

Redhouse Farm, Lavenham Road, CO10 0TQ  
Suffolk County Council  
Louise Newton, for and on behalf of Bidwells  
September 2023



**PLANNING STATEMENT**  
**BARN CONVERSION AT**  
**REDHOUSE FARM,**  
**LAVENHAM ROAD,**  
**SUFFOLK CO10 0TQ**

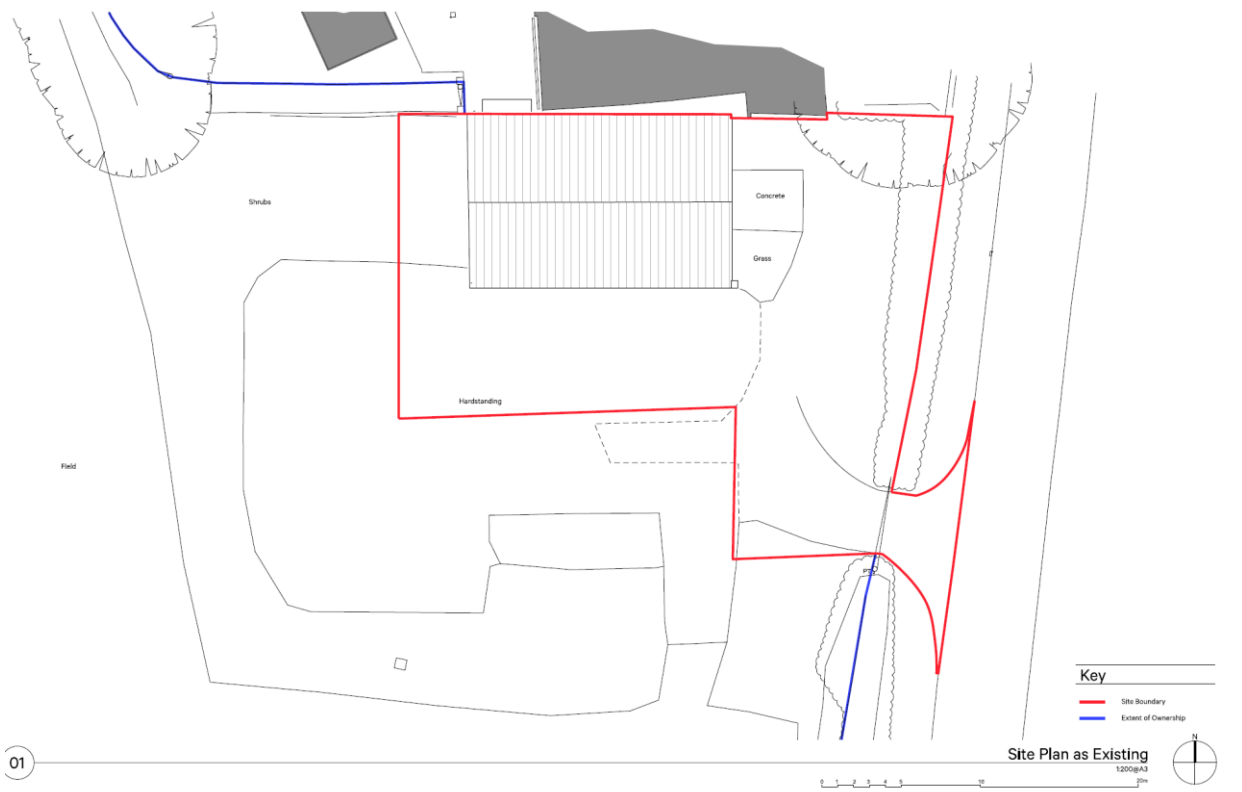
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## 1.0 Context

- 1.1 Redhouse Farm (the Site) is situated in the village of Great Waldingfield, CO10 0TQ.
- 1.2 The agricultural building, the subject of this proposal is located at Redhouse Farm, and forms part of an Established Agricultural Unit. The Established Agricultural Unit extends to 69.66 hectares (172.12 acres), or thereabouts and is currently farmed under a Farm Business Tenancy (FBT).
- 1.3 The holding known as “Land & Building Formerly Pt The Homestead & Washmere Green Farm” is an Established Agricultural Unit. Agricultural operations on the holding primarily comprise the farming of the productive farmland under an arable rotation of wheat, barley, oilseed rape, beans and sugar beet. Other than sugar beet these are all winter own and the tenant currently operates a min till cultivation and drilling system. The applicant lets this farm under an Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995 tenancy (FBT) and the tenant carries out all agricultural operations and farm maintenance. In addition to Redhouse Farm, there is a further yard and buildings at New Farm Acton, which is within the tenancy, and is where harvested crops from the holding are stored.
- 1.4 The application site comprises an agricultural building and associated curtilage. The building is modest in size and is largely unsuitable for modern agriculture, due to its limited height and construction. This means it is not readily accessible for large, modern farm machinery. It is also separate from the main farmyard, so it is not operationally efficient to use this building, other than for intermittent agricultural storage.



01 Site Plan as Existing (Ref: AP(0)010)

- 1.5 The existing building is of red brick elevations and constructed of a brick trussed wooden frame under corrugated fibre cement roof. The western gable is clad in part timber cladding and part profile metal cladding. The existing building currently has internal concrete panel grain walling.
- 1.6 The existing building is the only building located on the Site.
- 1.7 Redhouse Farm is an agricultural holding, the majority of buildings neighbouring the application site are traditional in their design and construction.
- 1.8 The site is accessed via an established point of agricultural access off the B1071. This is the main access to the site, and it is well established with hardstanding to the front of the agricultural building which is utilised for parking. An accompanying Transport Statement conducted by EAS Transport Planning Ltd details the safety, useability and upgrades proposed.

## **2.0 Site and Surroundings**

- 2.1 The site is located in the jurisdiction of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council (the Council) and within the village of Great Waldingfield. The site has an Agricultural Land Classification as Grade 2.
- 2.2 Great Waldingfield is a rural village in the south of the county of Suffolk. Located approximately 2.5km south of Lavenham, 1.2km northwest of Little Waldingfield and 2.2km northeast of Acton. Lavenham is a well-established village in the county of Suffolk. The 2011 Census reported the population of Great Waldingfield as 1,431.
- 2.3 The village is well located between Lavenham and Sudbury connected by the B1071 and B1115. From the Site the A134 can be reached within four miles. Sudbury is linked with Bury St. Edmunds by the A134. The A134 connects with the A14 to the north and A131 to the south allowing for easy access across the county and wider country.
- 2.4 Great Waldingfield is split into two separate parts; the older part of the village is around the St. Lawrence Church, and the newer and larger section is located along the B1115. Most of the houses were built after World War II including some council housing. The village has a selection of local amenities including, a primary school, Public House, Village Hall and Church. The village is a vibrant economic and social hub and the well developed range of amenity and economic facilities show that the village is well suited for appropriate residential development proposals.
- 2.5 The flood map identifies the Site in Flood Zone 1, an area with a 'low risk' of flooding. A copy of the Flood Risk Map is available in Appendix 2.
- 2.6 The site is not and does not form part of a site of Special Scientific Interest, a safety hazard or a military explosives storage area.
- 2.7 The building is not listed. Approximately 420 metres to the south of the Site is Lavenham Road, Farmhouse (List Entry Number:1180992), a Grade II Listed Building.
- 2.8 The site is not and does not contain a scheduled monument.

## 3.0 Proposal

3.1 The proposals are described in greater detail below. In summary, planning permission is sought for the following (“The Proposed Development”):

**“Change of use of an agricultural barn to 1 no dwelling house(s)”**

3.2 This application proposes a single dwellinghouse. The floor space of the existing building changing use is 251 sqm. The number of separate dwellinghouses will be one only. The proposed dwelling will not result in external dimensions of the building extending beyond the existing dimensions of the building.

3.3 Patently, we are now in a different agricultural era where economies of scale driven by ever increasing size of machinery is paramount. These buildings cannot be efficiently utilised for any modern agricultural purposes beyond miscellaneous storage and so it is no longer economically viable for them to be maintained by the farm business. The buildings should be retained and repurposed to provide a viable use going forward.

3.4 Agriculture as an industry is going through a period of significant changes and disruptions. As detailed above, the building and traditional farmyards of previous centuries are now no longer appropriate or viable for modern day farm businesses. It is essential that these buildings are allowed to be repurposed in order to retain their historic value. This is crucial in ensuring that the maintenance of the traditional rural landscape and vernacular continues.

3.5 The applicant therefore proposes the change of use and conversion of the existing agricultural barn building to provide a single dwelling.

3.6 Whilst detailed in full later on, the Applicant wishes to note that the proposed designs and layouts closely resemble the historic vernacular and is in line with Historic England’s 2017 guidance on adapting traditional farm buildings.

3.7 Residential curtilage will also be provided, but these proposals are believed to be reasonable appropriate for ensuring suitable amenity value for residential inhabitants.

## 4.0 Planning History

4.1 Bidwells have reviewed the planning history of the site and have identified the following applications in respect of the site, as follows:

APPLICATION REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	DECISION	DATE
<b>B//96/01052</b>	Erection of a two-storey extension with a covered link to store	Granted	2 October 1996
<b>B//92/00044</b>	Erection of two storey rear extension to dwelling and alterations and extension of ancillary outbuilding	Granted	2 March 1992

## 5.0 Planning Policy

5.1 The Site is governed by the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan (adopted in 2006) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023), as well as associated local strategy documents.

### 5.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and subsequently revised in July 2021 and updated on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The Framework identifies the Government's vision, objectives and goals for the planning system and provides a series of aids in the determination of planning applications.

5.4 The Framework identifies the Government's vision, objectives and goals for the planning system and provides a series of aids in the determination of planning applications. Moreover, in Paragraph 7, it outlines that sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

5.5 Paragraph 8 of the Revised NPPF highlights the three main objectives of achieving sustainable development:

- ***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.
- ***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 well-designed, beautiful, and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.
- ***An Environmental Objective*** – to protect and enhance our natural, built, and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."

5.6 Paragraph 9 states that *'these objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged.'*

5.7 The proposal provides an economic objective, repurposing an underutilised agricultural building. Employment will be created during the construction phase. Future occupiers will make a positive contribution towards the local rural economy.

5.8 Socially, the building will provide a home for a local family in this rural village, contributing towards the local community. It will also ensure a traditional farm building is retained for future generations, making a positive visual contribution to the local landscape and streetscape.

5.9 Environmentally, the reuse of an existing building is a sustainable means of providing a new dwelling. The applicant is also willing to accept a condition in relation to sustainable materials for the conversion.

5.10 Paragraph 80 of the NPPF considers appropriate circumstances for the development of isolated homes in the countryside. These include:

b) *“The development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset” and*

c) *“The development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting”.*

## **5.11 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan**

5.12 The Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 was adopted by the Council on 1st June 2006. It sets out the detailed policies and proposals for the control of development across the district.

5.13 The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan (JLP) Part 1, which sets out the visions and objectives for development, but does not include site allocations. The Main Modifications consultation closed in May 2023; this includes confirmation that all current allocations are to be removed due to housing need being met by extant planning permissions, and allocations in made Neighbourhood Plans. Further Examination Hearing Sessions have taken place and it is anticipated that the JLP Part 1 will be adopted in Autumn 2023.

5.14 The JLP Part 2 is set to follow the JLP Part 1, which includes information on settlement hierarchies and allocated sites. Due to delays with the JLP Part 1, the issues and Options (Regulation 18) for the JLP Part 2 are anticipated for Winter 2023, with Preferred Options (Regulation 18) in Autumn 2024 and the Consultation on the Draft Submission (Regulation 19) in Spring 2025. Adoption is anticipated for late 2025.

5.15 Together with the above, the following policies are considered relevant to the Applicants Full Planning Application for the change of use:

- Policy CS1: Applying the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development in Babergh.
- Policy CS2: Settlement Pattern Policy
- Policy CS11: Strategy for Development for Core and Hinterland Villages
- Policy CS12: Sustainable Design and Construction Standards
- Policy CS15: Implementing Sustainable Development in Babergh
- Policy CS17: The Rural Economy
- Policy CS20: Rural Exception Sites

5.16 Policy CS1 is in step with paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF. Policy CS11 is considered to be consistent with the aims of the NPPF, in particular with regard to the need for development to respond positively to local circumstances which is consistent with paragraph 77 of the NPPF

Policy CS15 sets out desirable characteristics for development which are based upon the principles of sustainable development.

Both policies CS11 and CS15 accord with the NPPF, particularly in relation to paragraph 77 and 78 of the NPPF relating to rural housing, locally identified needs and promoting sustainable development in rural areas: *“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.”*

NNPF paragraph 103 relating to limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes, paragraph 127 to achieve well-designed places and paragraph 170 to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

- 5.17 Policy CS2: Settlement Pattern Policy designates Great Waldingfield as a “Hinterland Village”. Local Plan Policy CR19: Provides the local authorities planning policy for proposals for conversion of barns or other redundant or under-used buildings in the countryside into dwellings, subject to listed considerations.
- 5.18 Policy CS11: Strategy for Development for Core and Hinterland Villages, a large proportion of the district is made up of rural areas with farmhouses, individual dwellings, and small groups of cottages. Small groups of dwellings and hamlets will fall within functional clusters. However, their remoteness and lack of any services or facilities mean that such groups and hamlets are classified as countryside.
- The Site falls within a rural area made up of Rural Farmhouses and individual dwellings and small cottages. The proposal seeks to retain the local distinctive rural characteristics.
- Although the site is located in the countryside, outside of the Built-Up Area Boundary for Great Waldingfield, Policy CR19 of the Local Plan provides the local authorities planning policy for proposals for conversion of barns or other redundant or under-used buildings in the countryside into dwellings. The proposed scheme meets the requirements set out under CR19, in that it is of architectural/historic merit and is capable of conversion without significant rebuilding and the conversion would retain the character.
- 5.19 Policy CS12: Sustainable Design and Construction Standards
- The proposed plans and elevations of the building are enclosed with this application. The design is in keeping with the character of the building and its surroundings. It is considered that the proposed conversion will enhance the Site and the surrounding countryside.
- 5.20 Policy CS13: Renewable / Low Carbon Energy. The proposal seeks to provide a renewable approach to development by converting the existing structure.
- 5.21 Policy CS15: Implementing Sustainable Development in Babergh
- The site is currently underused. The conversion of the building for residential use will result in the area being well maintained, and ultimately deliver a more attractive site, adjacent to existing residential properties.
- 5.22 Policy CS17: The Rural Economy encourages the re-use of redundant farm buildings, supported by the Governments housing statement and the general need for more homes in the UK.
- 5.23 Policy CS20: Rural Exception Sites states “The Council will take a flexible approach to the location of rural exception sites in the district, and will allow proposals adjacent, or well related, to the settlement development boundaries of Core and Hinterland Villages where: *the proposed development is appropriate to the size / scale and character of the village, and is acceptable in terms of other detailed considerations such as site location and circumstances, design, layout, materials, landscaping, biodiversity, impacts on the countryside, amenity, and access, etc.”*



### **Supplementary Planning Documents**

The following supplementary planning documents are considered relevant to this submission:

Rural Development and Core Strategy Policy CS11 SPD (Adopted 8 August 2014)

The Site is located between the Villages of Acton, Little Waldingfield and Great Waldingfield. The proposal is consistent with the local area's character, scale and surrounding buildings.

## **6.0 The Fallback Position**

- 6.1 The proposal accords with criteria set out under Part 3 Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended.
- 6.2 The Applicant considers the undisputed opportunity to implement these permitted development rights should be a material consideration in the assessment of this proposal. This has been confirmed through planning appeal. Appeal Ref: APP/D3830/W/16/3156030 dated 24 January 2017 confirmed the weight held by the fallback position of permitted development rights.
- 6.3 The applicant is applying under full planning permission to allow more flexibility on the time limits to complete the proposed conversion.

## **7.0 Summary**

- 7.1 The Site subject of this application are sited at Redhouse Farm, Great Waldingfield. The existing building is no longer suitable for agricultural purposes and is underutilised. The building itself is worthy of retention and suitable for a change of use to a single dwelling.
- 7.2 The applicant has considered alternative uses for the building and considers that change of use and conversion to residential to provide a single dwelling is the most viable option. If a suitable and sustainable future cannot be found for this Site, then it is very likely that they will see neglect and deteriorate over time. The applicant believes that this building has a value and therefore should be retained.
- 7.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires the determination of planning applications to be made in accordance with the provisions of the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.4 This Statement has demonstrated that the proposal is clearly supported by both local and national planning policy, as demonstrated throughout this document. The scheme is also considered to offer a significant enhancement to the Site and character of the area.
- 7.5 On this basis, we respectfully request that the application is approved without delay.

# APPENDIX 1

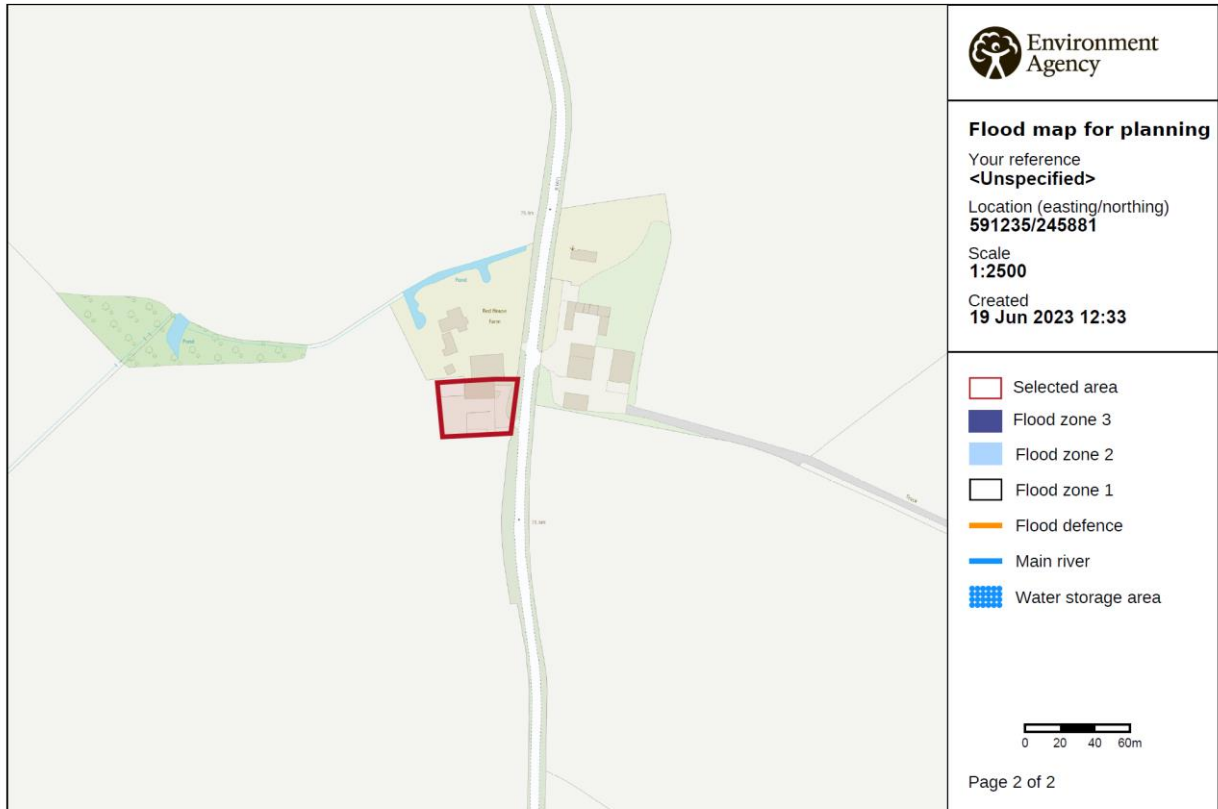
## DRAWING REGISTER

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DRAWINGS	REFERENCE NUMBER
Site Location Plan	AP(0)001
Site Block Plan	AP(0)002
Site Plan as Existing	AP(0)010
Ground Floor Plan as Existing	AP(0)020
Roof Plan as Existing	AP(0)021
Elevations as Existing	AP(0)030
Site Plan as Proposed	AP(0)040
Ground Floor Plan as Proposed	AP(0)050
First Floor Plan as Proposed	AP(0)051
Roof Plan as Proposed	AP(0)052
Elevations as Proposed	AP(0)060

# APPENDIX 2 FLOOD RISK MAP

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