

DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE **STATEMENT**

**PART CONVERSION OF EXISTING
STABLE BLOCK TO PROVIDE EXTENDED
ACCOMMODATION TO EXISTING
RESIDENTIAL ANNEXE**



**Little Choppins Stud Annexe, Spring Lane,
Coddtenham, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP6 9TN**

For

Mr & Mrs C. W. Taylor

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1. Introduction & Site Assessment

- 1.1 The application site lies within the countryside to the north of the village of Coddendam, to the east of the narrow, single-track road of Spring Lane, which itself runs northwards towards the neighbouring village of Stonham Aspal. The application site extends to some 4.2 Ha in area, gently rising eastwards from the hedged and post & railed boundary with the Lane and accommodates the Grade II Listed dwelling house of Little Choppins and its immediate residential curtilage, together with an 'L' shaped range of more modern, single-storey, cream-painted brick and concrete pantiled, gable-pitched roofed stable buildings to the north and a similar, smaller outbuilding to the east.
- 1.2 The existing main Grade II Listed, two-storey, timber-framed and pink-rendered, hipped thatched-roofed dwelling of Little Choppins on the site lies approximately 30 metres to the east of the Lane, with vehicular and pedestrian access gained via two separate, gated gravelled driveways from the Lane, sited slightly to the north and comparatively further to the south, with an internal gravel driveway then running around the dwelling linking between each.
- 1.3 The driveway running from the northern-most of these two access points runs between the Grade II Listed dwelling house and the more modern stable buildings and outbuilding, with a wider gravelled forecourt immediately to the southern frontage of the stable building.
- 1.4 To the north of the stable building, more recent Beech hedging forms the boundary to the shingled driveway running eastwards from the Lane and serving the Grade II Listed, two-storey timber-framed, rendered, concrete pan tiled dwelling house of Lower Spring Cottage to the north and a more recent and substantial timber-finished, pitched-roofed residential barn conversion of Stack House Barn.
- 1.5 The western-most end portion of the existing stable building has previously been converted into a residential annexe for use in association with that of the main dwelling house of Little Choppins (LPA Ref:- 0144/97) and is currently known as Little Choppins Stud Annexe. The proposals now put forward involve the further conversion of the remaining eastern-most portion of the 'northern' wing element of the stable building to provide for an additional wheelchair-accessible bedroom and associated, wheelchair-accessible kitchen and bathroom facilities as part of a larger annexe facility, enabling both carers and continued family accommodation to be provided.

2. Development Plan Policy Context

- 2.1 The application site lies within the countryside to the north of the village of Coddendam, to the east of the narrow, single-track road of Spring Lane.
- 2.2 In respect of existing Development Plan Policy, the site lies beyond the defined settlement boundary of the designated 'Local Service Centre Village' of Coddendam, thus despite its relatively sustainable location, technically lies within the countryside for planning policy purposes.
- 2.3 At the overarching national level, the planning policy context is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Document, first published on 27th March 2012, and more recently updated (December 2023). The PPF states that: "*At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development*". For decision makers this means "*approving development proposals that accord with an up to date development plan without delay*" or, where plans are out of date and the site is outside of any protected area, granting permission unless "*any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*"
- 2.4 Paragraph 38 underlines the positivity of the Government's intent, indicating that "*Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.*"
- 2.5 In respect of heritage issues, in determining planning applications which may affect heritage assets, Paragraph 200 of the Framework stipulates that "*local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.*"
- 2.6 Paragraph 205 of the Framework provides a positive emphasis with regard to determining such planning applications, stating that "*local planning authorities should take account of:-*
 - a) *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
 - b) *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, including their economic viability; and*
 - c) *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*"

- 2.7 The clear thrust of this Government Policy is that Local Planning Authorities should be looking to say 'yes' to development wherever possible, with a presumption, across the board, of permitting 'sustainable development' which accords with Development Plan Policy without delay.
- 2.8 At the more detailed, local level, the Development Plan currently comprises the recently Adopted '*Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan- Part 1*' of November 2023, which primarily provides strategic objectives and non-site-specific development control guidance against which to assess all proposals for new development within the Mid Suffolk District, within which the application site lies. Until such time as the forthcoming '*Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan- Part 2*' is published and Adopted, site-specific Allocations and settlement boundaries will continue to be utilised from the Mid Suffolk Local Plan of 1998.
- 2.9 At the more strategic level, Policy SP03 provides for the sustainable location of new development, and whilst establishes the principle of development within settlement boundaries, also acknowledges the circumstances where development elsewhere will be permitted, including residential annexes. Policy SP09 seeks to require all new development to support and contribute to the natural environment, whilst Policy SP10 seeks to ensure that all proposals for new development pay adequate regard to climate change.
- 2.10 Of the non-strategic, local policies, Policy LP16 seeks to identify and pursue opportunities to enhance biodiversity, whilst Policy LP27 seeks to ensure that adequate mitigation against the risks posed by flooding are suitably incorporated into all development proposals. Policy LP23 promotes sustainable construction and design, highlighting the measures which can be incorporated to achieve this aim, with Policy LP24 then seeking a high standard of design and appearance which suitably protects the character and amenities of the existing surroundings. LP29 then requires that development provides sufficient parking provision.
- 2.11 In a similar vein to Policy LP24, Policy LP19 specifically relates to the historic environment and seeks to safeguard and enhance the character and setting of existing heritage assets and the wider historic environment, whilst Policy LP17 seeks to protect the character of the rural landscape when considering new development proposals.
- 2.12 In respect of the proposals put forward, the most specific guidance is provided by Policy LP02, which provides the criteria for new residential annexes:-

Policy LP02 - Residential Annexes

1. Residential annexes will be supported where the proposal:

- a) Is ancillary and subordinate in scale to the host dwelling;*
- b) Does not involve the physical subdivision of the residential curtilage;*
- and*
- c) Is designed to easily allow for the annexe to be integrated later into the main building as a single dwellinghouse when the need no longer exists.*

2. *Where proposals for residential annexes are considered acceptable, planning conditions or obligations will be imposed to limit the occupation for use as an annexe, and to prevent the future use of the annexe as a separate dwelling.*

- 2.13 In this instance, whereby the proposals essentially involve the extension of an existing annexe (*the occupation of which is controlled via an existing S106 Agreement*) rather than the creation of a new annexe, there is clearly a need for a degree of flexibility in the detailed application of the Policy wording and criteria, which will be discussed within the subsequent elements of this Statement.

3. Involvement of External Parties

- 3.1 As advocated by Government Guidance, pre-application discussions have been held with Officers of the Local Planning Authority to establish the acceptability of the proposals now put forward (*PRE-APPLICATION ENQUIRY DC/24/01240*).
- 3.2 The Pre-Application Response received indicates the potential acceptability of the proposals, subject to confirmation that the proposals will remain as annexe accommodation in connection with the host dwelling of Little Choppins; will have no material impact upon the setting of the Grade II Listed dwelling house and can be readily assimilated with the host dwelling, should the accommodation subsequently not be required as an annexe in the future.

4. Evaluation of Site Assessment

- 4.1 The overall topographical, landscape and built features of the site and the wider surroundings (as indicated in the Site Assessment), together with the above pre-application guidance received and the applicant's practical occupational requirements, have together formed the basis for the amount, layout & location, scale, visual appearance and landscaping of the development now proposed.
- 4.2 These are now outlined in more detail below.

5. Use & Amount of Development

- 5.1 The proposals now put forward involve the further conversion of the remaining eastern-most portion of the 'northern' wing element of the stable building to provide for an additional wheelchair-accessible bedroom and associated, wheelchair-accessible kitchen and bathroom facilities as part of a larger annexe facility, enabling both carers and continued family accommodation to be provided.
- 5.2 As detailed upon the proposed Layout Plans, the existing 15-metre-long western-most length of the 4.1 metre-wide gable-ended element of the building currently accommodates a bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, living room at the western-most end, accessed externally via a personnel door within the southern frontage elevation. To the east, accessed via a separate external personnel door, two adjoining day rooms and associated w.c facilities provide additional family space.

- 5.3 The proposals now put forward involve the conversion of the remaining eastern-most 9 metre length of the overall 4.1 metre-wide northern wing element of the building, from two existing stable boxes and an associated small utility room to extended, wheelchair-accessible accommodation, with a separate, smaller carers facility then formed at the western end of the building.

6. Layout & Location

- 6.1 Whilst largely derived and commensurate with the applicant's practical occupational requirements, the overall internal and external layout of the built form now proposed has also been informed by the topography and physical features on and around the site, particularly the available envelope of the existing built form of the stable building.
- 6.2 As shown upon the submitted drawings, the main external alterations to the existing building involve the formation of two ramped access paths to enable wheelchair access into the building through respective new 1-metre wide entrance doors, with an existing door opening between the two then widened to enable the formation of a glazed, full-height window panel. At the eastern-most end of the building frontage, a further existing door opening would also become a full-height glazed window, whilst at the opposite, western end, a new door and two new windows would be proposed within existing openings.
- 6.3 Internally, the western-most end of the building would remain largely the same, but be re-purposed to provide a very modest, self-contained element for a carer to sleep, with the existing bathroom reduced in size and re-purposed as a w.c./shower-room. To the east, existing internal walling would be removed to allow the central area of the building to form a larger, open-plan, wheelchair-accessible living room and kitchen area. Beyond this, to the east, a smaller hallway area would then provide separation to a new, wheelchair accessible bedroom and adjoining en-suite shower-room facility.
- 6.4 At the very eastern end, a small utility room, accessed separately externally from the southern elevation, would be formed to replace that lost from the proposed additional annexe accommodation, to be utilised in association with both the annexe and main dwelling.

7. Scale of Development

- 7.1 As with the amount and location of the development proposed, the scale of the proposed development is largely contained within the extent of the existing available built form, aside from the two proposed external access ramps to the south and a new air-source heat pump, located towards the northern end of the western gable-end wall of the building.
- 7.2 The existing building has an external eaves height of only 2.4 metres, with the relatively narrow, 4.1 metre-wide gable-end then enabling the pitched-roof to benefit from an overall external ridge height of only 4.3 metres.

8. Landscaping & Ecology

- 8.1 As previously outlined, the existing building faces onto a wider gravelled forecourt immediately to the southern frontage of the stable building. Post and rail fencing with access gates then enclose this forecourt area from the access drive to the south, with more substantial soft landscaping then separating the access drive from the Grade II Listed dwelling house of Little Choppins.
- 8.2 Existing hedging then encloses the western gable-end elevation and the northern rear elevations from the remaining residential curtilage of Little Choppins to the west and that of Lower Spring Cottage and Stack House Barn to the north.
- 8.3 Whilst no obvious requirements for additional landscaping measures appear necessary as a result of the proposals, it is suggested that any such requirements deemed necessary could nevertheless subsequently be addressed via a Condition of any Planning Permission Granted for the proposals.
- 8.4 In a similar vein, whilst the proposals will have no material impact upon any existing ecological habitats, scope exists to provide an overall ecological enhancement of the site through the provision of measures such as bat & bird boxes, as indicated on the submitted drawings.

9. Visual Appearance

- 9.1 As outlined above, by virtue of the visually enclosed and contained location of the outbuilding concerned, set-back from the nearest public highway of Spring Lane to the west, together with the minimal external changes proposed, public views of both the resulting building and its wider setting to and relationship with the Grade II Listed dwelling of Little Choppins will be both limited and largely unchanged from those currently available.
- 9.2 Notwithstanding this, by virtue of the careful form and scale of the additional openings and fenestration proposed, the overall visual appearance of the resulting building will remain to be of an appropriately balanced, proportionate and attractive appearance, utilizing traditional rural building forms, materials and finishes, thus ensuring that a wholly positive visual enhancement of the building and its recognised historic setting within the surrounding rural area results.

10. Access

- 10.1 Whilst internal access and movement within and around the proposed building is largely the remit of other legislation (Building Regulations), the form and layout of the proposed conversion has nonetheless sought to achieve the best practical layout available to ease pedestrian movement to, within and around the resulting built form, given the specific need for wheelchair accessible movement.
- 10.2 With regard to external access to the site, as has been mentioned previously, pedestrian and vehicular access to the site would continue to be gained via the existing entrances to the building from Spring Lane to the west and south.
- 10.3 As detailed upon the submitted Plans, two additional, ramped, wheelchair-accessible personnel entrances into the extended annexe element of the building are proposed within the southern elevations of the building, whilst existing separate personnel entrances are retained to enable independent access to the carer's accommodation at the western end and the utility area for use in association with both the annexe and main dwelling at the eastern end.

11. Heritage Assessment

- 11.1 The key heritage assets against which the impact of the proposals need to be considered are the respective settings of the Grade II Listed Buildings of the main host dwelling of Little Choppins to the south, together with that of the neighbouring, slightly more distant, Lower Spring Cottage further to the north.
- 11.2 In respect of the built form of the existing outbuilding concerned, together with that of the further outbuilding to the south, whilst both are visually attractive in their own right and both suitably respect and complement the built form of the Grade II Listed host dwelling, both are equally and clearly post-date 1947, such that neither can be considered to be 'Curtilage Listed' and hence comprise a 'Heritage Asset' in their own right.
- 11.3 In this instance, given the significant visual and physical separation of the application site from the above-mentioned designated heritage assets of the identified Grade II Listed Buildings, together with the minimal changes proposed to the existing building in order to facilitate the further conversion to annexe accommodation, little if any resultant impact upon the settings of these acknowledged heritage assets will occur.
- 11.4 By the same token, whilst the proposals will provide a positive visual enhancement of their immediate surroundings, they will be unlikely to have any material impact upon the character or appearance of the wider surrounding rural landscape.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 The proposals put forward represent a wholly appropriate continued conversion of an existing, relatively modern outbuilding for much needed, wheelchair-accessible family annexe accommodation and associated carer accommodation.
- 12.2 As has been outlined within this Statement, the proposals will suitably respect the character, scale and appearance of the existing Grade II Listed dwellings adjacent and their wider historic rural setting.
- 12.3 By further utilising the extent of the available existing outbuilding on the site, the proposals will not result in over-development of the dwelling curtilage and will clearly remain subordinate in scale and proportion to the existing dwelling house, whilst will have no material impacts upon the existing residential amenities of any occupants of nearby properties.
- 12.4 The proposals therefore accord with the requirements of Development Plan Policy and represent the sustainable development which the Government suggests should be approved without delay.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

COPY OF LISTING DESCRIPTIONS

LITTLE CHOPPINS

CODDENHAM SPRING LANE TM 15 NW 5/44

Little Choppins Farmhouse - - II House, late C15. Timber-framed and roughcast. Thatched roof half-hipped at both ends. An axial chimney of painted red brick, and a gable chimney to right. A 3-cell open-hall house; 2 storeys. Mainly C20 small-pane casements; some original windows are exposed and glazed. C20 hipped plaintiled entrance porch, glazed, with battened and boarded door. The structure is unusually complete and fully exposed. The 2-bay open hall has all four doorways in the cross-entry, with hollow-chamfered 4-centred arches. The hall open truss is concealed, but part of the chamfered arch-braces are visible, with evidence for pilaster-shafts below. 6-light hall windows with transomes, some of the square mullions retained and glazed. At the dais end is good tension-braced close-studding. Complete smoke-encrusted coupled-rafter roof. The end cells have diamond-mullioned windows, and arch-braced studwork at the corners. Unchamfered heavy lodged floor joists; the service rooms were formerly divided by a wattle-and-daub partition. Evidence for speres at cross-entry and at the parlour doorway. An inserted upper floor with chamfered joists in the hall, with a large altered open fireplace backing onto the cross-entry, both of c.1600. A rear mid C20 2-storey extension.

Listing NGR: TM1390455846

LOWER SPRING COTTAGE

CODDENHAM SPRING LANE TM 15 NW 5/45

Lower Spring Cottage - - II House, probably C17. 2-cell end-chimney plan. 2 storeys. Timber-framed and plastered. Concrete tiled roof, formerly thatched, with C17 end chimney of red brick to left (the upper half rebuilt in C20); another of C19 to right. Early C20 small-pane casements. C19 lean-to pantiled extensions at either end, one having a boarded entrance door. Interior not examined.

Listing NGR: TM1388455912

APPENDIX 2

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS



Existing Southern Elevation of the Building





Existing western gable-end (above) and northern rear elevation (below)

