Nutts Lane, Holbeach St Johns

Design and Access Statement

July 2025

Client: Mr K & Mrs R Baxter

Project: Proposed new zero-carbon innovative self-build home and annex

Project no: 614

STUDIO11
architecture

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Executive Summary

This Design and Access Statement is intended as a supporting document that accompanies a planning application for a new self-build dwelling and annex on land off Nutts Lane, Holbeach St Johns. The information contained within this document seeks to establish the justification for the sites design in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework and the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan.

1.2 Background

The applicants (who are also the Authors of this document) live within the District. Mr Baxter has lived in and around Holbeach all his life and spent the first 7 years of his life living on a modest farm holding along Nutts Lane.

Mr Baxter is the *Founder and Creative Director* of Studio 11 Architecture and Mrs Baxter is the *Managing Director* of Studio 11 Architecture as well as being the *Communications and Marketing Manager* for the National Custom and Self-build Association (NaCSBA). They have three children who attend school and nursery in Spalding.

Studio 11 Architecture was founded in 2008 in the spare room of Mr Baxter's then home in Holbeach. The Practice has since grown to achieve national recognition for its work in Architectural Technology and in particular highly sustainable rural self-build homes. This work was recognised in national television coverage on Grand Designs (South Lincolnshire House) and within the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists internal AT Awards where Studio 11 Architecture won the overall award in 2021 and was Commended in 2022 whilst being a finalist in 2023.

The Practice has already designed several exceptional houses within the District - Grand Designs South Lincolnshire House, Bekstone House (Paragraph 55 Home in Crowland) and the zero-carbon home on land off Glenside North, Pinchbeck.

Currently the Practice employs six team members within the studio and a further two employees working from home. It is not the Directors intention to expand the business significantly but there is a need to provide stability to the business and allow for future modest organic growth.

1.3 The Vision

The proposals within this application seek to take the above existing exceptional projects and build upon them, by providing a self-build home and annex that exceeds their environmental credentials, provides a research and development platform and creates a showcase of how innovation through Architectural Technology can significantly improve how we live and work within buildings.



Image Showing the Position of the Proposed Site in Relation to the Settlement of Whaplode St Catherine and Holbeach St John's



Grand Designs South Lincolnshire House - Low Fulney

Completed 2021



Bekstone House - Crowland

Completed 2022



King Street, Kings Lynn

Completed 2020



Glenn Side North, Pinchbeck

Under Construction

Key Studio 11 Architecture Rural Homes

2.0 Planning Policy Review & Material Planning Considerations

2.1 The Need for Housing

There is a substantial need for housing within the United Kingdom and this is reflected in the Governments aspirations to deliver 1.5 million homes over the next parliamentary period. The Government have recently published a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which does include a revision to the methodology to determining housing need. It is likely that this change will have an affect on the amount of housing required in each District authority.

South Holland District Council have the adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan which outlines their strategy for addressing housing need for the period 2011 - 2036. The Local Plan identifies housing numbers, tenures and distribution of housing across the District. Within the Local Plan reference is made to Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding but there are no specific policies which demonstrate how the Council intends to meet its obligations under the Act.

2.2 The Need for Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing

The Government now recognise that self-build and custom-build housing is an aspect of housing need which must be addressed specifically, to ensure that demand is met. It was previously addressed within Paragraph 159 of the NPPF 2012, which required local planning authorities to take this into account in the demand for housing. However, this did not lead to any significant level of provision of land for use by self and custom builders. The latest National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) states within Paragraph 61:

'To support the Governments objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.'

Paragraph 63 of the NPPF requires local policies to recognise the need for the variety of housing:

'Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.'

The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016, requires local authorities, including District Councils, to keep a register of people who are seeking land to construct their own self-build homes. The Act also contains a **'duty'**, which requires local planning authorities to grant planning permission for sufficient plots for self-builders to meet the level of demand. This is established by the number of people (or groups) registering for plots, and the level of demand in each 12-month period must be met within the following 3 years.

The Act requires local planning authorities to have regard to guidance provided by the Secretary of State, namely the PPG. This sets out the duty which local planning authorities are under in this regard. It also notes the following:

'The planning functions of an authority may include both plan-making and decision-taking functions. The registers that relate to their area may be a material consideration in decision-taking. Relevant authorities with plan-making functions should use their evidence on demand for this form of housing from the registers that relate to their area in developing their Local Plan and associated documents.'

The Councils progress with complying with this duty is therefore highly relevant to this planning application. The Adopted Local Plan does not include a specific policy relating to self-build or custom housebuilding but does state:

'The Local Plan will also seek to meet the housing needs of non-travelling Gypsy and Traveller households and also custom and self builders as they may come forward.'

The latest figures released by Government show that 64,233 people wish to self-build their own home in the UK. For the year 2022 to 2023 5,182 permissions were granted which is less than 10% of the requirement.

The latest data provided by South Holland District Council shows that 98 people have signed the Self-Build Register. No data has been provided by the Council for permissions granted however the author of this report has some knowledge of this and can confirm that Studio 11 Architecture have obtained planning permission for 13 plots. Clearly that is a significant deficit of 85 plots and to date on all self-build applications the Council have confirmed that they are not meeting their statutory duty under the Act.

The Governments National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides the following guidance on what self-build and custom housing is:

'In considering whether a home is a self-build or custom build home, relevant authorities must be satisfied that the initial owner of the home will have primary input into its final design and layout.

Off-plan housing, homes purchased at the plan stage prior to construction and without input into the design and layout from the buyer, are not considered to meet the definition of self-build and custom housing.'

This demonstrates that self-build and custom housing is a defined type of housing in itself that has a specific need demonstrated through the Local Authority register.

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government wrote to all local authority leaders in England, on the 30th October 2020, which the Government had announced was right to build day. This letter restates Councils duties under the Act. It came shortly before the PPG was updated, in November 2020, and then again in February 2021, also to clarify these duties; this is something which must be taken into account in determining applications such as this one, and concludes as follows:

'Self and custom housebuilding remains a key component of this Governments wider housing strategy to create the quality homes and places this country needs. I trust that you will join me in supporting this growing sector.'

In 2021 the then Prime Minister launched an independent review of the upscaling of self-build and custom housing chaired by Richard Bacon MP. This review produced a report with key recommendations which the Government have warmly welcomed.

More recently the introduction of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) and particularly Section 123 of the Act which came into force on the 31st January 2024 have reinforced the Governments view that self-build and custom housebuilding has its own demand and that Councils should have due regard to this demand in granting planning permissions.

Through LURA Councils now have three statutory duties in relation to the Self-build and Custom housebuilding Act:

1. A duty to establish and maintain a CSB register;
2. Duty to have regard to the CSB Register in 'planning functions' (i.e Local Plans) plus housing, regeneration & land disposal functions
3. Duty to **grant** sufficient CSB permissions (Section 2A Duty)

The explanatory text goes on to confirm that demand is cumulative (i.e all entries from 2016 onwards) and that the supply of plots can only be counted if they are a suitable permission. This being permission restricted to self-build or custom housebuilding through the use of planning condition, Section 106 or Unilateral Undertaking.

Whilst it is clear that the Council are making some effort towards provision by granting some permissions there still remains a significant under provision of self-build plots. This suggests that the Adopted Local Plan policy for self-build and custom housebuilding is insufficient and on that basis we believe that this policy is now out of date. Furthermore based on this authors knowledge of the permissions granted virtually all permissions are on sites outside of settlement boundaries which shows that plot purchasers are having to source there own plots rather than the Council meeting their duty of ensuring sufficient permissions have been granted to meet need.

We believe that the Council's failure to meet its duty to provide sufficient suitable plots for self-builders is highly material to this planning application, as set out in national policy, guidance and recent Appeal Decisions.

In 2017 The Right to Build Task Force was established as a joint venture between the National Custom and Self-Build Association and the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government. The purpose of the Right to Build Task Force is to support the delivery of the Right to Build through the provision of technical expertise and advice. They also provide a resource of Planning Guidance documents which range from policy making through to decision making.

PG10: Counting Relevant Permissioned Plots confirms in paragraph 15 that "…,it is for the planning authority to demonstrate the number of permissioned plots and indicate why the council considers the plot will be built or sold as a custom or self-build plot. The counting of all windfalls or all permissions on smaller sites is not appropriate approach." It also confirms that the Right to Build legislation is designed to increase the diversity within the housing market, introduce new outlets for delivering high quality housing as well as open opportunities for self-builders on limited budgets.

The Right to Build Task Force have also produced a planning guidance document for Planning Offers when decision making, **PG10: NPPF and Right to Build Legislation - Delivering appropriate permissions**. Paragraph 50 sets out how Local Plan policies can be developed to provide CSB housebuilding, including permissive infill plots. Where no policies exist or where the Council is failing to meet its obligations under the act paragraph 52 is very clear in stating that proposals for CSB housebuilding should be given **'Significant Weight'** in the planning balance.

It is clear to see that all guidance on CSB housebuilding states that Local Authorities have a duty to keep a register and provide sufficient CSB housebuilding plots to deal with the identified need within register. South Holland District Council through their reported figures have a significant CSB

housebuilding need which is not being met through plots within settlement boundaries. This means that alternative locations such as the 'Countryside' in planning policy terms must be explored to deal with that housing need.

In recent years several appeals have been determined by the Planning Inspectorate which are of relevance to this proposal:

Limagrain UK Ltd, Station Road, Docking APP/V2635/W/23/3320506 - This proposal was an outline planning application for 4no. self-build plots. The Inspector found that whilst there was conflict with policies within the Adopted Local Plan and there was some harm to the 'countryside' and the European Special Protected Areas, that this harm was outweighed by the benefits brought forward by the provision of CSB housebuilding.

Land north of Thistle Barn, Lodge Road, Tivetshall St Margaret APP/L2630/W/3346313 - This proposal was a full planning application for the erection of a new self-build home. The Inspector found that whilst there was conflict with policies in the Adopted Local Plan including a reliance on the private car (given the sites position far from a settlement boundary) to meet daily needs that this harm was outweighed by the benefits of providing CSB housebuilding.

Land off Leaden Hill, Orwell APP/W0530/W/24/3347379 - This proposal was an outline planning application for the provision of 9no. self-build plots. The Inspector found that the proposal would conflict with the development plan in that it was contrary to the spatial strategy for the District and would not be located to reduce the need to travel by car. However, the Inspector attributed 'very significant weight' to the planning balance in respect of the provision of self-build plots and concluded that this material consideration was of sufficient weight to outweigh the conflict identified with the Adopted Local Plan.

All three appeal decisions provide consistent clear approaches to the decision making and outline that where there is a deficit in the provision of self-build and/ or custom housebuilding plots that this in most cases will outweigh the harm created by non-compliance with the policies contained within the Councils Adopted Local Plan. Furthermore, they also recognise that the weight that should be attributed to self-build / custom housebuilding outweighs any harm created by the potential use of a private car. This is significant and shows that nationally consistently that applicants are having to source their own plots outside of settlement boundaries to meet some level of need.

2.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2024

Paragraph 8 sets out the three aspects of sustainable development, which includes economic, social and environmental objectives. The social objective includes a requirement '***to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to the needs of present and future generations***'. The environmental objective includes a requirement to make '***effective use of land***'.

Plans and decisions are required to apply a '***presumption in favour of sustainable development***'. This is set out in Paragraph 11. For decision taking this means:

C) 'approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

D) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. 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.

Paragraph 38 states that '***local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way***', and that they '***should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible***'.

When determining applications, Paragraph 47 states that '***applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material indications indicate otherwise***'.

Paragraph 60 states that '***to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without necessary delay.***'

Paragraph 63 requires local policies to recognise the need for the variety of housing needed for different groups in the local community, including '***people wishing to commission or***

build their own homes.' The associated footnote within the NPPF advises local authorities to keep a register of those wishing to build their own homes and to '***give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand.***'

Paragraph 82 states that '***in rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs.***'

Paragraph 83 states that '***to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.***'

Paragraph 84 states that '***Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstanc-es apply:***

A) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;

B) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;

C) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;

D) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or

E) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:

- is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and

would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.'

Paragraph 85 requires significant weight to be given to '***the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.***'

Paragraph 86 requires planning policies to address barriers to investment, including inadequate housing.

Paragraph 110 states that '***The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.***'

Paragraph 124 states that planning decisions '***should promote an effective use of land in meeting the needs for homes and other uses.***'

Paragraph 129 states that planning policies and decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.

Paragraph 131 outlines that the '***creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve***' and that '***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.***'

Paragraph 135 sets out requirements for planning policies and decisions, which regard to the design of new development. This states that decisions should ensure certain design fundamentals are achieved which include ensuring that developments are '***visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping***', are '***sympathetic to the local character… while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.***', '***optimise the potential of the site***', and '***create places that are… inclusive, accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users'***.

Paragraph 139 is critical to this application and as such we have both evaluated the paragraph text in detail but also how the proposals can and will respond to policy.

Paragraph 139 states that **' Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides or codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:**

a) **development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/ or**

b) **Outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.**

Clearly there is a lot of information contained within Paragraph 139 which outlines many different approaches but to assist we have presented Paragraph 139 below in a simpler form:

- Development not well designed should be refused
- Significant weight should be given to development which meets the following criteria:

1. Development which reflects local design policies or government guidance on design;

and /or

2. Outstanding designs

or

3. Innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability;

or

4. Help raise the standard of design more generally in an area so long as they fit with the overall form and layout of their surroundings

Once broken down it is clear that Paragraph 139 allows significant weight to be attributed to the policy where any one of the criteria are met. Conversely it also suggests that where more than one of the criteria are met that significant weight should be applied to each criteria that is being met. This is a significant material consideration to this application and details of how the application meets the relevant criteria are outlined further within this report.

Paragraph 161 states that '***the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate.***'

2.4 South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2011 - 2036)

The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan manages growth up until 2036 and is the basis for decision making in planning within the District. Key policies relevant to this application are:

Policy 1: Spatial Strategy

Policy 2: Development Management

Policy 3: Design of New Development

Policy 4: Approach to Flood Risk

Policy 10: Meeting Assessed Housing Requirements

Policy 11: Distribution of Housing

Policy 17: Providing a Mix of Housing

Policy 28: The Natural Environment

Policy 30: Pollution

Policy 31: Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Policy 36: Vehicle and Cycle Parking

A breakdown of how the proposals meet each policy is outlined in the following section.

Policy 1: Spatial Strategy

It is accepted that the application site sits within the 'Open Countryside' as outlined within the SELLP settlement hierarchy. However, Policy 1 does make provision for development within the 'Open Countryside' and states:

'In the Countryside development will be permitted that is necessary to such a location and/ or where it can be demonstrated that it meets the sustainable development needs of the area in terms of economic, community or environmental benefits.'

Again this policy contains a lot of information and criteria to meet but to assist we have presented Policy 1 (d) below in a simple form:

- Development will be permitted that is necessary to such a location;
- Development will be permitted where it can demonstrated that it meets the sustainable development needs of the area in terms of:

  economic benefits

  or

  community benefits

  or

  environmental benefits

Policy 1 (d) is written in a positive light whereby where development does meet the criteria then proposals should be permitted. We believe that the application proposals

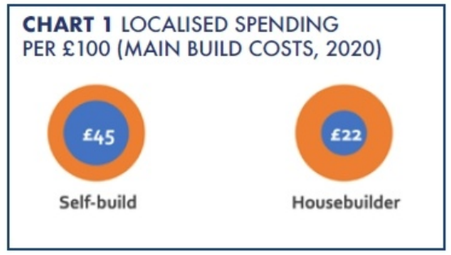
meet the needs of the area in terms of economic, community or environmental benefits and details are outlined below:

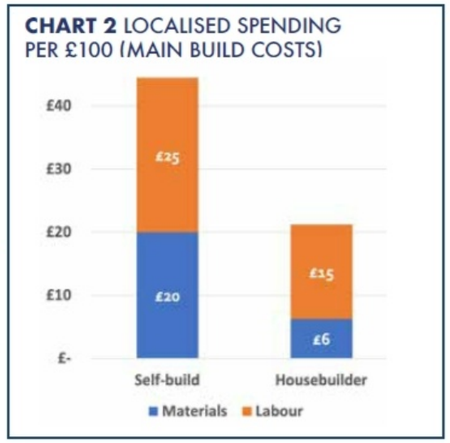
Economic Benefits

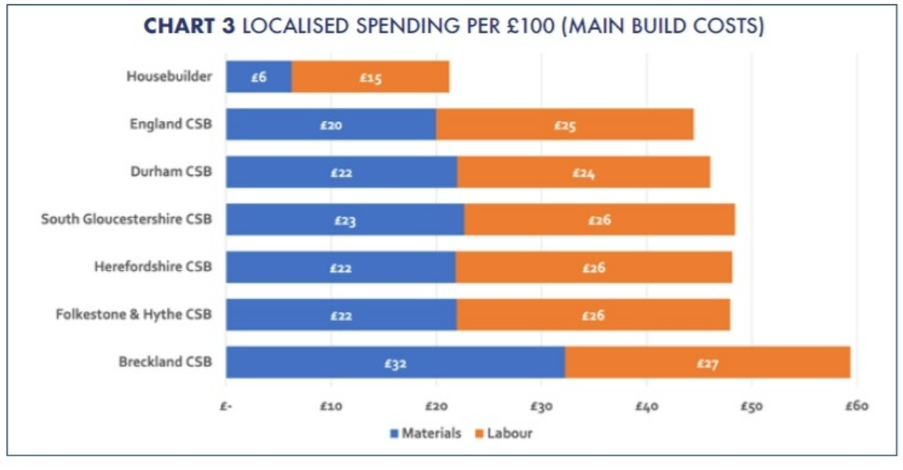
- The occupants of the new home and annex would work locally, support local services and make a contribution to the local economy.
- The business currently serves many customers within the South Holland District and this would remain rather than moving out of the District.
- The construction of a self-build home and annex would offer considerably more local economic benefits when compared to speculative housing. Evidence shows that self-builders are more likely to purchase materials locally and use local contractors. Thereby making significantly more financial contribution to the District.

Data from NaCSBA suggests that the economic benefits of the construction of self-build homes are almost double that of market housing. Recent appeal decisions recognise this as a significant material consideration in favour of the provision of self-build homes.

The recent appeal decision *Land adjacent to Langton Hall, West Langton (28th August 2024)* awarded significant weight to the economic benefits of self-build homes with the Inspector setting out in paragraph 45 *"evidence which suggests that custom and self-build development produces more than doubling of the beneficial local economic impact of mainstream housing when labour and materials are viewed together. Furthermore, the contribution of small and medium sized housebuilders to the provision of new homes has declined 69% since 1988."* They then go on to say that they *"attach substantial weight to the*







Graphs Illustrating Localised Spending of Self-Build Homes

Data: NaCSBA Custom & Self-Build Market Report 2023/ 2024

provision of self-build and custom build house. Further more, the economic benefit would attract significant weight."

- The new home and annex are designed to be a showcase of the occupants work and will inevitably bring national recognition as it has on previously approved projects within the District.

Community Benefits

- The provision of a self-build home meeting the needs of those on the Councils Self-build Register is a significant community benefit. Furthermore appeal decisions have shown that this provision is not limited due to the number of houses being provided as it would be for market speculative housing.
- The proposals would help to support services in Whaplode St Catherine, Holbeach St John's and Holbeach.

Environmental Benefits

- The home and office would be zero-carbon in terms of energy consumption and would include innovative design solutions to deal with overheating.
- The occupants electric and hybrid vehicles would be charged using site generated electricity with electric car charging being offered to any visitors to the site.
- The proposals include many ecological enhancements for the site improving ecology generally within the District.

Based on the above analysis it is clear that there are significant benefits in all areas and on that basis we believe that the proposals meet the requirements of Policy 1.

Policy 2: Development Management

The proposals within this application seek to provide well designed buildings and spaces that respect their local surrounding land and building uses. There are no historical buildings in close proximity to the site and ecological enhancements are proposed as part of the application.

The site is not at risk of flooding and incorporates sustainable drainage measures.

The proposals will support community services and infrastructure within surrounding villages and the town of Holbeach.

The site can be accessed by walking, cycling and public transport but it is accepted that nearby services are limited however that is not unusual for many areas within the District and the NPPF recognises the need to assess urban and rural areas differently.

The applicants currently live within Holbeach and use their private vehicles (electric and hybrid) on a daily basis to undertake the school/ nursery drop off and travel to work. All staff at Studio 11 Architecture drive to the office out of choice and the need for them to have a vehicle available to undertake site visits during the working day. It is likely that at the very least having an office in close proximity to the applicants home would result in the use of one of their vehicles on a daily basis rather than two vehicles.

On the basis of the above it is felt that the proposals meet the requirements of Policy 2.

Policy 3: Design of New development

A detailed appraisal of the site and the design response to the site is included in detail within this report. However, it is felt the design solution is of high quality and does raise the standard of design within the area. Similar projects within the District have provided national television coverage and set a benchmark to aspire to.

It is accepted that there will be some change to the landscape character of the area and a detailed analysis has been prepared within this report. The proposals would be visible from limited points and in most circumstances would appear with a backdrop of existing development.

It is therefore felt that the proposals meet the requirements of Policy 3.

Policy 4: Approach to Flood Risk

The application site is within Flood Zone 1 and on that basis is fully compliant with Policy 4.

Policy 10 : Meeting Assessed Housing Requirements

The proposals provide for a new self-build dwelling within the District and therefore meet the requirements of Policy 10.

Policy 11: Distribution of New Housing

Policy 11 relates to new housing allocations within the SELLP and therefore is not applicable to these proposals.

Policy 17: Providing a Mix of Housing

The proposal is a new self-build dwelling for occupants which

are currently on the Councils Self-build Register. It is therefore felt that the proposals meet the requirements of policy 17.

Policy 28: The Natural Environment

The proposals do not effect any international, national or local designated sites and provide significant ecological enhancements. The proposals are therefore compliant with policy 28.

Policy 30: Pollution

Policy 30 requires that all development take into account its potential environmental impacts and this application seeks to not only mitigate its impacts but also to provide a innovative framework in which Architectural Technology can be used to reduce CO2 emissions and respond directly to our changing world through climate change.

A detailed outline of sustainability measures are included within this report but it is felt that the sustainability credentials of the proposed scheme mean that the requirements of Policy 30 are exceeded.

Policy 31: Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

The application proposals are directly designed to respond to climate change and the effects of climate change moving forward. They aspire to create a new building typology that can be used within mainstream development throughout the UK.

Alongside the fabric approach to design renewable technologies will be included within the proposals and full details are provided within the sustainability section of this report.

It is therefore felt that the proposals meet the requirements of Policy 31.

Policy 36: Vehicle and Cycle Parking

Ample vehicle and cycle storage is provided within the proposals and therefore it is felt that the requirements of Policy 36 are met.

2.4 Relevant Appeal Decisions & Weight to be Attributed to the Provision of Self-Build

The Government attaches weight to achieving the objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. The NPPF is clear at paragraph 61 that in order to support the Governments objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward and that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed.

The importance of Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding as a material consideration has been reflected in a number of Secretary of State and appeal decisions. Of particular interest is the amount of weight which has been afforded to the provision of Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding plots relative to other material considerations.

Appeal Decision: *Corner Mead, Newland Lane, Drotwich Spa (13th July 2020) APP/H1840/W/3241879*

The Inspector found at paragraph 31 that:

"I do not consider the evidence provided by the Council is sufficiently reliable for me to conclude that the Council has met its duty under Section 2A. To my mind, some further analysis of the raw data is necessary…

...It is not sufficient to rely on CIL exemption forms without this type of further analysis, which is lacking in the Councils evidence. I conclude that the Council has not satisfactorily demonstrated that it has granted enough permissions for serviced plots to meet the demand for self-build and custom build plots in the first base period."

In undertaking the planning balance at paragraph 52 the Inspector set out that "*the proposed development would make a significant contribution to the supply of sites for self-build housing in Wychavon in accordance with section 5 of the NPPF and the associated PPG. There would be an economic benefit during construction and on-going support for local facilities, and significant social benefit in terms of the diversity of housing type which would contribute towards meeting the Councils duty under the 2015 Act. I attach substantial weight to this benefit*" (our emphasis added).

Appeal Decision: *Land at Church Lane, Whittington (20th November 2020) APP/H1840/W/20/3255350*

At paragraph four the Inspector found that for the second base period there was a significant undersupply and that "*consequently, and notwithstanding the existence of a five-year housing land supply more generally, the significant undersupply of self-build housing in the second Base Period carries substantial weight in favour of the proposal in helping to meet statutory requirements*" (our emphasis added).

In drawing together their conclusions at paragraph 10, the Inspector set out that although "*the proposal would not be in*

an appropriate location, conflicting with Policies SWDP1, SWDP2 and SWDP21 of the SWDP, as these policies seek to protect the countryside and significant gaps from urbanising development. However, I have identified an undersupply of self-build housing, and the policy objectives under paragraph 61 of the Framework, as a material consideration carrying substantial weight in favour of the proposal that outweighs the limited harm from conflict with the development plan in this particular case" (our emphasis added).

Appeal Decision: *Land behind 31 - 33 The Causeway, Steventon (28th May 2021) APP/V3120/W/20/3265465*

Inspector McGlone found at paragraph 24 that the Council *"...has not granted enough suitable planning permissions to address the demand arising the first two base periods (70 and 109 entries respectively) which was to be met by 30th October 2019 and 2020"*

At paragraph 26 the Inspector set out that *"the proposal would help meet the demand arising from the third base period (80 entries). As of 24th February 2021, the Council has granted 7 suitable planning permission"* and that *"the proposed provision would be of a substantial benefit given the period of time left for the Council to meet the demand for the third base period"* (our emphasis added).

He went on to explain in paragraph 28 that *"Approaches to unmet demand, which is a relevant consideration, have been considered in several appeal decisions. If I were to take unmet demand into account, the scale of the proposal would not change the substantial weight that I have set out above, nevertheless, the position would only confirm my opinion about the weight that I have given to the provision of this type of housing"* (our emphasis added).

In undertaking the planning balance, Mr McGlone found at paragraph 47 that: *The provision of self-build and custom build houses would be a public benefit as they would help the Council meet its duty, help address the established demand for this type of house and widen the type and size of housing in the area. These are substantial social benefits. The S106 would secure the provision of the self-build or custom-build houses and satisfy the relevant tests. Future occupiers would be likely to use and support local services, local facilities and local businesses. Consequently, the proposal would make a positive contribution to the local economy. The development of each house should also create opportunities for local builders, tradesman and builders merchants leading to local employment opportunities"* (our emphasis added).

Appeal Decision: *Land to the rear of Brock Cottage, Burford Road, Brize Norton (11th July 2022) APP/D3125/W/21/3274197*

The appeal decision relates to an outline application for 2 plots for self-build and custom housebuilding. Through paragraphs 16 to 23, the Inspector determined that the Council did not have enough suitable permissions to meet identified demand and therefore was failing in its duty under the 2015 Act (as amended).

Within this context, in the planning balance section of their report, the Inspector found at paragraph 34 that *"the Council has fallen well short of granting suitable planning permissions to meet the identified SBCH demand. Although the contribution to SBCH supply would be small, the extent of the shortfall, the statutory SBCH duty, and the identified economic and social benefits would be cumulatively amount to substantial weight in the balance"* (our emphasis added).

Appeal Decision: *Land to the east of Northford, Shrivenham (30th November 2022)*

The appeal proposals were for 5 serviced plots for self-build and custom house building with the main issues identified as relevant to the appeal being the benefits of the development, and whether the proposal would be suitably located with regard to development plan policies.

At paragraph 11 of the Inspectors report they found that the development would not be suitably located and would conflict with the Councils settlement hierarchy and strategy for housing delivery. However, at paragraph 14 they found that: *"The Council has not yet granted enough suitable permission to address demand arising from any base period, including the fifth base period."*

Paragraph 15 set out that: *"The proposal would therefore help to meet demand arising from the fifth base period, as there is no substantive evidence before me to suggest that other scheme is either being or likely to be considered or determined by the Council before the end of October 2023. The provision of five self-build and custom housebuilding plots would therefore amount to a benefit of considerable weight, given the length of time remaining for the Council to meet the demand for the fifth base period."*

The Inspector went on to explain at paragraph 16 that: *"Even if it were the case that the Council has met its requirement for the fifth or sixth base period, I am mindful of the approach discussed in the Steventon appeal. Moreover, there is no legislation, planning policy or guidance to demonstrate how undersupply of plots from previous base periods should be addressed. In that appeal, the Inspector reasoned that it would be illogical to not account for past under delivery of the of this type of housing given statutory duties imposed by*

the Act and the overall support for it in local and national policies."

In undertaking the planning balance, the Inspector found at paragraph 42 that there was no disagreement between the parties that the Council would demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. Then went on to find at paragraph 43 that whilst "*there is a clear rationale for focusing growth within built-up areas of designated settlements*" however "*there is not a specific exception to these policies that allows self-build or custom housebuilding to come forward beyond built-up areas and the Council has not met its responsibilities for the number of suitable permissions.*"

He concluded that "*the mechanics of policy or the application od it are not yielding the number of suitable permissions required. Accordingly, I am only able to afford moderate weight to the conflict of the proposal with these policies.*

In their concluding remarks at paragraphs 46 and 47 the Inspector states that: "*The benefits afforded to the proposal, not least meeting the requirements of the Framework and Act in relation to plots for self-build and custom housing, are material considerations that indicate that the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.*" And: "*This leads me to an overall conclusion that material considerations indicate the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. This would therefore justify the grant of planning permission.*"

Finally, paragraph 51 stated that: "*The proposal would conflict with the development plan, taken as a whole, but there are material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.*"

Appeal Decision: *Land west of Suffolk House, Ixworth Road, Norton (27th June 2023) APP/W3520/W/23/3316136*

The appeal proposals were for 9 serviced plots for self-build and custom housebuilding situated in open countryside in policy terms.

The Inspector found at paragraph 13 that: *I have reviewed the evidence and there is no doubt, even on the best-case position of the Council, that there is an actual shortfall of self-build and custom dwellings of a minimum of 133 units.in these circumstances, even if the reality is that the shortfall in supply may be greater than envisaged, the weight of failing to meet the statutory duty is substantial*" (our emphasis added).

And that: *I recognise the Council has been making progress in seeking to provide for self-build dwellings, but this does not reduce the weight or the failed duty. Such weighs in favour of the proposal as a departure from the Development Plan."*

He concluded at paragraph 21 that: "*The planning benefits of providing 9 self-build units, in light of an identified shortfall would be substantial*" (our emphasis added).

Appeal Decision: *Limagrain UK Ltd, Station Road, Docking, Norfolk (2nd October 2023) APP/V2635/W/23/3320506*

The appeal proposals were for four self-build dwellings, outside of settlement limits and in the setting of a Conservation Area.

At paragraph 50 the Inspector noted that "*the Council relies chiefly on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Exemption Part 1 Claim Forms to demonstrate it is meeting its statutory duty. Moreover, at the Hearing, the Council confirmed these are generally not supported by other evidence to provide certainty of sites coming forward, as this relates to marketing of a few larger multiple plot sites*".

At paragraph 51 it was explained that: "*I have reviewed the evidence before me in the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) and, based on all the above, there would be a significant shortfall in the provision of development permissions for plots for self-build and custom homes. While some plots could ultimately be capable of contributing to meeting the Council's Duty, the absence of other evidence for plots included solely based on CIL Part 1 Exemption Forms, provides too much uncertainty. A large proportion of the permissions referred to in the SoCG would therefore need to be discounted."*

They went on at paragraph 52 to set out that: "*The Council has identified it can demonstrate more than five-years supply of deliverable housing land within the borough, but this does not represent a ceiling on the delivery of housing. There is also no such ceiling to the growth Key Rural Service Centres, such as Docking, can accommodate or substantive evidence before me to demonstrate the proposed houses would reach a tipping point and result in harm to its facilities, services, or other infrastructure. I am also mindful of the Governments objective, outlined in the Framework, to*

significantly boost the supply of homes. The appeal scheme would amount to a small scheme that could be built out relatively quickly and would add to the supply and choice of housing in the borough."

In undertaking the planning balance exercise at paragraph 63, the Inspector concluded that: "*Despite the proposal according with several policies of the development plan, the conflict with CS Policies CS01, CS02, CS06, CS08 and CS12: and SANDMPP Policies DM2 and DM15 renders it contrary to the development plan, when considered as a whole. Nevertheless, the evidence before me points to a significant unmet demand for self-build and custom housebuilding plots in the Borough. Together with the benefits associated with it, this leads me to an overall conclusion that material considerations indicate the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. This would therefore justify the grant of planning permission for the appeal and lead to sustainable development, as advocated by SADMPP Policy DM1.*"

Appeal Decision: *Land adjacent to 110 Ribchester Road, Clayton Le Dale, Blackburn 1st May 2024 APP/T2350/W/23/3335737*

The appeal proposals were for a single unit self-build housing, secured in line with the legislative definitions by way of unilateral undertaking.

Paragraph 11 of the Inspectors report found that: "*Section 123 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 which came into force on 31st January 2024 made changes to the way both demand and supply of self-build and custom housebuilding are to be calculated.*"

With paragraph 12 explaining that: "*Demand is evidenced not by the number of people on the register at any one time but by the number of entries added to the register in each base period. Whilst authorities may remove individual details from the register, the number of entries remains the same, and retrospective removal of an entry does not reduce the demand figure. Moreover, unmet demand is now cumulative, so any demand that has not been met within the three-year compliance period does not dissipate but rolls over and remains part of the demand that an authority has to meet.*"

Paragraph 13 sets out that: "*In addition, the recent amendments mean that a development permission now only counts in meeting the duty if it actually for self-build or custom housebuilding - a permission is no longer considered suitable if the development could include self-build and custom housing. Whilst regulations are still awaited that will define exactly what can be counted as a development permission, the government have indicated that it is likely to require that for a permission to count it will need to be characterised by a condition or planning obligation making that requirement explicit.*"

Resultantly, the Inspector went on to state that: "*As such, it is clear the intention is that only land specifically for self-build or custom housebuilding qualifies towards a grant of permission to meet demand. This change means that it is no longer reasonable to count extant outline planning permissions as meeting the definition unless they have a mechanism attached to them to secure the development is restricted to self-build and custom housebuilding.*"

In respect of demand and supply, paragraph 16 reported that: "*On the basis of the evidence that is before me in relation to demand and supply, it would appear that demand is significantly greater than the Council estimates. Furthermore, given that only one dwelling has been granted permission that qualifies towards meeting this demand, and unmet demand has to roll over, it is likely that demand is likely to increase in forth coming years.*"

Concluding on this matter, the Inspector found that: "*Although the appeal scheme is only for 1 dwelling, I consider that substantial weight should be given to the fact that it is a self-build dwelling that would contribute towards meeting the significant demand for such housing in the borough.*"

Appeal Decision: *Land adjacent to Langton Hall, West Langton (28th August 2024)*

The conjoined appeal proposals were for two self-build plots (Appeal A) and a single self-build plot (Appeal B) on the same site which was located within a Registered Park and Garden and within the setting of Grade II listed heritage assets.

At paragraph 44 the Inspector found that in respect of the statutory duty in Harborough, "*there is still a very large deficit when the Council has a duty to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand.*"

In the context of which at paragraph 50, in respect of Appeal B the Inspector set out that they "*attach substantial weight to the provision of a self-build and custom build house. Furthermore, the economic benefit would attract significant weight.*"

The award of significant weight to the economic benefits was based upon the Inspector setting out at paragraph 45 that the appellant had provided *"evidence which suggests that custom and self-build development produces more than doubling of the beneficial local economic impact of mainstream housing when labour and materials are viewed together. Furthermore, the contribution of small and medium sized housebuilders to the provision of new homes has declined by 69% since 1988."*

While the Inspector dismissed Appeal A, she allowed Appeal B, setting out at paragraph 51 that: *"The harm to heritage assets would be at the lower level within the less than substantial spectrum of harm but nonetheless of considerable importance and weight. The benefits would be substantial, and I am satisfied that in this instance they would outweigh the harm to the heritage assets."*

Appeal Decision: *Land at Fairfeild Lane, Wolverley (9th June 2025)*

The appeal was for the provision of up to 6 self-build dwellings on a small agricultural field between two roads and an allotment within the settlement boundary of Wolverley.

There are some key details within the appeal decision that are pertinent to this application in particular the counting of permissions for self-build and custom housebuilding. This is significant in that the appellant was also successful in their application for costs relating to unreasonable behaviour in respect of self-build and custom housebuilding matters. The appellants alleged that the Council did not suitably substantiate their case, did not properly carry out their duties regarding self-build/ custom housebuilding and nor did they take heed of previous decisions made by Inspectors. Resultantly the appellant alleged that the Council acted unreasonably, and this led to unnecessary expense in taking the scheme to appeal.

The Inspector found in the costs decision that the Council had not suitably demonstrated that they had provided a sufficient supply of serviced plots to meet demand and had provided only vague evidence in support of supply, noting that it was not clear that the submitted supply complied with the LURA. They went on to find that the Council's actions in failing to set out supply in line with the LURA would have resulted in a sense of doubt in the applicant as to whether the application should have been refused.

The Inspector found that *"The Council's actions made the submission of the appeal necessary to seek confidence in the planning decision. The Council therefore acted unreasonably in dealing with the matter of self-build and custom housebuilding."*

Appeal Decision: *Rear of Landmere Cottage, Main Road, Holbeach Drove, Spalding Lincolnshire 3rd June 2025 APP/A2525/W/3359058*

The appeal was for the erection of a single dwelling and detached garage.

This appeal within the South Holland District was dismissed but there are details pertinent to this application which demonstrate that the provision of self-build when secured appropriately has a significant material effect on the application.

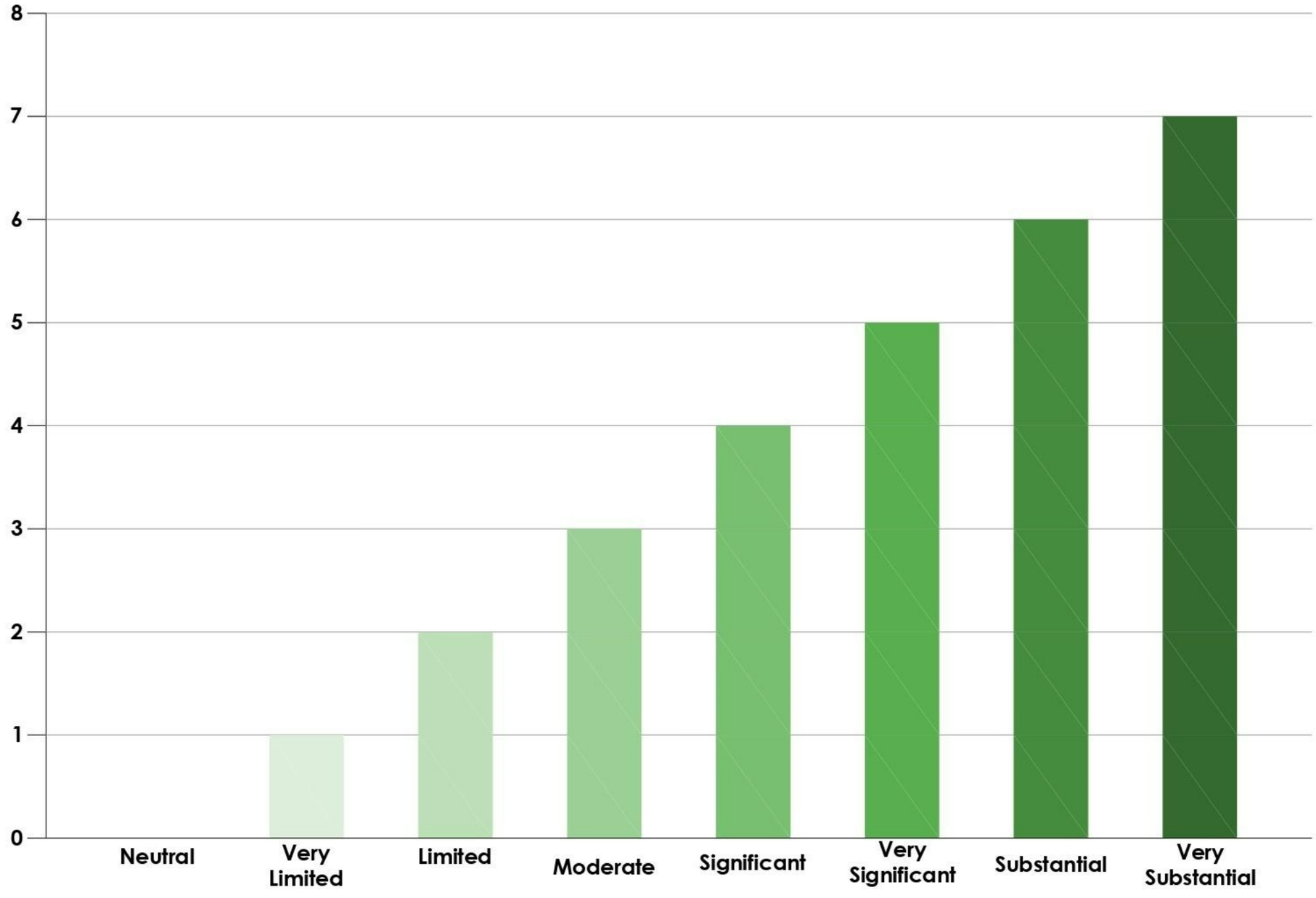
Within paragraph 7 the Inspector notes *"The appellant states that the proposal would be for a self-build dwelling. However, there is no mechanism before me, such as a signed Section 106 agreement, to secure the new dwelling as a self-build property."* They then go on to say within paragraph 9,*"...there is no compelling reason before me to justify a deviation from the provisions of Policy 1 in this case. Accordingly, the proposed site would not represent a suitable location for housing having regard to the development plan as a whole. The proposal would therefore conflict with SELLP Policy 1 which seeks, among other matters, to direct new development to the most sustainable locations."*

In this instance we agree with the Inspectors interpretation in that without a mechanism to secure the delivery of the self-build home it is in essence 'market housing' and given the Council can currently demonstrate a 5-year land supply for housing there is no reason why there should be deviation away from the SELLP Policy 1. This demonstrates the recognition of self-build and custom housebuilding as a separate housing need to market housing and the commensurate weight that should be attributed when Councils are bot fulfilling their duty under The Act.

2.5 The Planning Balance

Both the NPPF and Local Plans attribute weightings to material planning considerations which allow the comparison of matters appropriate to any planning application. These considerations are usually attributed to differing sides of the planning balance being matters in favour or against the application.

There is currently no guidance on what weightings should be attributed to matters, but there are appeal decisions which have considered weightings in detail. Appeal decision *APP/*



Planning Balance Weightings Established Within Appeal Decision *APP/N1920/W/24/3346928*

N1920/W/24/3346928 Land at Barnet Lane, Borehamwood provides a good understanding of weightings and how they should be attributed. We have used this approach in consideration of this application and our approach to weighting of matters and their effect on the planning balance is outlined within the following pages. Once appropriate weightings are established these can then be applied to matters directly relating to the planning balance .

We have considered matters relating to this application and their consideration is outlined below:

NPPF Paragraph 139 Innovative Design - The proposals are clearly innovative and therefore significant weight should be applied.

NPPF Paragraph 139 Raise Standard of Design in the Area - The proposals are high quality architecture, similar to previously approved schemes by Studio 11 Architecture within the District. On that basis significant weight should be applied.

Self-build Housing Supply - The Council currently have a significant shortfall in the provision of self-build plots within the District and are not meeting their duty under the Act. On the basis of appeal decisions on similar sites a minimum of significant weight should be applied.

Ecology Enhancement - The proposals include for significant ecological enhancement in planting, insect habitats and bird/ bat retreats. Given that BNG is now required on all applications we propose conservatively to apply limited weight.

Local Plan Policy 1(d) Compliance - It is our view that the proposals provide economic, community and environmental benefits to the District and are therefore compliant with this policy in multiple areas. On that basis substantial weight should be applied but conservatively we propose to apply this as a singular weighting rather than a weighting for each element.

Local Plan Policy 2 Non-compliance Potential for Increased Use of Private Vehicles - It is accepted that the application site is outside the settlement boundary of Holbeach St Johns but the site is within proximity of the numerous facilities available in Holbeach. There is a bus stop within a short walking distance of the application site at the Nutts Lane/ Jeykls Bank junction. Alongside this the site is within the area covered by the Holbeach Call Connect bus. Furthermore the applicants currently run an electric vehicle and hybrid vehicle which meet the NPPF definition of Ultra-low Emissions vehicles. On that basis it is felt that moderate weight should be applied.

Local Plan Policy 2 Non-compliance Landscape Character Impact - It is accepted that any built form on the site will have an effect on the landscape. We would argue that the proposals create significant interest to the site and the localised area of Nutts Lane. However we have decided to take a conservative approach and therefore propose substantial weight to this element.

Local Plan Policy 3 Non-compliance Change in Landscape Character - As above it is accepted that there will be some change but we believe that the overall landscape whilst visually interesting is not unique and that the proposals will conversely provide interest which compliments the landscape character. On that basis it is felt limited weight should be applied.

Local Plan Policy 3 Non-compliance Accessibility of Travel Modes - The application site is in close proximity to Holbeach the second largest settlement within the District with its commensurate services and public transport links. It is likely given the Districts rural location that there will be some use of private vehicles due to convenience but public transport links are available to the site with connections to Holbeach, Spalding and via the East Coast Mainline, London to the South. Alongside this all the roads surrounding the site are acceptable for cycling. On that basis we feel that there are a wide range of travel methods available to the occupiers of the new dwelling. It is therefore felt that limited weight should be attributed to this element.

These matters translate into the Planning Balance Diagram illustrated on the next page which clearly shows that the matters in favour of the application outweigh any potential harm that may be created and on that basis the application should be approved without delay.



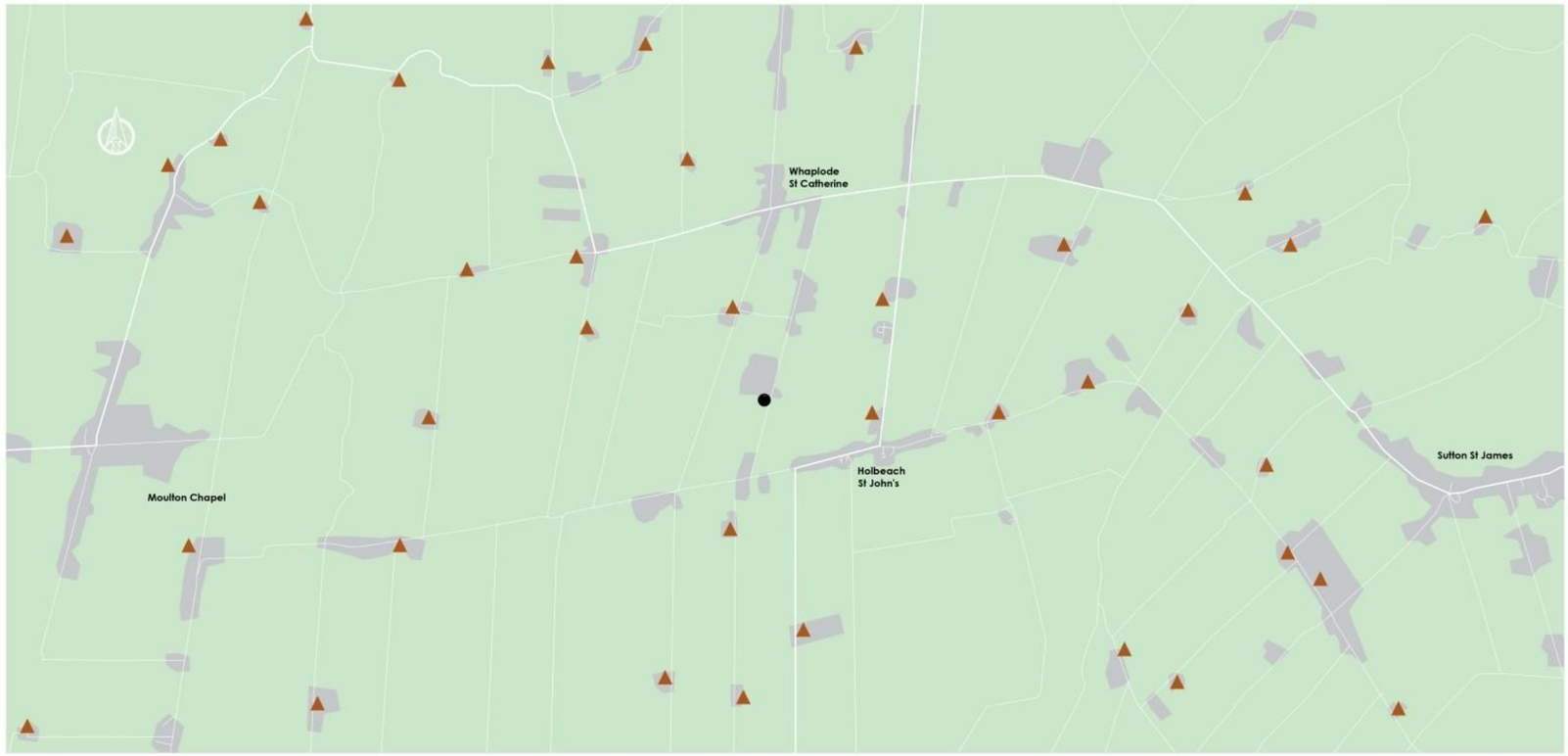
Planning Balance Diagram of Application Proposals

3.0 The Development in Context

3.1 Wider Character Assessment

South Holland is a rural District within Lincolnshire with its largest settlement being the market town of Spalding. The site itself lies to the south of Holbeach between the settlements of Whaplode St Catherine and Holbeach St John's.

Both Whaplode St Catherine and Holbeach St John's form part of an unusual landscape formed around a tapestry of north-south and east -west roads that define drainage channels and agricultural fields. This urban form is apparent between Holbeach to the north and Gedney Hill to the south, Moulton Chapel to the west and Sutton St James to the east. Within the urban form are village settlements linked with roads that include clusters of dwellings and sporadic dwellings. Both of which are usually either currently part of a farm holding or formerly part of a farm holding. These farm holdings are generally modest in size and developed post Second World War as pastoral and arable farms. This analysis follows the pattern outlined within Historic Englands *Greater Lincolnshire Character Statement & Framework Assessment*.



Wider Character Assessment Analysis Diagram

Greater Lincolnshire Farmstead Character Statement

The *Greater Lincolnshire Character Statement* categorises the site and surrounding areas as *The Fens, the Humberhead Levels and the Coastal Marshes.*. Which are:

"Renowned coastal grazing land used extensively from medieval times to fattening sheep and, later, cattle. 19th century improvements have created areas of productive arable land throughout the former marshes. The Fens are home to wide, open arable landscapes in drained and managed former wetlands. Farmsteads are both more numerous in these areas and also generally smaller, including high proportions of smallholdings."

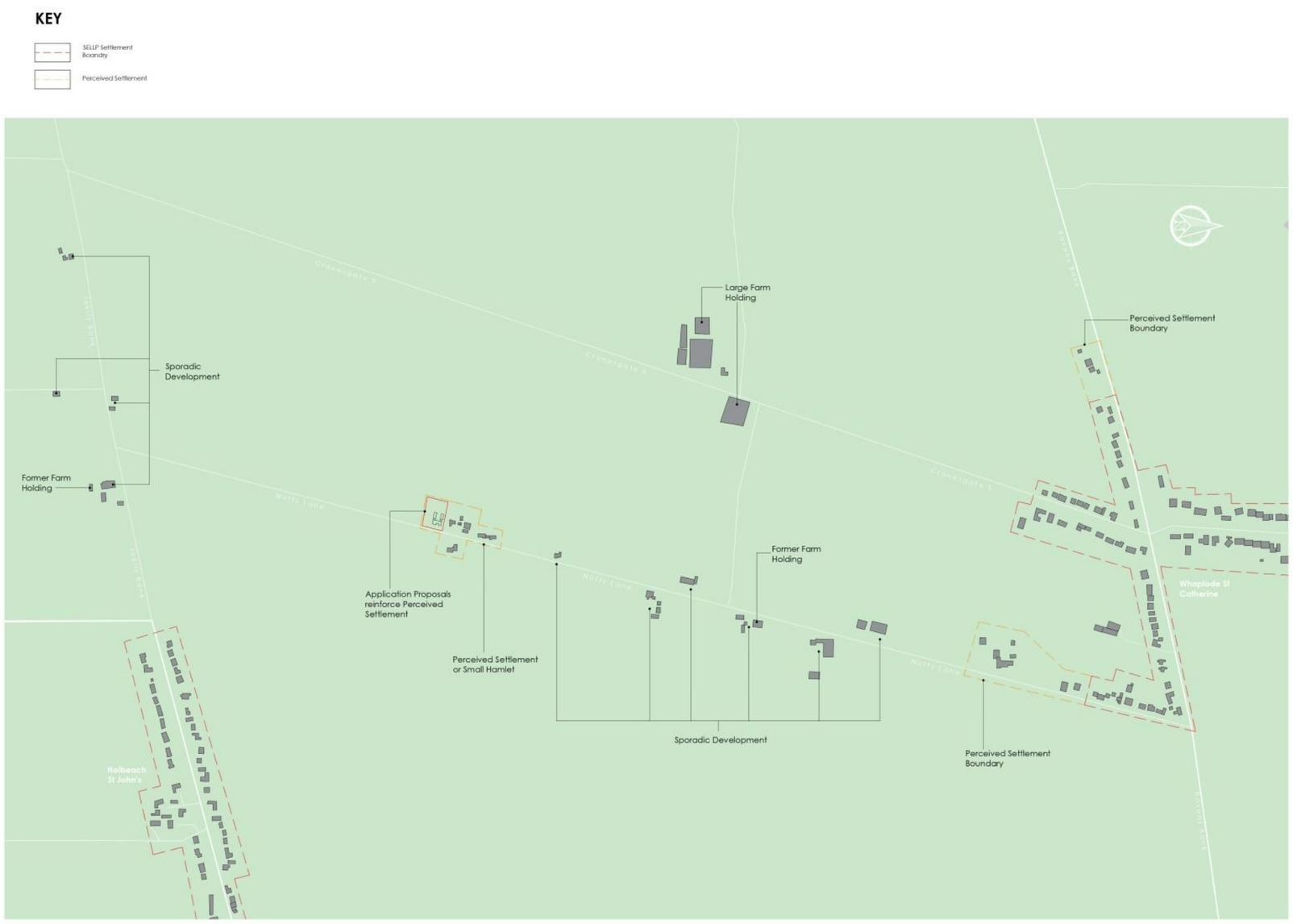
Within the statement an assessment has been made through

the county of farmstead development and how over time this varies. The character of the site and surrounding areas is described as - *"In low-lying parts of the county, such as the Fens, the Marshes, and the Isle of Axholme, the historic pattern of settlements was governed by the availability of dry land for cultivation. In these areas historic settlements were typically more linear or straggling, following bands of higher ground that were safe from seasonal flooding. Today these lowland areas are remarkable for their large numbers of small farmsteads, some of which may have their origins as medieval farmsteads founded on small outcrops of high ground."*

Modern farming took a very different approach that the enclosed fields of medieval farming. Open fields became apparent in the 19th century and this lead to new forms of farming practice including the establishment of new isolated farmsteads set away from the main village centres:

In areas of traditionally dispersed settlement, such as the Fens or the Coastal Marshes, isolated farms can be of great antiquity. In some cases they reflect the limited availability of land suitable for settlement. More commonly however, isolated farmsteads are indicative of the radical changes in the landscape which followed the enclosure of common land and open fields. Farmsteads of this date were generally established away from village centres. Farmsteads of this kind are commonly found on the heaths of Lincolnshire Cliff, the more recently drained fens and marshes, and in the uplands of Kesteven and the Wolds."

The layout of both farmhouses and the associated farmsteads are key to understanding how they worked when in use. Most farmsteads in Lincolnshire have their buildings set around one or more courtyards. These follow varying layouts as either regular/ planned or loose courtyard types. This is explored in detail within *Section 2.5 Farmstead Types* of the Greater Lincolnshire Farmstead Statement.



Nutts Land Character Analysis Diagram

3.2 General Character Assessment Nutts Lane

Nutts Lane is a typical country lane within the localised area and runs north-south between Ravens Bank to the north and Jekil's Bank to the south. The road itself is narrow with wide grassed verges to both sides. Rural agriculture is apparent in arable fields either side of the road interspersed with clusters of dwellings or singular dwellings. To the north the settlement boundary of Whaplode St Catherine extends south along the western side of Nutts Lane.

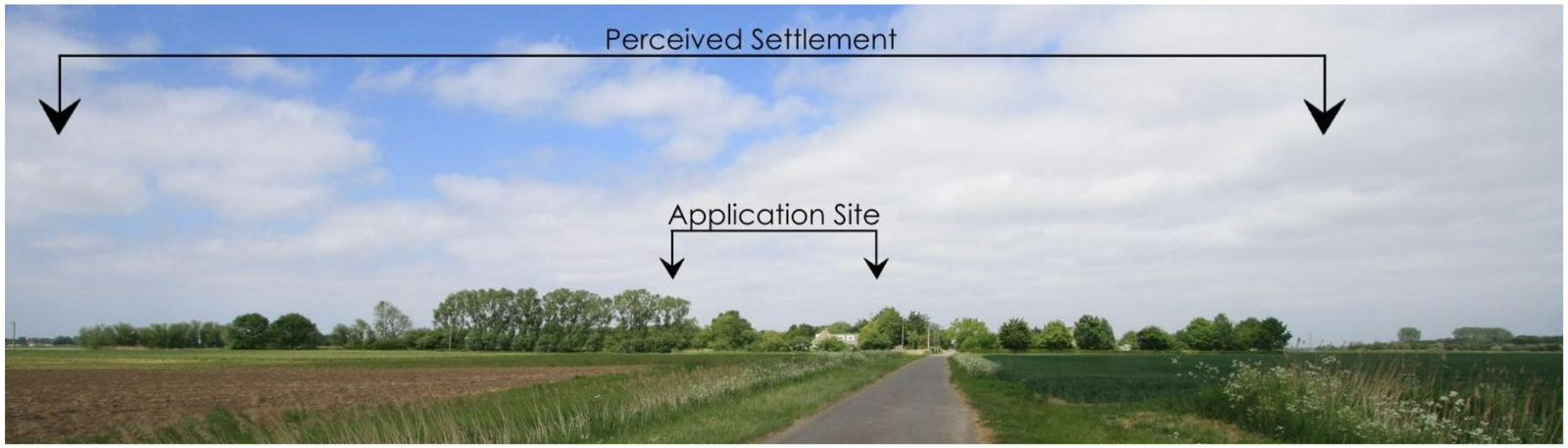
Development along Nutts lane is a mix of agricultural, domestic and domestic associated with a former agricultural use. Many dwellings along Nutts Lane have been altered significantly over the years and what were former farm holdings have developed into commercial uses.

Dwellings are generally single and two storey in scale, some with significantly sized outbuildings befitting their former use as an agricultural holding.

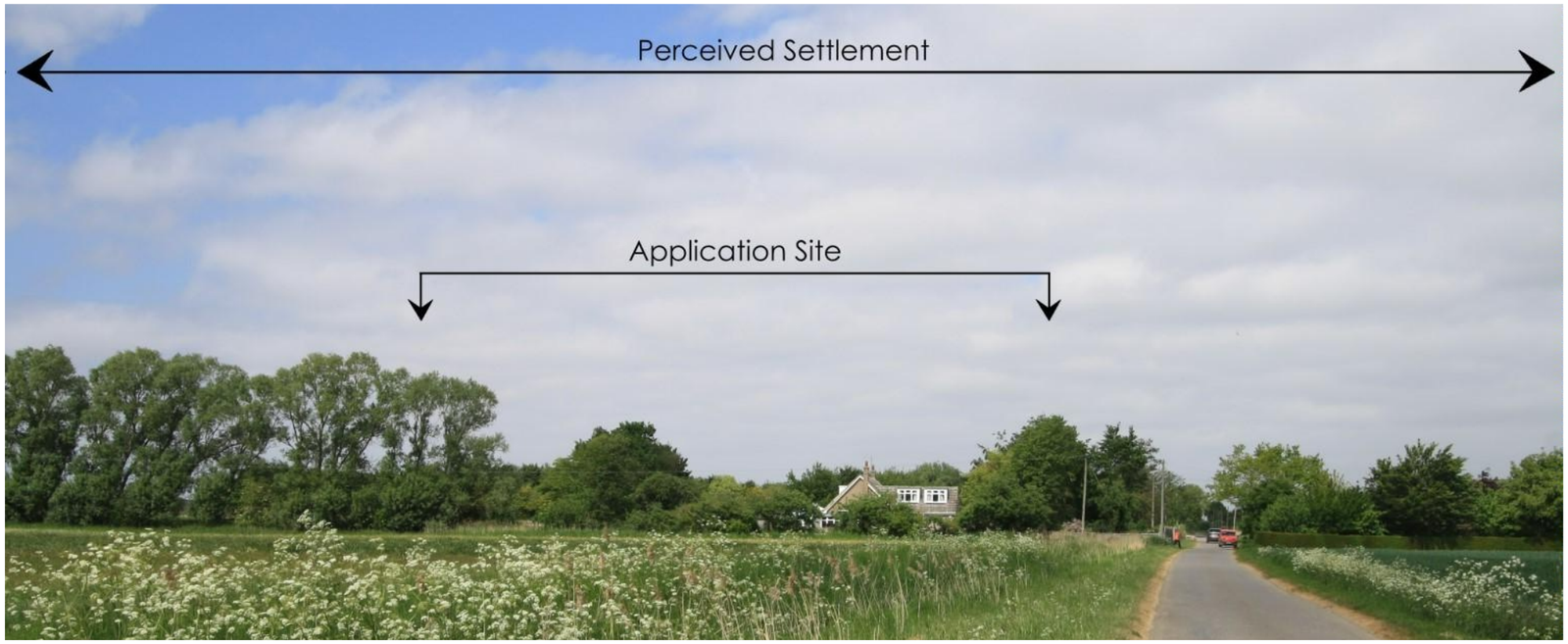
3.3 Perceived Settlement Along Nutts Lane

Generally development along Nutts Lane is singular development however there are two areas of perceived settlements outside the settlement boundary highlighted within the SELLP. To the north the perceived settlement of Whaplode St Catherine is visually apparent significantly before the actual boundary. And to the south of Nutts Lane a cluster of dwellings create their own perceived settlement.

This cluster of dwellings create a localised domestic feel to the area with a mix of what appears to be former Local Authority Council housing and more recent bungalow and chalet bungalow development. Appledore adjacent to the application site appears to be a former agricultural holding with a significant amount of associated outbuildings.



View of Application Site from Nutts Lane Looking North - View with a backdrop of existing dwellings beyond



View of Application Site from Nutts Lane Looking North - View with a backdrop of existing dwellings beyond

3.4 Landscape Assessment

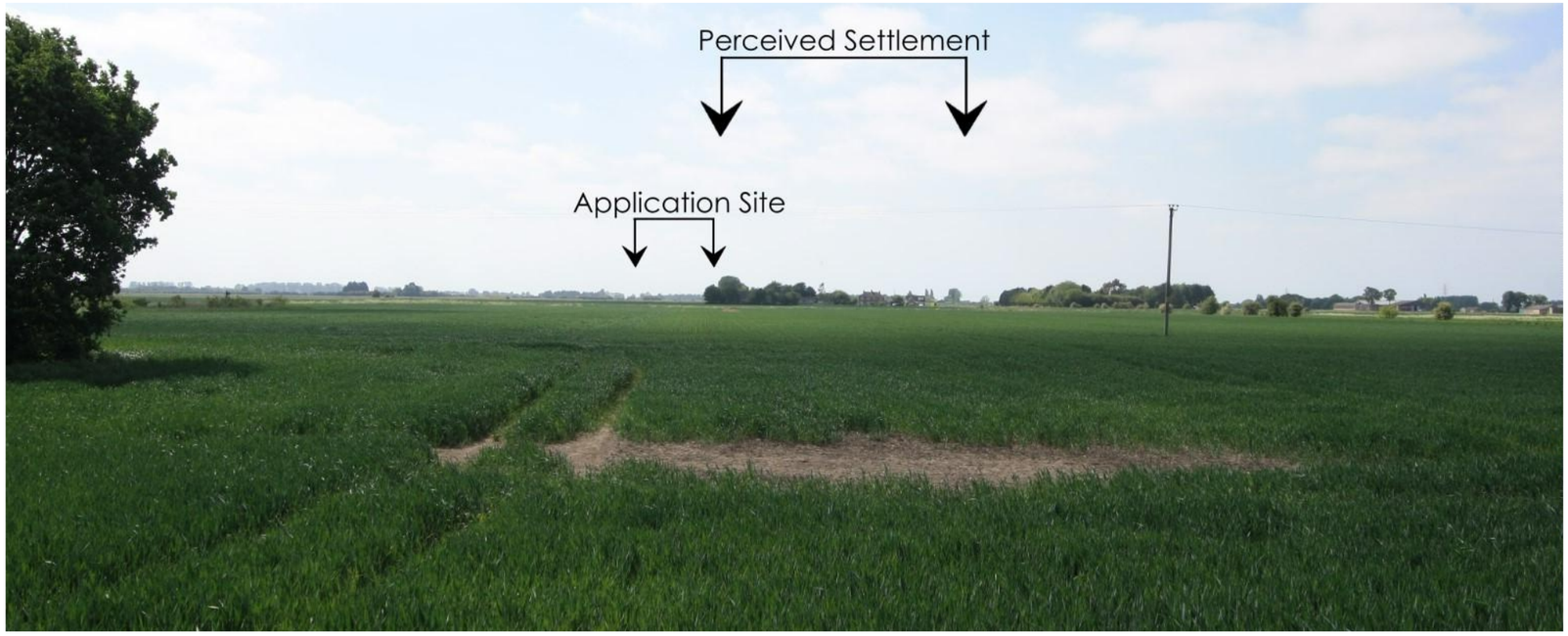
The application site has been assessed in the wider context of the 'Fens' and more locally in relation to views into the site from publicly accessible areas.

The National Landscape Character Assessment describes the key characteristics of The Fens as follows:

- *"Expansive, flat, open, low-lying wetland landscape influenced by the Wash estuary, and offering extensive vistas to level horizons and huge skies throughout, provides a sense of rural remoteness and tranquillity.*
- *Jurassic clays are overlain by rich, fertile calcareous and silty soils over the coastal and central fens and by dark, friable fen peat further inland. The soils are important for agriculture, which is hugely significant for the rural economy in the Fens. There are over 4,000 farms in the Fens; enough wheat is grown here annually to produce a quarter of a million loaves of bread and one million tons of potatoes are grown here. In addition to traditional vegetables, exotics such as pak choi are now cultivated. Some 40 percent of England's bulbs and flowers are also produced in the Fens.*
- *The Wash is the largest estuarine system in Britain, supporting internationally important intertidal and coastal habitats influenced by constant processes of accretion and deposition, forming salt marsh and mudflats and providing habitats for wildfowl, wading birds and other wildlife, including grey seals and approximately 90 per cent of the UK's common seals. It also provides important natural sea defences and plays a key role in climate change regulation. Flood storage areas on the Nene, Cam, Lark and Ouse washes also provide significant biodiversity interest. True fen mainly occurs at remnant conservation sites, such as Baston or Wicken Fen.*
- *Overall, woodland cover is sparse, notably a few small woodland blocks, occasional avenues alongside roads,*



View of Application Site From Cranesgate Looking North-East



View of Application Site From Ravens Gate Looking West

isolated field trees and shelterbelts of poplar, willow and occasionally leylandii hedges around farmsteads, and numerous orchards around Wisbech. Various alders, notably grey alder, are also used in shelterbelts and roadside avenues.

- *The predominant land use is arable - wheat, root crops, bulbs, vegetables and market gardening made possible by actively draining reclaimed land areas. Associated horticultural glasshouses are a significant feature. Beef cattle graze narrow enclosures along the banks of rivers and dykes and on parts of the salt marsh and sea banks.*
- *Open fields, bounded by a network of drains and the distinctive hierarchy of rivers (some embanked), have a strong influence on the geometric/ rectilinear landscape pattern. The structures create local enclosure and slightly raised landform, which is mirrored in the road network that largely follows the edges of the system of large fields. The drains and ditches are also an important ecological network important for invertebrates, fish including spined loach, and macrophytes.*
- *The area is very rich in geodiversity and archaeology, with sediments containing evidence for past environmental and climate changes and with high potential for well-preserved waterlogged site remains at the fen edge, within some of the infilled palaeo-rivers and beneath the peat.*
- *Large, built structures exhibit a strong vertical influence, such as the 83m high octagonal tower of 'Boston Stump' (St Botolphs Church), Ely Cathedral on the highest part of the Isle of Ely dominating its surrounding fen, wind farms and other modern large-scale industrial and agricultural buildings, while drainage and flood storage structures and embanked rail and road routes interrupt the horizontal fen plain.*
- *Settlements and isolated farmsteads are mostly located on the modestly elevated 'geological islands' and the low, sinuous roddon banks (infilled ancient watercourses with fens). Elsewhere, villages tend to be dispersed ribbon settlements along the main arterial routes through the settled fens, and scattered farms remain as relics of earlier agricultural settlements. Domestic architecture mostly dates after 1750 and comprises a mix of late Georgian-style brick houses and 20th century bungalows."*

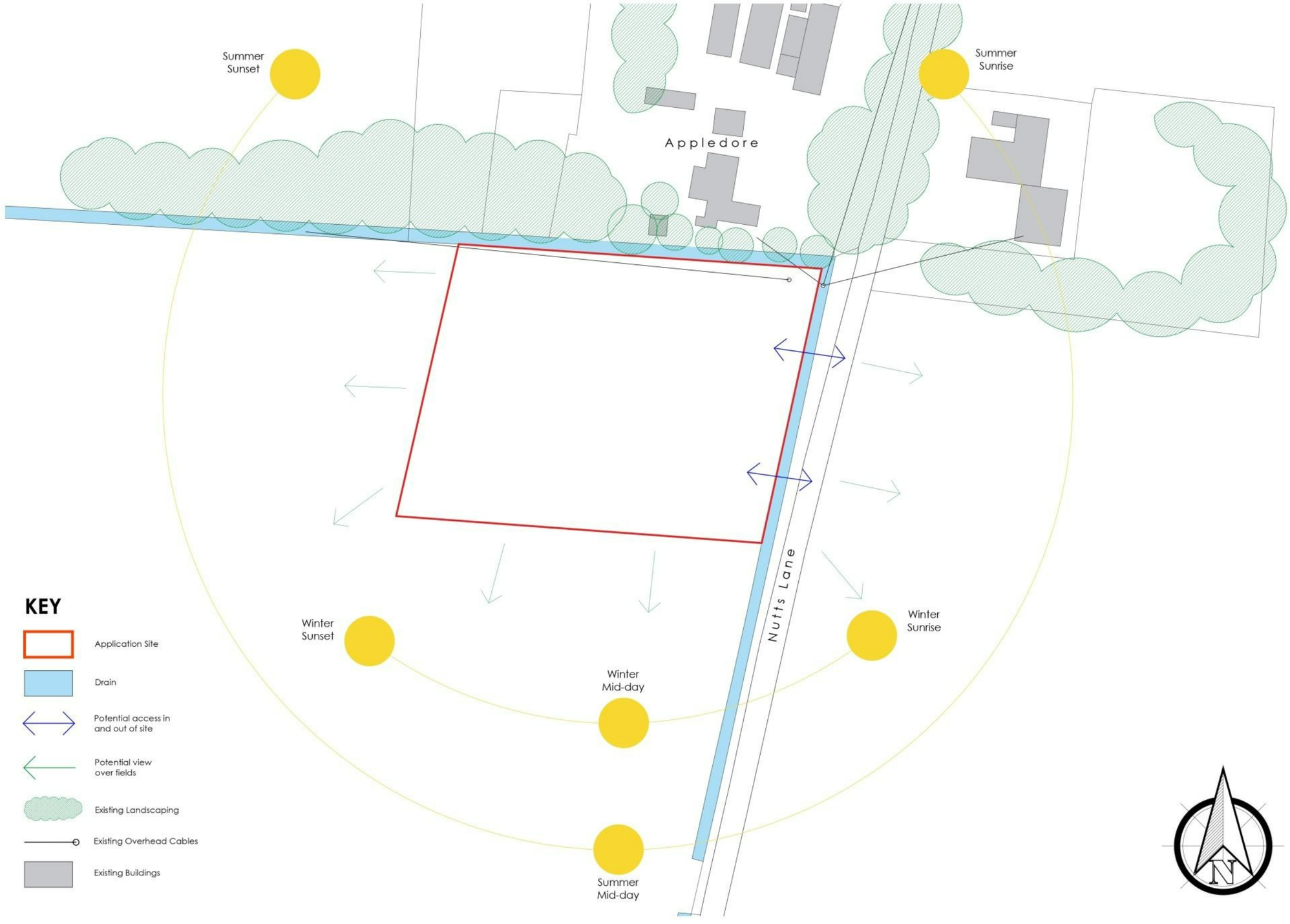


View of Application Site from Jekil's Bank Looking North

More locally to the site rural agriculture becomes more apparent with views of arable fields in the foreground and agricultural structures to the background. Localised domestic architecture is apparent directly adjacent to the site to the north.

3.5 Physical Influence

Currently the site is a fully managed agricultural field with non-defined physical boundaries to the south and west. To the north and east an existing drainage channel defines the physical boundary with Nutts Lane itself to the east. Domestic residential development of 1.5 storeys together with landscaping bounds the site to the north providing a significant vertical backdrop to the proposals.



Opportunities & Constraints Plan

4.0 Proposals

4.1 Use

The scheme comprises of the provision of a new self-build dwelling and annex.

4.2 Amount

The proposals are formed from two buildings on the site. The first forms the proposed new dwelling and the second creates a annex encompassing an architectural studio.

4.3 Layout

The proposed layout of the site is designed to create visual excitement by enhancing the appearance of the site by providing a new well designed scheme incorporating architecture of a high standard. The new dwelling is designed to follow the local agricultural vernacular as a cluster of buildings within a 'yard' linked together and appearing as modern barn conversions. The new annex is designed to be separate building but following the same principles of vernacular design.

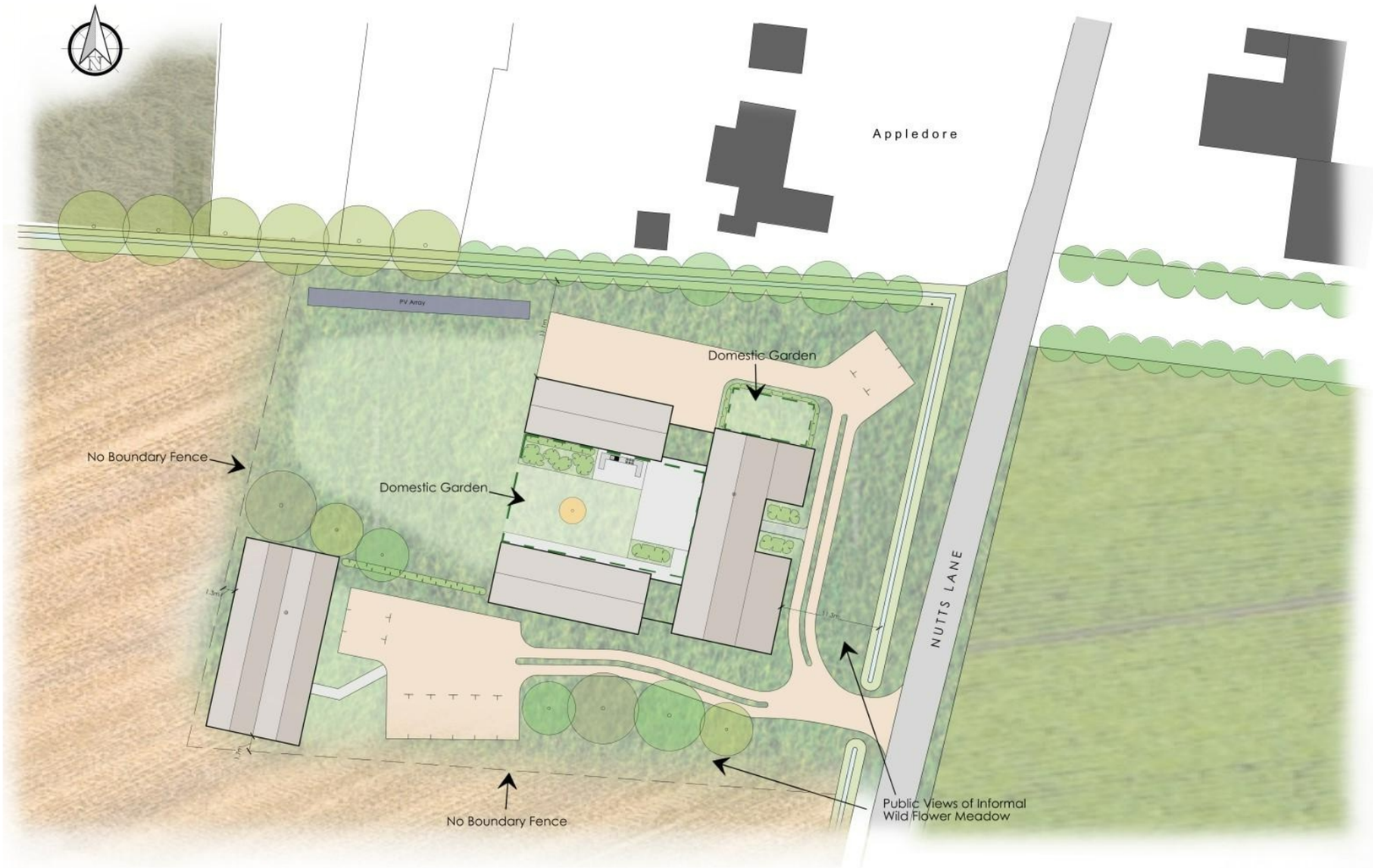
The Both buildings are designed to be orientated to maximise solar gains from both summer and winter sun. The main dwelling also incorporates a courtyard arrangement which assists with the passive design principles of the house.

4.4 Scale

The proposals are single storey in height and domestic in scale.

4.5 Landscaping

Currently the site is a highly managed parcel of arable farm land. The proposals seek to significantly enhance this through the provision of appropriate new planting and bio-diversity enhancements. Given the design intent of following the



Extract From Site Layout

agricultural vernacular of the area it is felt that the 'domesticated' feel of a new dwelling should be minimised and on that basis the proposals have been designed to create two clearly defined space types. Open edge boundary treatments to publicly viewable areas which provide views of very rural wild flower meadows as frontage to buildings. Domestic garden is created as a private space internally and not viewable from public areas. These areas include the normal domestic paraphernalia associated with a dwelling.

4.6 Amenity Space

The new home will be provided with significant amenity space allowing for a domestic garden and gardens which provide significant enhancement of bio-diversity on site.

4.7 Appearance

The design philosophy underpinning the proposals aims to ensure that the development has a clear affinity with the sites location on the edge of the settlement and in particular seeks to create its own place as a new feature to Nutts Lane.

The architecture and materials proposed seek to follow those of surrounding farm holdings along Nutts Lane and the wider context of the site.

4.8 Access

The principle access to the site is by way of a new private drive off Nutts Lane

Access to the principle entrance of the home and office will be provided with a level threshold.



Proposed Front Elevation to Self-Build Home

5.0 Paragraph 139 - Design Approach

5.1 Introduction

The weight attributed to Paragraph 139 of the NPPF has been reviewed earlier within this report and alongside the effect that can have on the planning balance. This section of the report deals with the relevant strands of Paragraph 139 and the applications response to those material considerations.

5.2 Strands to Paragraph 139

When broken down into simple form Paragraph 139 allows several potential strands of compliance:

1. Development which reflects local design policies or government guidance on design;

and /or

2. Outstanding designs

or

3. Innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability;

or

4. Help raise the standard of design more generally in an area so long as they fit with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

In this instance it is not possible to respond to all strands of the policy. However it is possible for us to directly respond to two stands; *Innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability* and *Help raise the standard of design more generally in an area so long as they fit with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.* This application follows the principle of compliance with both aspects of this policy.

5.3 Paragraph 139 - Innovative Designs Promoting High Levels of Sustainability

Paragraph 139 seeks to promote and encourage innovative designs and in particular in relation to sustainability. It is our view that the proposals are innovative and would create a highly sustainable home.

What is the definition of 'innovative'?

Oxford Languages defines 'innovative' as an adjective, (of a product, idea, etc) featuring new methods; advanced and original.

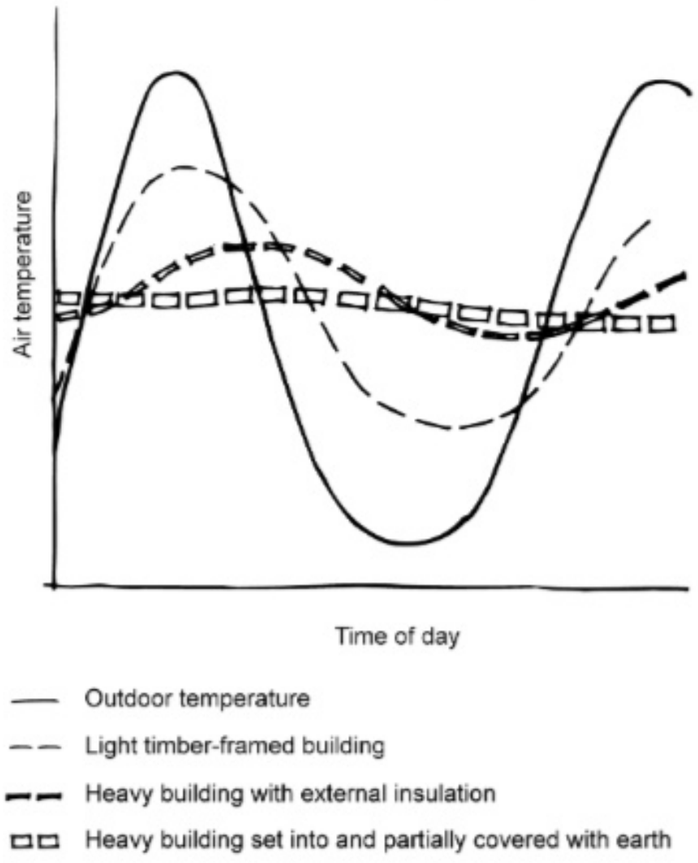
In essence improving an existing product or idea or having an original idea. In its most basic definition innovation is the process of developing, embedding, testing and scaling different ways of doing things. This may mean creating something from new or taking a promising model or practice and adapting it.

This applications basis is in research and development, in particular the ongoing design development of zero-carbon homes in relation to climate change, particularly the emerging issue of overheating.

Studio 11 Architecture have successfully constructed two zero-carbon homes within the District to date and this application seeks to build on that innovation by incorporating passive solar design techniques within the buildings form and construction to moderate overheating.

Proposed Passive Solar Techniques

Generally most eco or passive houses are designed to be lightweight structures with significant amounts of insulation whilst also being extremely airtight. The chosen solution to this is usually a lightweight wall construction like SIPS or timber frame. Often these types of construction whilst resolving some thermal problems create their own issues in that once complete the building performs in a very 'peak' and 'trough' manner in relation to temperature. The illustration below shows the comparison between lightweight buildings and heavy building structures and the effect this can have on internal temperature.



Daily Temperature Fluctuations for Different Construction Methods With Varying Thermal Mass

Source: Australians Guide to Environmentally Sustainable Homes

As can be seen from the illustration, thermal mass assists in moderating the internal temperature of a building through-out the daily temperature cycle which in turn reduces the

need for mechanical intervention and the associated carbon emissions.

Thermal mass can take many forms but this application proposes the use of cast concrete floors and internal walls to provide passive regulation of the internal temperature of the buildings.

In winter, thermal mass absorbs heat during the day from sunlight. It then re-radiates this warmth back into the building throughout the night.

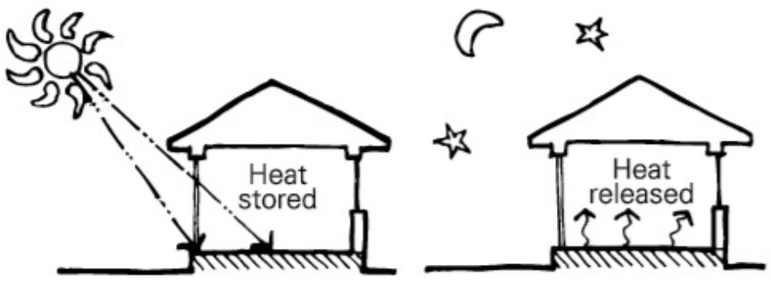
In summer, thermal mass can be used to keep the building cool. If the sun is blocked from reaching the mass (in this case through the use of internal solar shading), the mass will instead absorb warmth from inside the building.

Alongside the 'thermal mass' we are also proposing to implement a courtyard typology for both aesthetic reasons and also to assist with the passive design of the building. Courtyards historically are found in warmer climates where the use of the courtyard is to optimise coolth in areas of harsh sun. Within the UK courtyards historically have been limited but are becoming more popular post 20th within open plan homes. It should also be noted however that the principles of courtyards can be found in other areas of construction historically. For instance walled gardens.

Within the UK courtyards provide a sheltered space for warmth in the winter and coolth in the summer. Offering the potential for 2-5 degrees Celsius difference in temperature throughout the year. This in turn reduces the heat demand within the buildings and their associated carbon emissions.

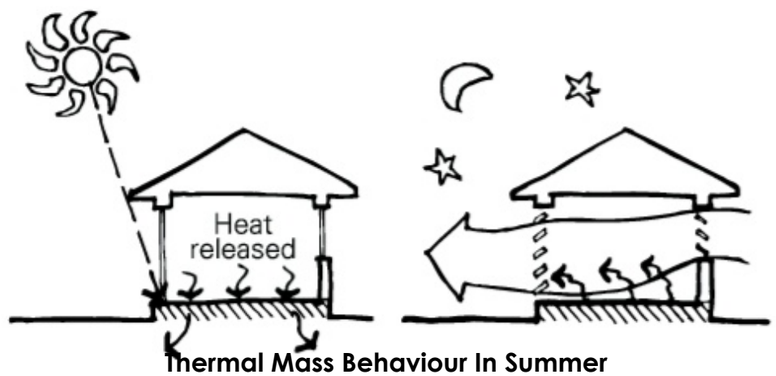
Conclusion

The use of thermal mass internally within a lightweight, highly insulated and airtight structure is innovative within the UK. This combined with the courtyard typology deals directly with the overheating problem associated with climate change and is an evolution of the work previously produced by Studio 11 Architecture within their zero-carbon homes constructed in the District. This innovation meets the criteria of Paragraph 139.



Thermal Mass Behaviour In Winter

Source: Australians Guide to Environmentally Sustainable Homes



Thermal Mass Behaviour In Summer

Source: Australians Guide to Environmentally Sustainable Homes

5.4 Paragraph 139 - Help Raise the Standard of Design in the Area

This application seeks to continue Studio11 Architectures on-going effort to raise design standards in all projects. Their aspirations are to do this through Architectural Technology. This being the bridge between the art of architecture, and the end performance of buildings. Studio 11 Architecture apply this through several key aspect of building design, including functionality, sustainability, performance and technology. These principles enabled Studio 11 Architecture to win the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists international AT Award in 2021 with their first building of this type located in Kings Lynn. This building formed the basis of the principles encompassed within the two zero-carbon homes within the District; Grand Designs South Lincolnshire House and the new dwelling off Glenside North, Pinchbeck.

Conclusion

This application is a further evolution of Architectural Technology locally and nationally and on that basis raises the standard of design within the area. Previous Studio 11 Architecture projects within the District have received national recognition though awards and national television coverage highlighting the Districts appetite to raise design standards generally. As these proposals are an evolution of previous projects we believe that we have helped to raise the standard of design in the District and these proposals will take that to a new level.

6.0 Key Sustainability Issues

6.1 General

The following section considers how the proposals will deliver its sustainability objectives and make a lasting and positive contribution towards sustainable development. The basic framework for analysis corresponds with the three key sustainability issues set out in planning and environmental legislation, guidance and best practice.

Sustainability in relation to the location of the site, amenities and public transport links are discussed in detail earlier within this report and within the Planning Statement.

Environmental Issues

6.2 Energy

The need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, particularly carbon dioxide (CO2), and adapt to effects of climate change is recognised as a global imperative. A key objective of the scheme has therefore been to encourage energy efficiency in all aspects of the home, including design, procurement, construction and use. Whilst also demonstrating how the building as constructed meets the changing landscape of climate change.

The building design includes environmental strategies throughout with the use of fabric-first detailing, heat recovery ventilation and passive solar gains. Passive solar gains will be achieved through controlled openings to the south with heavy weight floor and surface finishes storing the thermal energy through the use of thermal mass elements.

The home will generate its own electricity through Photvoltaic Modules, storing a proportion in batteries for use by the home in 'high demand' times and selling the remainder back to the grid. The home will also be provided with 100% low energy lighting, mechanical ventilation heat recovery and an air source heat pump reducing energy consumption.

All walls, floors and roofs will be highly insulated and the building airtightness will be improved significantly beyond current Building Regulations to provide a home which uses less energy than it generates and is therefore a **Zero-carbon Home**.

The definition of a Zero Carbon Home taken from the *Zero Carbon Hub* is:

'There are three core requirements which must all be met for a home to qualify as zero carbon:

1. *The fabric performance must as a minimum, comply with the defined standard know as the Fabric Energy Efficiency Standard (FEES) and*
2. *Any CO2 emissions that remain after consideration of heating, cooling, fixed lighting and ventilation, must be less than or equal to the Carbon Compliance limit established for zero carbon homes, and*
3. *Any remaining CO2 emissions, from regulated energy sources (after requirements 1 and 2 have been met), must be reduced to zero*

Requirement 3 may be met by either deliberately 'over performing' on requirements 1 and 2 so that there are no remaining emissions, or by investing in Allowable Solutions.'

The best way to determine if the proposed new home meets the Zero Carbon Home criteria is to produce a Standard Assessment Procedure Calculation.

The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is adopted by Government as the UK methodology for calculating the energy performance of dwellings. The calculation is based on the energy balance taking into account a range of factors that contribute to energy efficiency:

- Materials used for construction of the dwelling
- Thermal insulation of the building fabric
- Ventilation characteristics of the dwelling and ventilation equipment
- Efficiency and control of the heating system(s)
- Solar gains through openings of the dwelling
- The fuel used to provide space and water heating, ventilation and lighting
- Energy for space cooling, if applicable
- Renewable energy technologies

The calculation is independent of factors related to the individual characteristics of the household occupying the dwelling when the rating is calculated.

A Design Stage Standard Assessment Procedure Calculation for the home has been produced and he key highlights of the calculation in relation to the Zero Carbon Home criteria is as follows:

1. Dwelling Fabric Energy Efficiency 46kWh/m2/year — **Dwelling Fabric Energy Efficiency 43.4kWh/m2 PASS**
2. CO2 Emission Target 10kgCO2/m2/year—**Dwelling CO2 Emission Rate (DER) -0.95kg CO2/m2/year PASS**
3. Over provision of items 1 & 2 above mean that requirement 3 is passed. **PASS**

6.3 Water and Flood Risk

It is understood that there are no major water courses flowing through the site and therefore the risk of water pollution is very low. There is however drains to the northern and eastern boundaries and these will be fully protected during construction.

The use of water at the site will be regulated by fitting low consumption technology. The home will have its water restricted to 85 litres/person/day.

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore not at risk of flooding. On that basis the site also passes the sequential test.

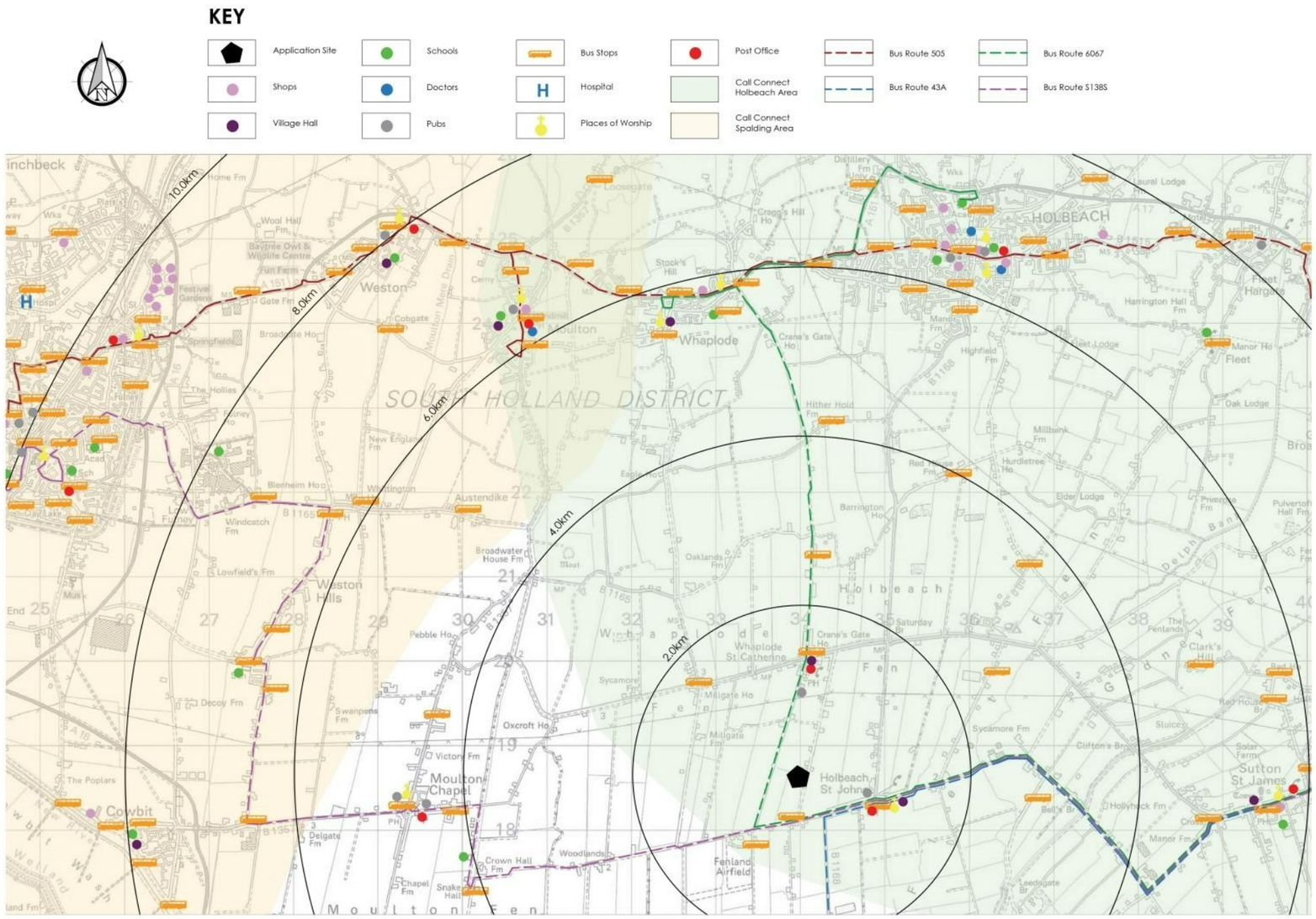
The surface water generated on site by the proposed development will discharged through a soakaway.

6.4 Transport

Paragraph 110 of the NPPF 2024 states:

' ...Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.'

The focus of paragraph 110 is on a choice of sustainable transport modes with the aim of reducing congestion, emissions and improving air quality. It also recognises that the



Plan Showing Services in Relation to Application Site

opportunities for sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas and this should be taken into account in decision making.

The Department of Transport *National Travel Survey 2017 f*indings outlines the mode of transport and their relevant percentage of trips as follows;

- Car 61% of all trips;
- Walking 26% of all trips;
- Bus 6% of all trips;
- Train 2% of all trips;
- Cycling 2% of all trips;
- Other 3% of all trips.

These figures suggest that peoples choice of travel mode is predominantly the conventional car with walking being their second choice. In rural areas the figures show an increase in the choice of car use up to 76% with only 4% of trips taken on public transport.

The main difference in travel patterns between urban and rural areas lies in the use of the car and this is reinforced by data which suggests that almost 60% of rural homes have two or more cars. It therefore can be generally accepted that living in rural areas creates a need for the use of a car and the NPPF 2024 recognises this in allowing a clear change in decision making between urban and rural areas. It also clearly states that occupants should be offered the choice of transport modes and this proposal seeks to offer that choice to the occupants of the new home.

Walking

Occupiers of the new home can walk along Nutts Lane to Holbeach St Johns/ Whaplode St Catherine and beyond. At the junction of Nutts Lane and Jekils Bank there is a bus stop (approximately 3 minutes walk from the application site) which provides public transport links to Holbeach and Spalding.

It is accepted that Nutts Lane itself is a narrow country road without streetlighting but this is not uncommon in the area. Vehicle speeds would be limited and there are significant grass verges on both sides of the road which allow refuge.

Cycling

The roads surrounding the site are suitable for cycling and provide access to the nearby towns and villages with their associated local and national public transport links.

Public Transport

The site is in close proximity to a bus stops located at the Nutts Lane/ Jekils Bank junction which provides links to Spalding and Holbeach.

The site is also within the catchment area of the Spalding and Holbeach Call Connect on demand bus service. This bus service provides an on demand service via telephone or app throughout the day from 07:00 to 19:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 18:00 on Saturday. This service serves hamlets, villages and market towns throughout Lincolnshire offering people the opportunity to connect to their local communities and other public transport options.

6.5 Waste During Use

Sustainable development demands a fundamental change in the way we design, produce, use and dispose of the products we consume. Every effort will be made to design out the production of on-site waste.

The home will be provided with dedicated internal bins with-in the Kitchens to allow the separation of recyclable and kitchen waste from landfill waste. These bins in-turn can be emptied into external bins and brought out to the kerbside of the road for collection by the Local Authority on the appropriate day. The home will also be provided with com-posting facilities to minimise green waste.

6.6 Waste During Construction

Where possible materials will be chosen to minimise on-site waste. Where this is not possible waste will be segregated on site to allow recycling where possible and to reduce waste going to landfill.

7.0 Conclusions

This proposal for a self-build home and annex addresses a clear need within the District for housing and in particular self -build housing. The site is in a sustainable location and is both compliant with the newly Adopted Local Plan as well as the current National Planning Policy Framework.

On that basis it is felt that the proposals meet the aspirations of the NPPF in delivering a home which responds to local need and the current and future requirements of Climate Change.

The architecture within the proposals will be of a high level responding directly to the site, its proposed occupants and their need to have a modern energy efficient building. The proposals are innovative and respond directly to climate change and the overheating imperative.

Given the above and the Councils current lack of self-build home plot provision and the policy compliant nature of the proposals, it is felt that the application should be approved without delay.

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