

PLANNING STATEMENT

**1-4 Church Close, Church Lane, Sproughton,
Suffolk IP8 3BD**

October 2023



1-4 Church Close



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Client: Maxwell Hembry

Our Ref: ND/LM/mac/9291

Prepared by	Checked by	Date	Signature
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1. INTRODUCTION

This Planning Statement has been prepared by The JTS Partnership LLP in support of applications that seek planning permission and listed building consent in relation to 1-4 Church Close, Sproughton. The principal elements of the proposal are:

- The refurbishment and extension of the 1-4 Church Close, to allow it to be converted from four apartments into two dwellings (Plots 1 & 2).
- The erection of a detached dwelling adjacent to the southern boundary of the site (Plot 3).

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the Design & Access and Heritage (DAHS) Statement, prepared by Nicholas Jacob Architects (NJA).

2. THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

1-4 Church Close is a substantial property that lies on a prominent corner plot adjacent to the junction of Church Lane and Lower Street, in Sproughton. The Grade II listed building has been much altered and extended and was subdivided in the late 1960s into four apartments.

The site extends to some 1.2 acres providing communal gardens, front and rear. It includes outbuildings situated along the northern boundary and to the west of the main building. The main access is via Lower Street, with secondary accesses from Church Lane. There are two groups of protected trees in the front garden and to the eastern boundary.

To the east, and on the opposite side of Church Lane, lies the Grade II* Listed All Saints Church. The Grade II Listed Tithe Barn lies to the north across Lower Street. A 1960s housing estate borders to the east and south.

3. BACKGROUND

In February 2023, planning and listed building applications (ref: DC/23/00870 and 00871) were submitted for an identical scheme that also included:

- The conversion of an outbuilding on the northern boundary of the site into a dwelling.
- The erection of a car port to serve Plots 1 & 2.

Both proposals have been omitted from the current proposal, with the outbuilding being retained as garaging for Plots 1 & 2.

Historic England objected to the previous applications due to a perceived adverse impact on the setting of the adjacent Grade II* listed Church of All Saints. Whilst the Applicant does not agree with Historic England's Assessment, these changes have been made in order to try and narrow the areas of disagreement.

The Applicant, and its representatives, meet with the Council's Conservation Officer on site on 21st August, subsequent to which the following advice was received:

Just to clarify a few points here, I think its more accurate to say that Historic England's comments do not consider the potential benefits to Church Close, and therefore are concerned only with the setting of the Church. In my own comments, I will be looking to consider both the potential impact to the setting of the Church and Church Close as well as the potential benefits of the scheme to Church Close.

I do not share Historic England's concerns regarding the outbuildings which will be disrupted by the proposed extension, as I feel the most significant fabric can likely be maintained (especially with some of the alterations discussed on site). However I do

agree that the subdivision of the site caused by the conversion of the garage/workshop outbuilding will alter the relationship of the group, and therefore impact to the setting of the Church. As also discussed, the visual impact in particular of this subdivision could be reduced by the further removal of boundary fencing.

This forms part of the reason why I have suggested your viability report is extended to include just the conversion of Church Close to two plots and the new proposed dwelling, omitting the conversion of the garage/workshop outbuilding.

As you have touched upon yourself and as discussed on site, as it stands, I currently feel that the overall heritage balance of the scheme would still result in harm to the settings of both the Church and Church Close itself, which will need to be balanced against any public benefits.

I also believe both Historic England and the National Amenity Societies will need to be at least notified of this the scheme again, as they would be considered statutory consultees. This would effectively be the same as reconsulting them. (As per Notification To Historic England And National Amenity Societies And The Secretary Of State (England) Direction 2015).

As a result, the Applicant agreed to withdraw the applications and resubmit the proposals, omitting the conversion of the outbuilding.

4. THE APPLICATION

The proposal is detailed on the following drawings:

- 21106-010 PL2 - Existing Location Plan.
- 21106-001 PL2 - Existing Site/Block Plan Block.
- 21106-002 PL3 - Proposed Site Block Plan.
- 21106-100 PL3 - Existing House Plans.
- 21106-101 PL3 - Proposed House Plans.
- 21106-102 PL2 - Existing Outbuilding & Morphology Plans.
- 21106-104 PL2 - Proposed New Dwelling Plans.
- 21106-200 PL2 - Existing House Elevations.
- 21106-201 PL3 - Proposed House Elevations.
- 21106-202 PL2 - Proposed New Dwelling – Elevations.
- LS1988-02-RevA - Landscape Proposals.

The application papers include the following:

- Church Close Condition Survey
- Design & Access and Heritage Statement prepared by Nicholas Jacob Architects.
- Planning Statement prepared by The JTS Partnership LLP.
- Tree Survey Arbs Impact Assessment and Landscaping Scheme.
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

5. PLANNING POLICY

Paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 confirms that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the development plan includes: -

- The Babergh Local Plan 2011-2031 Core Strategy & Policies (Part 1 of New Babergh Local Plan) 2014; and
- The Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 2006 – Saved Policies.

Babergh, along with Mid Suffolk Council, is reviewing its development plan and, in March 2021, the two authorities submitted a Joint Local Plan (JLP) to the Secretary of State for examination. The Examination Inspector reported in September 2023 and the emerging Local Plan can now start carrying weight in development control decisions. However, reference will only be made to emerging policies were they are material different to those of the current Local Plan.

Designations

The Local Plan Proposals Map (Figure 1) confirms that 1-4 Church Close lies within the defined settlement limits for Sproughton. It also lies within a Special Landscape Area with the site, itself, being designated as an Area of Visual and/or Recreational Amenity.

The draft JLP Proposals Map (Figure 2) confirms that the site continues to lie within defined settlement limits, with significant new housing development being identified to the north. The site is no longer identified as an Area of Visual and/or Recreational Amenity or as lying within a local landscape designation.



Figure 1: Local Plan Proposals Map

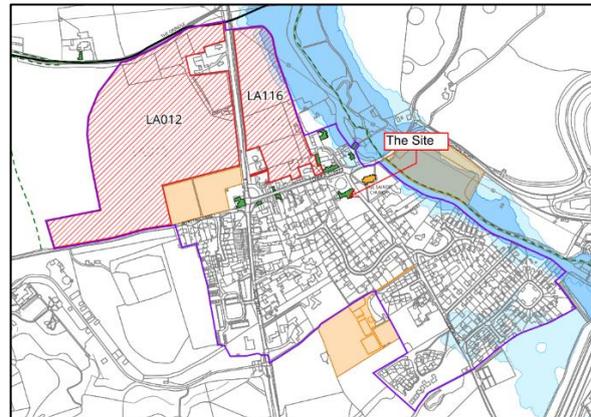


Figure 2: JLP Proposals Map

Core Strategy Policy CS1 Applying the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development confirms that the Council operates the national presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Core Strategy Policy CS2 Settlement Pattern sets out the Council's development strategy. It provides that most new development will be directed to main Towns and Urban Areas, Core Villages and then Hinterland Villages, with the scale of development in each being related to local housing needs and the role the settlement performs. Sproughton is identified as Hinterland Village and is expected to accommodate development to meet its needs.

The JLP (**Policy SP03**) elevates Sproughton to a Core Village. It also identifies Sproughton as lying within the Ipswich Fringe policy area.

Core Strategy Policy CS3 Strategy for Growth and Development confirms that new employment and housing growth will be accommodated within Babergh's existing settlement pattern (as identified in **Policy CS2**).

Replacement **JPL Policy SP03** provides that Ipswich Fringe settlements, market towns, urban areas and core villages will act as a focus for development. Sproughton is both an Ipswich Fringe Settlement and a Core Village and has been allocated two large housing sites (Figure 2).

Core Strategy Policy CS11 Strategy for Development for Core and Hinterland Villages confirms that proposals within Core and Hinterland Villages will be approved where they meet defined criteria and the requirements set out in **Policy CS15**. Emerging JPL Policy SP03 includes a similar schedule of criteria.

Core Strategy Policy CS15 Implementing Sustainable Development in Babergh provides that all new development should respect local context and character and will be assessed against a range of criteria as set out in the policy. Various policies in the JPL include a similar set of criteria.

Local Plan 2006 Policy HS28 Infill provides that planning permission will be refused for infilling or groups of dwellings where a site performs an existing visual or environmental function or where proposals represent overdevelopment, are out of keeping with the character of an area or are inadequate in terms of amenity or highway safety. It is to be replaced by criteria-based **Policy SP03**.

Local Plan 2006 Policy HS33 Extensions to Existing Dwellings states that planning permission will be granted provided the proposed scale, mass, design and materials of an extension are appropriate to the host, and adjacent, dwellings and do not have adverse impacts on trees or highway safety. These criteria are carried over into draft JPL **Policy LP03**.

Local Plan 2006 Policy CR04 Special Landscape Areas provides that, within SLA's, proposals for development will only be permitted provided they maintain or enhance the landscape and harmonise with landscape setting. Consistent with national policy, the JPL does not designate Special Landscape Areas.

Local Plan 2006 Policy CN01 Design Standards requires that all new development must be of a scale, form, design and materials appropriate to the locality and conform to any adopted Village Design Statement. Emerging JPL **Policies LP25** and **LP26** update the criteria.

Local Plan 2006 Policy CN03 Open Space within Settlements provides that the development of any visually important open spaces or gaps in the street scene will not be permitted. This site is no longer identified as being an important open space within the settlement (see Figure 2).

Local Plan 2006 Policy CN06 Listed Buildings - Alteration/Extension/Change of Use provides that proposals affecting Listed Buildings should preserve the historic fabric and retain all aspects that contribute to its special interest. Proposals should be of an appropriate scale, form, design, and siting and include appropriate fenestration and harmonise with its setting. JPL **Policies LP03** and **LP21** update the guidance to reflect NPPF guidance.

Local Plan 2006 Policy TP15 Parking Standards - New Development states that all proposals are required to provide parking in accordance with standards within supplementary planning guidance. JPL **Policy LP32** updates the guidance, which is summarised in the Council's pre-application response (Appendix 1).

6. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The site lies within the settlement limits of Sproughton, in a sustainable location within good access to local services and public transport. Sproughton is defined as a Hinterland Village

in the current Local Plan, which supports proposals that are of a scale that are commensurate with the character and function of a settlement. The JPL elevates Sproughton to a Core Village and identifies two significant housing allocations.

Consistent with national policy, the JPL does not carry over the Special Landscape Area designation or the Policy CN03 designation. Accordingly, the proposals fall to be considered against policies that seek to ensure that the scale and form of new development is appropriate to the host site, the street scene, local context and the character of a settlement.

The proposal seeks to make optimum use of the existing site by converting and extending the main building, converting an outbuilding to residential use and developing a new detached dwelling in the southern part. Consistent with the prevailing urban grain, each dwelling will be set within spacious grounds. The only material change to the street scene will be occasioned by the development of a new dwelling (Plot 3) at the southern end of the site. This property will be set back from the highway behind retained boundary planting.

The principle of additional residential development on this site is, in principle, acceptable and consistent with Core Strategy Policies CS1, CS2, CS3, CS11 and CS15, together with their corresponding replacement policies in the emerging Joint Local Plan.

7. DESIGN AND RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The DASHS describes how the scale and massing of the extension to the listed building responds to the host building, such that it will be reviewed as a subordinate structure.

The DASHS also describes how the design of the dwelling proposed for the southern part of the plot responds to site context, neighbouring listed properties, the street scene and the listed building.

All three dwellings will comfortably exceed nationally prescribed minimum space standards and will have a good quality outlook. Plots 1, 2 & 3 will have large private rear gardens, whilst Plots 1 & 2 will also share the large lawn and turning circle in front of the building.

The proposals will cause no harm to the amenity or outlook of any neighbours.

Consistent with Core Strategy Policies CS15 and Local Plan Policies HS28, HS33 and CN01, the proposals exhibit a high-quality design and will provide a quality residential environment for future occupiers.

8. ACCESS AND PARKING

The County Highway Authority, raised no issue with respect to the proposed means of access, car parking arrangements or highway impacts of the proposals. They are entirely in accordance with Local Plan Policies CN01 and TP15, together with their counterparts in the Joint Local Plan.

9. TREES AND LANDSCAPING

The application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Report and Arboricultural Implications Assessment, which demonstrates that, whilst a number of fruit trees, Lawson Cypresses, shrubs and small garden trees need to be removed in order to facilitate the development, all Category A & B trees, together with all protected trees, will be retained. Importantly, all trees on the Church Lane frontage, and within the lawned area between Plots 1 & 2, will be retained so maintaining the contribution that the site makes to the character of the street scene and this part of the village. Drawing LS1988-02-RevA shows new / replacement planting proposals.

The proposals are consistent with Core Strategic Policy CS15 and Local Plan Policy CN01, together with the corresponding policies of the emerging Joint Local Plan.

10. BIODIVERSITY & ECOLOGY

A preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been prepared by DCS Ecology. Whilst it identifies habitats that have the potential to support a number of protected species, it reports that, subject to that adoption of a number of recommended mitigation measures, which can be secured by condition, “..... *it is unlikely that the proposed development would cause a significant long-term impact to the conservation status of protected species in the area or to the conservation sites in the surrounding area, but sensitive planning may increase species because of the habitat enhancements short-term impacts to species populations or individuals would have been minimised through the incorporation of the above recommendation prior to, and during construction enhancement features, such as bat boxes, tree planting and bird boxes, will be incorporated into the final designs and therefore provide additional breeding, foraging, and sheltering opportunities for a range of wildlife*”.

The scheme is entirely consistent with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CS15 and Local Plan Policy CN01.

11. HERITAGE

The scheme has been amended and revised in order to address, and take on board, the views of the Council’s Conservation Officer and narrow the concerns raised by historic England. The updated DASHS concludes that, *‘the low level of less than substantial harm’ resulting from proposals is considered to be outweighed by the public benefits highlighted above and applicable to the whole site; key to this being the new build dwelling and its capital generating role’*. The public benefits include:

- Securing of an optimum viable and sustainable residential use for the site and all its structures, thereby supporting the long-term preservation and conservation of the heritage asset through use and maintenance.
- The extension proposals and the new dwelling will generate sufficient funds to undertake necessary repairs and refurbishments to the listed building (see Condition Assessment and Viability Report), which would not, otherwise, take place.
- The improvement of the main house’s character and appearance, when viewed from Church Lane and the resulting positive effect on the wider setting and immediate surrounding village. The aspect, and views, from the All Saint’s Church to the northeast of the site, will, in particular, be improved.
- Making improved use of an under-utilised site, providing a high-quality village development to community benefit and, noting paragraph 69 of the NPPF, ‘small-sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area’.
- The improved land management and better stewardship of the site, enhancing biodiversity and including additional beech hedging and tree planting along the eastern site edge facing Church Lane, thereby improving the natural environment.
- Compliance with, and support taken from, both existing and emerging Local Plan Policies that direct new development to Sproughton.
- Improving the existing housing stock on the site and the quality of residential accommodation.

13. CONCLUSION

The Council has confirmed that, through both the initial pre-application response and subsequent discussions that took place as part of the recent applications, that the principle of extending, and converting, 1-4 Church Close, from four to two dwellings, is acceptable.

The extension to the existing building, and the new dwelling, will provide a high level of amenity for future occupants; have an appropriate means of access and will cause no harm

to any neighbours or ecology interests. This scheme is compatible with the host building and site and will enhance local context and character. Whilst it will cause some 'less than substantial harm', and the lower end of that scale, it will generate the funds required to repair, restore and refurbish the listed building, which, together with other public benefits, outweigh the harm caused.

Whilst the scheme will enhance the heritage significance of the main listed asset, it will, overall, cause some less than substantial harm. The harm caused is, however, clearly outweighed by the public benefits arising from the proposal.