APPEAL STATEMENT

25/00806/FUL|ERECTION OF SINGLE SELF BUILD DWELLING WITH CAR PORT

Planning Application Reference: 25/00806/FUL
Proposal: Erection of a Single Self-Build Dwelling with Car Port
Site Address: The Plough, Milk and Water Drove, Farcet, PE7 3DR

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Appeal Statement has been prepared in support of an appeal against Huntingdonshire District Council's refusal of planning application 25/00806/FUL. The proposal seeks consent for one self-build dwelling and a car port on land at The Plough, Milk and Water Drove, Farcet on a browndfield classified site which has been redundant for over 10 years

The reasons for refusal are addressed individually below. It is the appellant's position that the proposed development accords with the development plan when read as a whole, is consistent with the principles of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024), and that no demonstrable harm would arise that would justify withholding planning permission.

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2. RESPONSE TO REASON FOR REFUSAL 1

(Development in the Countryside – Policies LP2 and LP10)

The Council asserts that the proposal represents unrestricted residential development in the countryside and does not fall within any policy exceptions. However, important material considerations were not fully accounted for:

2.1 Previously Developed Land Characteristics

The site contains the residual foundations and footprint of a former, larger building, together with hardstanding associated with the historic commercial vehicle depot use. The land therefore exhibits the characteristics of *previously developed land* as defined in the NPPF, and its redevelopment aligns with the Framework's encouragement for the efficient and responsible re-use of such land.

2.2 Existing Residential Use

A residential unit exists on the wider site and is assessed for council tax purposes. The proposal would represent a consolidation and qualitative enhancement of the established mixed-use character rather than the creation of a wholly new residential incursion into the open countryside.

2.3 Sustainable Self-Build Provision

The NPPF requires local authorities to support self-build and custom-build housing. Delivery of a modest, single self-build dwelling on land already under the appellant's control provides a proportionate and sustainable contribution to local needs without undermining the spatial strategy of LP2.

2.4 Landscape and Character Considerations

As demonstrated in the response to Reason 3, the development sits comfortably within the established pattern of loose-knit fen-edge development. The proposal would not materially erode the countryside's character or appearance.

In light of these matters, the proposal is consistent with the overall objectives of LP2 and LP10 and accords with the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development.

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3. RESPONSE TO REASON FOR REFUSAL 2

(Flood Risk – Sequential and Exceptions Tests – LP5 and NPPF Chapter 14)

The refusal suggests insufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Sequential and Exceptions Tests. This conclusion does not reflect the technical information submitted with the application.

3.1 Flood Risk Assessment and Mitigation

A detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) was submitted, addressing fluvial risk, depth and hazard data, safe access/egress, and resilience construction principles. The FRA concludes that, with the identified mitigation, the development can be delivered safely for its lifetime in accordance with NPPF para. 167.

3.2 Drainage Testing and Surface Water Management

On-site trial pits and infiltration testing confirm that soakaway-based attenuation is viable. This represents an improvement over the historic condition, as the proposal would incorporate a formal surface-water management regime where none previously existed.

3.3 Established Developed Footprint

The site historically supported a larger building, the floor slab of which remains partially in place. Redevelopment of this already developed area does not represent new encroachment into floodplain and avoids any additional displacement of flood storage.

3.4 Sequential Test Justification

The dwelling is required to meet a specific self-build objective on land already owned and occupied by the appellant. There are no reasonably available sites suitable for this purpose within areas of lower flood risk. This position is consistent with Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on the application of the Sequential Test to small-scale, site-specific proposals.

3.5 Exceptions Test

The proposal meets both limbs of the Exceptions Test:

- **Wider Sustainability Benefits:** These include the reuse of previously developed land, enhancement of the site's appearance, delivery of self-build housing, improved surface-water management and net biodiversity gains through proposed planting.
- **Safety of the Development:** The FRA demonstrates that the dwelling can be safely occupied without increasing risk elsewhere.

Accordingly, the development complies with Policy LP5 and NPPF Chapter 14. On this basis, flood risk provides no reasonable grounds for refusal.

There was no comment on the public access from environment agency concerning this or a LLFA

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4. RESPONSE TO REASON FOR REFUSAL 3

(Design and Landscape Impact – LP10(b), LP11, LP12)

The Council raises concerns regarding the southern gable elevation, building height, and the scale of the car port. These concerns are unfounded when assessed in the context of the site and the surrounding fenland landscape.

4.1 Contextual Response

The site is located within a dispersed, non-uniform rural setting, characterised by agricultural buildings, traditional fen dwellings and ad-hoc development clusters. A one-off dwelling of bespoke design is wholly appropriate in such a context and does not need to mimic suburban typologies.

4.2 Southern Gable Elevation

The southern gable is modest in width and has been intentionally designed as a blank elevation for energy performance and privacy reasons. Importantly, this elevation would be substantially screened by existing and proposed boundary planting. As such, its visibility and perceived massing would be negligible from Milk and Water Drove.

4.3 Building Height and Form

A ridge height of 9.4m is characteristic of fenland barn forms and agricultural outbuildings. The massing is therefore contextually appropriate and not "urban" in nature. The design accords with the

principles of the Huntingdonshire Design Guide by referencing vernacular forms and employing simple, robust materials.

4.4 Car Port Design

The open-framed, timber car port adopts traditional rural proportions. Its overall length is compatible with the wide frontage of the plot and does not represent an overly dominant or intrusive structure. Landscaping ensures that its visual impact remains low.

When viewed holistically, the design integrates effectively with the site and surroundings and does not result in harm to character, thereby satisfying Policies LP10(b), LP11 and LP12.

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5. RESPONSE TO REASON FOR REFUSAL 4

(Refuse Bin Contribution – LP4 and Developer Contributions SPD)

The refusal on this matter is procedural rather than substantive.

5.1 Existing Waste Service Provision

The wider site is already assessed for council tax and currently receives domestic waste collection services. Wheeled bins are already present on site and in use. The development does not generate a net increase in demand for waste infrastructure relative to existing site operations.

5.2 Unilateral Undertaking

Should the Inspector conclude that a financial contribution is technically required despite pre-existing provision, the appellant is fully willing to enter into a Unilateral Undertaking. As established in planning appeal case law, such a procedural matter should not justify the dismissal of an otherwise acceptable proposal.

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6. CONCLUSION

The appeal proposal represents the sustainable redevelopment of previously used land to deliver a high-quality self-build dwelling. All technical matters—including flood risk, design, landscape impact, and refuse provision—have been satisfactorily addressed.

When considered against the policies of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), the proposal accords with the development plan when read as a whole. Any outstanding contributions can be secured via condition or legal agreement.

It is therefore respectfully requested that the appeal be allowed and planning permission granted.