



SUPPORTING STATEMENT

In respect of an application for outline planning permission for the erection of two dwellings at:

Parsonage Farm, The Street, Preston St Mary,
Suffolk, CO10 9NQ

CONTENTS

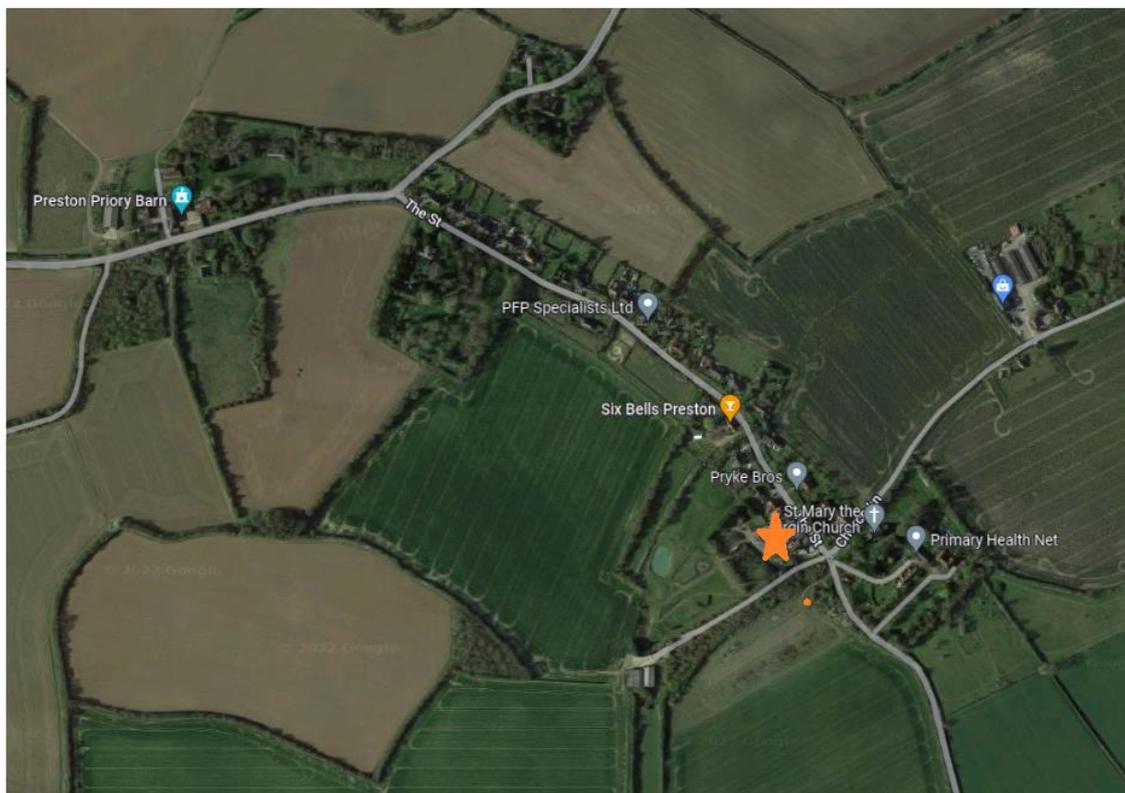
1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	The Site	4
3.0	The Proposal	5
4.0	Planning Policy	6
5.0	Relevant Planning History	8
6.0	Planning Considerations	8
7.0	Planning Balance	19

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement is prepared in respect of an outline planning application for the erection of two dwellings on land at Parsonage Farm, Preston St Mary.

1.2 It will consider the planning policy position and provide an overview of the relevant material considerations relating to the proposed development.

1.3 The extract below shows the location of the site relative to its surroundings and other nearby development, including the village of Preston St Mary.



1.4 Alongside this supporting statement, the application is supported by a suite of plans and documents including:

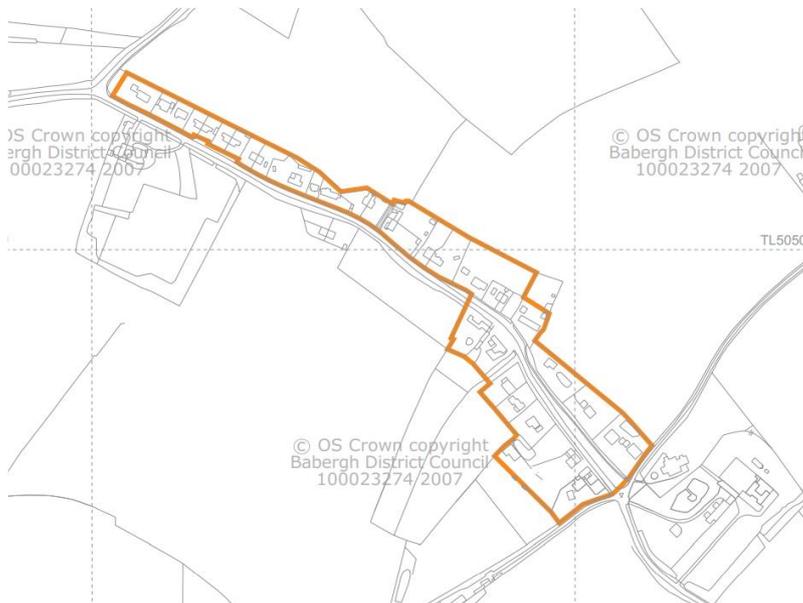
- Application Forms;
- Indicative Layout Plan and Site Location Plan;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal;
- Phase 1 Land Contamination Desk Study.

2.0 The Site

2.1 The site is identified in red on the Site Location Plan submitted with the planning application.

2.2 The image at paragraph 1.3 above shows the location of the site relative to nearby development. As can be seen, the site lies to the southeast end of the village and within a group of properties that lie close to the village church.

2.3 As demonstrated by the map extract below, the site lies entirely within the settlement boundary of the village of Preston St Mary.



2.4 The site is unconstrained by any landscape designations. It lies entirely within Flood Zone 1, therefore falling at the lowest risk of flooding. The land is not within a Conservation Area and there are no listed buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site, though the church is Grade I listed and The Six Bells public house is Grade II listed. These properties sit some distance from the site.

2.5 Planning permission was recently refused (January 2023) for a development of up to seven dwellings comprising this site and a much larger parcel of land to the rear. That decision was the subject of an appeal, which was subsequently dismissed in September 2023. This decision will be referred to wherever relevant within later chapters of this statement.

2.6 Preston St Mary is designated as a Hinterland Village within the Babergh Core Strategy, such that it is considered to contain some limited facilities and services. It lies within the hinterland of Lavenham, which is considered to be a higher level settlement (Core Village) within the settlement hierarchy.

3.0 The Proposal

3.1 The proposal seeks planning permission for a development of two dwellings with a new access proposed to The Street. The application is made in outline form with only the matter of access to be considered in detail.

3.2 The indicative layout plan which accompanies the application shows how the development could be laid out on the site. An existing building on the site frontage, as shown in the image below, would be demolished such that a new access could be formed between these two new properties that would front The Street.



View looking into the site with building to be demolished shown to centre of image

3.3 The extract below is taken from the indicative layout plan and shows how the new dwellings could be set out on the land. As this shows, two dwellings are shown to be located towards the road frontage. The dwellings would be read as infill development.

- 3.4 The access to the dwellings would be continued into the yard area to the rear of the properties, enabling the existing business to continue to operate precisely as it does currently.
- 3.5 In respect of the access, the new access would offer visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m in each direction. The access is relocated to the north of the existing access position, taking the access further away from the bend that lies to the south of the site, and thereby improving visibility relative to the current position.
- 3.6 The applicant intends to provide dwellings of high-quality, traditional, design on the site, recognising the character of the locality and the appearance of adjacent property.

4.0 Planning Policy

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) contains the Government's planning policies for England and sets out how these are expected to be applied. Planning law continues to require that applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The policies contained within the NPPF are a material consideration and should be taken into account for decision-making purposes.
- 4.2 The NPPF is supported by the Planning Guidance (PPG), which assists applicants and decision makers in interpretation the NPPF.
- 4.3 The Development Plan for Babergh consists of the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 (2006) and the Babergh Core Strategy (2014). The following policies from these documents are considered to be relevant to this proposal:

Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 (2006)

- CN01 – Design Standards
- HS28 – Infilling/Groups of Dwellings
- EM24 - Retention of Employment Sites
- TP15 – Parking Standards

Babergh Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Settlement Pattern Policy
- CS11 – Core and Hinterland Villages
- CS12 – Sustainable Design and Construction Standards
- CS15 – Implementing Sustainable Development in Babergh
- CS18 – Mix of Dwellings

4.4 The Council has recently received confirmation that their emerging Joint Local Plan has been found sound, and it is noted that this will now move forward to adoption in November 2023. In this regard, the emerging policy position set out through the Joint Local Plan (JLP) is also relevant to this proposal, as follows:

- SP01 - Housing Needs
- SP03 - The Sustainable Location of New Development
- SP09 - Enhancement and Management of the Environment
- SP10 - Climate Change
- LP15 - Environmental Protection and Conservation
- LP16 - Biodiversity & Geodiversity
- LP17 - Landscape
- LP19 - The Historic Environment
- LP23 - Sustainable Construction and Design
- LP24 - Design and Residential Amenity
- LP27 - Flood Risk and Vulnerability
- LP32 - Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations

4.5 The above policies will be considered in the 'Planning Considerations' chapter of this statement, wherever relevant to the consideration of this proposal.

5.0 Relevant Planning History

- 5.1 As detailed above, the site was included in a recent planning application for a larger development proposal that incorporated the rear yard area. This was refused outline planning permission, and a subsequent appeal was dismissed. That is the most relevant planning history here, though the following background is provided for the purposes of clarity/comprehensiveness.
- 5.2 In 2015, planning permission was granted for the erection of two new dwellings on land immediately adjacent to the site. Those properties have been constructed. See application reference DC/14/01095.
- 5.3 In 1989, planning permission was sought and granted for the *“Continued use of existing premises for the purposes of a small haulage business concerned with the transport of agricultural machinery”*.
- 5.4 Whilst there are other applications that have been made on this site, including for an agricultural workers dwelling in 1988, these were either withdrawn or refused such that they are not directly applicable to this proposal.

6.0 Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

- 6.1 At a national level, paragraph 10 of the NPPF states; *“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”*.
- 6.2 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out three objectives for achieving sustainable development:
- “a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right*

time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”.

6.3 The site lies wholly in the settlement boundary of this Hinterland Village. The Joint Local Plan does not change the status of existing settlements, and work to reconsider the settlement hierarchy and settlement boundaries will form part of a second stage to the plan.

6.4 The manner in which development within the settlement boundaries is being considered in both the Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts at the current time can be found within recent decisions issued. The following quotes are stated directly as they appear:

“The application site is located within the settlement boundary of Beyton, designated as a secondary village under policy CS1. Some provision for meeting local housing needs in primary and secondary villages is provided for by CS1. The draft Neighbourhood Plan at policy BTN1 – Spatial Strategy seeks to focus new development within the settlement boundary. Emerging JLP policy SP03 states that the settlement boundaries established in earlier Local Plans and Core Strategies are being carried forward without change. It goes on to state that the principle of development is established within settlement boundaries”.

“Of most relevance to this application in principle is JLP policy SP03; this policy states that settlement boundaries established in earlier Local Plans and Core Strategies are being carried forward without change. It goes on to state “The principle of development is established within settlement boundaries” and that “Outside of the settlement boundaries, development will

normally only be permitted where the site is allocated for development, or in a made Neighbourhood Plan, or is specifically permitted by other relevant policies of this Plan, or it is in accordance with paragraph 80 of the NPPF (2021)". Again, the application site falls within the Debenham Settlement Boundary, as such the proposal is supported by policy within the emerging JLP".

6.5 There can, therefore, be no objection to the principle of development here, given that the site lies within the settlement boundary of a Hinterland Village. The proposal thereby benefits from support from policy SP03, a policy that now attracts significant weight in the decision making process. The status of the JLP, and the weight to be given to the emerging policies is materially different to that which existed at the time of the appeal related to the previous scheme submitted on this site.

6.6 The position set out in policy SP03 is unquestionable. It clearly states that (emphasis added for clarity):

*"Settlement boundaries are defined on the Policies Map. These boundaries were established in earlier Local Plans and Core Strategies and have not been reviewed as part of the Plan but are carried forward without change at the present time. **The principle of development is established within settlement boundaries** in accordance with the relevant policies of this Plan".*

6.7 There is, therefore, no reason to comment further on the principle of development.

The Previous Appeal

6.8 The primary matters of concern that were considered through the previous appeal were the impact on the character of the area and the impact on the existing business operating from the (wider) site. These matters are considered in more detail below.

6.9 In considering the impact of the proposal in the character and appearance of the area, the Inspector found that:

“10. The appeal site adjoins the end of a distinctive linear pattern of road facing, predominantly detached houses, set back from the road, with soft front boundary landscaping. Although they generally have large rear gardens, there is an absence of backland development. These characteristics contribute positively to local distinctiveness. An example of a similar development at Monks Leigh is cited, however the location is more than 2 miles away and is a larger settlement with roads of houses running perpendicular to the main street near to the example, so is different to the appeal site.

11. The neighbouring house, the end house of the road, sits perpendicular to the highway with another house the same orientation behind it, forming an end stop of houses along The Street. This neighbouring relationship is the exception, and otherwise there is no backland development within this row of houses.

12. The site frontage is not wide enough to provide for 7 houses, and the illustrative plans show 5 houses at the rear of the site. Although the land slopes down from the main road, this is not significant, and it is likely that any development at the rear would be visible from the main road. The number of new houses proposed at the rear of the site, regardless of whether they are single storey or higher would collectively occupy a larger footprint than the 2 buildings currently located at the rear of the existing street frontage buildings at this site. Consequently, any backland housing would have a more dominant presence, seen from neighbouring houses. The presence of houses in this location would be out of character with the distinctive pattern of local development, and consequently, would have a harmful effect.

13. I conclude that the development would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the area. As such it would be contrary to policies CN01 and HS28 of the LP and Policy CS15 of the CS and the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework). These policies seek, amongst other things, that new development provides good design that is sustainable and appropriate to its location, scale and setting, and that development integrates effectively into its surroundings”

6.10 The entirety of the commentary here relates to the backland elements of the previous proposal. Indeed, commentary is offered that it was not possible to fit all seven dwellings on the site frontage, suggesting that development at the front of the site would not be

uncharacteristic. The proposal has, therefore, been revised solely to facilitate frontage development and completely remove the backland elements.

- 6.11 It is considered, therefore, that the proposal has fully addressed the elements of concern relating to the character and appearance of the area that lead to the previous appeal being refused. The proposal thereby constitutes acceptable infill development.
- 6.12 The concerns with regards to the employment use of the site have also been addressed.

“6. The appeal site is currently used for the storage and sale of stone. Access is between residential properties from The Street and opens up to a large yard at the rear of houses with a number of small and large storage buildings.

7. Saved Policy EM24 of the Babergh Local Plan adopted June 2006 (LP) requires that planning applications for redevelopment of existing employment land is either justified through evidence of a sustained marketing campaign, undertaken at a realistic asking price or that it can be demonstrated that the site or premises is inherently unsuitable or not viable for all forms of employment use. This policy is required because the area is under pressure for residential sites and that new employment sites are difficult to find.

8. The appellant provides no evidence of any sustained marketing of the site or explanation of why the site is unsuitable or unviable for all forms of employment use, only that they do not want to use it anymore. Although, I appreciate that the current owner might choose to reduce the scale of their business, that the business model for the particular use has changed and that the current owner has no intention stopping their business entirely, I am mindful of the advice contained in the Planning Practice Guidance that in general planning is concerned with land use in the public interest. The current use is just one employment use and there may be other suitable employment uses and a demand for such a site.

9. Consequently, the development would lead to the loss of employment land in an area where such uses are in short supply. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy EM24 of the LP. The policy amongst other things, requires that planning applications to redevelop existing employment land for other uses, will only be permitted where it is demonstrated there is no demand for the employment site or that the site is inherently unsuitable or unviable”.

- 6.13 The proposal now presented retains the entirety of the yard area for employment purposes. Access remains readily available to it, and there is nothing about the current proposal that seeks to prejudice that use or to reduce its potential for continued employment based use.
- 6.14 The proposal has, therefore, also addressed this aspect of the previous appeal decision.

Other Matters

- 6.15 Residential development of the site raises no heritage concerns owing to the separation distance to the nearest designated heritage asset. Landscape harm will be very limited given the visually contained nature of the site set within existing development. The site essentially reads as infill, and the dwellings will be appreciated in the context of the existing dwellings along The Street such that it will only be seen only in a built up context. The adjacent properties are of a similar scale in any event.
- 6.16 The site is well related to neighbouring development and as such will read as forming part of the settlement forming the main body of Preston St Mary village. There are bus connections available to the village through the “Connecting Communities” service, which collect and drop off outside The Six Bells and provide onward connections to larger centres.
- 6.17 Within Preston St. Mary the existing facilities include The Six Bells PH, the church and a village hall, all within a short walking distance of the site. Lavenham, the core village to which Preston St. Mary is linked as a ‘hinterland village’, is well served by services and facilities including several food stores, eating establishments, a doctor’s surgery and primary school. In this respect the proposed site is approximately 2.3 miles from the centre of the village and 2.6 miles from the doctors’ surgery.
- 6.18 Given the siting of the land within the settlement boundary, and its position adjacent to and opposite multiple properties, it is considered that this is a sustainable location for residential development. The site relates well to the village and would contribute to it, rather than being read as a harmful extension to it.
- 6.19 With regards to the three objectives of sustainable development (social, economic and environment) the proposal is considered to meet all three strands.

- 6.20 From an economic aspect, the construction of two new dwellings would provide much needed jobs for local people and there would be economic benefits from the purchase of materials also. Occupants of the properties would contribute to the local economy through the purchase of goods, their employment and involvement in community activity. The existing business is to be retained, enabling the economic benefits that the site currently generates to also be retained. It is, therefore, considered that the economic objective of sustainable development is met by this proposal.
- 6.21 The social aspects of new housing are embedded in the NPPF which states that *“supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being”*.
- 6.22 The accessibility of this site has already been considered above. It has been found that the site is in an accessible location that would offer some opportunity for travel by alternative methods of transport. The site is within a short distance of Lavenham and Bildeston, with their extensive range of services and facilities. In any event, the site is within the settlement boundary where policy SP03 states that the principle of development is acceptable.
- 6.23 Furthermore, the delivery of these new dwellings would help to provide the supply of housing required by the NPPF and, therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets the social objective of sustainable development. The proposal’s contribution to the Council’s housing supply should not be underestimated. The applicant intends to carry out the development in a short timescale should permission be granted. In this regard, the site should be considered deliverable in the terms set out in the NPPF and should thereby be afforded further weight in terms of its sustainability credentials.
- 6.24 With regards to the environmental elements of the proposal, the proposed dwellings would be built to current Building Regulations standards which embed positive measures to reduce carbon emissions and energy usage. Indeed, recent changes to the Building Regulations have imposed additional criteria on new build properties to significantly reduce their energy usage and improve their efficiency. The proposal would also offer opportunities to provide an

environmentally sustainable development through the incorporation of renewable energy provision, and would be constructed utilising water efficient taps, showers and toilets, and energy efficient white goods. Electric car charging provision would also be secured.

- 6.25 Biodiversity improvements can be offered in terms of the provision of log piles, swift bricks and bird boxes on the site which will actively encourage biodiversity on the land. New landscape planting can be provided also. With this in mind, the proposal is considered to offer environmental gains that would support the environmental objective of sustainable development.
- 6.26 As such, it is felt that the proposal demonstrates a cohesive approach to sustainability that complies with the NPPF and is in line with the way in which the dimensions of sustainable development are applied by Planning Inspectors and the Planning Officers alike.
- 6.27 Paragraph 126 of the NPPF identifies that *“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process”*.
- 6.28 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF also seeks to ensure that planning policies and decisions ensure that development will function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks.
- 6.29 Whilst the proposal is made in outline form, there is nothing to suggest that the dwellings to be designed here would not reflect local distinctiveness and bring enhancement to the architectural quality in the locality. An indicative layout is provided with the application, showing how the site could be developed.

- 6.30 Each dwelling is shown with dedicated amenity space and with associated parking and turning provision. By virtue of the existing land levels, there would also be negligible impacts on the surrounding landscape. The proposed dwellings would not be silhouetted against the skyline nor would they intrude into views of the countryside. They would be visible from the road but would be set in the context of the existing dwellings along The Street and the mature landscaping that lies beyond the site.
- 6.31 The approach taken here, is, therefore, in accordance with the principles of good design set out in the NPPF, which seeks (paragraph 130) to ensure that planning policies and decisions ensure that development will function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks. The proposal thereby also complies with the Council's policies that address landscape impact, including CN01, CR04, CS15 and LP24 in particular.
- 6.32 The indicative layout shows that on site parking can be delivered for each of the plots, along with turning space into the access road. No concerns were raised previously with regards to highway safety or parking when the previous application was considered, which included similar arrangements to this part of the site.
- 6.33 The proposal includes provision for a new access onto The Street with the indicative layout demonstrating how splays of 2.4m x 43m being achievable in both directions. The existing hedge and conifers are to be removed.
- 6.34 Paragraph 111 of the NPPF confirms that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety. According to www.crashmap.co.uk, vehicular crash data reveals that within the last 20 years, the road outside the site has not been subject to any form of vehicular collision. Therefore, there is nothing to suggest that the new access would be unsafe, and this can be delivered in a manner that would be safe and suitable for all users.

- 6.35 The scheme would not result in undue intrusion into the domestic enjoyment of neighbouring dwellings given the spacing which exists.
- 6.36 Given the nature and extent of the proposed use, it is unlikely that the resultant domestic use would present issue (for example, to privacy, overlooking, outlook, noise, smell, light, pollution, daylight or sunlight) extending above and beyond the established nature of the area.
- 6.37 Regulation 9(5) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Implemented 1st April 2010) provides that all "*competent authorities*" (public bodies) to "*have regard to the Habitats Directive in the exercise of its functions*". The applicant has provided a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal with this application which fully addresses the ecological implications of this proposal.
- 6.38 Guidance on the conservation of protected species is given in ODPM Circular 06/2005. At Paragraph 99 the Circular advises that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent to which they might be affected by the proposed development, must be established before planning permission is granted. The applicant has, thereby, fully complied with these obligations.
- 6.39 The site is within Flood Zone 1 and therefore not liable to flood risk. Furthermore, the land can accommodate appropriate drainage solutions to serve the proposed dwellings.
- 6.40 The applicant has provided a Phase 1 Desk Study that considers the risk of the development in regard to land contamination.
- 6.41 This report finds that:

"There were no notable features present in the context of land contamination other than inert Made Ground as described above.

Desk Study searches have shown that the site rests on Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel underlain by Crag Group (Sands).

An overall Low risk is associated with the site subject to the final paragraph in this report”.

6.42 It can be seen, therefore, that the proposal is not at risk from contamination and the proposal thereby accords with the requirements of paragraph 183 of the NPPF which requires that planning policies and decisions should ensure that *“a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination. This includes risks arising from natural hazards or former activities such as mining, and any proposals for mitigation including land remediation (as well as potential impacts on the natural environment arising from that remediation)”*.

6.43 Paragraph 119 of the NPPF states that:

“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land”.

6.44 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF identifies that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account, inter alia:

- the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
- the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change, and;
- the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

6.45 Paragraph 125 takes this position further, identifying that local planning authorities should refuse applications which *“they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards)”*.

- 6.46 The layout of the proposal, along with the quantum of development brought forward, has taken full account of the character of the site whilst making efficient use of the land. It reflects the linear pattern that the Planning Inspector referenced in the appeal decision, and the proposal enables the retention of the existing business use within the established yard area to the south of the site. The result is a design and layout that comes from an informed position, proposes a viable and deliverable scheme that comprehensively addresses the uses of the land.
- 6.47 The site can accommodate dwellings of the proportions indicated with no detriment to the character of the area or neighbouring amenity. The proposal would, therefore, make the most efficient use of land in line with the aims of paragraphs 124 and 125 of the NPPF.

7.0 Planning Balance

- 7.1 The proposal seeks outline planning permission for the erection of two new dwellings on land at Parsonage Farm, Preston St Mary, fronting The Street.
- 7.2 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The consideration is, therefore, whether the development accords with the development plan and, if not, whether there are material considerations that would indicate a decision should be taken contrary to the development plan.
- 7.3 The development plan includes the Babergh Core Strategy (2014) and the saved policies in the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 (2006). However, the new Joint Local Plan has recently been found sound by the examining Inspector and is now being given significant weight in the decision making process. In light of this proposal relating to the development of a new dwelling, an important factor in the determination of this proposal is that emerging policy SP03 makes clear that the principle of development is acceptable in the settlement boundary, such that the principle of development is not at question here.

- 7.4 This statement has set out how the proposal addressed the previous reasons for refusal, as considered further through the appeal. It has been found that:
- The proposal comprises infill development along The Street;
 - The Inspector raised no issue with the development previously proposed to the front of the site;
 - This revised proposal has removed any form of backland development;
 - The proposal does not compromise the existing employment land to the rear;
 - The proposal does not lose employment areas from the site.
- 7.5 As such, it can be seen that the proposal fully addressed the concerns expressed by the Planning Inspector and the LPA in their consideration of the larger proposal previously submitted.
- 7.6 The proposal has also been assessed against the three objectives of sustainable development. In respect of the economic objective, the applicant recognises that there would be benefits from the construction of the new dwellings and from the contribution made by future occupants into the local economy. The existing business is being retained on adjacent land. The proposal is thereby economically sustainable.
- 7.7 In terms of the social dimension, the NPPF recognises the contribution made by the delivery of housing and the vitality of rural communities to the social aspect of sustainability. The site is located within the settlement boundary where the principle of new development is acceptable. In light of these factors, and in the absence of any social detriment, the proposal must also be considered to be socially sustainable.
- 7.8 The matter of environmental sustainability is, as is often the case in rural areas, more complex. The PPG recognises that there is a need to take a flexible approach to considering the potential for sustainable transport modes in rural areas and the site has been found to be well located in terms of the facilities and services that lie in proximity to the site. In this regard, and in the absence of any recognisable detriment to matters such as heritage assets, land contamination, biodiversity, highway safety or flood risk, the proposal is found to be environmentally sustainable also.

7.9 However, this is not a proposal that seeks to provide only a negative effect. The environmental benefits of the scheme are substantial and include:

- The construction of the dwellings would include significant insulation and energy efficient white goods and lighting;
- The build would include water efficient showers and toilets;
- The introduction of ecological enhancements is proposed on the site;
- New planting is proposed;
- The proposal includes electric car charging provision.

7.10 These benefits are considered to go well beyond offsetting any limited environmental harm that may be considered to be occur (notwithstanding that this statement has found no such harm to occur in any event). As such, any harm would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme, where the delivery of two dwellings would contribute to the district's housing supply whilst meeting a local need. As such, the balancing of the main issues would result in a conclusion that the proposal is sustainable and, therefore, there would be a presumption in favour of it.

7.11 For all of these reasons, the proposal is found to be a sustainable development and should, thereby, be supported.