



STANFORDS

Land at Shamrock Farm
Marshalls Green
Assington

The erection of an agricultural storage building
Planning Statement and Heritage Impact Assessment.

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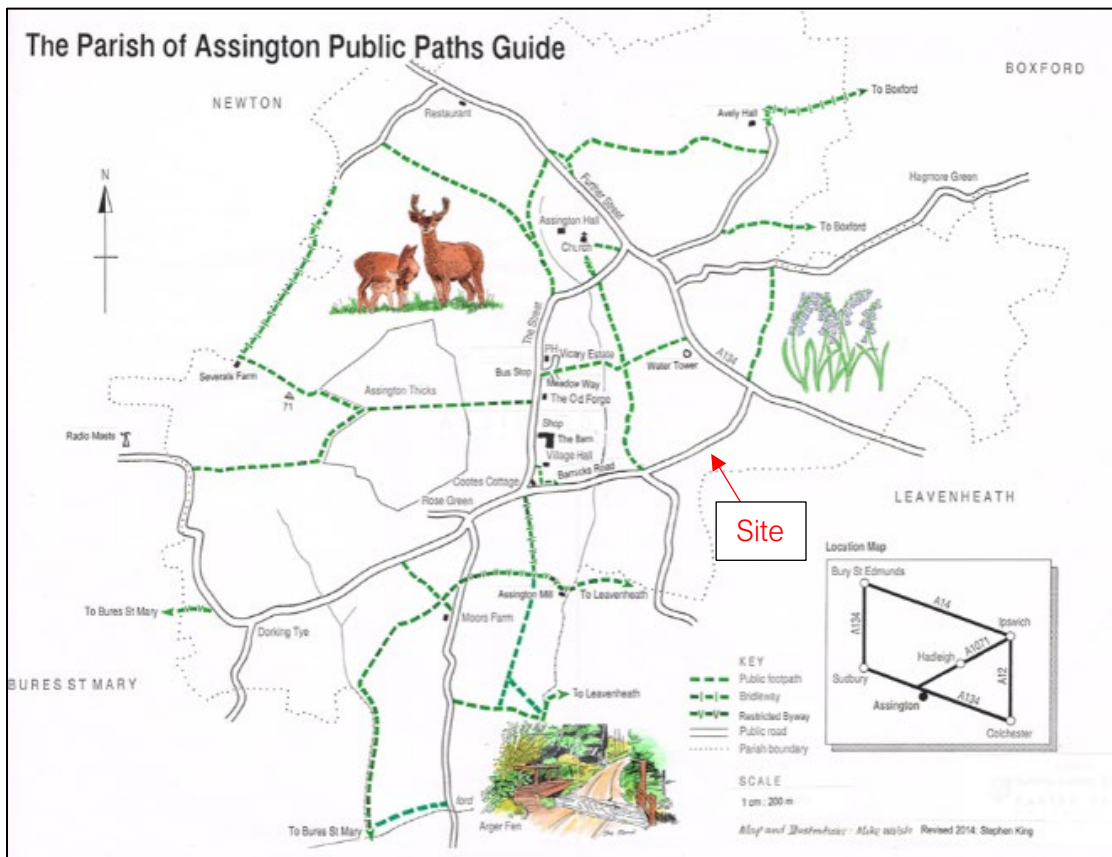
1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr Crisell in support of a full planning application for the erection of an agricultural storage building at land at Shamrock Farm, Marshalls Green, Assington, CO10 5LS.
- 1.2 This statement should be treated as forming part of the application and includes details on the site and its surroundings, the intended scheme and how it relates to adopted and emerging planning policies. Although the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2013 removed the requirement for Design and Access Statements to be submitted with minor planning applications, this statement is submitted to explain the rationale behind the development to assist the Local Planning Authority in making its decision.

2.0 Context of Site

- 2.1 The site is located to the southern side of Marshalls Green, one of the three connecting lanes to the centre of Assington. The site extends approximately 0.13ha and its authorised use is for agricultural purposes. Shamrock Farm once formed a larger agricultural holding however has subsequently been sold into separate parcels of land; the applicant purchased the site in 2006. The site has a grade 3 agricultural land value, which is good to moderate quality.
- 2.2 The character of the area is predominantly agricultural, with the dominance of the A134 to the east and the centre of Assington to the west. The site has the benefit of two existing accesses. There is a pig sty area to the western arm of the site, with an existing barn and small piggery buildings to the east. The applicant has erected a small polytunnel for the cultivation and growing of soft fruit plants. There are also eight telegraph poles which have been erected; the applicants' intention is to utilise these as the frame to the proposed chicken coop. This is subject of application DC/24/00479. The applicant lives within the village of Assington.

2.3 The site is located within Flood Zone 1. Shamrock Farmhouse is located approximately 40m east of the application site's boundary and is within a separate ownership. This dwelling is Grade II listed (List Entry Number: 1036690). The site is neither within the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Assington Special Landscape Area nor the Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity as defined within the adopted Neighbourhood Plan. There is a public footpath that runs from the junction of Marshalls Green with Barracks Road and High Road into the agricultural field to the north of the application site. This footpath route also forms one of the protected views to the north of the application site.



3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 A full planning application for the retention of a polytunnel and the erection of a chicken coop and polytunnel at the application site is currently awaiting determination (reference: DC/24/00479).

4.0 Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- 4.1 Paragraph 84 states that to support a prosperous rural economy, planning decisions should enable b) the development of agricultural businesses. Other than this, the NPPF does not explicitly discuss the approach to development within the agricultural industry outside of the Green Belt allocations.
- 4.2 Section 12 sets out a framework for achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 126 spotlights that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

Local Planning Policies

- 4.3 The Development Plan for the District comprises:
- Core Strategy – adopted 2014;
 - Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan – adopted 2023; and
 - Assington Neighbourhood Plan – adopted 2022;
- 4.4 Policy LP17 (Landscape) states that to conserve and enhance landscape character development must:
- a) Integrate with the existing landscape character of the area and reinforce local distinctiveness and identity of individual settlements;
 - b) Be sensitive to the landscape and visual amenity impacts (including on dark skies and tranquil areas) on the natural environment and built character; and
 - c) Consider the topographical cumulative impact on landscape sensitivity.

- 4.5 Policy LP22 (New Agricultural Buildings) states that the suitability and sustainability of proposals for agricultural buildings outside settlement boundaries will be subject to all of the following considerations:
- a) The provision of safe and suitable access for all, including the mitigation of any significant impacts on the transport network and highway safety to an acceptable degree;
 - b) The nature of any proposal in the locality and its relationship and impacts with surroundings (including but not limited to landscape, design, habitats sites and protected species, heritage assets and their settings);
 - c) The impact on the amenity of nearby residential occupiers; and
 - d) The scale, nature and extent being proportionate to the purpose, function and relationship to any existing uses.
- 4.6 Policy LP19 (The Historic Environment) states that where an application potentially affects heritage assets, the Councils will require the applicant to submit a heritage statement that describes the significance of any heritage asset that is affected including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and sufficient to understand the potential impact.

Assington Neighbourhood Plan (2022)

- 4.7 There is no discussion about the agricultural operations in Assington or parameters for such development.
- 4.8 Policy ASSN14 (Design Considerations) states that proposals for new development must reflect the local characteristics and create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment.

5.0 Proposed Development

- 5.1 Due to the extent of agricultural holding falling below 0.4ha and 5ha respectively, it is not possible for the applicant to benefit from the provisions under Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A and Class B of the GPDO in this instance, thus full planning permission is sought.
- 5.2 There are currently two containers kept on site temporarily to act as secure storage for feed stuffs, hay and machinery relating to the existing agricultural operations at the site.

The proposal for a new agricultural storage building will act as a permanent solution whereby the containers can be removed from the site entirely.

- 5.3 The applicant has historically kept pigs at the site. Nine Iron Age pigs and fourteen hens have been kept at the site December 2023. The applicant's intentions are to improve the infrastructure at the site to expand the number of pigs and chickens kept for egg laying and butchery purposes with up to 100 hens and 30 pigs total at any one time. The applicant has already been in discussions with the local village farm shop and has been approved to sell the eggs produced there. The keeping and rearing of the pigs and chickens at the site does not require planning permission.
- 5.4 The agricultural storage building would be constructed from English oak sourced locally and would have an external floor area of 28m², 3.5m in width and 8m in length. The barn would be 2m to the eaves and 3m to the ridge. The building will not be used for the accommodation of livestock and used only as a storage facility. Given the size of the holding, the proposed scale of the barn can only be considered appropriate.
- 5.5 The site has the benefit of two accesses onto Marshalls Green. This road has a speed limit of 60mph. In terms of visibility splays, 2.4m x 165m northeast and 2.4m x 220m southwest are available from the access to the east and 2.4m x 190m northeast and 2.4m x 215m southwest are available from the access to the west. No planning permission is required for the use of these accesses for agricultural purposes and do not form part of this application. However, it can be determined that the visibility splays available are adequate to ensure safe entrance and egress from the site with ability to turn within the site and leave in a forward gear. Given the restricted size of the site, and low level of activity, there are a maximum of two movements a day from the site. Thus, the proposal complies with criteria a) of Policy LP22.
- 5.6 The site is well screened by mature hedgerow, trees and fencing. The scheme has been designed around the retention of all planting as it is the applicant's intention to contribute to a diverse countryside agriculturally and arboriculturally. The scale of the operations for the keeping of chickens and pigs, alongside the soft fruit plant growing, can only be considered proportionate to the size of the site and its constraints. The purpose is to provide soft fruit, eggs, and meats to the local farm shop in the village. It is well situated as the dominant surrounding use is agriculture. The relationship between the smallholding

and the nearest unrelated dwelling is discussed within the Heritage Impact Assessment section of this report.

6.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

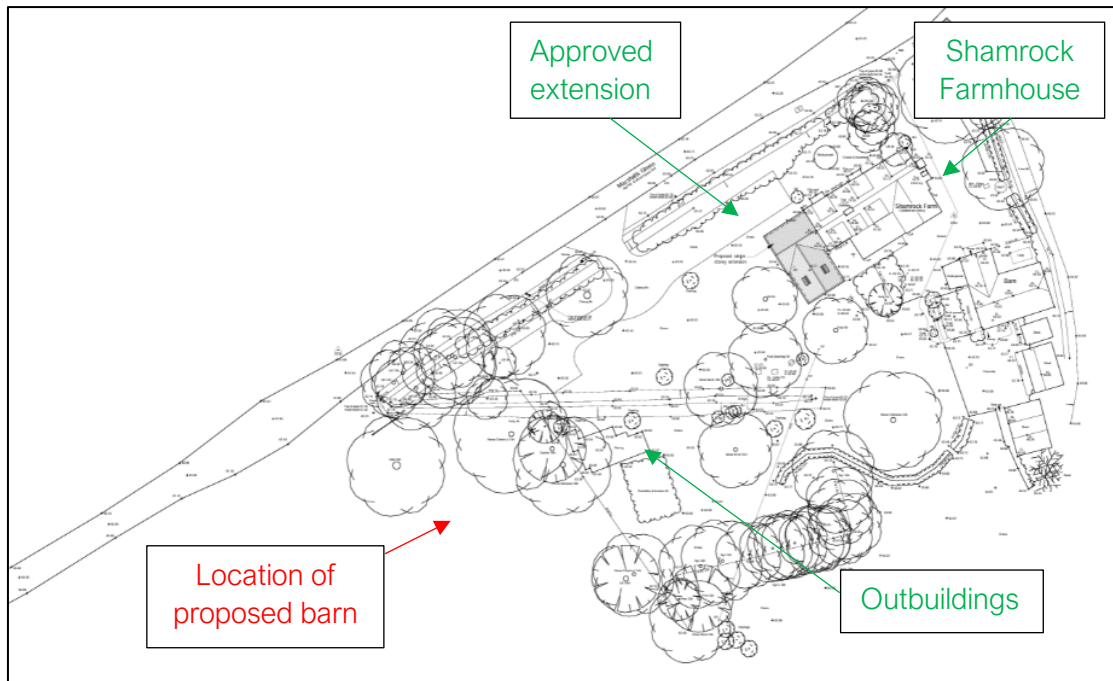
6.1 There are no non-designated heritage assets in the vicinity nor is the site within a conservation area. The site is neither within the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Assington Special Landscape Area nor the Area of Local Landscape Sensitivity as defined within the adopted Neighbourhood Plan. There is a dwelling known as Shamrock Farmhouse 40m east of the boundary of proposed development site which is Grade II listed (List UID: 1224934). The official List entry reads as follows:

A C17-C18 timber-framed and plastered house with C19 external features. 1 storey and attics. On the south side the windows are double-hung sashes with vertical glazing bars and on the north side there are 2 modern bay windows. Roof thatched with 2 dormers on the south side. At the east end there is an external chimney stack.



Figure 1: View of Shamrock Farmhouse from Marshalls Green facing south. Photo dated 2023.

6.2 Planning permission and Listed Building Consent were granted in June 2022 for the erection of a new side/rear extension at Shamrock Farmhouse (references: DC/22/00026 and DC/22/00027).



6.3 The NPPF definition of 'significance' states that in the planning context heritage interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. The architectural and artistic interest definition relevant in this instance is 'These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.'

6.4 The List entry is clear that the significance of Shamrock Farmhouse are the original timber frame and nineteenth century external features such as the dormers in the eaves and the thatched roof in part. The significance of the farmhouse also is derived from the series of farm buildings which occupy its curtilage. One of the farm buildings have been converted into an annexe and another into a separate dwelling (references: B/97/01236 and DC/20/05175 respectively). With addition of the domestic glazing and increase in garden space and subsequently paraphernalia, the fundamental significance and setting of the listed building has been altered.

- 6.5 The external material proposed to construct the agricultural storage building have been chosen by the applicant as the English oak can be sourced locally and to ensure a distinct separation to that of the heritage asset whilst respecting its character in the countryside. The English oak would not appear out of character to the area, nor would detract from the setting or significance of the farmhouse. Given the storage-only nature of the use, it is highly unlikely that any noise or disturbance from the proposed barn will be caused to the farmhouse. Hours of operation can be secured by way of a planning condition.
- 6.6 It is considered that the subservient nature of the proposed barn would have no impact on the heritage asset. Therefore, neither a 'substantial' or 'less than substantial harm' is identified with the proposed barn. However, if the Council deem that a 'less than substantial' harm is applicable, paragraph 202 of the NPPF would apply where public benefit and optimum viable use should weigh in the planning balance. Paragraph 020 of the PPG makes clear that public benefits could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in paragraph 8 of the NPPF. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit.
- 6.7 In terms of public benefit, the proposal would enable the secure storage supporting the existing and future agricultural operation for additional egg, soft fruit, and meat production for the local farm shop less than a mile from the site for the consumption of the villagers. This can only be considered a sustainable field-to-fork cycle. This would ensure the authenticity of the farm shop in terms of local produce. The economic benefits would be to the village in terms of local spending as a whole and employment of a local resident. In terms of optimum viable use, the site's authorised use is for agriculture, and this is to be retained. This planning application seeks to merely improve the infrastructure at the site to do so, which does not have the benefit of permitted development rights due to its size. This land also once formed part of the wider Shamrock Farm, which was an operating agricultural holding which has since ceased within the farmstead. Therefore, this can only be considered the optimal viable use.