

Planning Committee

29 August 2024

Report of: Assistant Director for Planning

Reference Number: 22/00590/FUL

Proposal: Conversion of remaining former agricultural barns into two single-storey dwellings and replacement of removed former agricultural Dutch barn with a new dwelling (Amended Description)

Site: Land Rear Of East End Farm, Wrights Lane, Wymondham

Applicant: The Trustees of 2009 Peggy Drewry Discretionary Settlement

Planning Officer: Mark Ketley

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Corporate Priority:	Delivering sustainable and inclusive growth in Melton
Relevant Ward Member(s):	Councillor David Chubb (Wymondham)
Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):	5 October 2023
Exempt Information:	No

Reason for Committee Determination:

Letters of objection have been received from more than 10no. households contrary to the Officer recommendation.

Web Link:

<https://pa.melton.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage>

What 3 words:

<https://what3words.com/scorching.gender.shots>

Site Location Plan



RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the application is **APPROVED** subject to:

1. Conditions detailed in Section 10 of this Report

Update

This application was presented to Planning Committee at its previous meeting on 1st August 2024 when it was deferred to allow for discussions to take place with the applicant and their agent to secure additional car parking within the site and also to allow for further assessment over any potential resultant amenity impacts on the neighbouring property at No 15 Wrights Lane.

Since the previous meeting an updated layout plan for the proposed development has been submitted and this achieves additional car parking provision within the site as requested by Members. Specifically, the parking provision now being proposed would be set out as follows:

- Barn Conversions 1 & 2: Two parking spaces each within the courtyard area;
- New Build Dwelling: Two external parking spaces to the side of the reinstated Dutch barn and a third space within an integral garage. It should be noted that the garage is classed as being a third parking space for the property by virtue of its size exceeding the minimum requirements of 6m x 3m as specified in the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide and in accordance with the Council's Design of Development SPD which makes clear that garages are counted as parking spaces provided they are of an adequate size.
- Visitor Parking: One visitor parking space would now be provided within the courtyard area through a reconfiguration of that part of the site whilst another visitor space would be provided alongside the parking spaces for the reinstated Dutch barn. It would also be possible for a visitor to park behind the new-build dwelling's parking spaces in a tandem arrangement which again is compliant with the guidance set out in the SPD which states that tandem parking can be used for occasional visitor parking purposes.

Following the above reconfiguration of the proposed car parking arrangements within the site it is the case that a total of 7no. resident parking spaces and 3no. visitor parking spaces would be provided. The overall number of spaces being proposed exceeds the minimum requirements in policy terms and therefore the scheme complies with Policy IN2 of the Local Plan in this respect.

Conditions in Section 10 of the previous report as set out below have been updated where necessary in order to reference the revised plans to ensure delivery of these parking facilities.

Turning to the issue of privacy and the specific concern raised at the previous meeting of the Planning Committee was the potential impact of the proposed development on the privacy of No 15 Wrights Lane to the immediate west of the application site. As noted at paragraph 8.28 of the previous report (below) this neighbouring property is the original farmhouse but the dwellinghouse itself is positioned more than 40m away from the location of the proposed new dwellings and therefore would not be affected by the proposal in terms of its residential amenity.

The neighbouring property does also feature former agricultural outbuildings on the boundary with the north-western part of the application site which it is understood are used for hobby workshop purposes by the occupiers. However, again it is considered that no undue impacts would arise from the proposed development on the privacy or future use of these adjacent residential outbuildings. Indeed, the outbuildings feature only one window in their north-facing elevation that would face into the courtyard area between the two barns to be converted into dwellings and the application proposes landscaping and boundary walling within this courtyard area. This will ensure that there would be no opportunities for overlooking from either the south-facing windows or garden areas of the two converted properties towards the opposing outbuilding window and vice versa.

There is also a window and a solid timber door in the east elevation of the outbuilding. No views into the outbuilding are possible through the door given its solid timber construction and equally

no views can be obtained from it towards the application site. The window in this elevation does face out onto the application site but it would overlook the parking courtyard area and not any main habitable space, either internally or externally, of any of the properties to be developed. The proposed Dutch barn reinstatement would sit beyond the parking courtyard but the distances involved across the parking area would ensure that there would be no unacceptable levels of overlooking or loss of privacy. This is aided by the fact that the main habitable windows in the property to be developed on the footprint of the former Dutch would be on the opposite side of the building and facing east towards the open countryside rather than back into the site.

Following this in-depth assessment it remains the case that the proposal is considered to not give rise to any unacceptable impacts on neighbouring residential amenity through loss of light, overbearingness or overlooking/loss of privacy thus ensuring accordance with Policy D1 of the Local Plan, and Policies H5 and H7 of the Neighbourhood Plan, in this respect.

PREVIOUS REPORT

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Planning permission is being sought in this case for the redevelopment of land and buildings previously associated with East End Farm which is located off Wrights Lane on the eastern edge of the village of Wymondham.
- 1.2 The site is not allocated for housing in either the Local Plan or the Neighbourhood Plan. The proposal seeks permission for the redevelopment of the site, creating 3no. dwellings through a combination of converting the existing former barns into two dwellings and the effective reinstatement of a Dutch barn-style property. This would constitute a housing windfall opportunity that would be commensurate with the scale of the settlement, and it would make effective use of land that is previously developed, albeit with former agricultural buildings. The development would be sustainable in these respects and acceptable as a matter of principle when considered in the context of the NPPF; Policies SS1 and SS2 of the Local Plan; and Policy SD1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.3 Furthermore, the proposed new dwellings would be located entirely within the identified development limits for Wymondham as defined by Policy SD3 of the Neighbourhood Plan and so would not result in the outward extension of the built-up part of the village. The site is also closely surrounded by other buildings/properties and it would not result in the loss of any domestic garden space or public open space. It is therefore the case that the proposal is acceptable, in principle, as a housing windfall site under the provisions of Policy H5 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.4 The proposal would be acceptable in terms of its design and resultant impacts on the streetscene and character of the surrounding area in accordance with the requirements of Local Plan Policy D1. In addition, the proposal would have positive impacts on the character, appearance, setting and significance of the Conservation Area such that there would be no harm caused to the designated heritage asset and demonstrable enhancements would be achieved in accordance with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; the NPPF; Policies D1 and EN13 of the Local Plan; and Policies H7 and H8 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.5 Subject to the recommended conditions, the proposal is also considered to be acceptable in terms of its potential impacts on neighbouring residential occupiers, access, car parking provision, impacts on the local highway network, matters of ecological interest and the

proposed drainage arrangements thereby also according with Local Plan Policies D1, EN2, EN11 and IN2 and Policies H5, H7, T1 and ENV5 in these respects.

Main Report

2 The Site

- 2.1 The application relates to land and buildings previously associated with East End Farm which is located off Wrights Lane on the eastern edge of the village of Wymondham.
- 2.2 The site is accessed from its southern boundary off Wrights Lane and there are three distinct areas within the site with these being clearly identifiable as:
- (i) Redundant former agricultural buildings in the north-west corner of the site which comprise a range of single storey structures that vary in height between 5m - 5.6m and are constructed from brick with a mix of pantile and slate roofing;
 - (ii) Central area of the site where the remnants (concrete flooring) of a former Dutch barn are still visible with two former grain silos positioned either end of the former building that was positioned on a north-south axis; and
 - (iii) Area of paddock land on the eastern side of the access track leading into the former farmstead where initially two new dwellings were proposed to be constructed prior to these being removed from the scheme in September 2023.
- 2.3 The site has a gentle gradient falling from the north-west to the south-east corner with the southern and eastern boundaries being particularly well screened by mature trees and hedgerow planting. The western boundary of the site meanwhile is flanked by existing residential properties at No's 15 and 15A Wrights Lane whilst to the north are more dwellings that are also accessed off Wrights Lane and from Main Street.
- 2.4 The boundary of the Wymondham Conservation Area includes the built extent of the former farmstead with the redundant barns to which this application relates, and the remnants of the former Dutch barn being located inside of the Conservation Area boundary. The paddock area to the eastern side of the site access track lies outside of the designated Conservation Area and it is outside of the limits to development for Wymondham as defined in the Wymondham & Edmondthorpe Neighbourhood Plan. The access track leading into the site off Wrights Lane in effect forms the boundary of both the defined settlement limits and its designated Conservation Area.

3 Planning History

- 3.1 There is no planning history relating to the current application site, however the following applications have previously been determined on the wider former East End Farm site:
- 3.2 13/00536/FUL - New dwelling land adjacent to No 15 Wrights Lane - Approved 11.10.13
- 3.3 16/00645/FUL - Detached dwelling - Approved 27.10.16

4 Proposal

- 4.1 The proposed development for which planning permission is being sought in this case would involve the redevelopment of the former farmstead for residential purposes with the proposal involving a combination of converting the former agricultural buildings in the north-west corner of the site into two properties; and the construction of a third dwelling which effectively

would be a new-build designed to appear as a reinstatement of the former Dutch barn that occupied the central part of the site.

- 4.2 As noted earlier in the report, the application as originally submitted also proposed the construction of two new detached dwellings within the paddock area to the east of the access/driveway into the site off Wrights Lane. This aspect of the proposal was subsequently removed from the scheme in September 2023 following concerns raised by both the Case Officer and members of the public during the original consultation period over a lack of conformity with the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan due to this part of the site sitting beyond the defined development limits of the village.
- 4.3 The former barn in the very north-west corner of the site is a linear single storey structure in two parts that sits on the boundary of the site with Wrights Lane to the west. This building would be retained and converted into a three-bedroomed dwelling as part of the proposed redevelopment of the site with all of its existing door and window openings being retained and incorporated into the scheme with just a small number of new window and rooflight insertions being proposed. Additionally, there would be a single storey link extension to join the two parts of the building and create a courtyard entrance, with all of the proposed interventions being limited to those that would ensure the provision of acceptable levels of natural light internally. There would be no changes to the elevation facing towards Wrights Lane to the west to ensure that any potential impacts on the character, appearance and setting of the wider village context and its Conservation Area are minimised when the development is viewed externally.
- 4.4 The other former barn in the north-west part of the site which sits alongside the first barn to be converted is a brick and slate structure with double pitched roof that is sited on the northern site boundary. This building has particular interest architecturally with two arched openings in its south facing double-gabled elevation and full height vaulted space internally with oak trusses that would be retained as part of the scheme. This building would again be converted into a three-bedroomed dwelling with all existing openings being re-used and additional window and rooflight insertions again being kept to a minimum.
- 4.5 The third proposed dwelling would be sited within the central part of the former farmstead and would be positioned on the same footprint as the former Dutch barn that previously occupied this part of the site and whose concrete flooring remains evident. The two redundant grain silos that flanked the northern and southern ends of the former Dutch barn would be removed from the site as part of the proposals with a new-build dwelling being constructed that has been designed to appear as a modern/contemporary Dutch barn conversion. The proposed dwelling would be a two storey five-bedroomed unit with a rectangular shaped footprint that would be sited on a north-south axis in keeping with the orientation of the former Dutch barn. The dwelling would feature large expanses of glazing in its east-facing elevation to take advantage of views across the countryside to the east of Wymondham whilst its other elevations would be timber boarded featuring more traditional-style window and door openings. The roof of the dwelling would be arched to appear in keeping with the architectural style of Dutch barns and it would be constructed using profiled metal sheeting with open louvered elements at either end to break up the massing of the structure and reflect inset elements of the structure beneath.
- 4.6 Access to the site would continue to be taken from Wrights Lane to the south with the existing access/driveway leading to the former farmstead being upgraded with a new surface and widened as part of the proposal to satisfy Highway Authority requirements.

5 Amendments

- 5.1 The proposal has been amended since the application was originally submitted with two detached dwellings that were initially proposed to be constructed on the area of paddock land to the east of the site access being removed from the scheme. Amended plans showing this revision were received on 29th September 2023 and a full re-consultation exercise has subsequently been undertaken.
- 5.2 Additional information has also been provided during the course of the application in the form of a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit and Designer's Response to address concerns raised by the Highway Authority over the safety of the proposed means of access to the site. The width of the internal access road leading to the proposed development has also been widened to 4.25m for the first 5m back from the adopted highway, and to 3.7m for the remainder of the road, through amended plans requested by the Highway Authority.

6 Planning Policy

6.1 National Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
- National Design Guide

6.2 Heritage Legislation

- 6.3 The Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. Considerable weight should be applied to these duties even in cases where any identified resultant harm would be less than substantial.
- 6.4 Paragraph 203 of the latest version of the NPPF published in December 2023 is also a significant material consideration in this case and in relation to matters of heritage interest this states that, in determining applications for planning permission and listed building consent, Local Planning Authorities should take account of:
- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 6.5 Paragraph 205 of the Framework further requires that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm would amount to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 6.6 Paragraph 206 advises that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

6.7 Paragraph 207 goes on to state that in cases where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

6.8 Paragraph 212 makes clear that Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

6.9 **Melton Local Plan**

- The Melton Local Plan 2011-2036 was adopted by Full Council on 10th October 2018 and is the development plan for the area.
- The Local Plan is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2023 and, whilst it is now being updated, its policies remain relevant and up to date for the determination of this application.
- The relevant policies to this application include:
 - Policy SS1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - Policy SS2 Development Strategy
 - Policy SS3 Sustainable Communities (Unallocated Sites)
 - Policy EN1 Landscape
 - Policy EN2 Biodiversity & Geodiversity
 - Policy EN6 Settlement Character
 - Policy EN11 Minimising the Risk of Flooding
 - Policy EN13 Heritage Assets
 - Policy IN2 Transport, Accessibility and Parking
 - Policy D1 Raising the Standard of Design

6.10 **Neighbourhood Plan**

- The Wymondham & Edmonthorpe Neighbourhood Plan (2017-2036) which was made on 6th June 2018 also forms part of the Development Plan for this area.
- The relevant policies to this application include:
 - Policy SD1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - Policy SD2 General Policy Principle
 - Policy SD3 Limits to Development
 - Policy H5 Housing Provision Windfall Sites
 - Policy H7 Building Design Principles
 - Policy H8 Nationally Designated Heritage Assets
 - Policy ENV5 Biodiversity
 - Policy T1 Transport Requirements for New Developments

7 Consultation Responses

7.1 Please note the below is a summary of responses and representations received. To view the full details please follow the web link on the first page.

SUMMARY OF TECHNICAL CONSULTATION RESPONSES

7.2 Conservation Officer

The dilapidated barns are located on the fringes of the Wymondham Conservation Area. The conversion of the barns appears to be appropriate, with sensitive materials employed in the construction, all new apertures are aligned and the overall scheme is modestly scaled. The conversion of the barns will secure the longevity of these heritage assets, which make a positive contribution to the streetscene of the Wymondham Conservation Area. As such this offers public benefits which may serve to counterbalance any identified harm to the streetscene of the Conservation Area, or the principle of over development in a village setting, in accordance with paras 208 and 212 of the NPPF.

The retention of the open paddock land will also allow for greater visual permeability when viewed from the open countryside beyond. The Dutch style barn is a contemporary design which features an innovative curved roof. This will not be unduly prominent when viewed from the streetscene of the Conservation Area. As such, the works are deemed acceptable and the following conditions are recommended:

- There must be no visible trickle vents used in any of the fenestration proposed to the barn conversions or the new build dutch barn
- All facing materials for the barn conversion and the dutch barn must be submitted to the LPA prior to commencement of works
- The timber cladding for all elements of the works must incorporate natural timber - composite timber which is blended with uPVC is not permitted

It is considered that the streetscene of the conservation area will be preserved following completion of the works. The works are considered acceptable, in accordance with Paras 212 of the NPPF, which states: Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

Conclusion: No Objection - The scheme demonstrates a 'clear and convincing justification' for the proposed works which would not result in harm to the special significance of the streetscene of the Wymondham Conservation Area, in accordance with para 212 of the NPPF. The proposal therefore would preserve the special significance of the conservation area and would achieve the desirable objectives as described within Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and the application should be approved.

7.3 LCC Highways

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) required an internal access road width of 4.25m for a minimum distance of 5m behind the highway boundary and a minimum internal access road width of 3.7m to enable access by emergency vehicles. These requirements have been satisfactorily addressed on amended plans submitted on 12th January 2024.

A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) and Designer's Response has been submitted to accompany the proposed access design on 9th February 2024.

A Restricted Byway (E50g) runs adjacent to the southern boundary of the proposed development. This route is a 'restricted byway', this means pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and anyone with a horse and carriage/trap could use the Public Right of Way.

The LHA are satisfied that the level of traffic will not be of significant concern to safety subject to the conditions set out at the end of this report.

7.4 LCC Ecology (Original Consultation Response)

The bat activity survey found no evidence of bats using the buildings proposed for conversion, and since they are considered to have low potential for them, no further mitigation measures are required. I note that bat and bird boxes, and other enhancements have been proposed, which is welcomed. However, the location of some of the integrated boxes does not appear to be suitable for the species, therefore I am happy to advise further, as can their ecological consultant. For example, the swift nest boxes are spread around the site, on both north and south elevations. Bird boxes should not be placed on south facing elevations since they can over-heat (potentially fatal for the chicks) and swifts prefer to nest in groups so their boxes should be placed in groups rather than individually. Swifts also need an open area in front of the nest entrance, and some appear to be very close to trees, which would make them unlikely to be used

7.5 LCC Ecology (Re-consultation Response following Amended Plans)

No objection to the proposed changes. The revised bird and bat box plan is acceptable.

7.6 Severn Trent Water

No objection subject to a condition requiring details of the proposed foul and surface water drainage arrangements being submitted prior to development commencing.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

7.7 Ward Member(s)

No comments received.

7.9 Parish Council (Original Consultation Response)

The Wymondham and Edmondthorpe Neighbourhood Plan (W&E NP) Policy SD3 Limits to Development states that development within the Limits to Development will be supported (subject to design and amenity considerations. Plots 1 and 2 are outside the Limits to Development and therefore the Parish Council objects.

Policy H7 of the W&E NP requires:

- New buildings should follow a consistent design approach in the use of materials, fenestration and the roofline to the building. Materials should be chosen to complement the design of the development and add to the quality or character of the surrounding environment and of the Conservation Areas.
- Redevelopment, alteration or extension of historic farmsteads and agricultural buildings within the Parish should be sensitive to their distinctive character, materials and form. Therefore the Parish Council asks that the development of Barn 1 and Barn 2 be subject to these requirements.

Similarly Policy H7 of the W&E NP requires:

- All new housing should reflect the character and historic context of existing developments within the Parish. However, contemporary and innovative materials and design will be

supported where positive improvement can be robustly demonstrated without detracting from the historic context.

Therefore the new Dutch Barn be subject to these requirements.

The W&E NP Policy ENV7 Protection of Important Views reflects the widely held wish to protect the rural settings. Thus there is concern that the development will impact materially and adversely on W&E NP Policy ENV7 in the direction of the Waddlings (item g page 44)

Finally the site is surrounded on its boundaries by significant heritage trees and hedges, particularly on the eastern boundaries. W&E NP Policy ENV4 Woodland Trees and Hedges requires that such biodiversity and amenity value be protected from loss or damage as a result of development.

Therefore in conclusion the Parish Council objects to Plots 1 and 2 and asks that the remaining items Barns 1 and 2 and the Dutch Barn be reconsidered in the light of the above references to the W&E NP

7.10 Parish Council (Re-consultation Response following Amended Plans)

The Parish Council considered this application at their meeting on 6th November 2023 and whilst they have no objections they wish to remind you of their comment in their response to the first application in May 2022:

that the application be allowed only if the new works are similar in style and materials to the existing building to conform to the Wymondham and Edmondthorpe Neighbourhood Plan Policy H7 Building Design Principles

7.11 Neighbours (Original Consultation Response)

11no. letters of objection were received from 10no. separate households in response to the original consultation on the application raising the following issues:

- Application site is outside of the village development limits and is therefore in conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan that was agreed on by the villagers of Wymondham;
- Approval of the application would undermine the purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan and the hundreds of hours of input from the local community in its preparation;
- Plots 1 and 2 would set an unwelcome precedent for future developments to be allowed outside of the defined village curtilage;
- Access lane to the site is dangerous for pedestrians and other road users;
- Inadequate parking provision to be provided for each of the properties; and
- Concerns raised over the adequacy of the proposed ecological mitigation measures.

7.12 Neighbours (Re-consultation Response following Amended Plans)

3no. letters of objection have been received from 2no. separate households in response to the amended plans re-consultation raising the following issues:

- Design of the Dutch barn replacement is out of keeping with the local area;
- Visual impact of the Dutch barn replacement on the approach into Wymondham;
- Impact on neighbouring residential amenity; and
- Access lane to the site is dangerous for pedestrians and other road users.

7.13 **Response to Consultations and Representations**

All of the issues raised that are material planning considerations are addressed in detail under Section 8 'Planning Analysis' below.

It is important to highlight however that many of the objections in response to the original consultation on the application were specifically in relation to the proposed new-build dwellings on the paddock area to the eastern side of the site access (referred to as Plots 1 and 2 on the original plans submitted) with these subsequently being removed from the scheme through amended plans received on 29th September 2023.

8 Planning Analysis

8.1 The main considerations in determining this application are as follows:

- Principle of Development
- Design & Visual Amenity Impacts
- Heritage Considerations
- Impact on Amenity
- Highway Matters
- Ecological Impacts
- Flood Risk & Drainage

8.2 **Principle of Development**

8.3 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan makes clear that, when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The policy goes on to state that planning applications which accord with the policies in the Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

8.4 Local Plan Policy SS2 sets out the future development strategy for the Borough in relation to housing and employment proposals for the period up to and including 2036. It identifies a sustainable approach towards development and defines settlements as being either Service Centres, Rural Hubs or Rural Settlements before then going on to set out the type of development that is considered appropriate for each.

8.5 The application site is located within the built-up part of the village of Wymondham which is defined as a Service Centre in the Local Plan. Policy SS2 explains that Service Centres and Rural Hubs will accommodate approximately 35% of the Borough's residual housing requirement (1822 units) over the Plan period on a proportionate basis and that this will be delivered by planning positively for the development of sites allocated within and adjoining the Service Centres and Rural Hubs, and by encouraging small scale residential windfall development, where it would represent sustainable development under Policy SS1.

8.6 Policies in the Wymondham & Edmondthorpe Neighbourhood Plan are also relevant in this context with Policy SD1 similarly establishing a presumption in favour of sustainable development consistent with the overarching aims and objectives of the NPPF.

8.7 Policy SD3 sets limits to development and this makes clear that development proposals within Wymondham will be supported on sites within the Limits to Development as identified

in Figure 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan where they comply with all relevant policies in the Plan and subject to design and amenity considerations.

8.8 Policy H5 relates specifically to housing windfall sites and this states that small residential development proposals on infill and redevelopment sites will be supported subject to proposals being well designed and meeting all relevant requirements set out in other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and the Borough-wide planning policies and where such development would satisfy the following criteria:

- Comprises a restricted gap in the continuity of existing frontage buildings or on other sites within the built-up area of Wymondham and Edmondthorpe where the site is closely surrounded by buildings;
- Will not involve the outward extension of the built-up area of Wymondham and Edmondthorpe as defined in Policy SD3 of the Neighbourhood Plan; and
- Does not reduce garden space or open space to an extent where it adversely impacts on the character of the area, or the amenity of neighbours and the occupiers of the dwelling.

8.9 In this case the application site is not allocated for housing in either the Local Plan or the Neighbourhood Plan and therefore its proposed redevelopment with 3no. dwellings through a combination of converting the existing former barns into two dwellings and effective reinstatement of a Dutch barn-style property would constitute a housing windfall opportunity that would make a small but meaningful contribution towards the Borough's overall housing supply and which would help to support the role of Wymondham as a rural service centre. In addition, the development being proposed is of a scale that would be commensurate with the scale of the settlement that it would be located within and it would make effective use of land that is previously developed, albeit with agricultural buildings.

8.10 The proposed development would be sustainable in these respects and, subject to the design and amenity considerations that are assessed in detail below, it would be acceptable as a matter of principle when considered in the context of the NPPF; Policies SS1 and SS2 of the Local Plan; and Policy SD1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

8.11 Furthermore, the proposed new dwellings would be located entirely within the identified development limits for Wymondham as defined by Policy SD3 of the Neighbourhood Plan following deletion of the originally proposed new-build dwellings on the paddock area to the east of the site access in September 2023 and so would not result in the outward extension of the built-up part of the village. The site is also closely surrounded by other buildings/properties and it would not result in the loss of any domestic garden space or public open space. It is therefore the case that the proposal is acceptable, in principle, as a housing windfall site under the provisions of Policy H5 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

8.12 **Design & Visual Amenity Impacts**

8.13 Policy D1 of the Local Plan seeks to raise the standard of design from new developments and it states that, amongst other things, proposals should be sympathetic to the local area in terms of scale, massing, design, materials, landscaping and architectural detailing. This is reinforced by Policy H7 of the Neighbourhood Plan which requires all new development proposals involving one or more houses, replacement dwellings and extensions to satisfy a number of building design principles with the aim of these being to ensure that new development enhances and reinforces the local distinctiveness and character of the area in which it is situated, particularly within Conservation Areas.

- 8.14 The proposed development areas within the site can effectively be split into two parts with these involving redundant former agricultural buildings in the north-west corner of the site that would be converted into 2no. three-bedroomed dwellings; and the central area of the site where the remnants (concrete flooring) of a former Dutch barn are still visible and where 1no. five-bedroomed detached dwelling would be constructed that would have the form and appearance of a Dutch barn reinstatement.
- 8.15 Neither of these parts of the site are particularly visible from Main Street to the north which is the main route through Wymondham due to the site being located behind existing residential properties that front onto Main Street. It is therefore the case that the proposed redevelopment of the site would not have a significant impact on the established character, appearance or setting of the main core of the village.
- 8.16 The site becomes more visible after turning off Main Street onto Wrights Lane with the barns in the north-west corner of the site starting to become visible approximately 70m into the distance. The barns naturally become increasingly noticeable when travelling south along Wrights Lane towards the site but the external façade of the barn forming the western site boundary presents a plain and traditional stone elevation backing onto Wrights Lane that would not be altered during the conversion process other than the insertion of rooflights within the rear roof slope.
- 8.17 The intrinsic character, appearance and setting of Wrights Lane would therefore be largely preserved with the changes to the elevation of the barn backing onto Wrights Lane being kept to a minimum and ensuring that the experience when travelling along the lane would not be unduly affected by the conversion scheme. In this respect the sympathetic treatment of this particular elevation of the site is welcomed and, otherwise, it is considered that the levels of intervention with the buildings have been limited to those elevations that are inward-facing and restricted to a level that is reasonably necessary to ensure the provision of acceptable levels of natural light internally and living standards generally within the two proposed conversion units.
- 8.18 Turning to the proposed new-build dwelling in the central part of the site this, as explained earlier in the report, would be positioned on the same footprint as the former Dutch barn whose concrete flooring remains evident. The two redundant grain silos that flanked the northern and southern ends of the former Dutch barn would be removed as part of the proposal which would result in a substantial visual enhancement within the site with the new-build dwelling being designed to appear as a modern/contemporary Dutch barn reinstatement. This is considered to represent an interesting, attractive and high quality design approach to this part of the application site that would not only reflect and respond positively to the existing agricultural setting but that would also ensure that the three properties forming the development proposal can be read as a coherent group of buildings that reinforce the historic built form of the site and allow for both the original elements of the former farmstead and its subsequent evolution to remain legible.
- 8.19 In terms of its wider visual impacts it is the case that the application site is only visible in one longer range view on the approach into Wymondham from the east. From here views of the site are at a distance of approximately 150m with intervening fields and other residential properties that sit closer to the edge of the village being the dominant visual features. Only the proposed Dutch barn reinstatement would be visible in this view and any visual impact is considered to be minor given that the building would be seen sitting behind and in context with the residential properties that sit closer to the road.

8.20 Overall it is considered that the proposed development would enhance the character and appearance of the application site and its immediate surroundings. Retention of the barns in the north-west part of the site is a welcomed part of the scheme and their sympathetic conversion, particularly the treatment of their elevation backing onto Wrights Lane which is the only visible element from beyond the boundaries of the site, would help to safeguard the original built form and allow for the original elements of the farmstead to remain legible. The effective reinstatement of the former Dutch barn in the central part of the site with a new-build dwelling that would feature all of the key characteristics of a Dutch barn but with a modern/contemporary approach would also represent a visually stimulating and sensitive addition to the site that would help to restore the built form of the former farmstead thus also being a welcomed part of the scheme. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of its design and resultant impacts on the streetscene and character of the surrounding area in accordance with the requirements of Local Plan Policy D1 and Neighbourhood Plan Policy H7.

8.21 **Heritage Considerations**

8.22 Given the above design and visual amenity considerations it is considered that the proposed redevelopment of the site overall would preserve and enhance the character, appearance and significance of the Wymondham Conservation Area. Indeed, from Main Street (which is the main route through the core of the village and this part of the Conservation Area) it is the case that the application site is not particularly visible due to being located behind existing residential properties that front onto Main Street.

8.23 The removal of the two redundant grain silos from the central part of the site would be of benefit to both the site and the Conservation Area whilst what would, in effect, be a reinstatement of the former Dutch barn with a high quality modern interpretation of a similar structure that reflects and reinstates the evolution of the site would also have a positive impact on the character, appearance, significance and setting of the designated heritage asset. Moreover, whilst not listed, the barns to be converted in the north-west part of the site form an integral part of the setting of Wrights Lane. The proposed development of this part of the site therefore represents an important opportunity to secure the long-term future use and upkeep of these buildings that would not only allow for the original elements of the farmstead to remain legible but would also ensure that historic views along Wrights Lane and in this part of the Conservation Area are safeguarded.

8.24 The positive impacts on the character, appearance, setting and significance of the Conservation Area that would prevail in this case are such that there would be no harm caused to the designated heritage asset and demonstrable enhancements would be achieved. The proposal therefore accords with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; the NPPF; Policies D1 and EN13 of the Local Plan; and Policies H7 and H8 of the Neighbourhood Plan in these respects.

8.25 **Impact on Amenity**

8.26 There are a number of existing residential properties surrounding the application site and therefore potential amenity impacts arising from the proposed development are an important consideration in this instance.

8.27 Although there are neighbouring residential properties to the north of the site it is the case that the positioning and orientation of these properties in relation to the barns to be converted in the north-west corner are such that there would be no issues arising from potential overlooking, overbearingness or loss of privacy. Indeed, from outside of the site there would be minimal intervention with these single storey buildings as existing with all

new window and door openings being proposed within the inward-facing elevations of the development. Similarly, although there are residential properties on the western side of Wrights Lane that face towards the barns to be converted, the only window insertions on this façade of the proposed development would be rooflights at a height that would not afford opportunities for overlooking from within the respective properties.

- 8.28 The proposed new-build dwelling in the central part of the site would be more closely located towards No's 15 and 15A Wrights Lane. However, the former of these two neighbouring properties is the original farmhouse and it still features former agricultural outbuildings on the boundary with the application site whilst the latter property is positioned more than 40m away from the location of the proposed new dwelling. Consequently, it is considered that the proposed new-build property within the site would not cause any concerns in relation to neighbouring residential amenity impacts.
- 8.29 On the basis of the above assessment it is considered that the proposed redevelopment of the site would not have an unacceptable impact on neighbouring residential amenity thus ensuring accordance with Policy D1 of the Local Plan, and Policies H5 and H7 of the Neighbourhood Plan, in this respect.
- 8.30 **Highway Matters**
- 8.31 The Highway Authority (LHA) are satisfied that residential development would be an appropriate use of the application site in this case.
- 8.32 In assessing the potential highway impacts of the scheme the LHA have had regard to the current lawful use of the site whereby it could be brought back into use for agricultural purposes without any form of planning approval being needed which naturally would involve use of the access by much larger and heavier vehicles than would be the case if the site was to be redeveloped with 3no. dwellings in the manner being proposed.
- 8.33 Notwithstanding this, the LHA have requested the provision of an internal access road width of 4.25m for a minimum distance of 5m behind the highway boundary and a minimum internal access road width of 3.7m for the remainder to enable access by emergency vehicles. These requirements have been satisfactorily addressed through the submission of amended plans on 12th January 2024.
- 8.34 A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) and Designer's Response have also been submitted on 9th February 2024 to accompany the design of the access road improvements and these confirm that safe and suitable access can be achieved. The LHA have also confirmed that adequate turning and parking provision would be made within the site that enables vehicles to park off the public highway and enter/exit the site in a forward gear.
- 8.35 Subject to the recommended conditions the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of access, impacts on the local highway network and parking provision within the site in accordance with the NPPF, Policy IN2 of the Local Plan and Policy T1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 8.36 **Ecological Impacts**
- 8.37 Protected species survey information submitted with the application has identified the presence of bats on the application site along with the potential for bird nesting.
- 8.38 Following consultation the County Ecologist has advised that, subject to a condition securing the installation of bat boxes and bird boxes on the site as part of the proposed redevelopment scheme it would be unlikely to impact negatively upon any matters of ecological interest. Subject to the recommended condition the proposal accords with Local

Plan Policy EN2, and Policy ENV5 of the Neighbourhood Plan, in respect of the potential impacts of the proposed development on protected species and their habitat.

8.39 The application was submitted prior to the introduction of mandatory biodiversity net gain and is therefore not required to fulfil this statutory requirement.

8.40 **Flood Risk & Drainage**

8.41 The application site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at a low risk of flooding itself nor does the proposed development give rise to any initial concerns over increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere. However, Severn Trent Water in consultation have requested the imposition of a condition requiring details for both foul and surface water discharges from the site to be provided before development commences.

8.42 Subject to this condition it is considered that the proposal accords with both the NPPF and Policy EN11 of the Local Plan in respect of flood risk and drainage considerations.

9 Conclusion & Reason for Recommendation

9.1 The application site is not allocated for housing in either the Local Plan or the Neighbourhood Plan and therefore its proposed redevelopment with 3no. dwellings through a combination of converting the existing former barns into two dwellings and effective reinstatement of a Dutch barn-style property would constitute a housing windfall opportunity that would be commensurate with the scale of the settlement that it would be located within and it would make effective use of land that is previously developed, albeit with former agricultural buildings. The development would be sustainable in these respects and acceptable as a matter of principle when considered in the context of the NPPF; Policies SS1 and SS2 of the Local Plan; and Policy SD1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

9.2 Furthermore, the proposed new dwellings would be located entirely within the identified development limits for Wymondham as defined by Policy SD3 of the Neighbourhood Plan and so would not result in the outward extension of the built-up part of the village. The site is also closely surrounded by other buildings/properties and it would not result in the loss of any domestic garden space or public open space. It is therefore the case that the proposal is acceptable, in principle, as a housing windfall site under the provisions of Policy H5 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

9.3 The proposal otherwise would be acceptable in terms of its design and resultant impacts on the streetscene and character of the surrounding area in accordance with the requirements of Local Plan Policy D1. In addition, the proposal would have positive impacts on the character, appearance, setting and significance of the Conservation Area such that there would be no harm caused to the designated heritage asset and demonstrable enhancements would be achieved in accordance with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; the NPPF; Policies D1 and EN13 of the Local Plan; and Policies H7 and H8 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

9.4 Subject to the recommended conditions, the proposal is also considered to be acceptable in terms of its potential impacts on neighbouring residential occupiers, access, car parking provision, impacts on the local highway network, matters of ecological interest and the proposed drainage arrangements thereby also according with Local Plan Policies D1, EN2, EN11 and IN2 and Policies H5, H7, T1 and ENV5 in these respects.

10 Planning Conditions

- 10.1 The development shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by S51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 10.2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with following approved drawings and documents:

Dwg No 8293-03-002 Rev C - Proposed Site Layout - received 05.08.24

Dwg No 8293-03-003 Rev C - Proposed Site Layout - received 05.08.24

Dwg No 8293-03-004 - Proposed Barn Conversion 1 - received 04.05.22

Dwg No 8293-03-005 - Proposed Barn Conversion 2 - received 04.05.22

Dwg No 8293-03-006 - Proposed Dutch Barn - received 04.05.22

Dwg No 8293-03-009 Rev C - Bat and Bird Boxes - received 05.08.24

Dwg No 8293-03-010 Rev E - Proposed Highways Details - received 05.08.24

Stage 1 Road Safety Audit prepared by Midlands Road Safety Ltd, dated February 2024, report ref: 24-1643-RSA1 - received 09.02.24

Designer Response to Stage 1 Road Safety Audit prepared by Edwards & Edwards Consultancy Ltd, dated February 2024 - received 09.02.24

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is in accordance with Policy D1 of the Melton Local Plan.

- 10.3 No development shall take place until samples of the external materials to be used in the construction of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved external materials.

Reason: To ensure that the development has a satisfactory external appearance in accordance with Policy D1 of the Melton Local Plan.

- 10.4 All new doors and windows shall be timber or aluminium framed; no uPVC shall be used in any of the window fenestration or door openings.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of external appearance and to ensure that the development is in accordance with Policies D1 and EN13 of the Melton Local Plan.

- 10.5 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (England) 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting the Order with or without modification) no development falling within Schedule 2 Part 1 Classes A-F and Part 2 Class A shall be erected/carried out without the prior permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the intrinsic character and appearance of the development and the wider Conservation Area in accordance with Policies D1 and EN13 of the Melton Local Plan.

- 10.6 Notwithstanding any indication which may otherwise be given on the plans hereby approved, there shall be no visible trickle vents used in any of the fenestration of the dwellings hereby permitted.

Reason: To safeguard the intrinsic character and appearance of the development and the wider Conservation Area in accordance with Policies D1 and EN13 of the Melton Local Plan.

10.7 The dwellings hereby permitted shall not be occupied until such time as the access arrangements for the dwellings as shown on Dwg No 8293-03-010 Rev E - Proposed Highways Details (received 05.08.24) have been implemented in full.

Reason: To ensure that vehicles entering and leaving the site may pass each other clear of the highway, in a slow and controlled manner, in the interests of general highway safety in accordance with Policy IN2 of the Melton Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

10.8 The dwellings hereby approved shall not be occupied until such time as the parking and turning facilities for the dwellings have been implemented in accordance with Dwg No 8293-03-010 Rev E - Proposed Highways Details (received 05.08.24). Thereafter, the on-site parking and turning provision shall be kept available for such uses in perpetuity.

Reason: To ensure that adequate off-street parking provision is made to reduce the possibility of the proposed development leading to on-street parking problems locally, and to enable vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward direction, in the interests of highway safety and in accordance with Policy IN2 of the Melton Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

10.9 The development hereby approved shall be implemented in strict accordance with the Bat and Bird Boxes Plan (Dwg No 8293-03-009 Rev C, received 05.08.24) unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Photographs of the installed bird and bat boxes shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority in order to discharge this condition.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development would not have an adverse impacts on species protected by law and their habitat, and to maintain and enhance the biodiversity value of the site, in accordance with Policy EN2 of the Melton Local Plan.

10.10 The development hereby permitted shall not commence until drainage plans for the disposal of surface water and foul sewage have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is first brought into use.

Planning Practice Guidance and Section H of the Building Regulations 2010 detail surface water disposal hierarchy. The disposal of surface water by means of soakaways should be considered as the primary method. If this is not practical and there is no watercourse is available as an alternative other sustainable methods should also be explored. If these are found unsuitable, satisfactory evidence will need to be submitted, before a discharge to the public combined water sewerage system is considered.

Reason: To ensure that the development is provided with a satisfactory means of drainage as well as reduce the risk of creating or exacerbating a flooding problem and to minimise the risk of pollution in accordance with Policy EN11 of the Melton Local Plan.

11 Informatives

11.1 Planning Permission does not give you approval to work on the public highway. Therefore, prior to carrying out any works on the public highway you must ensure all necessary licences/permits/agreements are in place. For further information, please telephone 0116 305 0001.

11.2 It is an offence under Section 148 and Section 151 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit soil, mud or similar materials on the public highway or to fail to carry out works to prevent soil,

mud or similar materials on the highway when required to do so, and therefore you should take every effort to prevent this occurring.

- 11.3 Nesting birds are protected from disturbance under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) therefore the applicant is advised that building works with nesting bird potential and any vegetation removal should only take place outside of the breeding season (March - August inclusive) unless carefully checked beforehand by a suitably qualified person.
- 11.4 All bat species are afforded full protection under UK and European legislation including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Together, this legislation makes it illegal to: intentionally or recklessly take, kill or injure a bat; intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to bat roosts; and intentionally or recklessly disturb bats. A bat roost is defined in the legislation as “any structure or place which a bat uses for shelter or protection”. Roosts are protected whether or not bats are present at the time.
- 11.5 Severn Trent Water advise that although their statutory sewer records do not show any public sewers within the area you have specified, there may be sewers that have been recently adopted under The Transfer Of Sewer Regulations 2011. Public sewers have statutory protection and may not be built close to, directly over or be diverted without consent and you are advised to contact Severn Trent Water to discuss your proposals. Severn Trent will seek to assist you obtaining a solution which protects both the public sewer and the building.

12 Financial Implications

- 12.1 There are no financial implications associated with this planning application.

Financial Implications reviewed by: N/A

13 Legal and Governance Implications

- 13.1 The legal implications are largely set out in the report as they apply to the issues covered, and legal advisors will also be present at the meeting.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Tom Pickwell, Deputy Monitoring Officer

14 Background Papers

- 14.1 The planning history is contained within Section 3 of the report and the details of which are available to view on-line.