



SUPPORTING STATEMENT

In respect of a planning application for the conversion of agricultural/storage building to form a residential dwelling at:

Stoke Farm, Battisford, Stowmarket,
Suffolk, IP14 2NA

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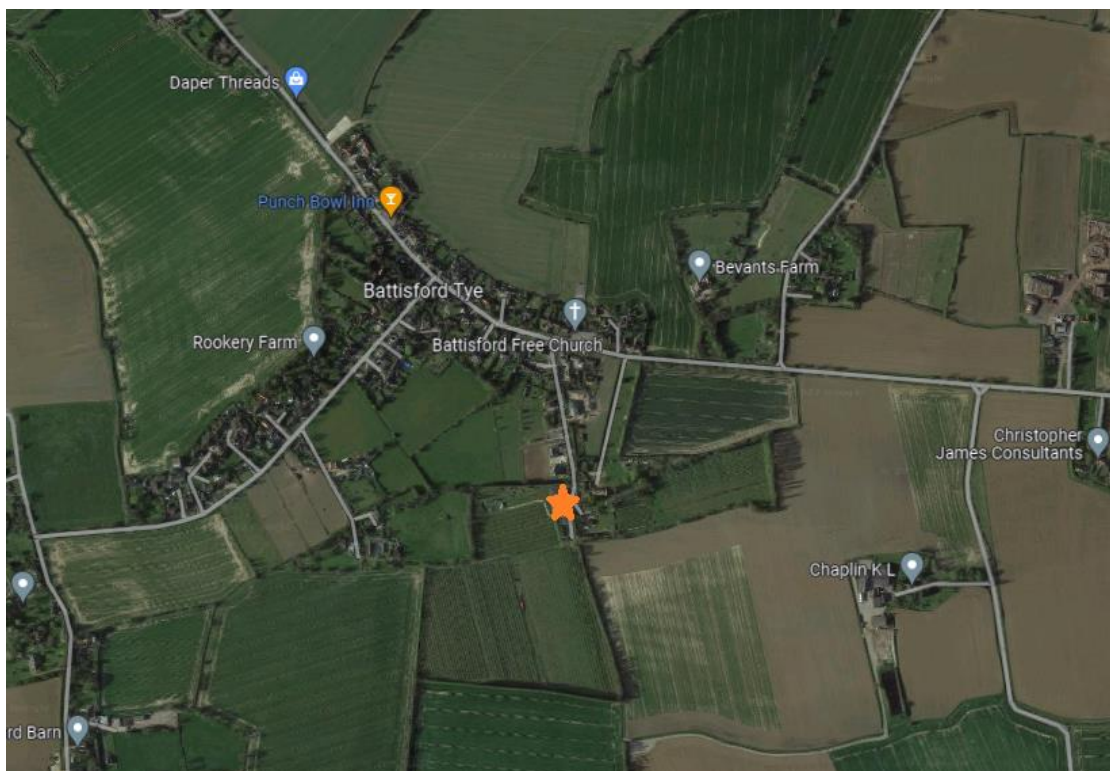
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement is prepared in support of an application for planning permission for works to convert an existing agricultural/storage building at Stoke Farm to form a residential dwelling.

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 nearby development and the village of Battisford.



1.4 Alongside this Supporting Statement, the application is supported by the following plans and documents:

- Plans prepared by Ian Smillie Architectural Services;
- Phase 1 Land Contamination Report;
- Flood Map for Planning extract;
- Bat Roost Characterisation and Mitigation Report by Abrehart Ecology.

2.0 The Site

2.1 The building that is the subject of this application lies to the west side of a complex of buildings that form part of Stoke Farm. It is constructed from mostly brickwork with a fibre cement sheet roof.

2.2 The application site (as identified by the red line site plan) is located at the end of a private lane off Straight Road. The private lane serves several existing neighbouring properties. There are residential dwellings to the north of the site and agricultural fields to the south. Indeed, permission has recently been granted for two new dwellings to the north/northeast of this site in the immediate setting of this building.

2.3 The images below show the building from the east (to the left) and the west (to the right).



2.4 The site lies to the south of Battsford and is in the countryside for the purposes of planning policy though is just a short distance to the south of the Battsford Tye settlement boundary.

2.5 There are no landscape designations on the site and it is not within a Conservation Area. The Grade II listed Stoke Farmhouse lies some distance to the east of the site, separated from these buildings by another dwelling.

2.6 The site lies wholly in Flood Zone 1 and is not at risk of flooding.

3.0 The Proposal

- 3.1 The application seeks planning permission for the conversion of the existing building on the site into a residential dwelling. The proposal would include internal and external alterations to facilitate the conversion together with the removal of a lean to structure to the eastern side of the building and the sub-division of the wider site to form garden and parking spaces
- 3.2 Please refer to the elevation plans for details of the proposed changes, the finished appearance of the new dwelling and the proposed materials.
- 3.3 The internal arrangement delivers three bedrooms (one with ensuite facilities), a family bathroom and an open living/kitchen/dining area. All of the accommodation is provided at single level and the resultant dwelling would be constructed to accessible standards to facilitate use by all.
- 3.4 The site benefits from an existing access which would serve the proposed dwelling and facilitate parking and turning on the site. Three parking spaces are to be provided for the new dwelling at the front of the site.
- 3.5 The dwelling would benefit from a good sized private amenity space contained within the existing hedgerows that form the boundaries to the site.

4.0 Relevant Planning History

- 4.1 There appears to be no planning history relating to this site in the last 20 years.
- 4.2 Planning permission was granted in September 2023 for the *“Erection of two detached dwellings (following demolition of the existing buildings that are subject to approval for change of use to two dwellings)”* under application reference DC/22/05074.

5.0 Planning Policy Context

5.1 The revised National Planning Policy Framework was published in September 2023. It sets out the Government's planning policy and is a material consideration when determining planning applications.

5.2 At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It identifies that *"For decision-taking this means:*

- *approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay;*
or
- *where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed ; or*
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole".*

5.3 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. The NPPF is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which assists applicants and decision makers in interpretation the NPPF.

5.4 The development plan for Mid Suffolk District Council consists of the saved policies of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998), the Core Strategy (2008) and its Focussed Review (2012).

5.5 The following policies within these documents are considered to be relevant to this proposal:

Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Development Plan Document and the Core Strategy Focused

Review

- FC1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- FC1.1 - Mid Suffolk Approach to Delivering Sustainable Development
- CS1 - Settlement Hierarchy
- CS2 -Development in the Countryside and Countryside Villages
- CS5 - Mid Suffolk's Environment

Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998

- GP1 - Design and Layout of Development
- H9 – Conversion of Rural Buildings to Dwellings
- H13 - Design and Layout of Housing Development
- H15 - Development to Reflect Local Characteristics
- H16 - Protecting Existing Residential Amenity
- T9 - Parking Standards
- T10 - Highway Considerations in Development
- CL8 - Protecting Wildlife Habitats

5.6 The Council are in the process of taking forward their new local plan, and this will replace the suite of policies listed above. The following emerging policies may be considered relevant to this proposal:

- SP01 - Housing Needs
- SP03 - The Sustainable Location of New Development
- SP09 - Enhancement and Management of the Environment
- SP10 - Climate Change
- LP04 – Replacement Dwellings and Conversions
- LP15 - Environmental Protection and Conservation
- LP16 - Biodiversity & Geodiversity
- LP17 - Landscape

- LP23 - Sustainable Construction and Design
- LP24 - Design and Residential Amenity
- LP27 - Flood Risk and Vulnerability

5.7 Both the existing and emerging policies will be considered in the 'Planning Considerations' chapter of this statement, wherever relevant to the consideration of this proposal.

6.0 Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

6.1 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 Paragraph 69 of the NPPF clearly sets out that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirements of an area and that local planning authorities should support the development of windfall sites.

6.4 Paragraph 119 supports this position, stating 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”*.

6.5 The site lies outside of any settlement boundary and is thereby considered to be a countryside location under Core Strategy Policy CS1 where the Council would normally seek to resist new development. However, this policy is dated and the NPPF provides a more flexible approach to the consideration of rural housing. At paragraphs 78 and 79 it provides that:

“78. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.

79. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby”.

6.6 This position is amplified by the provision of a dedicated development plan policy relating to the conversion of rural buildings. Saved policy H9 of the Local Plan states:

“In the countryside, the conversion and change of use of agricultural and other rural buildings whose form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings, will be favourably considered, subject to the following criteria:-

- the proposed conversion must respect the structure, form and character of the original building and retain any important architectural features. Existing openings should be utilised wherever practicable and new openings kept to a minimum;

- where proposed extensions are essential they should not dominate the original building in either scale, use of materials or situation. Proposed extensions should not detract from the appearance or character which warrants the original building being retained as a feature in the countryside. Domestic features, such as porches and chimney stacks, unrelated to the traditional appearance of the building will be considered inappropriate. The creation of a residential curtilage around a newly converted building should not impose adversely on the character of the surrounding countryside;

- the extent to which any residential conversion detracts from the original character of the building or its rural surroundings will be treated as a material consideration. In order to protect the character and appearance of the converted building or the amenity and appearance of the surrounding countryside the district planning authority may impose conditions removing permitted development rights under the general permitted development order 1995”.

6.7 The relevance of this policy in respect of the conversion of rural buildings that are not partly/wholly in agricultural use was the subject of consideration in a recent appeal. In that appeal (attached as Appendix 1 to this statement and dated 16th June 2023) the Inspector found that:

“5. Policy CS 1 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document Adopted September 2008 (CS) sets out a settlement hierarchy in order to direct the majority of new development to towns and key service centres whilst allowing some provision for meeting local housing needs in primary and secondary villages. The policy states that in the rest of Mid Suffolk, including settlements not listed, will be designated as countryside and countryside villages and development will be restricted to particular types of development to support the rural economy, meet affordable housing, community needs and provide renewable energy.

6. CS Policy CS 2 goes on to set out a list of defined categories of development that, if proposals are in accordance with other CS policies will be supported. One of those included in the defined

categories is rural exception housing that includes the possible conversion of rural buildings. There is therefore support under Policy CS 2 for the 'possible conversion of rural buildings' to housing. There is no definition as to what a 'rural building' is defined as, or any exceptions in relation to the type of building where the policy would not apply. I therefore consider that the proposal would fall under the list set out under Policy CS 2 as a possible conversion of a rural building.

7. The appellant states that policies CS 1 and CS 2 of the CS are out of date given that they represent a more restrictive approach to the location of new development. The Council contend that in countryside locations such as the appeal site, policies CS 1 and CS 2 remain in date. I consider that the policies are more restrictive in their approach to the acceptability of development compared with the more balanced approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). However, the policies do still direct development to settlements where there are facilities, services, employment and access to public transport provision. I therefore attach substantial weight to policies CS 1 and CS 2. In any case, I have found that the proposal would be consistent with the approach in Policy CS 2 which allows for the 'possible conversion of rural buildings'.

8. The Council have provided an appeal decision¹ in support of their case. Whilst this did consider whether policies CS 1 and CS 2 are out of date, it did not relate to the conversion of an existing building and therefore is not comparable to this appeal proposal.

9. Policy H9 of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan Adopted September 1998 (LP) considers the conversion of rural buildings to dwellings. This policy states that in the countryside, the conversion and change of use of agricultural and other rural buildings whose form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings will be favourably considered, subject to three further criteria. As is the case of Policy CS 2 of the CS, there is no definition set out under Policy H9 as to what is meant by the term 'other rural building', or a list of the types of buildings that are excluded from being covered by this term.

10. The Council assert that because the building has not been in agricultural or an other type of use relevant to a rural setting, that it does not fall under the category of being an 'other rural building', as required by Policy H9 of the LP. The building subject to this appeal is a

building located in a countryside location and therefore is situated in a rural setting. 11. The Council have provided the planning history of the site, identifying that the building was granted permission for use as a commercial workshop relating to the sale and repair of used cycles and accessories. Whilst the building has not been actively used for the permitted use in more recent times, there is no substantive evidence before me to suggest there has been an intervening use or that the building has become domestic as a result of it not being in active use. In any case, looking at the terminology of the policy, even if the building were to be in use for domestic storage, there is nothing to exclude this type of use from the definition of an 'other rural building'.

12. I therefore find that the appeal building could be reasonably described as an 'other rural building' and subject to the proposal meeting the criteria set out under Policy H9 of the LP, it would meet the requirements of this policy which in my view is the most relevant to this case".

6.8 The very same conclusions should be drawn here. The building is a rural building that has provided agricultural use in part and, in the past, has also been used for some alternative commercial use (though not for the last two years). It is no longer required for those purposes and is in a rural setting. It is an 'other rural building' in the terms suggested by policies CS2 and H9.

6.9 Similar provisions are being brought forward through the emerging plan, where policy LP04 states that:

"1. Proposals for replacement dwellings will be supported where the building to be replaced has a lawful use as a permanent residential dwelling.

2. Proposals for conversion of buildings to residential must demonstrate the structure is capable of accommodating the use and the development would reuse redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting.

3. Additionally, proposals for replacement dwellings and/or conversions must:

a. Be of an appropriate scale and setting for the area, and use materials to achieve a high standard of design in response to the context, and the character and appearance of the surroundings;

b. Consider the amenity for both existing and for future occupiers;

- c. Have safe and suitable access and parking;*
- d. Reuse redundant or disused buildings where possible; and*
- e. In sensitive areas not be more visually intrusive than the original dwelling”.*

6.10 Therefore, it can be seen that the principle of the proposed use is not unacceptable, and attention turns to the specific provisions of policies H9 and LP04 below.

Design and Layout

6.11 The provisions of policies H9 and LP04 relate heavily to the impact of a conversion on existing buildings in terms of the scale, form and character of the proposal relative to the existing structure. However, it is to be noted that policy H9 falls somewhat short of requiring a standard of design that results in an enhancement to the surroundings, and it can surely not be the case that the Council would allow a development that respects the surroundings but not one which would enhance it. Indeed, policy LP04 seeks to address this through the provision of requirements similar to those found in NPPF paragraph 80. In this regard, the applicants consider that the policy provisions should be read as a minimum requirement, not an aspirational target. The applicant has, therefore, sought to deliver a proposal that goes beyond just mitigating any harm and which actively enhances the character of the buildings and their setting.

6.12 Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government’s aims to achieve well-designed places. It states (paragraph 126) that:

“126. 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”.

6.13 The above has formed the basis of the design approach taken in respect of this proposal. The applicant, supported by Ian Smillie Architectural Services, has given consideration to a number of material considerations in the design of this proposal with the overall aim of achieving a

high standard of design that would enhance the surroundings and ensure the development sits comfortably in its environs. The existing utilitarian building would be converted to form a dwelling of high quality design and which would bring about enhancement to the character of the area.

- 6.14 The finishes to the converted building would retain the brick elevational treatment and insert new glazed elements that would provide interest to the facades, retaining a rural appearance that is wholly reflective of the agricultural setting. The agricultural form of the building is retained, but the proposed works would improve the facades and bring about a visually attractive appearance that would lift the character of the building and the surroundings.
- 6.15 The proposed alterations to the building result from a detailed assessment of the site and surroundings. The appearance of the converted building would be different to that of the adjacent dwellings, adding interest to the locality and creating a feature building that is vastly more attractive than the current buildings.
- 6.16 In terms of the requirements of policy H9 specifically, the proposed conversion would, therefore, clearly respect the structure, form and character of the main building without the need for extension to it. Whilst the proposal would see a limited amount of new work in order to convert the building such as the insertion of windows/doors, this is not considered to be out of the scope of Policy H9 and would not go beyond the scope of the conversion of an existing building. The new windows and door openings are of appropriate scale and ensure the rural form and character of the building are respected. The converted building would clearly resemble a converted agricultural building, taking on a modern-traditional style, preserving the character of the area and ensuring that the proposal remains in-keeping. The finished appearance would, therefore, be entirely appropriate to the countryside location in which it is located.
- 6.17 The layout facilitates turning and parking space on the site, and offers an appropriate curtilage consistent with the size of other gardens locally.

- 6.18 For all of these reasons, the proposal demonstrates an attention to detail and a design approach that ensures that the proposed works are compliant with policies GP1, H9, LP04, LP24 and H15.

Landscape Impact

- 6.19 Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

(a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

(b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

(c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

(d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

(e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

(f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate”.

- 6.20 The current buildings sit in a context containing other buildings of similar form. However, permission has recently been granted to replace some of these buildings with new dwellings, such that the character of the immediate area around the site will change. The subject building is sited well back from the highway and due to the context in which it is sited is not visually

prominent when viewed from the highway or within the wider landscape. The significant trees and hedgerow which lie adjacent to the building provide extensive screening and precludes any clear views of the building such that the impact of these buildings on the landscape is negligible.

- 6.21 The form and scale of the building would not change such that the physical impact of the building would not erode the landscape setting. There is nothing about this proposal which seeks to introduce visual impact, with any impacts being localised due to the contained nature of the site and the limited scale of the building.
- 6.22 As such, this proposal complies with the requirements of paragraph 174 of the NPPF as well as the respective elements of policies H9, LP04 and LP17 which address landscape impact.

Highway Safety

- 6.23 The proposal seeks to make use of the existing access. Ample parking would be provided within the site including turning and manoeuvring space.
- 6.24 According to www.crashmap.co.uk, there have been no accidents within vicinity of the access identifying that the existing access does not give rise to significant detrimental highway safety concerns.
- 6.25 The former agricultural use of the building would have given rise to large vehicles servicing the building when the applicant required such. The use as a single dwelling would not intensify the use of the access road, and would result in smaller vehicles accessing the site. There are, therefore, no detrimental impacts resulting from the proposed conversion.
- 6.26 The proposal is, therefore, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 110 of the NPPF, which identifies that in assessing specific applications for development it should be ensured that safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users.

Land Contamination

- 6.27 Submitted with this application is a Phase 1 Land Contamination Assessment which demonstrates that the land is not known to be, or likely to be, contaminated.
- 6.28 The proposal is therefore in accordance with paragraph 183(a) of the NPPF which states 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.

Residential Amenity

- 6.29 Given the size of the existing site, and the separation distance between the site and existing dwellings, the proposal is not considered to have any detrimental impact on residential amenity. Furthermore, there is no risk of overlooking resulting from the proposal.
- 6.30 The proposal would provide for good quality private amenity space for future occupiers.
- 6.31 The proposal is, therefore, also in accordance with policies H16 and LP24.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.32 The site lies wholly in Flood Zone 1 and is, therefore, outside the designated Flood Zones 2 and 3. Suitable drainage can be designed to ensure that the development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere by use of soakaways (if ground conditions permit) or SUDS designed systems.
- 6.33 As such, there is no identifiable restraint upon the delivery of drainage for both surface and foul water that would prevent planning permission being granted in this regard.

Biodiversity and Ecology

- 6.34 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".
- 6.35 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.
- 6.36 In this instance, an Ecology Report and associated Bat Roost report are submitted as part of the application. This demonstrates that the development can be carried out without harm to ecological interests or to important habitat. In any event, there is significant scope to bring about biodiversity enhancements on the site such as to provide a net gain across the site.

Sustainable Development

- 6.37 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF outlines the three objectives of sustainable development that schemes should seek to deliver. The proposal carries the following sustainability benefits.
- 6.38 From the economic aspect, the proposal would generate a small benefit for local trade before, during and after construction. The purchase of materials to support the development will also deliver economic benefits. Furthermore, there will be a positive benefit through the support to local amenities, facilities and services resulting from future occupiers. The proposal can, therefore, be seen to be economically sustainable.
- 6.39 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"*.

- 6.40 Notwithstanding that a proposal in this location would contribute to enhancing and maintaining services within the village, Stowmarket, Needham Market and neighbouring villages, the PPG advises that *“all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas”*, cross-referencing to NPPF 79, *“and so blanket policies restricting housing development in some settlements and preventing other settlements from expanding should be avoided...”*. Moreover, in rural areas, where public transport is limited, people may have to travel by car to a village or town to access services. At paragraph 105 of the NPPF, it identifies that *“The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making”*. The general policy in favour of locating development where travel is minimised, and use of public transport is maximised, has therefore to be sufficiently flexible to take account of the differences between urban and rural areas.
- 6.41 The delivery of a new dwelling would help to meet housing need in the locality and would help to boost the supply of housing required by the NPPF. Both national and local policy identify that the reuse of rural buildings for residential purposes is acceptable in principle in rural settings (including in isolated locations) such that their location cannot, in itself, be reason to find a proposal unsustainable.
- 6.42 For these reasons, it is considered that the proposal also meets the social objective of sustainable development. Furthermore, the proposal’s contribution to the Council’s housing supply should not be underestimated. Given that the proposal provides for the conversion of an existing rural building and can be easily converted within a short timescale, 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.
- 6.43 With regards to the environmental elements of the development, the proposal would make reuse of an existing building in a sustainable manner. The development will include the use of water efficient taps, showers and toilets, and energy efficient white goods. Renewable energy

provision is included in the form of solar panels and the proposal will include for electric vehicle charging. These elements would deliver further benefits in terms of significantly reducing the impacts of the development, and these benefits would be accentuated by the use of sustainable construction techniques to be employed in the build.

- 6.44 The proposal would also build in biodiversity enhancements, through the delivery of onsite habitat, bird boxes and through new planting. Existing hedgerows and trees would be retained and maintained supporting the continued biodiversity on the site. With this in mind, the proposal is considered to offer environmental gains. These benefits are considered to go a significant way to offsetting any limited environmental harm that may be considered to occur (notwithstanding that this statement has found no such harm to occur in any event).
- 6.45 As such, any harm would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme, where the delivery of a new dwelling to the market would contribute to the districts housing supply. 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.

Heritage Impacts

- 6.46 The proposal does not engage the setting of any heritage assets and, therefore, there is no heritage harm which occurs.

7.0 Planning Balance

- 7.1 The proposal seeks permission for the conversion of an existing building on the site to form a new dwelling. Two new dwellings have recently been permitted in the very same complex of buildings, and would remove some of the existing buildings here.
- 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 Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008) and its Focussed Review (2012) and the saved policies in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998). In accordance with paragraphs 79 and 80 of the NPPF and policies H9 and LP04 of the existing and emerging plans respectively, the proposal seeks to make reuse of underused buildings in the countryside where there can be no 'in-principle' objection to the proposed use.
- 7.4 The material considerations that are relative to the determination of this application have been satisfactorily addressed (including design and layout, highway safety, biodiversity, land contamination and residential amenity) such that they have been found to comply with the provisions of the NPPF and the relevant development plan policies. The proposal has been found to comply with the relevant development plan policies in this regard, including H9, H15, H16, GP1, LP04 and LP24.
- 7.5 The proposal would make efficient use of existing buildings on the site, and the applicant considers that, for all of the reasons given, the proposal is not harmful in any event. Indeed, the proposal would deliver visual and biodiversity enhancements that would be benefits resulting directly from the proposed development. Coupled with the delivery of a new house to the market, the proposal has been found to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits and is, therefore, a sustainable development.
- 7.6 As such, the LPA is requested to support this proposal and enable the reuse of the building in the manner set out in this application.