without delay.”*

3.4 Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Policy CS 5 states that development which is *“high quality, that respects local distinctiveness and the built heritage of Mid Suffolk”* should be approved and that developments which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environments, as put forward in this application, will be supported.

3.5 Local Plan Policy GP1 sets out local planning policy for the design and layout of proposals. This states that proposals should enhance or maintain the character and appearance of their surroundings. The proposals put forward in this application have been carefully considered to retain as much of the original fabric of the building as possible by utilising existing openings and retaining as many features as possible. The character of the building is maintained while making it a usable and functioning property which will have high levels of natural light and ventilation.

3.6 GP1 also requires that the materials and finishes should be traditional, or compatible with traditional materials and finishes. The proposed materials such as the brick surrounds for the new windows will be created from matching materials. The windows and doors will be traditional designs, utilising timber detailing. The roof

lights have been altered since the pre-application in order to reduce the domestic appearance of the previously proposed style and to reinforce the agricultural character of the building. Therefore the proposals are fully in keeping with the requirements of this policy.

- 3.7 Local Plan Policy H18 deals with extensions to existing dwellings. While the proposal put forward in this application is not an extension in terms of size, this application seeks to make alterations to an existing building which is a domestic outbuilding which will increase the usable floor area of the building. Policy H18 states that proposals should be in keeping with the design and material of the existing dwelling. The external materials proposed for the new windows and doors on the barn have been chosen to reflect the character of the building, utilising high-quality timber frames and matching brick surroundings to preserve and respect the building.
- 3.8 The Drinkstone Neighbourhood Plan Policy DRN 12 states that proposals must *“contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment”*. The proposals seek to improve and repair an existing building which contributes to the character of the village. The proposals meet the requirement of this policy and will help to maintain the character and setting of the village.
- 3.9 This application seeks to make improvements to an existing residential outbuilding which will fix the underlying issues identified in a structural assessment and to make improvements to the building which will allow it to be used as a functional and comfortable working space as a home office and studio. This improvement work will ensure that the barn has a long-term use which will ensure that it is kept in a good state of repair and its design and appearance contributes to the character of the wider setting.

Historic Impact

- 3.10 Chapter 16 of the NPPF is entitled *“Conserving and enhancing the historic environment”*. Paragraph 197 states that when determining a planning application, local authorities should *“take account of the durability of sustaining and enhancing heritage assets and putting them to a viable use consistent with their conservation.”*
- 3.11 Local Plan Policy HB1 seeks to protect historic buildings and their setting. Local Plan Policy HB3 states that alterations to buildings listed building or buildings of historic interest will only be permitted when these changes meet high standards of design,

detailing materials, and construction.

3.12 This planning application is submitted with a detailed Heritage Assessment which identifies the significance and setting of the barn, assesses the proposed works and assesses the impact of these proposals.

3.13 This assessment concludes that;

“The proposed works have been developed with the intention of avoiding harm to the significance and setting of The Old Rectory and the proposed use of the barn as a home office... ancillary to the main house, is achieved without harm to its value as a non-designated heritage asset. But if a low level of harm is perceived, the public benefits which accrue, by providing it with a viable use consistent with its conservation, outweigh the level of harm caused.

The proposal is wholly within the spirit of national planning guidance and local planning policies which seek to protect the historic environment.”

3.14 Therefore this development is in accordance with local and national planning policies and should be considered acceptable from a heritage perspective.

Highway Safety

3.15 Local Plan Policy T10 requires that planning applications have regard for highway safety. This application is for the renovation and improvement of an existing outbuilding. There will be no additional vehicle traffic generated due to these buildings' use as the building is ancillary to the existing residential use of The Old Rectory.

3.16 Local Plan Policy T9 states that development proposals will be required to provide for parking and manoeuvring of vehicles. This application does not require car parking as the use is ancillary to the existing residential use of The Old Rectory which has ample car parking space for residents to use. Therefore, this proposal will not have any impact on highway safety.

Residential Amenity

3.17 The NPPF Paragraph 185 and Local Plan Policy H16 seek to protect neighbouring residential amenity when considering planning application.

3.18 This application proposes improvement works to an existing residential outbuilding. There is an adjoining residential property to the south of the building. The proposed

changes are to make improvement works and alterations to the building and do not propose a new use. Therefore, there will be no change which would reduce the amenity of this neighbouring property.

- 3.19 The improvements proposed will improve the long-term amenity of the adjoining property. As set out in the accompanying structure report, the building is not currently insulated or sealed and there are structure deficiencies. These issues are likely to reduce the amenity of the adjoined house, through loss of heat and potentially damp issues transferring through the party wall. The improvement works will allow the outbuilding to be properly heated and maintained which will improve the amenity of the neighbouring house.

Ecology

- 3.20 Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that when determining planning applications should avoid significant harm to biodiversity, and provide mitigation or compensation for any perceived harm. Local Plan Policy CL8 requires that development does not adversely affect wildlife habitats.
- 3.21 This application proposes improvement works to an existing building which is currently used for similar purposes, therefore no harm will be caused to biodiversity through the proposed alterations.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 This householder planning application seeks planning consent for alterations and improvement works to a barn building which is an existing residential outbuilding.
- 4.2 A structural survey has been undertaken of this building which has identified several deficiencies which urgently need rectifying. This application seeks to undertake these required repairs and to further improve the building to make it into a regularly usable outbuilding ancillary to the Old Rectory.
- 4.3 The barn is not listed; however, it is historic and is in the setting of the Grade II* listed property; The Old Rectory. The repair works and minor alterations proposed in this application seek to improve the building's external appearance and will provide it with a long-term viable use which will support its ongoing maintenance. The changes have sought to use the existing openings in the building for windows and doors and to minimise the loss of any original fabric. This is supported by a heritage report which has assessed the proposals.
- 4.4 Pre-application consultation was undertaken with Mid Suffolk heritage and planning officers who supported the proposed development. Mid Suffolk heritage officers suggested changes to the proposed roof lights, from individual roof lights which they identified as being overly residential, to a continuous strip of roof lights which would have a more authentic character to the former agricultural use of the building. This change has been implemented in the submitted plans, and so the proposals put forward are entirely in keeping with the pre-application feedback.
- 4.5 There are no issues identified relating to ecology, highways or residential amenity, as such this application accords with both national and local planning policy and we look forward to receiving confirmation of support for these changes from the local planning authority.