



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposal

SELF-BUILD - Erection of 1No. detached dwelling, , ancillary outbuilding and change of use of land, *utilising existing access* (following demolition of 3no. barns / in lieu of Extant Class Q proposal under re: DC/22/03636 and following DC/23/04294).

Site

**Barns and Land at Frogs Hall Farm, The Street,
Aldham, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP7 6NH**

Applicant

Mr Harry Brown

Date

January 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1) This **design & access statement** has been prepared to assist with the determination of this application and is a requirement of Article 4C of the Town & Country General Development Procedure Order 1995, as amended, together with Section 3 of the DCLG Circular 01/2006.
- 1.2) The site is NOT within a designated Conservation Area, is not (nor does it affect) ANY listed asset and is for 1 no. (Class C3) dwelling which shall replace the extant dwelling on the site permitted under DC/22/03636.
- 1.3) A subsequent proposal was granted planning permission for a most similar scheme under DC/23/04294/FUL.
- 1.4) The aim of this statement is to demonstrate in detail why it is considered that this application is appropriate and worthy of planning permission, taking fullest account of its siting, design, context, setting and policy constraints.
- 1.4) The proposal is a FULL application for the erection of an 'alternative' detached dwelling, ancillary outbuilding and change of use of land, utilising existing vehicular access (following demolition of *three* existing barns - including the *Class Q* structure).
- 1.5) The application herein includes a bespoke / detailed proposal for 1 no. new dwelling / ancillary outbuilding and how it shall seek to integrate into this unique setting and the wider context of the site. It shall provide a contemporary SELF-BUILD' *family* dwelling at the site whilst ensuring an appropriate rationale as to harmonise within this agricultural landscape and wider vistas
- 1.6) This application closely follows that as *approved* under DC/23/04294. However it now incorporates some very minor changes to the site (red line) boundary *due to the land vendors requirements* and incorporates a commensurate outbuilding.

- 1.7) The density (1 for 1) and broad architectural approach / appearance herein have been the result of information accumulated to date (including DC/22/03636 & DC/23/04294).

The application now before you is the culmination of this work and closely follows the originally approved Class Q permitted dwelling albeit this is not a 'Class Q' proposal. It is the opinion of the applicant that it exceeds the extant scheme to be a most worthy and comprehensively considered 'alternative'. I.E. Given the fact that the principle of a two-storey dwelling on this site is now established which it is (on balance) the overall better proposal, *by some margin*. The Officers' report to DC/23/04294 considered the proposal a 'vast improvement' on the Class Q proposal.

- 1.8) Embedded within this proposal is the potential to enhance the local biodiversity, be a beacon of sustainability and improve the visual amenity of the site and wider setting with an appropriate, low-key and 'familiar' proposal of both character and quality.

2) SITE PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1) DC/23/04294/FUL (granted)
- 2.2) DC/23/01409 – Pre-app (replacement dwelling) (i)
- 2.3) DC/22/03636 – Class Q dwelling (15th September 2022) (ii)
- 2.4) DC/21/06571
- 2.5) DC/22/02160
- 2.6) B/15/00531
- 2.7) B/14/01224
- 2.8) B/08/01219
- 2.9) B/00/01081
- 2.10) B/96/01464

- (i) DC/22/03636 - Permission and officer's report attached.
- (ii) DC/23/04294 –Copy attached herein.

3.0 THE SITE & ITS SURROUNDINGS.

3.1) The proposal site appears as a group of 4 no. semi-redundant (minor storage) agricultural structures (1 no. not within the red-line site) and detritus to the north of two existing dwellings known as Frogs Hall Farm and Tadpole Cottage. Frogs Hall Farm was the former large two storey farmhouse, whilst Tadpole Cottage was a recently completed barn modest Class Q conversion.

3.2) It is reached via an existing track / private driveway to the south of the 'The Street' (30 mph zone) within the core of the smaller settlement (Hinterland Village) of Aldham, Suffolk.

3.3) The approved Class Q dwelling under DC/23/03636 (to be demolished under this proposal) is the southern most of the three large barns . closet to the existing dwelling known as Tadpole Cottage.

The driveway and surrounding field boundaries offer generous levels of landscape screening and wider vista protection and this is to be improved to further integrate / screen the proposal from the views further afield.

3.4) There are also areas of existing hard-standing, a shipping container and substantial detritus to be removed as part of this proposal to be replaced with landscaping and ecology habitat. NOTE: this is NOT offered under DC/22/03636 *as approved*.

3.5) The site is relatively level across its east-west axis and falls slightly north to south (see topographical survey).

3.6) In terms of surrounding land uses, the land to the south (immediate and slightly further south) has seen recent residential development. To the north, east and west is agricultural land and open countryside. However, the site is relatively inconspicuous given its hedgerow / tree screening and relatively set-back location (from The Street).

- 3.7) The proposal will set high architectural and landscape standards for the site. Its scale, siting, massing, detailing and external material palette have all been considered to respect and harmonise within the context and setting of the site, locality, agricultural landscape and within the spirit of the extant permission under DC/22/03636 (thus no other architectural approach has been adopted). In addition it is most similar to that as previously approved under DC/23/04294 except for the addition of an appropriate outbuilding.
- 3.8) To the east of the access junction there are bus stops for sustainable transport options with the large town of Hadleigh being close at hand.
- 3.9) There are no listed buildings / assets adjacent to the site. The site is not within a CA, AVRA, or SSSI. It currently consists of buildings, detritus and overgrown amenity land.
- 3.10) There are a few trees on the site ALL are to be retained. The contribution to the site and wider locality of soft landscaping is wholly recognised and is a fundamental and integral part of the proposal for this site.
- 3.11) The overall site is broadly rectangular in shape and measures 0.22 hectares (including the land previously approved under DC/22/03636).
- 3.12) Plots / amenity sizes of dwellings in the area varies greatly. However, this is a replacement (1 for 1 proposal). Therefore, the proposal is considered similar in character and appropriate within the context to the general pattern of development.
- 3.13) Clearance of the site (in a cohesive way) of structures and paraphernalia offers substantial public benefit as compared to the alternative position under DC/22/03636.

4.0 ACCESS / HIGHWAYS.

- 4.1) The site benefits from an existing vehicular access / (private drive) onto The Street (the main thoroughfare through the village – 30mph zone. This is AS APPROVED / EXTANT under DC/22/03636 & DC/23/04294, *also for a 4 bed dwelling*. SEE OFFICERS REPORTS regarding LHA conditions and reasoning for NOT attaching them to the permission. Also, that the parking matters discussed in the officer's report have been satisfactorily and wholly addressed within this application.
- 4.2) The existing access is to be utilised / retained and is unaffected except for where it is improved locally to serve the new dwelling siting. This includes on-site turning for all vehicles including a turning head for deliveries and / or a '20T' fire appliance
- 4.3) DC/22/03636 permitted the Class Q with no conditions relating to highway matters. This application proposes no additional / exacerbation of highway safety risk thus there should be no highway conditions attached that were not considered material to DC/22/03636. Similarly DC/23/04294 was approved for a most similar scheme to that now proposed *albeit without an outbuilding*.
- 4.4) There are no public footpaths / PROW across the site (or adjacent to it) but the site is easily and safely accessible from The Street.
- 4.5) Turning would be provided on-site for the proposed dwelling, private vehicles and deliveries / fire appliance. In addition, to a secure machine / cycle store and open cart-lodge the dwelling will also benefit from at least 4no. parking spaces with ample additional visitor provision within the site. All to be in accordance with adopted standards. All shall be inconspicuous from public vantage due to the soft landscaping / boundary treatments ensuring that detrimental *urbanisation* from public vantage does not result.

- 4.6) The towns of Hadleigh / Sudbury / Ipswich have a wide good range of local amenities, employment opportunities and services.
- 4.7) The site benefits from viable / regular bus services.
- 4.8) The new dwelling will have a ramped approach / level access and a disabled-compatible WC at ground floor level. Also, wider doorways, open-plan spaces, accessible switches, sockets and devices etc in accordance with the Building Regulations *Approved Documents*.
- 4.9) An EVCP is to be provided – see plan.
- 4.10) Crash-map results demonstrate that the access has not been an issue in terms of road safety.
- 4.11) Dedicated bin collection point is provided and a bin store area and direct external access to the rear garden/ amenity is shown to ensure an orderly development results.

5.0 THE DESIGN SOLUTION

- 5.1) Having due regard for this unique and sensitive site the design process first looked towards the approved Class Q dwelling under DC/22/03636 and its relationship with the site, its neighbours and the buildings condition of the site which were to remain / not affected by the extant proposal.

Further to the grant of DC/23/04294 and the need to deal with *conditions* therein a suitable outbuilding was clearly to be required and hence the primary reason for this application. However in addition the land vendor has made minor alterations to the plot boundaries and these are also incorporated into the proposal.

Accordingly, DC/23/04294 (a most similar proposal) was the starting point for the design proposal (the dwelling has not changed). The applicant (a local farmer) wanted something contemporary, yet subtle within the landscape with the potential to screen and substantially improved and enhance the site for flora and fauna. Accordingly, the currently fenced extent of the three barn's 'curtilage' was used as an appropriate area to be cleared of detritus and improved for the benefit of the site, applicant and wider landscape. In addition, the wider meadow land (blue-line) was made available as such but it is *not* subject to this *change of use of land* application.

- 5.2) The site remains largely intact as its hedge screening and dwellings to the south shall all assist in retaining its current, wider character. All that is to change under this proposal is that the massing of buildings is to be substantially reduced and a slight larger dwelling (broadly 15%) and commensurate outbuilding shall be sited slightly north of its current position. However, the dwelling still shall remain wholly within the volume of the existing buildings (barn#3) which was not part of the proposal (to be removed) under DC/22/03636).

Designed to the exacting requirements of the applicant as their long-term family 'dream', self-build home it shall harmonise, respect and reinforce this distinct agricultural character, yet be of its time and of its site.

- 5.3) A single wide span roof (10m) - similar to the extant permission - shall differentiate it as a modern agricultural form as opposed to seeking it to be of tradition *vernacular* form. This shall ensure its continued relevance and context to the site and not detract from the *authentic* timber frame barn conversion adjacent (Tadpole Cottage).
- 5.4) The simple low-slung roof configuration of sheet roofing with large central glazing aperture shall bring light deep down into the building whilst reducing the visual-appreciated ridge line.

The 'alternative' material palette reinforces this aesthetic whilst allowing a flexible and contemporary interior which in turn encourages social interaction. The dwelling shall be elegant and well proportioned whilst not seeking to dominate or be overtly conspicuous within the landscape. Large regressive glazing panels to the east and west elevations shall be suggestive of barn door openings from long distance views whilst actively providing discreet balcony areas, privacy and passive solar shading. Substantial glazing provision for natural light and to avoid a domestic fenestration arrangement.

- 5.5) The loose form and set-back nature of the development shall create a relaxed and rural character within the locality where it will appear as part of wider street scene but remain individual and wholly private.
- 5.6) The existing trees and native hedgerows shall ALL be retained and reinforced with substantial tree and hedgerow planting as per drawing 23/91/04 with additional tree planting across the frontage and deeper into the site to improve the setting of the public area between the adjacent dwellings. There is ample spacing around the dwelling so that it will not over-bear on its neighbours (unlike *perhaps* under DC/22/03636) or impact negatively on the wider landscape. The proposed site (for *change of use of land*) is well defined by existing fenced boundaries and has established land uses to all four boundaries. The dwelling shall use high quality materials, landscaping, detailing and workmanship (with contemporary interiors) to reflect local distinctiveness.
- 5.7) Bespoke detailing shall enrich and enhance the site and wider locality for its own architectural merit albeit not seeking to jar or be overtly conspicuous. The layout seeks a rationale which will enhance and reinforce the agricultural vernacular of the locality with something 'of its time'.

- 5.8) The proposal would provide a future-proof family home for the applicants and their family with *home-working* a most viable possibility and enviable convenience to the nearby town of Hadleigh.
- 5.9) Appropriate distances from first-floor windows have been applied to all locations (obscure where required). The layout has been designed to ensure generous open-plan 'family' spaces for interaction wherever possible.
- 5.10) Appropriate levels of parking, safe vehicular access and ample private amenity are all indicated as being wholly achievable.
- 5.11) The density is appropriate (as a 'replacement' dwelling) and consistent with surrounding established development.
- 5.12) The proposed massing, materials, detailing, fenestration and roof-form shall respect surrounding development and thus ensure the appropriateness of this intervention into the established landscape. The *rural* character shall be reinforced *not* eroded by the development.
- 5.13) The outbuilding is the only major change to that previous approved under DC/23/04294. It is sited to form an attractive and practical courtyard to the dwelling and furthermore shall assist in screening the house from the Street with a very simple block building of agricultural aesthetic. It is only 4m to the ridge and of similar materials of profiled sheet roofing over timber clad walls. It contains a practical machine and cycle store given the size of the land to be maintained) the EVCP to its flank and two open / practical cart bays for discreet parking of owned vehicles away from any view ensuring a site free of paraphernalia.

- 5.14) As can be seen by the proposed site plan, landscape enhancement and biodiversity form an integral part of the scheme for the applicant and it shall continue to enhance the site and the wider locality long into the future.

6. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1) **FOUL WATER:** To be to a new PPTP.
- 6.2) **SURFACE WATER:** To underground grey-water recycling tanks / water butts with over-flows to new *on-site* soak-aways.
- 6.3) **ARBORICULTURAL SURVEY:** An independent Arboricultural report is not *attached* to this application as it is not deemed necessary. All existing trees should be protected in accordance with BS5387:2012
- 6.4) **PROTECTED SPECIES:** Refer to *attached* specialist report and DRG No. 23/91/03. All recommendations shall be implemented as per requirements/ conclusions therein (STPP).
- 6.5) **HARD/ SOFT LANDSCAPING:** The proposed site layout DRG NO. 23/91/03 shows the site layout including type and location of fencing as demarcation of the residential curtilage formed. All existing trees / hedges are to be retained. Paths and patios shall be grey random laid and pointed Yorkstone *type* slabs and additional driveway cover is to be pea-shingle (permeable) with timber (staked) edgings.
- 6.6) **LISTED BUILDING/ HERITAGE STATEMENT:** The proposal does not *directly* affect any listed buildings and is not within a Conservation Area (see H.E. plans herein).

- 6.7) **ARCHAEOLOGY:** The site has no known former historical uses and we are not aware of any requirement for further archaeological appraisal of the site. Therefore, under the requirements of Para 141 of the NPPF a site specific WSI is not submitted with this application.
- 6.8) **FLOODING:** The site is *not* at risk of flooding. See FRA plans in Enviro-search and already has consent for a dwelling (Class Q) under DC/22/03636 and DC/23/04294.
- 6.9) **CONTAMINATION:** The proposal is for a sensitive end use and thus an *Enviro-search* is attached to this application ("Passed"). NB: The general site / existing building is already approved for residential use under DC/22/03636 & DC/23/04294.
- 6.10) **PLANNING STATEMENT / POLICY ISSUES:** This proposal has been designed with due regard to all *relevant* Local & National policies & emerging planning policies. Furthermore, it closely follows the principles (fallback position) of DC/22/03636 and DC/23/04294.

Extant permissions re: DC/22/03636 & re: DC23/04294 are both materially pertinent / relevant to this proposal as they permit a newly created two-story dwelling at the site of similar form and scale to that proposed herein. However DC/22/03636 does not propose demolition of the adjacent much larger barn which the a proposal herein does.

The proposal is for a 'SELF-BUILD' dwelling shall be in lieu of DC/22/03636 & DC/23/04294 thus no additional dwelling is actually proposed.

All 3no. existing large barns are to be demolished / removed from site. Paraphernalia and detritus cleared completely from the redline site area to form a modest but commensurate area of curtilage.

Principle policy issues are considered to be:
JLP, BLP 2006 Alt No. 2, NPPF & NPPG.

Under the BLP esp. Policies CN01, CR07, CR19, CS01, CS02, CS11, CS15, NDALD, NPPF, SP03, LP04, LP24, HS05

The principle of allowing a fallback position was established under DC/23/04294 for the class Q conversion. In this case the slightly larger building (of similar form, massing and orientation) has been sited slightly further north (within the massing of the largest barn (barn#3) to be removed altogether. Accordingly, the cumulative impact of DC/22/03636 is far greater than that herein despite the Class Q structure being a marginally smaller dwelling.

It is also to be noted that the cumulative accommodation provided by the previous Class Q permitted conversion *Tadpole Cottage* (broadly 150m²) and the proposal herein (broadly 250m²) remain smaller than the upper limit of a Class Q would otherwise permit (465m² and up to 5no. smaller dwellings) by some considerable margin.

It is accepted that the Class Q is as yet not completed. However, in regards to 'replacement dwelling' policy:

i) "the size and massing of the replacement is not significantly different to those of the original dwelling to be replaced"

This proposal is for a replacement 4 bedroom' dwelling of comparable form, appearance, height and massing to the extant approved under DC/22/03636 (and DC/23/04294).

- ii) ***"The new dwelling is of a design which is sympathetic in scale, mass, materials and architectural details to the character of the surrounding development".***

The new dwelling is purposefully designed to reflect a simple utilitarian / agricultural building like that which has already been accepted under DC/22/03636 and as approved most recently under DC/23/04294. Its materials, form and fenestration are unequivocally simple and non-domestic in style. The long approach driveway and landscaping zones the development would sit comfortably within its curtilage and not cramped with limited opportunity for screening as in the current Class Q approval under DC/22/03636.

- iii) ***"The proposal would not cause felling of or prejudice the retention of any significant trees that contribute to the environment quality of the area."***

None are to be removed to facilitate the development.

- iv) ***"The new dwelling has safe vehicular access".***

It shall be via the existing access (as approved under DC/22/03636 & DC/23/04294) and be of no intensification of use above the existing case.

- v) ***"The new dwelling is not more visually intrusive than the original dwelling".***

This is not considered to be the case as stated above. Although marginally larger than the extant dwelling under DC/22/03636, the cumulative landscape improvement of removal of ALL existing barns and detritus shall vastly and demonstrably improve the site and wider setting.

- vi) ***"The existing dwelling is not a listed building and there is no increase in the number of dwellings on the site".***

Neither of these criteria apply to the proposal.

The site does not lie within the BUAB. However due to the context of the site it is NOT considered isolated. The principle of a newly created dwelling at this site clearly exists.

'To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. This *presumption in favour* of sustainable development should be seen as the 'golden thread' running through both plan-making and decision taking.'

Therefore, the key issues within this development are whether it can be demonstrated to be 'sustainable' development. *Sustainability* being judged in three key areas: economic, social and environmental. These can be discussed as follows:

Economic:

The proposal would generate small-scale local employment whilst being constructed and beyond by way of local trades people etc.

The dwelling has a dedicated home-office to ensure home-working is easily feasible without detriment on the rest of the household. Secondary employment such as that at local service providers, businesses, public transport etc would also benefit from enhanced development of the site.

Social:

The site is not in any way isolated and is broadly part of this hinterland village. It is only a few minutes' walk from the site to the local bus stops for sustainable transport links. Hadleigh has a wide range of pubs, schools, fuel station, convenience stores, employment etc.

This is considered as *particularly* 'socially sustainable' for such a location. There is easy access to rail links, major road links and a bus service close to the site. In addition, this is a 'self-build' by the applicant as their long-term 'dream' family home, *as is actively encouraged within the NPPF.*

Environmental:

The proposal shall employ renewable technologies such as Air Source Heat Pumps, Passive shading, EVCP, Suds and Solar / PV to minimise the environmental impact of the development. NONE of these are proposed / conditioned under the extant consent. The building has been designed to maximise the benefits of natural light and solar / PV heating via its orientation and fenestration arrangement.

Its construction specification shall be environmentally sound from heating controls to lighting to potable water usage; built using local trades-people and where possible using locally sourced materials / suppliers from environmentally responsible manufacturers.

The dwelling shall easily meet / exceed the requirements of the current *building regulations* in terms of thermal efficiency and shall have installed an electric vehicle charging point.

All existing soft-landscape features shall be retained. A comprehensive landscaping proposal is submitted herein demonstrating substantial enhancement of biodiversity (Flora & Fauna) at the site over and above the extant permission under DC/22/03636.

Rainwater would be harvested for grey / garden use purposes and waste arisings to be responsibly managed during the construction phase and beyond with well-managed recycling. The buildings would be offered for sale so they could be reused for their intended purpose elsewhere

- 6.11) **LIGHTING:** External lighting should be kept to a minimum with LED - PIR activated external lighting *with timer controls* to avoid light pollution in the countryside and ecology/ neighbour detriment. NO flood lighting of the site shall be proposed.
- 6.12) **CIL:** The *Additional information* form are submitted herein and the Applicants are aware of the obligations placed upon them the site by the adopted policies. The applicants shall comply fully with any such requirements of the relevant policies as may be applicable at the time of consideration/ determination of this application.
- 6.13) **RAMS:** The site is within the ZOI for the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Protection Area and Ramsar Site. A contribution shall be required and the Applicant is fully accepting of this requirement. (This charge has been paid previously by the same applicant as this proposal and would we expect be carried over).
- 6.14) **Residential Amenity, Safe and Secure Communities:** A fundamental reason for re-siting the proposed dwelling herein is to give sufficient space and 'air' around the dwelling and to avoid any over-bearing and overlooking between the proposal and Tadpole Cottage. A matter referred to in the officers' report to DC/23/04294. It is considered that the proposal and its relationship/ siting within the plot and the wider site is a much more ;'comfortable' and amenable solution than the extant (Class Q) permission offers and in all regards. As previously stated, (see drawings) the visual impact of the re-sited proposal including the removal of barn#3 is a reduction in landscape impact versus the current *and* approved scenarios not a status-quo nor of further detriment in this regard. There are no uses within close proximity of the proposed dwelling which could give rise to the potential noise disturbance to the occupants of the proposed dwelling.

It could be argued that intensified use of the retained barn by a third party (Should DC/22/03636 be implemented) may lead to such disturbance. Accordingly, in this regard the proposal herein would be a cohesive and complete resolution to this site.

6.15) **PUBLIC NEIGHBOUR CONSULTATION:** None has been undertaken to date however as the Parish Council did not object to the previous application, we would hope that this (improved) proposal would also meet with such support. Reference has been made to the *Adopted Aldham Neighbourhood Plan* and it is considered that the proposal is compliant given the fallback position of DC/22/03636 and DC/23/04294 its cumulative landscape impact as approved. The proposal herein has a much-improved juxtaposition with Tadpole Cottage and amenity with its immediate neighbours is enhanced.

6.16) **NATURAL LIGHTING:** Design and orientation of utilitarian fenestration shall ensure all habitable rooms are adequately lit and shall be bright and welcoming. The regressive form of the principal fenestration shall ensure no over-heating whilst allowing vistas out of the dwelling and ensure accretions are not required / minimal in this regard.

7. CONCLUSION

It is considered therefore that the proposal now before you, when judged *on its individual merits*, will be one of demonstrable **enhancement** to the site and wider locality. It would not prejudice or create a precedent for such 'fall-back' Class Q replacements within the Babergh-Mid Suffolk Area. It would represent an asset to the local community in regards to housing stock provision and associated demographic diversity. It is merely a better planned solution with demonstrable and pragmatic material advantage over its fall-back position *Class Q* alternative over which principle, the LPA has no control. It offers a self-build, 4-bedroom home (as is the extant scheme), without additional existing / cumulative development, in a most similar but preferable siting and is of a utilitarian / agricultural form and appearance.

DC/23/04294 permitted a most similar proposal however due to reasons beyond the control of the applicant in regard to redline boundaries and the requirement for a secure cycle store / machine store and covered parking of vehicles the design herein incorporates a commensurate outbuilding and *non material* minor changes across the proposal. *The proposed dwelling design has not changed.*

We consider that this proposal embodies all that is recognised in the spirit, aims and objectives of the relevant Local and National policies, respects its neighbours and follows advice / addresses concerns raised at the pre-application stage.

We respectfully request therefore that your Authority be minded to approve this application.

End.