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Our ref: E350.C1.Let20  
18<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear Sir / Madam,

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE DEMOLITION OF AN EXISTING BARN AND THE  
ERECTION OF 5 HOUSES

LAND WEST OF COLLEGE FARM, WYVERSTONE

This planning application proposes the demolition of an existing agricultural barn and its replacement with 5 houses in the hamlet around College Farm, near Wyverstone. The barn was granted Class Q Prior Approval on 17th October 2022 to be converted into 5 houses under planning reference DC/22/04228. This consent remains extant until 16th October 2025 so there is sufficient time to undertake the conversion. This extant permission provides a firm fallback position which will be implemented if a replacement scheme is not agreed.

This proposal seeks to replace this extant permission with a smaller development of 5 houses in a farmyard-style courtyard which will complement and enhance the setting and character of the surrounding hamlet and the countryside. The design proposed is a significant improvement over the extant Class Q conversion and will have a positive visual impact on the area. The proposed properties have a combined floor area of 396.86 sqm, which is substantially smaller than the extant barn conversion proposal which has a floor area of 516.15 sqm.

This planning application is submitted following pre-application advice (ref DC/23/04498) which was received from Mid Suffolk Council. This pre-application advice confirmed that if a replacement scheme offers a flood risk benefit over the extant scheme, and does not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land, the principle of development is supported.

Evolution Town Planning Limited

**Registered Office:**

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**Registered in England Number**  
10636748



The extant barn conversion scheme is situated partially within an area which is shown as at risk of surface water flooding on Environment Agency flood mapping. The proposed development seeks to move the houses, car parking, and gardens away from the surface water flood area to an area shown to be entirely outside of the land shown to be at risk from surface water flooding. This is a significant benefit of this application over the extant scheme. Only a small area of access remains in the surface water flood-affected area which runs through the centre of the hamlet around College Farm. A flood risk assessment is submitted with this application. This concludes that the proposed scheme reduces the flood risk to future occupants over the extant scheme and that having modelled the depths of flood water around the access, emergency entry and egress would be possible at all times.

Also submitted with this application is a statement regarding the productivity of the small area of agricultural land incorporated into this application. This confirms that this area of agricultural land being lost to development is very small and is an awkward shape in a stepped corner of a field which makes it difficult for modern farm machinery to access and farm efficiently. It would make agricultural production more efficient to square this part of the field off. The land has previously been the site of a farmyard and has had farm buildings built upon it. As such there is rubble within the soil which limits the productivity of this part of the field. As such it is not the most versatile or productive land.

Pre-application feedback was received that the scale and appearance of 2-storey dwellings would be intrusive into the countryside and would impact the character of the surrounding hamlet. As such the proposed scheme is entirely single-storey in a traditional farmyard arrangement, akin to a range of single-storey barns which have grown organically over time. This proposal aligns with the feedback received and has also sought to replicate the appearance of the farm buildings which were historically part of College Farm and located on the application site to the west of College Farm House. From historic mapping, these appear to have been a range of small buildings arranged in a courtyard, which has been incorporated into the design of the proposal.

Evolution Town Planning has worked on many small developments across Mid Suffolk to provide houses which have been designed to meet the needs of local residents. We have recently delivered schemes of well-designed, attractive houses in nearby villages such as Bacton, Worlingworth and Beyton which have been supported locally. One recent development has been delivered just across the road from the application in the hamlet around College Farm. Examples of locally delivered houses can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1 - Examples of Recently Delivered Houses (College Farm, Wyverstone and Norton)

These properties have been designed by a highly experienced local architect to respect the local vernacular, providing well-proportioned homes in spacious plots with large gardens. The houses have a range of sustainability features such as high levels of insulation, solar panels and heating provided by air-source heat pumps. They have been very popular with residents.

The proposed development seeks planning consent for 5 houses in a traditional farmyard arrangement which is subservient to the neighbouring College Farm House. The proposal suggests a housing mix of 3 x 2-bedroom and 2 x 3-bedroom houses as there is high demand for high-quality homes of this size. The proposed properties have a combined floor area of 396.86 sqm, which is substantially less than the extant conversion proposal which has a floor area of 516.15.

The applicant is a popular local landlord whose rental properties are in high demand. They have a waiting list of prospective tenants looking for 2 and 3-bedroom houses in the area. These house types are proposed because there is strong local demand. There are especially few 2-bedroom houses available in the area which are suitable for younger or older residents who do not have large families to accommodate.

The extant Class Q DC/22/04228 would have created 5 houses which were positioned side-on to the road and the other houses around the hamlet at College Farm. The conversion would have had highly prominent car parking areas to the front. Due to the Class Q Constraints, these houses would have very small outdoor areas. The existing barn is a utilitarian building, created for a specific agricultural purpose as a pig building, and does not positively contribute to the setting. The conversion of this building into houses would mean that the form of this building will be retained permanently. This proposal seeks an alternative scheme which will provide a good range of houses in a traditional farmyard style which is in keeping with the character of the other houses around College Farm and the surrounding rural character.

Each house has designated car parking areas which have been positioned so that they will not be prominent and are well-screened by carefully thought-out walls and landscaping. The houses each have private garden areas, which, due to the houses being single-storey and their layout and design, are not overlooked.

The scheme puts forward a significant amount of planting around the perimeter of the development which will provide new habitats for biodiversity and will have a benefit on the character of the village. This will also help to soften the view of the new development from the countryside and the footpath which leads away from the site to the west, which the extant Class Q consent would have been prominent from.

This application proposes an attractive small development of 5 well-designed houses to replace an extant barn conversion permission. This will provide attractive, high-quality, energy-efficient homes. The houses are located in an area which is not at risk of surface water flooding and are less prominent from the nearby roads and footpaths than the extant conversion permission. The floor area of the proposed homes has been reduced by nearly 120 sqm compared with the extant scheme and proposes smaller homes which there is a strong level of local demand. Overall, this proposal improves upon the extant permission in every way and should be strongly supported by the LPA.

We enclose the following documents with this application:

1. Planning Portal Application Form
2. This Covering letter – E350.C1.Let21
3. Planning Statement – E350.C1.Rep16
4. Topographical Survey/Existing Site Plan – Ref SJG3088
5. Existing Barn Plans and Elevations – 1925-01 Rev A
6. Proposed Block Plan – Ref 1925-20
7. Proposed Floor Plan – Ref 1925-21
8. Proposed Elevations – Ref 1925-22
9. Street Scene Coloured – Ref 1925-23
10. Location Plan
11. Phase I Contamination Report – Ref 3760 v3
12. Ecology Report – Ref COLLEGEFARM/2023/ER/001 Rev 6
13. Post Construction Habitats Plan
14. Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation Metric
15. Flood Risk Assessment – Ref 3760C v3
16. Agricultural Land Quality Note
17. Tree Survey and Arboricultural Report – Ref LS2209-01

We trust that this is sufficient for you to progress this planning application and we will be in touch when an officer has been allocated.

Yours sincerely



**SAM STONEHOUSE**  
SENIOR PLANNER  
EVOLUTION TOWN PLANNING LTD