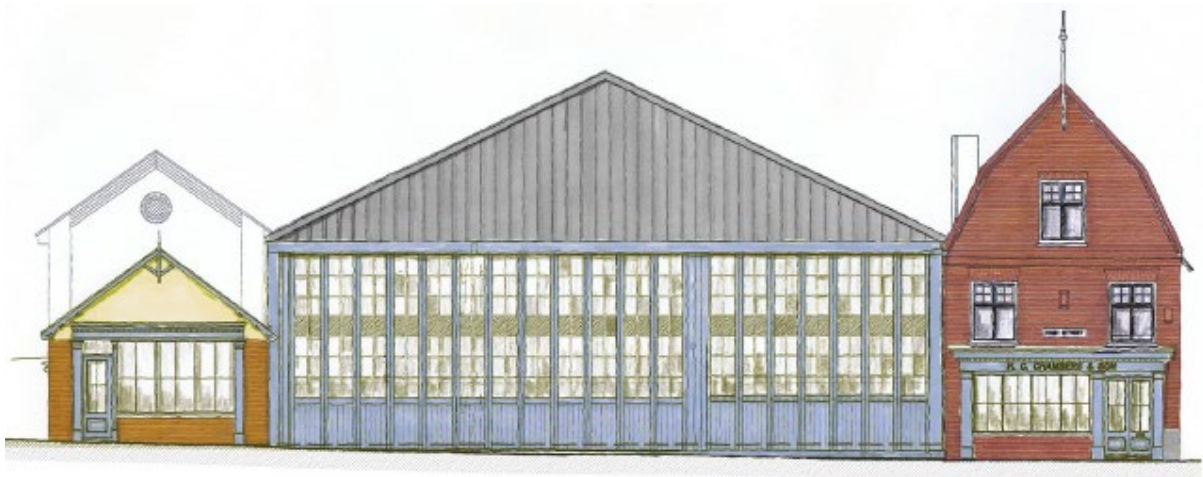


DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Former Bures Bus Depot, Church Street,
Bures St Mary, Suffolk



REPORT NUMBER 1
DATE: February 2024
JOB NUMBER: J450

ROSE

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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SECTION ONE

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) forms part of the planning application for the former bus depot site in Bures St Mary. The DAS sets out the context for the site. This is framed by a wide range of factors, such as history, topography, planning policy, ecology, landscaping and residential amenity. Evolving from this context are various design objectives, most of which have been formalised through the 2022 planning permission (ref: 22/00754/FUL). The DAS then presents the proposed design, explaining the reasons for the various attributes and demonstrating how the design objectives are met.

1.2 The Application

As noted above, planning permission was granted in October 2022 the construction of local convenience store and 10 no. apartments/houses. However, this DAS forms part of a new full application for the erection of “Demolition of outbuildings and in-filling of former vehicle inspection pits. Demolition of most of former bus depot and house to allow construction of 47 sqm commercial unit and 14 apartments/houses (a net increase of 13 dwellings) and associated drainage, parking, hardstanding, fences/walls and other infrastructure”.

The application is supported by the following information and which this statement should be read in conjunction with:

- Planning application form (including completed ownership certificate)
- Site location plan
- Technical reports
- Architectural drawings
- Covering letter

SECTION TWO

Background

2.1 Background

This section explains the physical context for the site, examining the characteristics of the site and those of the surrounding area. It then explains how the proposal for the site evolved from its inception, through the 2022 permission to the latest proposal.

2.2 Site Description

The application site is 0.32 ha (0.78 acres) and is comprised of buildings and yard associated with the former use of the site as a bus depot. Primarily this includes the main, metal-framed large bus depot building. There is also a small, single storey building on its northern edge that forms part of the former depot. On the southern side of the former depot building is a 3-storey, brick, residential dwelling. The remainder of the site is comprised of concrete hardstanding and is flat. There are no trees or shrubs on the site, although there is a row of evergreen trees just outside the eastern boundary of the site. The rear yard includes some outbuildings in various states of repair. Alongside the southern edge of the existing house there is a wide vehicular access to the highway at the junction of Bridge Street and Church Square. None of the buildings on the site are listed.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan



Different configurations of buildings have existed on the site for many centuries. A key part of the history of the site started in the late 1870s/ early 1880s when HC Chambers & Sons started running a saddlery from the site and then a bus company. Accordingly, the main buildings at the front of the site date from the 19th and 20th century. The oldest elements front the main road with more modern elements added to the rear. A full summary of the site's history is set out in the Heritage Statement that forms part of this planning application.

2.3 Site Context

Bures St Mary is within the county of Suffolk, but is conjoined with Bures Hamlet of Essex. The Essex/Suffolk county boundary follows the course of the river Stour between Bures St Mary and Bures Hamlet. While the county boundary and river separates the two parts, the village is experienced as one village and hereafter is referred to simply as “Bures” unless specific attention is drawn to a particular part of the village.

The site forms an important part of the centre of the village and is prominent as the B1508 winds through the centre of Bures. The site forms part of the Bures St Mary conservation area and there are several listed buildings nearby. This includes the Grade I listed church of St Mary opposite the site. The Heritage Statement depicts all the nearby listed buildings that form part of the site context.

The nearby building scale is predominantly 2-storey, although there are several examples of 3-storey, such as at no. 8/9 Bridge Street, Queens House, the application site and the church which extends higher. Almost all the nearby buildings sit at the back edge of the pavement, again the church is an exception as it is surrounded by its grounds. The churchyard contains a number of trees alongside the church’s boundary wall. However, in the immediate vicinity of the site there are almost no other trees or grassed areas in the public realm. As typical for an historic village centre, the buildings are traditional in appearance, reflecting the development of the village through the centuries.

There are bus stops opposite the site on both the eastbound and westbound sides of Bridge Street. The site is served by the 83, 754 and 756 bus services running between Colchester town centre and Sudbury. Bures railway station is approximately 5 minute’s walk from the site and it is on the Essex side of the river in Bures Hamlet. Greater Anglia services run to and from Bures between Sudbury and Marks Tey, where it joins the mainline service between London Liverpool Street and Norwich. A journey from Bures train station to London Liverpool Street can take approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes.

Bures includes a range of services including two pubs, a post office, a convenience store, places of worship, a GP surgery and a school. It is categorised as a “core village” in the local plan.

The photos below show a range of building styles, ages and types in the village centre.

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Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



SECTION THREE

Design Context

3.1 Design Context

To a large extent, the design parameters are established by the 2022 consent for redevelopment of the site. In broad terms, this consented design approved the conversion of the bus depot building with a small cul-de-sac of houses at the rear of the site. The former depot building was to accommodate a new convenience store at ground floor with flats above. The remainder of the site is formed by 2-storey houses. This design output does itself reflect a wide range of policy context and physical context of the surrounding area, and the history of the site. Nevertheless, this section sets out these factors and how they influence the proposed design.

3.2 Archaeology & Heritage

Investigative trial trenching has already been undertaken as part of the 2022 consent. The finds were not significant and have not directly affected the proposed design.

The site is located within the Bures Conservation Area. It is also within the setting of several listed buildings. The existing bus depot building could also be considered as a Non Designated Heritage Asset. A full assessment of these factors is included in the accompanying Heritage Statement.

Heritage matters influence the proposed design in a wide ranging way, from height, scale and massing to fenestration, brick choices and detailing. The proposed design should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings in which it is sited.

3.3 Ecology

Given the brownfield status of the former bus depot site, the scope for on-site ecology is limited. Nevertheless, the appropriate surveys have been undertaken and are included with the application. Survey work has shown that bats may be roosting in the roof of one of the frontage buildings. If work is required to the roof, then the appropriate licence will be sought from Natural England. In terms of design constraints, the retention of this roof should be incorporated into the design.

3.4 Ground Investigation

Where existing buildings permit, ground investigation work has already been undertaken on the site. As expected this has revealed soil contamination. This will need to be addressed in the normal manner, but does not create any particular design constraints.

3.5 Highways

The proposal will cease the previous vehicular access directly from the depot onto the highway. All vehicular access should be via the main access road to/from the site at the junction of Bridge Street and Church Square. Despite this historic access point, the potential for design improvements to this access point should be sought. This could include build-outs to improve vehicular visibility and safety here.

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Previously approved improvements to the pedestrian experience along Bridge Street and Church Square should ideally be replicated on this latest proposal. It included pavement widening, tactile paving and bollards.

On-site, the proposal should also include suitable vehicle and bicycle parking and enable suitable turning by refuse vehicles and fire tenders.

3.6 Landscape Impact & Trees

The site is located at the centre of Bures and as such is not appreciable from the wider landscape. In itself, this therefore does not present any constraints.

The brownfield status of the site means that the site has very limited green space and trees on site. Existing trees along the boundary with Friends Field are reported to be a nuisance to neighbours, by virtue of their height and ensuing shadowing, which is typical for leylandii trees. The proposed design should consider this existing impact and review ways to improve this situation.

3.7 Services & Utilities

To comply with drainage regulations, the proposed design should consider sustainable drainage systems. The height of the water table and existing contaminants present challenges that restrict the scope of the drainage system design. Similarly, the existing foul water network is also complex. The drainage design needs to be considered alongside the architectural design to ensure that any scheme is deliverable.

3.8 Opportunities and Constraints

In general terms, the project offers a great opportunity to bring a vacant and derelict site at the centre of Bures back into use. In simplistic terms this will rejuvenate the site, with obvious benefits this will bring to the site's context in the Conservation Area, setting of Listed Buildings and heart of the village.

The project is not without its constraints. Its central and enveloped location means that the site has numerous neighbours whose amenity should be respected. Heritage and highway matters are also very important and restrict the scope of any project. Notwithstanding this, the existing consent sets a useful benchmark in terms of the scope of redevelopment, scale, demolition and architectural detail.

SECTION FOUR

Design Objectives

4.1 Design Objectives

This Section sets out the key design objectives that have been distilled from the agreed and proposed design context. In doing so, these objectives take the next logical step in the design process.

4.2 Design Evolution

Evolving from the design context of Section 3 are various objectives. These include objectives relating to land use, amenity and character as well as drainage, highway and construction matters. These objectives are used to shape the detailed design and ultimately provide a benchmark for future design assessment. Most of the principal design objectives are already approved as part of the 2022 approval. The site has the following design objectives:

- Bring the site back into active use
- Provide high quality housing that is in keeping with its surroundings
- Deliver some commercial space
- Provide adequate residential vehicular and bicycle parking
- Improve vehicular and pedestrian safety
- Ensure that the design is secure and safe
- Respect the residential amenity neighbours
- Deliver a suitable urban drainage system

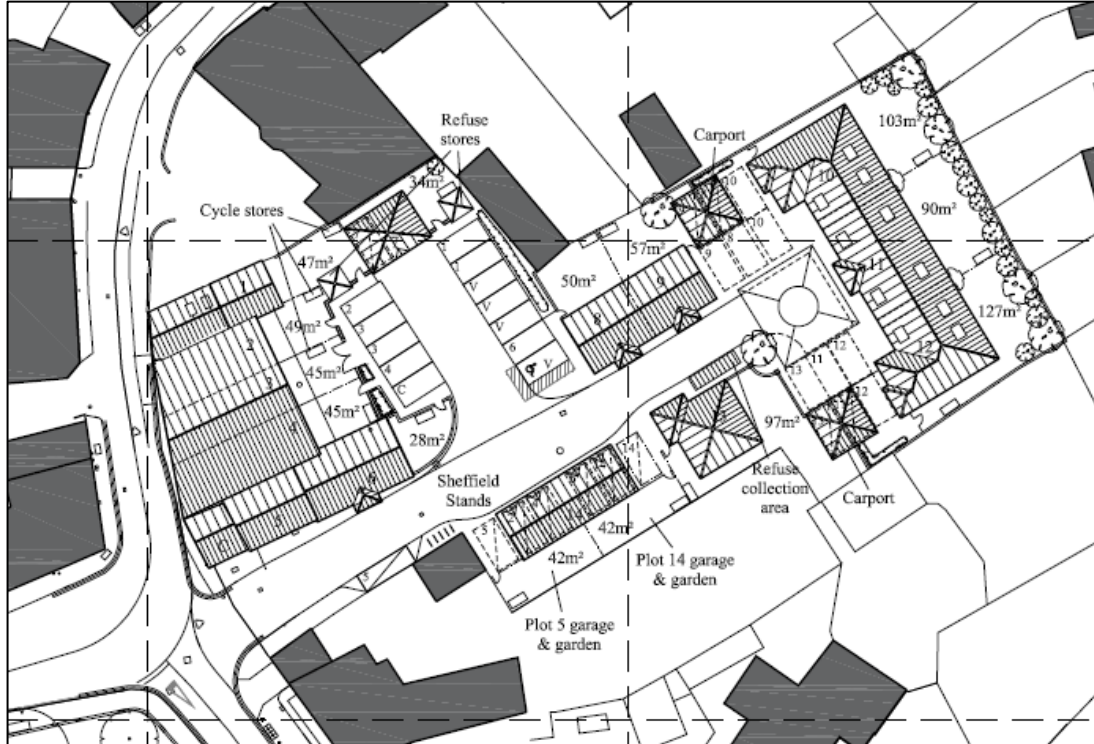
SECTION FIVE

Proposed Design

5.1 Proposed Design

This Section describes the proposed development and explains how its design has drawn upon both the agreed and proposed design context of Sections 4 and 5.

Figure 2: Proposed Layout



5.2 Landscaping

The scope for extensive landscaping is very limited on this brownfield site and reflects the wider context of the historical centre of Bures village, which has very few street trees. Nevertheless, some street trees and frontage planting can be provided. This is supplemented by private gardens for all dwellings. This is as per the 2022 approved design.

5.3 Drainage

The design allows for surface water and foul drainage to existing networks that exist along Bridge Street. The drainage design requires a large extent of shallow attenuation crates below the on-site road network. This is as per the 2022 approved design.

5.4 Highways and Access

The existing point of vehicular access is retained and very closely matches the 2022 approved design. A small change has been made to allow the safer use of the front door associated with the small commercial unit on site. The vehicular access includes a build out. This will improve vehicular visibility when leaving the site. Improvements to the pavement widths on Bridge Street and Church Street will improve pedestrian safety. This design is as per the 2022 approved design.

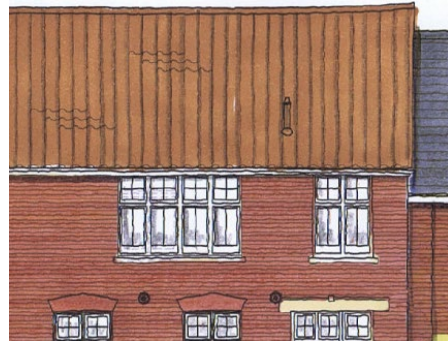
5.5 Built Form and Detailing

The proposed built form closely follows the 2022 approved design. This is evidenced through the style, scale and finishing to the frontage building and a cluster of other dwellings to the rear with a parking zone between the two.

Figure 3



Figure 4

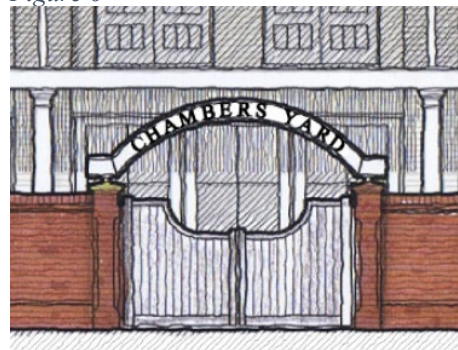


The frontage building is slightly different from the 2022 design in that it is predominantly residential with only a small element of commercial space. Importantly, the proposed design follows the building height of the existing depot building, whereas previously it required a raised ridge that was set back from the frontage slightly. Furthermore, the roofscape is more complete and does not involve any first floor courtyard. Similarly, the southern elevation relies on the same extent of demolition as previously approved. It requires fewer fenestration changes to this elevation (Figure 4) and thereby more closely retains the positive characteristics of the existing building fabric. As per the approved demolition strategy, the frontage doors need to be temporarily removed to be repaired before being reinstalled to the front.

Figure 5



Figure 6



Its detached status gives Plot 7 a more individualistic style. Nevertheless, it still draws upon the strong design aesthetic. Its garage doors refer to former stables that were present in the early days of the former bus company (Figure 10). The small flanking buildings are bin stores, but are given a grandness in their strong use of brick with detailing around the doors and decorative roof design.

The middle of the site narrows and brings sense of “gatekeeper” homes before moving onto the rear part of the site. These gatekeeper homes use strong forms through the brickwork.

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Decorative roof finials help add some flourish to these homes (Figure 8). First floor canopies and associated fenestration hint at potential former uses of the buildings, again adding visual interest (Figure 7 and 9).

Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

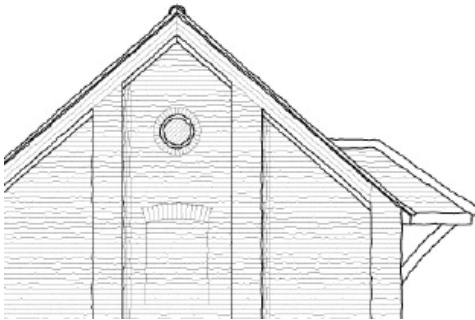
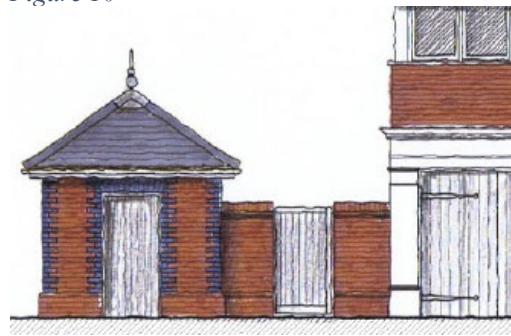


Figure 10



The rear of the site includes three chalet bungalows. These form an interesting vista stop and will be visible from the site entrance. Their massing is smaller than the 2022 design and is set further away from the eastern boundary. These bungalows are very ornate and draw upon the local example shown in Photo 8. The windows, chimneys and brickwork include elaborate detailing (Figure 11 and 12).

Figure 11

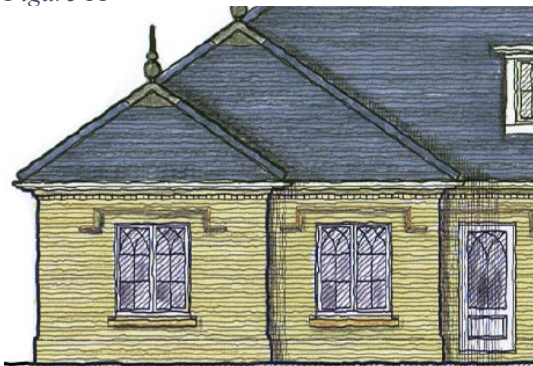
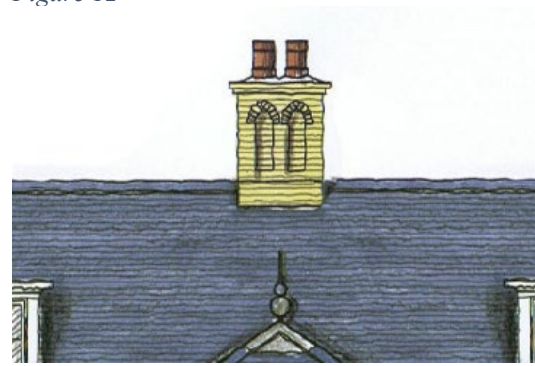


Figure 12



SECTION SIX

Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

This Design and Access Statement sets out the design rationale to support an application for 14 dwellings and a commercial unit at the former bus depot site in Bures. The design proposal responds well to the context set by planning policy and its physical surroundings. The design quality is high and its delivery would create a dramatic improvement over the existing, redundant site.

The design would respect the amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of massing, privacy and outlook. Site security would be improved through the redevelopment of the site, which would also benefit adjacent properties. Highway safety would be improved through the changes to the site access point. These match those approved in the 2022 consent. The commercial unit would provide local jobs and a service for the local community.

Heritage is very important. The proposed design would improve upon the 2022 design, through a closer resemblance to the existing depot appearance, massing, fenestration and roofscape. Crucially, finding a new long-term use for the site would enliven the site and surrounding area.

A1.1 Development Plan

The current development plan for the site contains the following:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- Adopted Tendring District Local Plan (2007)
- Submission Tendring District Local Plan (2017)
- Bures Conservation Area Appraisal (November 2007)

A1.2 National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

The Framework is an overarching document which established a new national planning policy agenda focused specifically upon the delivery of sustainable development. It must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbouring plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Paragraph 8 of the Framework specifically sets out the basis for the achievement of sustainable development in planning terms and defines three key objectives in the planning system:

- An economic objective
- A social objective
- An environmental objective

The Framework sets out the following points for consideration when assessing whether development is sustainable:

- Making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages
- Moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature
- Replacing poor design with better design
- Improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure
- Widening the choice of high quality homes

Furthermore, with regards to sustainable development, Framework Paragraph 10 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”.

To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and it is clear that the creation of new homes has an important role to play. Residential development is recognised as being a major contributor to driving economic growth, with the planning system helping to deliver the new homes that will move the country forwards. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

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Housing Supply

At Paragraph 59 the Framework states that to significantly boost the supply of homes it is important that sufficient land can come forward where it is needed and that permission is developed without unnecessary delay. To determine the minimum number of homes, Paragraph 60 states that strategic policies should be informed by a local housing assessment conducted using the standard method unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals.

Strong Economy

Paragraph 80 states that “significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development”. In terms of the rural economy, the Framework supports the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business, as well as the development of accessible community facilities such as open space.

Healthy and Safe Communities

Street layouts should allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods. Such connections should be safe and accessible to encourage the active and continual use of public areas. Proposals should enable and encourage healthy lifestyles. This can be through layouts that encourage walking and cycling with links to local shops and green infrastructure.

Sustainable Transport

Paragraph 102 highlights that transport issues should be considered at the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals. This is so that impacts can be addressed, opportunities can be realised, and that movement patterns are integrated into layout design. Paragraph 103 adds that 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”. However, it adds that “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”.

In relation to allocated sites, Paragraph 108 of the Framework requires that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be taken up, that safe and suitable access can be achieved, and that any significant impacts on the transport network can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

Requiring Good Design

Chapter 12 of the Framework focuses on achieving high quality buildings and places, highlighting that good design is a key component of sustainable development. Paragraph 127 sets out the various elements that comprise good design including functionality, attractiveness, character, sense of place, development mix and places that are safe, inclusive and accessible. Paragraph 130 allows councils to refuse development of poor design that fails to take opportunities to improve the character, quality and functionality of an area. Conversely, where design accords with clear expectations in plan policies, such design should not be used as a reason for to object.

Flooding and Climate Change

The Framework supports the transition to a low carbon future. New development should avoid vulnerability to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emission through location, orientation and design. When determining planning applications, flood risk should not be increased elsewhere. To better understand this, a site-specific flood risk assessment is often necessary. Generally, sites should be located in areas of low flood risk. Major development schemes should incorporate sustainable drainage systems.

Natural Environment

The objective of chapter 15 is that policies and decisions contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Paragraph 170 sets out the main elements for discussion, namely valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity/geological value, countryside character/beauty (including coastline), biodiversity impact, pollution and remediation.

Historic Environment

Planning applications should describe any impact on the significance of heritage assets affected, including their settings. Such description should include archaeological interest too. In assessing proposals, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Where proposals would lead to less than substantial harm, such harm should be balanced against the public benefits of the proposal.

National Planning Practice Guidance

The online National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) supports and informs existing policies within the Framework. It is to be considered in line with the Framework as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

A1.3 Local Planning Policy

The Council adopted Section 1 and Section 2 of its Local Plan in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

Joint Local Plan – Submission Document (November 2023)

SP01 – Housing Need. The Council will deliver at least 7,904 net new dwellings over the plan period. The mix of tenure, size and type shall reflect the District needs assessment.

SP02 – Affordable Housing. On brownfield sites of 10 dwellings or more, a 25% provision of affordable housing will be sought. Where it is convincingly demonstrated that the required provision of affordable housing is not viable, the council may agree to vary the requirement. An agreed viability assessment format will be required to demonstrate this.

SP03 – The Sustainable Location of New Development. The principle of development within settlement boundaries is established.

SP05 – Employment Land. Existing employment uses should be retained.

SP06 – Retail and Main Town Centre Uses. Town centre uses will be supported in identified town centres.

SP09 – Enhancement and Management of the Environment. All development will be required to protect and enhance biodiversity.

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SP10 – Climate Change. All developments should take a proactive approach to the mitigation/adaptation of climate change.

LP09 – Supporting a Prosperous Economy. Proposals for employment use must be sensitive to its surroundings, be of a high standard of design and be safe/suitable for all users.

LP11 – Retail and Town Centres. Proposals that include “above the shop” homes will be encouraged.

LP15 – Environmental Protection and Conservation. Proposals on previously developed land will be prioritised. Development should remediate land affected by contamination.

LP16 – Biodiversity & Geodiversity. All development should seek to enhance habitats and avoid impacts and mitigate against harmful impacts on biodiversity.

LP19 – The Historic Environment. A Heritage Statement will be required when there is the potential to affect heritage assets. The council will support proposals that contribute to local distinctiveness.

LP23 – Sustainable Construction and Design. All new development is required to adopt a sustainable approach to energy use. Development should also consider CO2 emissions, water efficiency, climate change adaptation/mitigation and minimise energy demands.

LP24 – Design and Residential Amenity. All new development must be of high-quality design. Proposals should respond to existing character, being compatible with its location and be appropriate in terms of scale, mass, form, siting, design, materials, texture and colour.

LP26 – Water Resources and Infrastructure. Development should consider its impact on water resources and show that it has consulted with the relevant water authorities.

LP27 – Flood Risk and Vulnerability. Proposals should show how on-site surface water is to be managed.

LP29 – Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport. All development are to maximise the uptake in sustainable and active transport. Proposals should incorporate pedestrian route, cycling facilities and improved public transport measures.

LP32 – Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations. Developers are obliged to provide Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions.

Bures Conservation Area Appraisal (November 2007)

The Bures St Mary Conservation Area Appraisal sets out and explains the characteristics of the conservation area and key components of its historical importance. Of most relevance for the application site are the importance and proximity of listed buildings as well as non-designated heritage assets. While the site does not contain any listed buildings, the appraisal mentions “the local bus company’s yard and sheds being very much part of the street scene” (page 19). It also mentions that “the bus shed’s roof and gables were apparently originally asbestos sheeting, but could be upgraded to a more traditional material.”

Suffolk Guidance for Parking (November 2015)

This document requires 1 no. vehicle parking space for each 1-bed unit, 1.5 no. spaces for each 2-bed unit, 2 no. spaces for each 3-bed unit and 3 no. spaces for each 4-bed unit. There

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should be a total of 1 no. visitor parking spaces for every 4 no. dwellings. The guidance document sets out minimum size requirements for garages of 7m x 3m, although 6m x 3m can be acceptable where alternative provision for bin and cycle storage is supplied. Surface car parking spaces should be no smaller than 5m x 2.5m and parallel parking spaces should be 6m x 2m.

APPENDIX 2

Building For Life Summary

A2.1 Building for Life Assessment

Each of the Building for Life (BfL) criteria are set out below, followed by a statement explaining how this has been achieved in the proposal. This is intended to be a summary assessment, with all the relevant detail provided in the previous sections of this Statement.

BfL Question	Site Assessment	Rating
Integrating into the Neighbourhood		
1) <i>Connections</i> Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, while also respecting existing buildings and land uses around the development site?	The site continues its connection at the site frontage. Other connection points are not possible because of adjacent land ownership.	Green
2) <i>Facilities and services</i> Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes?	The site is very close to existing services in Bures St Mary and Bures Hamlet.	Green
3) <i>Public transport</i> Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?	Bus stops are located immediately outside the site. The railway station at Bures Hamlet is within walking distance of the site	Green
4) <i>Meeting local housing requirements</i> Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?	The proposal has a mix of housing types to meet local housing needs. However, it only provides private accommodation	Amber
Creating a Place		
5) <i>Character</i> Does the scheme create a place with locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?	The proposal fits in well with its surrounding area, respecting the existing built, historic and natural environment.	Green
6) <i>Working with the site and its context</i> Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates?	The site is fairly small and flat. There is no significant natural habitat on site. The proposal uses existing buildings where this is feasible. Other buildings are redundant and will be demolished.	Green
7) <i>Creating well defined streets and spaces</i> Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance	The public spaces on the site are well defined by new buildings.	Green

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streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?		
8) <i>Easy to find your way around</i> Is the scheme designed to make it easy to find your way around?	Aided by its relatively small size, the site is easy to navigate. Distinctive buildings help in placemaking and way-finding.	Green
Street & Home		
9) <i>Streets for all</i> Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?	The shared surfaces can only realistically be used at low vehicle speeds. This will encourage them to be used as social spaces.	Green
10) <i>Car parking</i> Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?	Resident and visitor parking is provided in dedicated spaces, cart lodges and garages. Some screening is provided where feasible.	Green
11) <i>Public and private spaces</i> Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to be attractive, well managed and safe?	The public and private spaces will be clearly demarked by the proposed buildings. A high level of architectural design will afford an attractive place to live.	Green
12) <i>External storage and amenity space</i> Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling as well as vehicles and cycles?	The proposed garages will be of a sufficient size to accommodate refuse storage. Those without garages will have a dedicated bike store and space for bin storage. There is also adequate space for refuse collection.	Green

Key

Green	Meets all criteria
Amber	Unable to meet all criteria
Red	Does not meet criteria