OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00229/FUL **Full Planning Application**

Proposal: **Demolition of existing outbuildings and conversion and extension of existing barn to a single self-build dwelling and associated works including the installation of air source heat pumps**

Location: **The Barn Garden Farm The Town**

Applicant: **Mr and Mrs Elizabeth and Murray MacKay**

Grid Ref: **512092 264200**

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

This application seeks approval for the demolition of existing outbuildings and the conversion and extension of an existing barn to a single self-build residential dwelling alongside associated works at Garden Farm, Great Staughton.

Garden Farm, The Town, Great Staughton is a Grade II Listed Building approximately 1km south-west of the built-up area of Great Staughton. The existing property is a two-storey, 16th century, timber-framed and plastered farmhouse of a gable-end design. The property is approximately 80m south-west of the Great Staughton Conservation Area. The historic timber framed barn subject to approval for conversion and the ancillary buildings to be demolished are considered to form part of Green Farmhouse (Grade II Listed) under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The application site is within Flood Zone 1. The site is located within the boundary of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan. The examiner's report on the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan was issued on 3 April 2025 and recommended that the Plan met all legal requirements and can proceed to referendum. This was considered by Cabinet on 17th June 2025 where it was agreed to accept the recommended modifications and progress the neighbourhood plan to referendum. Accordingly it can be given considerable weight at this stage.

The Local Planning Authority is also considering a Listed Building consent application for the same development (Reference number 25/00230/LBC).

This application has been accompanied by the following documents:

- Planning Statement;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Heritage Statement;
- Condition Survey Report;
- Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment;
- Flood Risk Assessment for Planning;
- Structural and Underground Drainage Appraisal and Feasibility Assessment;
- Arboricultural Method Statement;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment;
- Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Surveys;

Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):

* delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
* building a strong, competitive economy;
* achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

Section 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 - adopted May 2019

LP1: Amount of Development
LP2: Strategy for Development
LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
LP5: Flood Risk
LP6: Waste Water Management
LP9: Small Settlements
LP10: The Countryside
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP15: Surface Water
LP16: Sustainable Travel
LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
LP25: Housing Mix
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
LP33: Rural Buildings
LP34: Heritage Assets and Their Settings

Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2036 - Referendum Version - April 2025

Policy GSNP 1: Spatial Strategy
Policy GSNP 2: Defining the Built-Up Area Boundary
Policy GSNP 5: Housing Mix
Policy GSNP 7: Landscape and Townscape Characteristics
Policy GSNP 9: Great Staughton Conservation Areas
Policy GSNP 10: Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets
Policy GSNP 11: Biodiversity and Wildlife Habitats

Policy GSNP 12: Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency
Policy GSNP 14: Water Efficiency
Policy GSNP 15: Surface Water Flood Risk
Policy GSNP 17: Road Safety and Parking

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)
Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2017
Developer Contributions SPD 2011
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2017
Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2024)

The National Design Guide (2021)

* C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
* I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
* I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
* B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
*M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
* N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
* H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
* H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
* H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

25/00232/LBC - Erection of Single Storey rear extension - Approved.

25/00231/HHFUL - Erection of Single Storey rear extension - Approved.

25/00230/LBC - Demolition of existing outbuildings and conversion and extension of existing barn to a single self-build dwelling and associated works including the installation of air source heat pumps - Pending consideration.

CONSULTATIONS

Great Staughton Parish Council - No comments received

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue - Request a condition regarding fire hydrants be imposed on any planning permission granted.

Cambridgeshire County Council Definitive Map Team - No objections to the proposal, subject to an informative ensuring the footpath remains open and unobstructed at all times.

Huntingdonshire District Council Environmental Health Officer - No objection. Request conditions be imposed on any planning permission granted to ensure there is no residual contamination from the previous use.

Huntingdonshire District Council Arboricultural Officer - Supports the application.

Huntingdonshire District Council Conservation Officer - Objects to the proposed development due to the total loss of historic curtilage buildings, harm to the timber framed barn, loss of historic associations and introduction of an overwhelming domestic character to the agricultural setting of the listed farmhouse.

REPRESENTATIONS

No third party representations were received during the course of the application.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.

As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within paragraph 48 of the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the 2004 Act as "the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area".

In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan consists of:

o Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
o Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
o St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029
o Godmanchester Neighbourhood Plan (2017)
o Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan (2018)
o Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan (2019)
o Bury Village Neighbourhood Plan (2021)
o Buckden Neighbourhood Plan (2021)
o Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2036 (2022)
o Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan 2021 to 2036 (2023)
o The Stukeleys Neighbourhood Plan 2022 to 2036 (2023)
o Sawtry Village Neighbourhood Plan 2022 to 2036 (2023)

The statutory term 'material considerations' has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.

The main issues to consider are:

o The Principle of Development
o Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage Assets
o Residential Amenity
o Highway Safety
o Flood Risk and Surface Water
o Biodiversity
o Trees
o Developer Contributions
o Accessible and Adaptable Homes

o Water Efficiency

*The Principle of the Development

The site is located outside of the built-up area of Great Staughton and is therefore considered to be countryside land in accordance with the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. As such, Policy LP10 (The Countryside) of the adopted Local Plan is relevant in this instance.

Policy LP10 states that development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan. As this application seeks approval for the demolition of existing buildings and the conversion and existing of an existing barn, alongside associated works, Policy LP33 (Rural Buildings) provides an opportunity for development in principle.

It is also worth noting that Policy GSNP 2 of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan states that development proposals outside of the Built-Up Area Boundary will only be supported where there is material evidence of a local community need that would be met by proposal; or where the proposal complies with requirements of other national of local policies or sites that are allocated as part of the strategic policy in the adopted Local Plan.

Policy LP33 of the adopted Local Plan states that a proposal for the conversion of a building in the countryside will be supported where it can be demonstrated that
(a) the building is
(i) redundant or disused;
(ii) of permanent and substantial construction;
(iii) not in such a state of dereliction or disrepair that significant reconstruction would be required;
(iv) structurally capable of being converted for the proposed use.

This application has been accompanied by a Planning Statement which states that the barn is redundant and no longer in practical use, except as a temporary shelter for wood and one vehicle. However, given the number of buildings to be demolished and the limited evidence supplied to demonstrate that the building in question is redundant or disused, the Local Planning Authority are not able to fully satisfy themselves that the proposal meets this criteria in this instance.

Based on the information provided, the Local Planning Authority are satisfied that the barn is of permanent and substantial construction. However, as concluded in the submitted Condition Survey Report, the building is in poor condition with missing braces, areas of timber decay, areas of deflection, detached plinths and joins and poor brickwork - all of which has been exacerbated by poor quality modern repairs. It is concluded that the current condition of the barn is not of sufficient integrity to undertake any new works until stabilisation measures have been put in place and the level of proposed modifications to the fabric would significantly impact on the building.
Furthermore, the Condition Survey Report states that a significant programme of repair will be necessary to provide the timber framed barn with the structural integrity necessary to allow the redevelopment of the site in a manner appropriate to achieve the statutory requirements necessary for buildings.

As such, the Local Planning Authority consider that the building is in such a state of dereliction or disrepair that significant reconstruction would be required and insufficient information has been provided to adequately demonstrate that the building is structurally capable of being converted for the proposed use in its current state.

Policy LP33 goes on to state that the proposal would be supported where it
(i) would lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting; and
(ii) any extension or alterations would not adversely affect the form, scale, massing or proportion of the building. Furthermore, a modest increase in floorspace would be supported.

As discussed in further detail in the following section of this report, the Local Planning Authority do not consider the proposal to lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting and the proposed extensions would adversely affect the form, scale, massing and proportions of the building. As such, the proposal would not be in accordance with Policy LP33 in this regard.

It is proposed to demolish three outbuildings totalling the loss of 1,093m2 footprint and erect two single-storey extensions alongside providing a first-floor level in the barn to the converted, creating 706m2 in floorspace. As such, the proposal would not result in an overall increase in floorspace.

Overall, while Policy LP33 provides an opportunity for the conversion of an existing rural building, this application does not adequately demonstrate that the proposal would meet the criteria of the policy and is therefore considered to be unacceptable in this instance.

Policy LP10 goes on to state that all development in the countryside must
(a) seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value;
(b) recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
(c) not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.

The existing land that is the subject of this application is classified as Grade 2 agricultural land (Very Good). Some 98% of the district comprises land within Grades 1 to 3, with 15% being Grade 1 and an estimated 77% of land falling within the definition of best and most versatile land. The proposal, if granted, would result in the loss of this land.

Given there is a limited supply of land of lower grades in the district and that a significant number of sites allocated for development in the District in the Local Plan to 2036 are on land that is the best and most versatile, it is considered that the proposed development does not represent an unacceptable loss of agricultural land in this instance and any harm that results are limited.

As discussed in further detail in the following section, the Local Planning Authority consider the proposal to satisfy criteria (c) of Policy LP10, however, do not consider the proposal to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and therefore would not meet criteria (b) of Policy LP10.

Overall, while Policy LP33 of the adopted Local Plan provides an opportunity for the conversion of a rural building in the countryside, the Local Planning Authority are not able to satisfy themselves that the building is suitable for conversion, nor that the proposal would be acceptable in terms of its design. As such, the principle of development is considered to be unacceptable as the proposal would be contrary to Policies LP10 and LP33 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and Policy GSNP 2 of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version).

*Design, Visual Amenity and Impact Upon Heritage Assets

The Local Planning Authority is required to ensure that special regard is given to preserving the listed buildings and their settings in relation to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Local Planning Authority is also required to ensure that with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 at Section 72. This is also reflected in the submission Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan, Policy LP34 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policy LP11 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context. Policy LP12 states that new development will be expected to be well designed and that a proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it contributes positively to the area's character and identity and successfully integrates with adjoining

buildings and landscape. This is also reflected in the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version), Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

This application seeks approval for the demolition of existing outbuildings and the conversion and extension of an existing barn to a single five-bedroom residential dwelling alongside associated works at Garden Farm, Great Staughton. The historic timber framed barn subject to approval for conversion and the ancillary buildings to be demolished are considered to form part of Green Farmhouse (Grade II Listed) under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The Barn is a five bay timber framed building and the size and quality of timbers is suggestive of a 16th Century date which is supported by the types of carpentry techniques used in the framing. There is no reason to think that this barn is not contemporary with the 16th Century listed farmhouse. The interesting timber joints, aisled construction and numerous clear carpenters' marks combine to give the building high evidential value which contributes to the special interest of the listed building and has significance in its own right.

To the south of the main barn is a group of brick, timber framed and weatherboarded cart lodges and outbuildings. These make three sides of a small yard area and define the southern boundary of the main farmyard. They appear to date to the first half of the 19th Century. In places these buildings are in poor condition but as ancillary agricultural buildings they make a positive contribution to the setting and special interest of the listed farmhouse.

It is proposed to demolish all the ancillary farm buildings except for the main timber framed barn which would be converted into a dwelling and extended on both sides with contemporary styled 'wings'. The former farmyard concrete surface would be removed and the area landscaped into formal gardens with a new access track and parking area introduced into the north of the site.

The converted barn would be finished with timber cladding walls and a slate roof with rooflights on the north-side elevation roofslope. The proposal includes various alterations to the fenestration of the building, the installation of an air source heat pump, hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatments.

The proposed extension involves the creation of two single storey wings that would be connected to the main barn by single storey glazed links. The eastern extension would provide a recreation wing with a swimming pool and gym, would measure 32.9m by 7.8m, (not including the glazed link) and be of a flat-roof design measuring 3.05m in height. The western extension would also be of a flat-roof design with a matching height, would measure 14.6m by 7.3m (not including the glazed link) and would create a garage, office and bedroom. The proposed extensions would be constructed with a black metal finish with black windows and sedum roofing with solar panels.

The proposed extensions are not considered to be subservient additions or well-related to the existing building and the use of contemporary architecture in the former farmyard is considered to adversely impact the setting of the Listed Building by introducing a modern domestic character that detracts from the historic agricultural setting of the farmhouse. This impact is considered to be compounded by the introduction of formal domestic hard and soft landscaping.

The subdivision of the curtilage by the eastern extension (recreation wing) would erode the spatial relationship of the farmhouse with the farmyard and walled gardens. The status of the farmhouse would be lessened by the increased presence and massing of the converted barn. This would be compounded by the introduction of a new access driveway to the converted barn over the existing pasture.

The proposal also involves the demolition of three ancillary curtilage farm buildings to the east and south of the barn to be retained. The buildings in question make a positive contribution to the

special historic interest of the Listed Farmhouse and inadequate clear and convincing justification has been provided as part of this application to warrant their removal.

The historic relationships between the farmyard, farm buildings and wider agricultural landscape forms a part of the significance of the Listed Building. It is considered that the submitted Heritage Statement fails to consider cumulative impacts of the proposed development on the setting to the Listed Building and does not accord sufficient weight to the total loss of the curtilage outbuildings and their contribution to the significance of the farmhouse.

The Council's Conservation Officer has concluded that the cumulative impact of the total loss of historic curtilage buildings, harm to the timber framed barn, loss of historic associations and introduction of an overwhelming domestic character to the agricultural setting of the Listed Farmhouse would amount to a high degree of harm to the significance of the heritage asset. As such, the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest and setting of the Listed Building to a less than substantial degree of harm.

Paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that where a proposal will 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.

The submitted Heritage Statement argues that the harm arising from the development would be "outweighed by the heritage benefits delivered by the scheme which include restoring the structure, rectifying historic interventions which has caused damage and providing it with a new long term sustainable use."

The Local Planning Authority do not consider the public benefits of the development identified within the Heritage Statement outweigh the high degree of harm that would result from the proposal. Furthermore, the proposed works do not offer clear and convincing justification that conversion to a domestic dwelling is the optimum viable use of this building.

As such, the proposal is deemed to be contrary to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policies GSNP 7, GSNP 9 and GSNP 10 of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version) the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard and planning permission should therefore be refused in this instance.

*Residential Amenity

Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036 states a proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of the proposed development and maintained for users and occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings.

The closest neighbouring residential properties that are likely to be impacted upon as a result of the proposed development are Garden Farm Farmhouse and Garden Farm Cottage.

The proposed eastern extension would be approximately 4.4m at its closest point to Garden Farm Farmhouse with a boundary wall (approved under permission 25/00231/HHFUL) and a post and rail fence proposed. As the proposed extension would be single storey in height only (maximum height of 3.05m) with boundary treatments to screen the majority of the proposal, the Local Planning Authority are satisfied that the proposed extension would not result in any detrimental overbearing, overshadowing, overlooking or loss of light impacts on the neighbouring property of Garden Farm Farmhouse.

It is also worth noting that no first-floor eastern side elevation windows are proposed in the existing barn to be converted and the main dwellinghouse would screen the proposed western elevation from the neighbouring property of Garden Farm Farmhouse.

With regard to Garden Farm Cottage, the proposed western extension is not considered to result in any detrimental overbearing, overshadowing, overlooking or loss of light impacts as it would be single storey in height only and approximately 50m from the neighbouring property with the retention of historic boundary walls and mature trees to screen the proposal.

Furthermore, the first-floor western side elevation window serving a bedroom in the main dwellinghouse would not result in any overlooking impacts on the neighbouring property of Garden Farm Cottage due to the distance (approximately 70m) and being located further north than the neighbouring property.

As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on residential amenity and therefore is in accordance with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Highway Safety

Policies LP16 and LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036 seeks to ensure that new development incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates access for emergency vehicles and service vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles.

The proposed dwelling would be accessed via the existing vehicular access point off Great Staughton Road which serves a number of residential dwellings, as well as agricultural units. The proposal would involve the creation of a new entrance leading off the primary driveway. The use of the existing vehicular access and the proposed entrance are considered to be acceptable in this instance with appropriate dimensions. A condition would be imposed on any planning permission granted to ensure that development is carried out in accordance with the Cambridgeshire Construction Specification.

It is also worth noting that the proposal includes adequate space for off-street car parking spaces (including an integral garage in the eastern extension) and turning provision to ensure that vehicles enter the highway in a forward gear. A condition would be imposed on any planning permission granted to ensure the provision of secure cycle storage at the property.

As such, subject to appropriate conditions, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on highway safety and therefore accords with Policy LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policy GSNP 17 of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version) and Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Flood Risk

The application site lies within Flood Zone 1 in accordance with Environment Agency mapping and the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024).

The flood risk vulnerability of the proposed development is 'more vulnerable' in accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance, which is compatible with land within Flood Zone 1. Furthermore, as stated in paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), as the application seeks approval for the change of use and minor development, sequential and exception tests are not required.

It is proposed to manage surface water from the proposed development through the use of soakaways with the disposal of foul sewage via the mains sewer. The proposed methods are

considered to be acceptable, and officers are satisfied that full details of the surface and foul water drainage can be secured as part of building regulations and other relevant legislative requirements in this instance.

As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on both flood risk and surface water and therefore accords with Policies LP5, LP6 and LP15 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policy GSNP 15 of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version) and Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Biodiversity

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF (2024) states planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated and ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.

This application has been accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (PRA) and Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Surveys.

The PRA concluded that three of the buildings to be converted/demolished were assessed as having a high value for roosting bats due to external and internal roosting features identified. Accordingly these three buildings were therefore subject to three separate emergence surveys which identified the presence of bats. The development will therefore need to be permitted by a bat mitigation licence and an ESPL application to Natural England will be required to legally permit the proposed works. The site was also assessed to contain suitable reptile habitats in the form of scrub, hedgerow and modified grassland.

The Local Planning Authority are satisfied with the findings of the report and that the proposed development would not result in any harm to any species or habitats subject to the imposition of conditions to ensure the development is carried out in strict accordance with the mitigation measures and recommendations provided.

In regard to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), as of the 2nd April 2024 a mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was imposed on small sites. A statement has been submitted with the application which states the application falls within the self-build exemption. As the application consists exclusively of a single self-build dwelling on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares, Officers are satisfied that it is exempt from providing biodiversity net gain under The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024. A condition to ensure the property would be a self-build property shall be imposed on any permission granted.

It is also worth noting that the site is not subject to any designations and there are no statutory sites nearby. While the site lies within the impact risk zone of Perry Woods (SSSI), the proposal is not listed as a possible high-risk.

Overall, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP30 of the adopted Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policy GSNP 11 of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version) and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Trees

Policy LP31 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that the potential for adverse impacts on trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows has been investigated. A proposal will only be supported where it seeks to conserve

and enhance any existing tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of value that would be affected by the proposed development.

The site is not located within the Great Staughton Conservation and there are no Tree Preservation Orders in place nearby. There are, however, a number of mature trees that add significantly to the vista and arboricultural landscape that could be affected by the proposed development. Accordingly, an Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been submitted, alongside a survey of the trees, Method Statement and a Tree Protection Plan.

The proposal would involve the removal of two trees (T15 and T17), a small part of a hedge and some minor pruning to G2. In order to protect existing trees, tree protection fencing and no-dig driveway (within the RPA of T16) are proposed.

The Council's Arboricultural Officer raised no objections to the proposed development, subject to the imposition of conditions on any planning permission granted to ensure that the development is carried out in strict accordance with the tree protection measures proposed.

As such, the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the Policy GSNP 7 of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan, Policy LP31 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and Sections 12 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.

*Development Contributions

Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. This application has not been accompanied by a Unilateral Undertaking Form in respect of wheeled bins. As such, the proposed development is contrary to Policy LP4 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and the Developers Contributions SPD (2011).

*Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings

Policy LP25 of the Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 seeks to ensure that all housing developments in the district offers a genuine choice of accessible and adaptable dwellings that meet the requirements of residents:

f. ensuring 100% of new dwellings, across all tenures provided, meet Building Regulation requirement M4 (2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' (or replacement standards).

In this case, given the constraints of dealing with an existing building it would not be considered reasonable to attach such a condition.

*Water Efficiency

Policy LP12 (j) of the Local Plan to 2036 states that new dwellings must comply with the optional Building Regulation requirement for water efficiency set out in Approved Document G of the Building Regulations. A condition will be attached to any consent to ensure compliance with the above in accordance with Policy LP12 (j) of adopted Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Policy GSNP 14 of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version).

*Other

*Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The development will be CIL liable in accordance with the Council's adopted charging schedule; CIL payments will cover footpaths and access, health, community facilities, libraries and lifelong learning and education.

*Conclusion

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposal, by virtue of lack of information, is not able to demonstrate that the barn to be converted is redundant/disused, is not in such a state of dereliction or disrepair that significant reconstruction would be required and is structurally capable of being converted for the proposed residential use. Accordingly it is not considered to satisfy the criteria of Policy LP33 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan and by extension is considered to be an unacceptable form of development in the countryside and would be contrary to Policies LP10 and LP33 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and Policy GSNP 2 of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version).

The cumulative impact of the total loss of historic curtilage buildings, harm to the timber framed barn, loss of historic associations and introduction of an overwhelming domestic character to the agricultural setting of the listed farmhouse would not preserve the special architectural and historic interest of Garden Farmhouse or its setting and would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. As such, the proposed development would be contrary to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policies LP10, LP11, LP12, LP33 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policies GSNP 7, GSNP 9 and GSNP 10 of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version), the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Furthermore, the application has not been accompanied by a unilateral undertaking in relation to wheeled bins and is therefore contrary to Policy LP4 of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contributions SPD (2011).

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is concluded that the proposed development is contrary to policy and not acceptable. There are no overriding material considerations that indicate that permission should be granted in this instance. Therefore, it is recommended that the application be refused.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Jennifer Wallis**