

Planning Statement in Support of a Planning Application for the Demolition of an Existing Barn and the Erection of 5 Houses

Land West of College Farm, Wyverstone

March 2024



Opus House
Elm Farm Park
Thurston
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP31 3SH

T 01359 233663
E enquiries@evolution-planning.co.uk
W evolution-planning.co.uk

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Land West of College Farm, Wyverstone

Client: David Black and Son

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1.0 Introduction and Summary

- 1.1 This planning application proposes the demolition of an existing agricultural barn and its replacement with 5 houses around the hamlet of 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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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 of 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.
- 1.5 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. It is also 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.

1.6 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.

1.7 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 some of the locally delivered houses can be seen in Figure 1.1.



Figure 1.1 - Examples of Recently Delivered Houses (College Farm, Wyverstone and Norton)

1.8 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, heating provided by air-source heat pumps and biodiversity improvements. They have been very popular with residents.

- 1.9 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 houses, 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 sqm.
- 1.10 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.
- 1.11 The extant Class Q DC/22/04228 would have created 5 houses which were positioned side-on to the road and the other houses in the hamlet around 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.
- 1.12 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, as it is entirely single-storey and due to the layout and design of the houses, are not overlooked.
- 1.13 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.

1.14 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 in an area which is not at risk of surface water flooding, unlike the extant scheme 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.

2.0 Site Location and Description

Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The application site is in the Hamlet around College Farm in Mid Suffolk. It is situated amongst a cluster of 10 houses to the south of the village of Wyverstone.
- 2.2 Figure 2.1 shows the application site and its immediate surroundings.

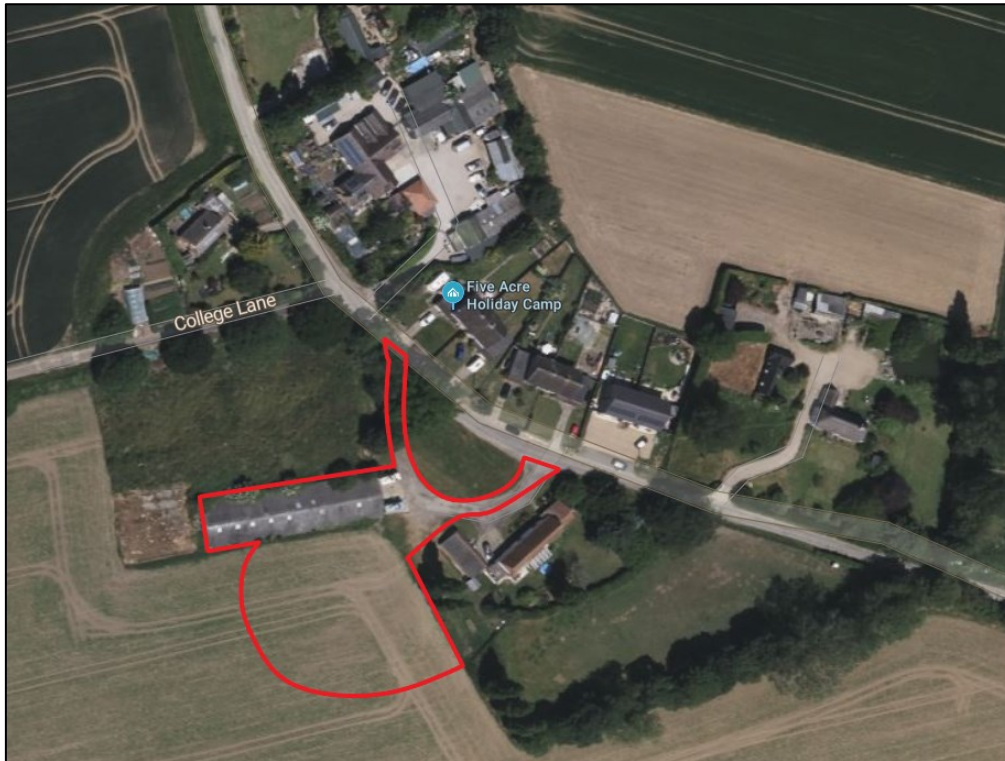


Figure 2.1 - Application Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.3 As shown in Figure 2.1, the site is made up of an existing barn, with extant permission to be converted into 5 houses, and the corner of an agricultural field. There are existing trees on the eastern and northern boundary. The site is approximately 0.25 hectares in size.
- 2.4 The existing barn on the site, which is proposed to be demolished, was originally constructed to house livestock, but due to its relatively small size and location close to houses, this use was no longer appropriate and the barn has been used for the storage of agricultural equipment in recent years. It is a prominent structure in the hamlet which is 50 metres long and stretches into the countryside. It is not ideally located for agricultural use as it is positioned away from the applicant's main farm buildings at Red House Farm and it is close to the houses around College Farm. Prior

notification DC/22/04228 granted permission for the barn to be converted into 5 houses which remains extant until 16th October 2025.

2.5 An image of the existing barn taken from the road can be seen in Figure 2.2.



Figure 2.2 - Existing Barn East (Front) Elevation



Figure 2.3 - Existing Barn South Elevation

2.6 The extant permission; DC/22/04228, included front parking and small amenity areas to the north of the barn. This would increase its prominence as the hedges and brambles would be cleared from this part of the site and new hardstanding areas and access roads would be created. Should this conversion to undertaken, it would preserve the form of this building permanently.

- 2.7 To the north of the site is a farm track which is also a footpath which leads to the west, beyond which is the house 'Freshwinds'. Directly to the east of the site is College Farm House and on the far side of the road is a line of 9 houses which follow the road. To the south and west of the site are agricultural fields.
- 2.8 The village of Wyverstone is approximately 800 metres to the north of the site, and Bacton is approximately 2km to the east.
- 2.9 Access to the site is provided by the existing access track to the east which has served the barn in the past as well as the neighbouring property College Farm House. This provides two accesses to College Road. The accesses onto College Road have good visibility and a small development will not have a detrimental effect on highway safety. A Crashmap extract can be seen in Figure 2.4 which shows that there have been no crashes in the 24 years between 1999 - 2022 for when records are available.

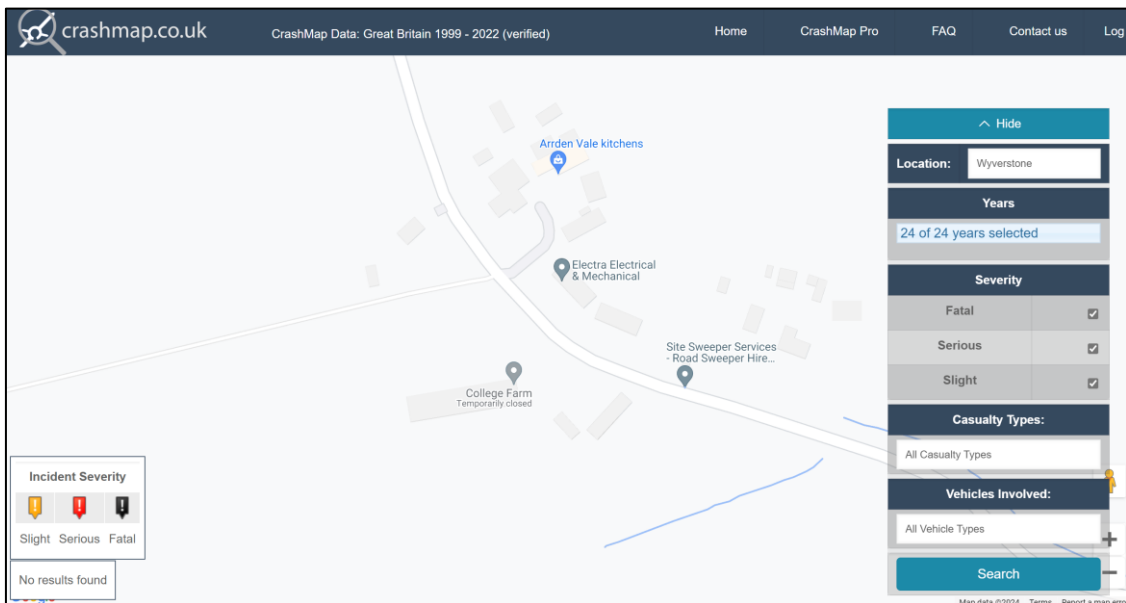


Figure 2.4 - Crashmap Extract

- 2.10 The Mid Suffolk Constraints map has been checked regarding the application site. This confirms the following;
- 2.10.1 Is within Flood Zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea;
 - 2.10.2 Is not within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, an ancient woodland, a local nature reserve
 - 2.10.3 There are no listed buildings on the site;

2.10.4 Is not within a conservation area.

2.11 The Environment Agency surface water flood map has been reviewed with regard to the site. This has shown that there is a large area of surface water flooding which affects land around College Farm as shown in Figure 2.4. The site has been specifically proposed to move development away from this surface water flood risk. The area proposed for development reduces the risk of surface water flooding to future occupants compared to the extant Class Q permission which, as shown outlined in Green in Figure 2.4, is largely within the area at risk of surface water flooding. Only a very small section of the access encroaches in the surface water flood risk area. To assess the risk this poses, a flood risk assessment of the site and the proposed development has been undertaken by BHA Consulting. This concludes that the site, buildings, and gardens are entirely outside of the area shown to be at risk of flooding, as such it is a significant benefit over the extant scheme. This has also assessed the depth of potential flood water across the vehicular access and concludes that emergency vehicle entry or egress from the site would not be impeded by surface water flooding, therefore it is a suitable location for the proposed development.

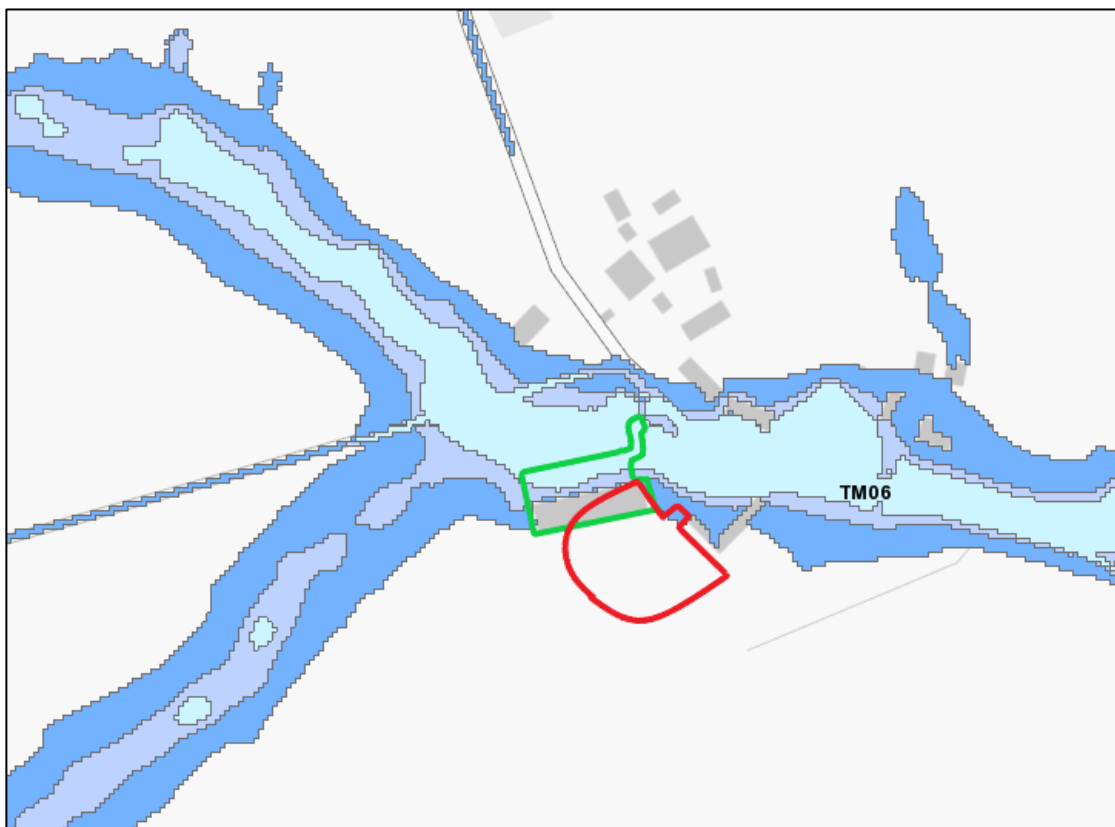


Figure 2.5 - Surface Water Flood Map - Application Site Shown in Red, Extant Class Q Outlined in Green

2.12 A statement setting out the quality of the agricultural land is included with this application. This confirms that the land is not the best or most versatile agricultural land. It is highlighted that this is a stepped corner of a field, as such it is difficult to manoeuvre large modern agricultural machinery in this area. As the following section will highlight, there have been farm buildings situated in this part of the field in the past, as such the soil has rubble mixed amongst it which reduces its productivity.

Site Historic Setting

2.13 The site is not within a conservation area and there are no listed buildings on the site. Town Farm House, which is a grade II listed building is approximately 120 metres to the east of the site. The site is screened by College Farm House which stands between this listed building and the application site as shown in Figure 2.6.

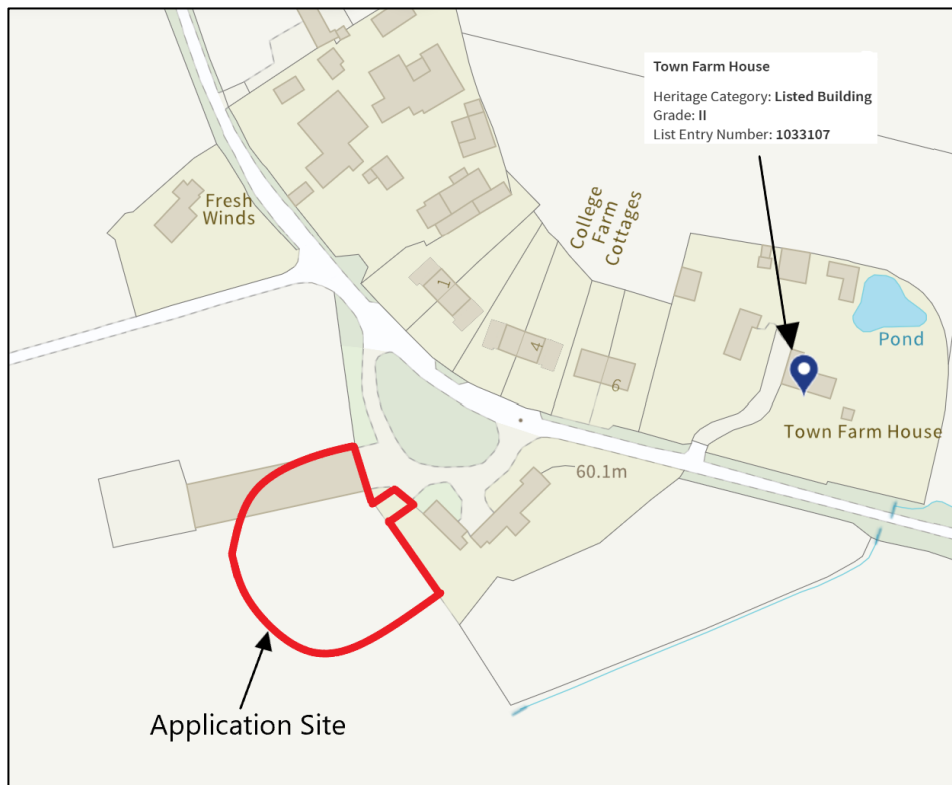

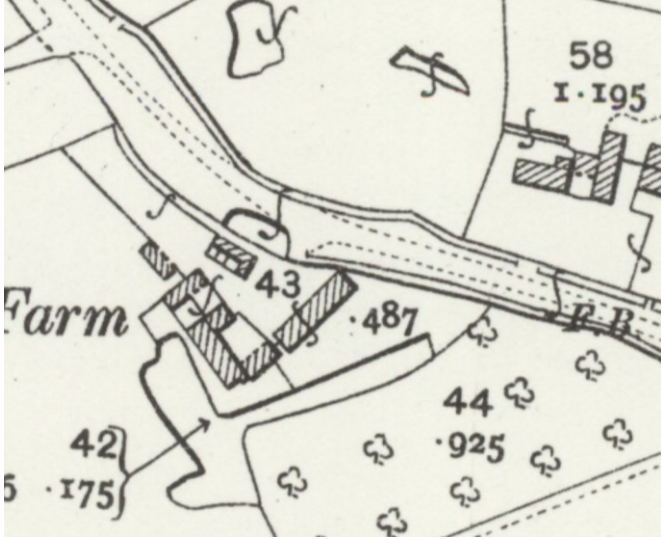


Figure 2.6 - Nearby listed buildings

2.14 College Farm has an entry in the Suffolk Heritage Explorer under record; WYV 043. This states that College Farm is; *“a 19th-century farmstead and Farm House. Regular courtyard U-shaped plan formed by working agricultural buildings, with additional detached elements. The Farm House is set away from the yard. Only the Farm House survives. Located within a loose farmstead cluster.”*

2.15 Historic mapping for the site was reviewed at an early stage of developing the proposal design and layout. As shown in Figure 2.4, historic maps published in 1884, 1904, and 1953 all show a range of farm buildings arranged in a horseshoe to the southeast of College Farm House. The application site matches the area and arrangement of the traditional farm buildings before these were replaced with the modern barn which is currently on the site, which was constructed in the second half of the 20th Century.

Date + Map Information	Map Extract
<p>Suffolk Sheet XLVI.NW</p> <p>Surveyed: 1884, Published: 1884</p> <p>Available at: https://maps.nls.uk/view/101577353</p>	 <p>This map extract shows a cluster of farm buildings arranged in a horseshoe pattern. The buildings are drawn in black with some internal details. A blue area, possibly a pond or stream, is visible to the left of the buildings. The map is on aged, yellowish paper.</p>
<p>Suffolk XLVI.2</p> <p>Revised: 1903, Published: 1904</p> <p>Available at: https://maps.nls.uk/view/114499582</p>	 <p>This map extract shows the same area as the 1884 map but with more detail. The farm buildings are labeled with numbers: 42, 43, 44, 487, 58, and 925. The buildings are drawn with hatching to indicate their structure. The map is on aged, yellowish paper.</p>

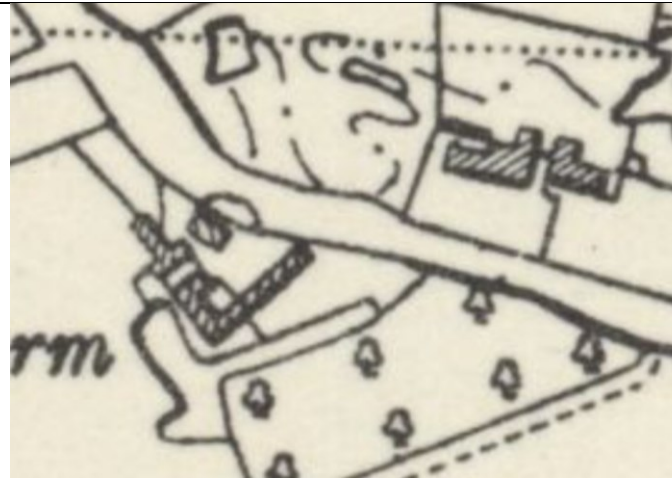
Suffolk Sheet XLVI.NW

Revised: 1950, Published: 1953

Available at:

<https://maps.nls.uk/view/1015773>

[47](#)



- 2.16 The existing barn does not have a beneficial impact on the setting of either Town Farm House or College Farm House. Should it be converted to houses as permitted in the extant consent, this will permanently secure the unattractive form of the existing barn in this location which would diminish the setting of this listed building. Its demolition will have a positive effect on the setting of Town Farm House and the character of the hamlet.

Proposals

- 2.17 This planning application seeks permission to demolish the existing modern barn and to build an attractive small development of 5 single-storey homes in a farmyard, barn-style layout.
- 2.18 The houses are proposed in a horseshoe arrangement, forming a central courtyard which will have car parking areas and landscaping made up of hedges and trees at the centre.
- 2.19 The proposals have been designed to replicate the historic arrangement of farm buildings to the southwest of College Farm House as shown in the historical maps. These new houses will be subservient to College Farm House and Town Farm House and will improve the setting of this listed building by creating attractive buildings which seek to replicate the form and style of the historic layout of this farmyard. A comparison of the 1904 historic map and the proposal can be seen in Figure 2.7.

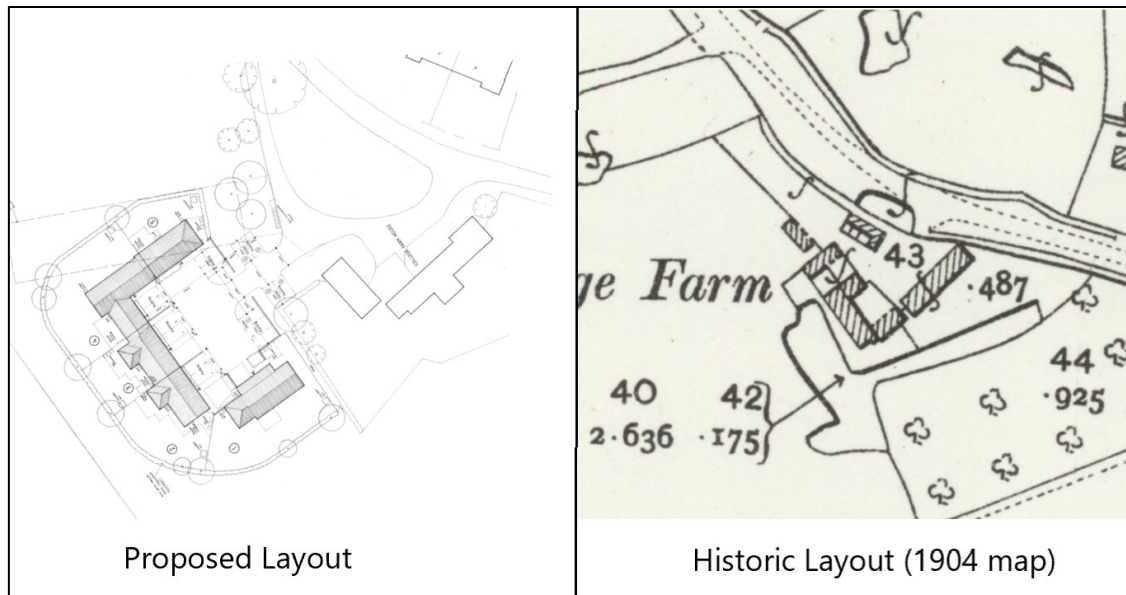


Figure 2.7 – Comparison between the Proposed Layout and the 1904 Map

- 2.20 This application proposes a housing mix of 3 x 2-bedroom houses, and 2 x 3-bedroom houses. 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.
- 2.21 The development has been designed by architect Les Andrews who has extensive experience working in Mid Suffolk and specialises in historic building design and traditional Suffolk architecture. The proposed development seeks to recreate a traditional range of Suffolk barns and include varying roof heights which give the impression of buildings which have developed organically, and provide visual interest to the development.
- 2.22 The houses include a mixture of facing materials, which are predominantly red-facing brick, but with areas of black weatherboarding. The roofs will be covered mostly with red pantiles, but lean to elements will have slate roofing. The bargeboards and fascias will be coloured black, to reinforce the agricultural character of the development.
- 2.23 The houses are proposed to be constructed to a high specification. They will include energy-saving features such as high levels of insulation, rainwater harvesting and energy-efficient air source heating. Areas on the roof for solar panels are shown

which will provide the residents with a source of on-site renewable electricity.

2.24 To the rear of each of the houses is a private garden area with a rear boundary of native hedging which will soften the view of the development from the countryside and will benefit local biodiversity.

2.25 The proposed development puts forward a significant amount of landscaping and planting which will have a positive impact on the street scene as well as soften the view of the development from the countryside. A comparison between the proposed scheme and the extant Class Q scheme can be seen in Figure 2.8 below.



Figure 2.8 – Comparison between the Extant Block Plan (DC/22/04228) and Proposed

2.26 As this comparison shows. The application seeks permission for a more attractive scheme in a more suitable location which will have a positive impact on the character of the area by breaking up the mass of buildings and locating it in a more suitable location, providing improved landscaping, design, and general layout as well as moving the houses and their gardens entirely out of the surface water flood area.

2.27 The view of the new houses from the road will be especially improved as the proposed development will appear as a traditional farmyard, which is subservient to College Farm House and is positioned in a historically accurate location. The low height of the proposed houses will mean that this high-quality development is not imposing on the other houses in the hamlet, or the countryside.

3.0 Planning Policy

3.1 This section assesses the proposals against the requirements of national and local planning policies. National planning policy is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) revised 2023. Local planning policy is set out in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Part 1 (JLP) adopted in 2023.

Principle of the Development

3.2 The NPPF states in Paragraph 11 that decisions should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development and approve development proposals where they accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

3.3 The site is situated in the hamlet around College Farm in Mid Suffolk. JLP Policy SP03 states that; *“new housing development will come forward through extant planning permissions, allocations in made Neighbourhood Plans, windfall in accordance with the relevant policies of the Plan or Neighbourhood Plans and any allocations which are made in the forthcoming Part 2 Plan.”* This proposal seeks to replace an extant planning permission, so is in accordance with this policy.

3.4 This principle of development was confirmed by planning officers during pre-application discussions ahead of the submission of this application (Ref: DC/23/04498). The extant Class Q permitted under prior notification reference DC/22/04228, provides a clear and realistic fallback which will be implemented should this alternative scheme not be approved. The pre-application advice confirmed that should the replacement scheme be confirmed to have a benefit over the extant scheme in terms of flood risk, and the land be shown not to be the best and most versatile agricultural land, officers would not object to the principle of the proposal. Flood Risk and agricultural land grading are discussed in the following sections of this report.

3.5 The principle of a Class Q permitted Development approval being considered as a fallback development was confirmed in the case of Michael Mansell V Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, referenced: [2017] EWCA Civ 1314. This case established that permitted development rights can legitimately represent a material consideration, which carries significant weight.

3.6 There have been several recent examples in Mid Suffolk of Full Planning Permission being granted for the replacement of agricultural barns with houses following a Class

Q prior notification approval. In January 2024 under application DC/23/04645, permission was granted to demolish a similarly shaped rectangular barn in the Parish of Rattlesden and to replace it with a development of 6 houses in a circular shared courtyard. It was concluded in the officer's report the Class Q *“fallback positions available to the site are considered to be acceptable in this instance as it allow for a fuller, more considered design approach to be undertaken and show the entire impact of the redevelopment within one suite of applications. Therefore, it is considered that the principle of development is established.”*

3.7 In July 2022, under application DC/22/02464 permission was granted to demolish a barn to reposition it away from the boundary. It was concluded in the officer's report that; the *“replacement residential unit would enhance the appearance and character of the vicinity to bring it into modern-day living standards”* And the application was approved.

3.8 Similarly, under application DC/22/06226 permission was granted to demolish and replace a barn in January 2023. Again, in the officer's report, it was noted that the amended proposal would *“enhance the appearance and character of the area”*, and the application was approved.

3.9 These recent local examples and case law show that the principle of replacing a Class Q consent with a full planning application for new build developments is supported.

3.10 JLP LP04 sets out the policy for replacement dwellings and is therefore somewhat relevant to this proposal as there is extant permission to use the barn on the site as a house. This draft policy states that proposals for replacement dwellings will be supported where *“the building to be replaced has a lawful use as a permanent residential dwelling.”* This policy also states that proposals for replacement dwellings must:

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

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

c) Have safe and suitable access and parking;

d) Reuse redundant or disused buildings where possible; and

e) In sensitive areas not be more visually intrusive than the original dwelling.

- 3.11 The proposed development meets all these aims, and so should be considered in keeping with the direction of travel of local planning policy.

Design and Layout

- 3.12 Local Plan Policy GP01 requires that proposals should, '*maintain or enhance the character and appearance of their surroundings...*'. The scheme seeks to improve the design compared to the extant Class Q permission DC/22/02464. It proposes the replacement of the barn with well-designed, attractive houses which are appropriate for the setting. These houses represent a reduction in the building footprint of the extant scheme from 562 sqm to 474 sqm, approximately 16%. While the position of the replacement houses has changed, this seeks to recreate the historic farmyard arrangement on the site and to break up the large mass of the existing barn. The updated layout also reduces the prominence of parked cars.
- 3.13 Feedback was received from the pre-application discussions which took place before the submission of this application. The pre-application proposal included a pair of semi-detached houses and a 2-storey detached weatherboarded house. Planning Officers advised that the;” design, *layout and appearance of the houses was overly intrusive and harmful of views*” into and out of the hamlet, the countryside and the listed building. It was felt that whilst there are; “*several modern semi-detached dwellings on the north-east side of College Road, the southwestern side of the road is not as urbanised in terms of character.* “
- 3.14 In response to this feedback, the layout, scale, and appearance of the scheme were redesigned, focusing on recreating the historic layout of farm buildings, and maintaining a single-storey range of traditional countryside buildings.
- 3.15 The proposed development will result in a substantial reduction in the impact on the public realm compared to the permitted Class Q consent DC/22/02464 for 5 houses. Under the extant scheme, the northern elevation of the permitted houses would have cars parked along the front of the houses which would be prominent from the footpath which follows part of the northern boundary of the site and for vehicles entering the hamlet from the north. The new proposals screen the vehicles within the central courtyard by the houses and the brick walls proposed.
- 3.16 The new design creates houses in a traditional countryside character with high levels of glazing, and bifold doors opening into garden areas which will provide natural light

into all the rooms. The houses all have good-sized gardens which have been designed to provide private outdoor amenity spaces which are not overlooked.

Sustainability

- 3.17 The NPPF states in paragraph 11 that plans and decisions should apply the presumption of sustainable development. In Paragraph 8 of the NPPF, sustainable development is stated to encompass 3 overarching objectives – Economic, Social and Environmental.
- 3.18 This proposal has been designed to meet these requirements. There is a local need for high-quality rental housing in the area, which the applicant has direct experience with as they have a long waiting list for tenants who are seeking high-quality houses of the proposed size and types.
- 3.19 Economically, there will be a local benefit as the applicant uses local builders and other tradespeople to construct their houses. The additional residents will help support the shops and services in nearby Bacton and Wyverstone. Facilities in nearby Wyverstone include a bus service, village hall and church, while Bacton has a range of services including a regular bus service, a shop and post office, a pub, a primary school, a nursery, a village hall, a playground, a football club and a bowls club.
- 3.20 As the NPPF states in Paragraph 83, houses in groups of smaller settlements can support services in other nearby villages, such as Bacton and Wyverstone.
- 3.21 Environmentally, the proposed houses will be built to be energy efficient and to provide future occupants with access to renewable energy. The houses will be constructed to a high specification with high levels of insulation, solar panels, rainwater harvesting and air source heat pumps. JLP Policy SP10 requires all developments to apply existing and innovative approaches to sustainable design and construction, which is met by these features.
- 3.22 While this application proposes the demolition of an existing building and its replacement, it is proposed that the embodied carbon within the existing barn be recycled in the construction of the new scheme. An image of the existing barn as it stands can be seen in Figure 3.1 below.



Figure 3.1 - Existing Barn View from South

- 3.23 As shown in this image, the barn is mostly constructed from brick and blockwork. This brick and blockwork can be crushed and used as the sub-base in the new houses and for the access roads. The roof is covered with asbestos sheeting. The roof would have needed to be replaced for the Class Q conversion so this will be disposed of by licenced contractors. Therefore, the embodied carbon contained within the materials of the existing barn will not be wasted.

Heritage Impact

- 3.24 As stated in Section 2, Town Farm House, which is a grade II listed building is approximately 120 metres to the east of the site. The NPPF states in Paragraph 212 that planning authorities should look for opportunities within *“the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance.”* JLP Policy LP19 states that the council; *“will have regard (or special regard consistent with the Councils’ statutory duties) where appropriate to the historic environment and take account of the contribution any designated or non-designated heritage assets make to the character of the area and its sense of place. All designated and non-designated heritage assets must be preserved, enhanced or conserved in accordance with statutory tests and their significance, including consideration of any contribution made to that significance by their setting.”*
- 3.25 The existing barn does not have a positive impact on the setting of this listed building. It is a modern farm building, built for a specific purpose without regard for the setting or character of the area. Should this building be converted into houses as per the extant Class Q approval DC/22/04228, the building will become more prominent as

the vegetation around the building will be cleared, boundary treatments will be created and domestic paraphernalia and cars will become more prominent. Should the barn be converted, this will permanently preserve this structure in this location.

- 3.26 The proposed development seeks to push the houses further from the listed building, into an area where there have historically been farm buildings as shown by the historic mapping in Section 2 of this report. The proposed houses are all single-storey which will reduce the impact of the houses on the setting of the listed building. The design of the development is in the style of a collection of farm-style buildings with a comprehensive scheme of planting. This is true to the historic layout of College Farm and as shown on the historic maps, is a compatible design for the area.
- 3.27 The adjacent property, College Farm House, is not a listed building. It is a 19th-century building therefore it is somewhat historic and an improvement to its setting is a benefit.
- 3.28 The development is entirely single storey which will further reduce the prominence of the new houses and will ensure that this range of farmyard-style houses is subservient to College Farm House and Town Farm House. This is in keeping with the aims and requirements of both national and local planning policy.

Landscape Impact

- 3.29 NPPF Paragraph 180 a) states that decisions should seek to “protect and enhance valued landscapes” and b) “*recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.*” JLP Policy LP17 also seeks to conserve and enhance landscape qualities.
- 3.30 This application seeks to replace an extant Class Q permission which would be prominent when viewed from the surrounding countryside. The limitations of Class Q mean that the external area is limited to the footprint of the barn, therefore no hedges or boundary treatment to screen the development from the wider countryside was included. The Class Q consent if implemented will result in an imposing row of 5 prominent houses with car parking and other residential paraphrenia areas for the new houses.
- 3.31 There is a footpath which is located north of the site. The extant Class Q approval would be very prominent from this footpath if implemented. The location of this footpath set against the Class Q permission can be seen in Figure 3.2 below.

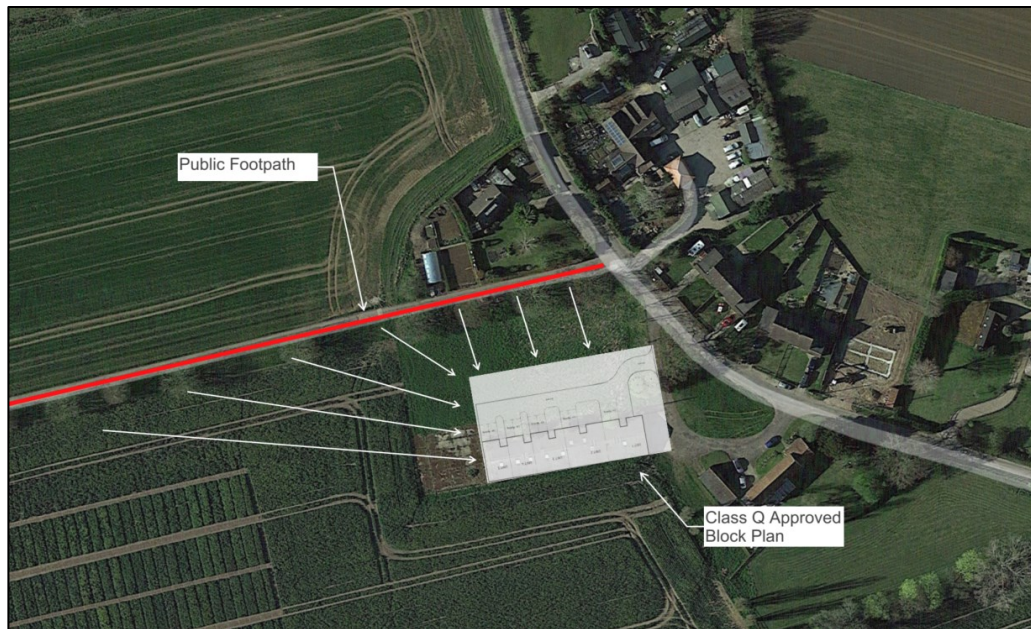


Figure 3.2 - Class Q Block Plan in Context

- 3.32 The proposed development seeks to improve the wider landscape impact by breaking up the buildings and creating a more dispersed development. There are large numbers of trees and hedges proposed around the development which will provide a high level of screening from the footpath and wider countryside.
- 3.33 The car parking areas are positioned in front of the houses, in a courtyard area which again means that these are not prominent within the landscape.
- 3.34 This represents a significant improvement to the extant scheme which is in keeping with the aims of local and national planning policy and therefore should be supported by the local planning authority.

Sustainable Transport, Highways, Access, and Parking

- 3.35 JLP Policy 29 1) sets out that all development *“must demonstrate safe and suitable access for all and prioritise sustainable and active transport and utilise these modes in accordance with the transport hierarchy.”*
- 3.36 The site is well-located to encourage active transport options for new residents. There is a connection to the public footpath network just to the north of the site, which is a paved farm road. This extensive network provides walking routes across the county, locally, pedestrian access to Wyverstone and Bacton is provided with only very short sections on the highway.

- 3.37 There is a bus stop on Rectory Road to the south, which can be accessed across a public footpath from College Farm.
- 3.38 The site is on a quiet country lane which is suitable for cycling. The village of Bacton is less than a 2-mile cycle from the site, entirely via quiet country lanes. There are a range of services and facilities in Bacton, including a shop, a doctor's surgery, a primary school, a pub and a church. There is also a regular bus service to the towns of Stowmarket, Bury St Edmunds, Eye and Diss. Therefore, there are both active transport options and public transport for future occupants of the houses.
- 3.39 JLP Policy 29 3) also states that *“all development must be informed by the relevant parking guidance, with adequate access for servicing and emergency vehicles”*, and that the; *“impact on highway safety must not be unacceptable and the residual cumulative impact on the road network must not be severe”*.
- 3.40 The development accesses the highway from an existing access which serves the barn and College Farm House. This access was reviewed by Suffolk County Council highways as part of the Class Q application process. No objection was raised to the proposed development on highway safety grounds.
- 3.41 The Crashmap record shows that there have been no vehicle accidents in this area in the past 22 years from 1999 - 2022 when data is available.

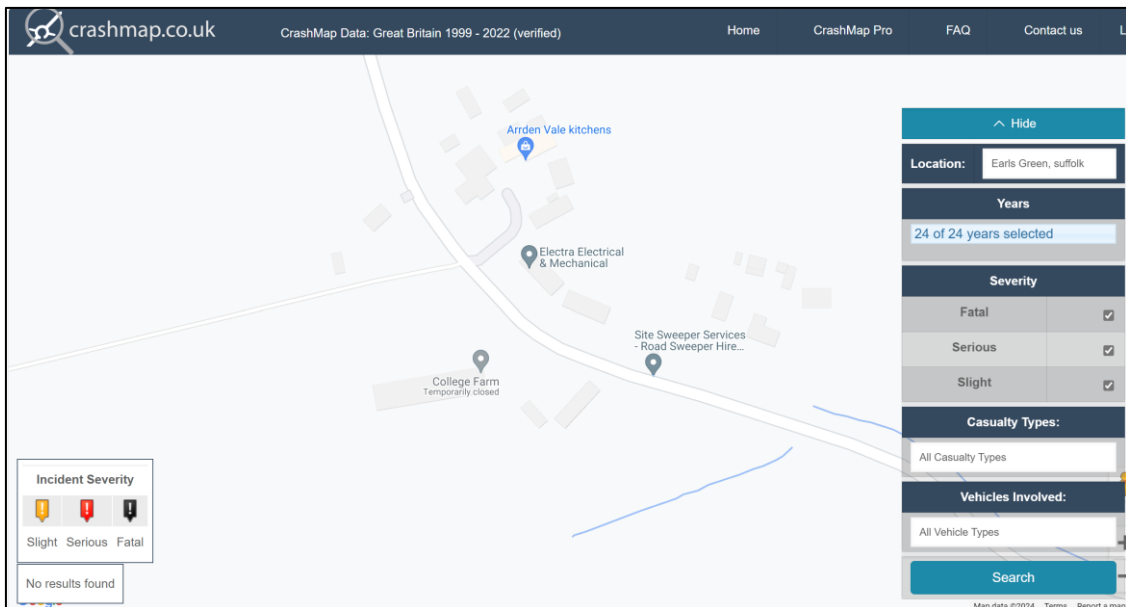


Figure 3.3 - Crashmap Record

- 3.42 The extant Class Q development fallback means that there is existing consent on site for 5 houses. Therefore, this proposal does not seek to intensify the use above what

is already permitted on the site.

- 3.43 Car parking for the houses has been in line with the Suffolk County Council car parking requirements which states that for 2 and 3-bedroom houses, 2-car parking spaces should be provided. Each of the houses is provided with 2 allocated car parking spaces and 2 visitor spaces are provided. Each of the houses is also provided with 2 secure, covered cycle storage spaces, which meet the cycle parking requirements.

Flood Risk

- 3.44 As set out in the supporting text for JLP Policy LP27, *“the general approach to flood risk is to direct development away from the areas of highest risk”*.
- 3.45 The flood map for planning has been checked and this has confirmed that the site is in Flood Risk Zone 1, where there is the lowest risk of flooding from rivers and the sea.
- 3.46 No objection was raised in terms of the risk of flooding during the Class Q prior notification application.
- 3.47 The surface water flood map has been checked concerning the proposal. This shows surface water flood risk around College Farm and some of the surrounding land. As such the proposal has been specifically designed to keep the development outside of this area of flood risk while remaining as close to the footprint of the extant barn conversion consent as possible. This is a significant benefit of the proposed development over the extant scheme, which would have had all the garden and parking areas completely within the surface water flood zone.
- 3.48 When constructing the new development, sustainable drainage features will be included as required by building regulations. As set out above, this application proposes a reduced footprint compared to the extant scheme so this will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere compared to the extant scheme.
- 3.49 Part of the access to the new properties is within the areas shown as being at risk of surface water flooding. As such a flood risk assessment has been undertaken. This confirms that the level of possible flood water in the worst-case scenario would not impede access for emergency vehicles and a route of least hazard is provided. A new link from the site to the nearby public footpath is also provided.

Contamination

- 3.50 The NPPF states in Paragraph 180 f) that decisions should enhance the natural and local environment by remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land. JLP Policy LP15 requires that; *“where necessary, the development will include measures to remediate land affected by contamination and avoid unacceptable proximity to hazardous sources.”*
- 3.51 A Phase I contamination assessment of the site has been undertaken. This confirms that with the demolition of the barn, the cement asbestos roofing sheets should be removed and disposed of by a licenced contractor.
- 3.52 It also identifies that there is a risk within the made ground from asbestos fibres in the garden areas, as such a Phase II contamination assessment and remediation is proposed. This can be required via the condition of any planning consent.
- 3.53 The removal of the asbestos roofing from the barn and its disposal and the remediation of contaminated land around the barn is a public health benefit of this application.

Ecology

- 3.54 JLP Policy LP16 states that development must *“protect conserve, restore and contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity and geological conservation interests including Priority habitats and species. Enhancement for biodiversity should be commensurate with the scale of development.”*
- 3.55 As such an ecology assessment of the site has been completed and a report detailing the findings is submitted with this application. This report finds that there are no protected species identified on either the site of the barn to be demolished, or the proposed development site. Mitigation and enhancement for any loss of habitat is proposed and this will be carried out in full through the development.
- 3.56 JLP Policy LP16 also states that developments must; *“identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains, equivalent to a minimum 10% increase for biodiversity.”* A biodiversity net gain assessment is submitted with this application which confirms that the proposal includes measures to provide above the 10% requirement.

Efficient and Effective Use of Land

- 3.57 The NPPF Paragraph 180 b) requires that *“decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by... recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits from the best and most versatile agricultural land”*. JLP Policy LP15 also states that *“where development needs to take place on greenfield land, avoidance of the best and most versatile agricultural land should be prioritised.”*
- 3.58 The proposed development is partially on the footprint of the existing barn, and partially on the agricultural field to the south of the barn. This location has been proposed as it seeks to recreate the historic layout of the farm buildings beside College Farm House and to move the development outside of the area shown to be at risk from surface water flooding.
- 3.59 An assessment of the land has been undertaken. This confirms that given the site is such a small piece of land in a stepped corner of the field, it is not the best or most versatile land. The loss of this very small piece of agricultural land will not impact food security or the economic viability of the farming operation of the region.
- 3.60 The land which this application seeks to use for development is a very small area in the corner of a field, approximately 0.25ha which is located adjacent to an existing residential house. It is an awkward shape which makes it difficult for large modern agricultural machinery to effectively farm. The site has previously had farm buildings situated on top of it and so there is rubble from these former buildings mixed into the soil. This has a negative impact on the quality of the produce able to be grown on the site.
- 3.61 This application seeks to replace an extant scheme which permitted the conversion of the barn on the site, and the use of the adjacent land for amenity space, parking, and an access road. This extant consent permits the change of agricultural land to residential. This application seeks to replace this consent and to reposition the development to the other side of the barn, so there is little change to the extant permission proposed by this application.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 This planning application proposes the demolition of an existing barn and the construction of 5 houses at College Farm near Wyverstone. This proposal benefits from the fallback position of an extant Class Q consent for the existing barn to be converted into 5 houses which will be implemented should this proposed alternative not be supported.
- 4.2 The proposed development puts forward a carefully designed scheme of houses which respects the character of the surrounding countryside and houses and seeks to recreate the historic arrangement of subservient farm buildings to the west of College Farm House. This scheme has been designed by a highly experienced local architect to meet the housing requirements of local people. The houses put forward in this application are 2 and 3-bedroom, single-storey houses which there is local need for.
- 4.3 The layout proposed provides an interlinked arrangement of houses in a farmyard layout which seeks to recreate the appearance of small farm buildings and barns which have developed organically. The courtyard arrangement and landscaping will help to screen the site and reduce the prominence of cars parked in front of the houses. The low height of the development ensures it remains subservient to College Farm House and the listed Town Farm House, and will reduce the visual impact on the countryside. The gardens are also screened by proposed hedge planting which will further screen any domestic paraphernalia and reduce views of the new buildings from the countryside. This is a significant improvement over the extant Class Q consent.
- 4.4 The development site has been moved to the south to recreate the historic arrangement of farm buildings in this area and to reduce the impact of surface water flooding on the development. Over half of the site area of the extant scheme is in an area which is shown to be impacted by surface water flood risk, however, the updated proposal moves all the houses and their gardens outside of this area with only a very small section of the access within the surface water flood zone. A flood risk assessment by BHA Consulting has confirmed that the projected level of any flooding will not prevent egress or access for emergency vehicles. Therefore, the proposal is a clear improvement over the extant Class Q scheme.
- 4.5 While a small area of agricultural land is proposed to be used for the development, this area has historically had building located on it, and it has been shown to not be

the best or most versatile agricultural land.

- 4.6 The houses have been designed to be energy efficient and to utilise modern building materials to create energy-efficient buildings with high levels of insulation. Heating will be provided using air-source heat pumps. Solar panels are provided on roof-mounted arrays which will provide occupants with a renewable source of electricity. Any reusable material from the existing barn on site will be reused as a sub-base for the houses and hardstanding areas so any embodied carbon of the existing building will not be wasted.
- 4.7 Overall, this proposal seeks to create a more attractive, better-designed scheme than the extant Class Q consent. The proposal put forward a development of the same number of houses, but a significant reduction in floor area and footprint. The development is more dispersed which will reduce the prominence of the houses in the wider countryside and will create a more subtle development in keeping with the density and form of the surrounding properties.
- 4.8 Local and national planning policy supports the proposed development which will result in a small number of well-designed, attractive houses which complement the character of the surrounding hamlet and the countryside.