



## Planning Committee South

**Application no** DC/20/4916/FUL

**Location**

Alston Barns  
Grimston Lane  
Trimley St Martin  
Felixstowe  
Suffolk  
IP11 0SD

**Expiry date** 2 February 2021 (extension of time previously agreed)

**Application type** Full Application

**Applicant** Labelcraft Signs Ltd.

**Parish** Trimley St Martin

**Proposal** Change of use and conversion of an existing agricultural building to B8 (storage) use, including the installation of cladding over three bays on the south east elevation.

**Case Officer** Rachel Lambert  
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### 1. Summary

Proposal

- 1.1. Change of use and conversion of an existing agricultural building to B8 (storage) use, including the installation of cladding over three bays on the south east elevation.

Determination route

- 1.2. This application can be determined at officer level in accordance with the scheme of delegation, as none of the committee referral triggers have been met. The application accords with planning policy, the applicant is not an elected member or member of staff or close relative, the land is not owned by the district council, Trimley St Martin Parish Council and the ward member(s) have not commented, and there has been no objections from statutory consultees.

- 1.3. It is acknowledged that the neighbour objection was from a now former East Suffolk Councillor, however, as all correspondence received was from a personal perspective (not as the Ward Member) the referral process is not triggered. Notwithstanding this, the application was called to Planning Committee by the Chair of the South Planning Committee during the Planning Referral meeting, held on Tuesday 3 August when addressing the adjacent application (DC/20/4916/VOC). Members requested that both items are to be determined by the planning committee due to the history of the site and concerns raised by the neighbour - allowing the proposed/retrospectives works to be assessed as one 'masterplan'.

#### Recommendation

- 1.4. Recommended for approval subject to conditions.

## **2. Site description**

- 2.1. The subject site is located at Alston Barns, Grimston Lane, Trimley St Martin and comprises a redundant agricultural building. The building is of portal frame construction with existing galvanised corrugated sheet cladding on three elevations and an open front. The roof is formed of corrugated sheet cement board.
- 2.2. Located within Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the surrounding environment is predominately agricultural in nature, with a residential dwelling located approximately 24 metres to the north.
- 2.3. The change of use of Alston Barns - an associated unit located approximately 24 metres to the north west - from agriculture to B1(c) use was granted planning permission (subject to conditions) on 9 August 2019 (DC/19/1967/COU). Trinity College are the landowners and Labelcraft Signs Ltd are the current tenants.
- 2.4. The adjacent building is occupied by Labelcraft Signs Limited (the applicant of this application). They advise that it has become apparent that the existing premises does not provide sufficient storage space for the business and therefore require the use of the adjacent building for storage purposes.
- 2.5. The subject site is located within Flood Risk 1 zone, which the Environment Agency defines as having a low probability of flooding, due to the associated low risk, no further assessment is required.
- 2.6. Other than the application currently under consideration, there are no known extant applications or consents relating to this building.

## **3. Proposal**

- 3.1. This application seeks Full Planning Permission for a change of use and conversion of an existing agricultural building to B8 (storage) use, and associated physical works including the installation of cladding over three bays on the south east elevation.
- 3.2. As shown on the proposed floor plan (PS1611-01 Rev.03) the internal layout comprises an area of shelving and storage of tools and other equipment (three bays), along with a wood

store and trailer store (two bays). The three bays to the northern aspect of the site are to be screened with full height vertical feather board cladding, painted black to match the main building. The remaining two bays will be left open and will include a new concrete base.

3.3. Access to the site is already established via Grimston Lane.

3.4. The application is accompanied by a planning statement and preliminary ecological appraisal.

#### 4. Consultations/comments

4.1. One third party response was received, which raised the following matters:

- Noise and disturbance/impact on residential amenity;
- Outlook (untidy site);
- Overlooking/loss of privacy to front garden; and
- Adverse impact on character of the AONB.

#### Consultees

##### Parish/Town Council

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Trimley St Martin Parish Council	9 December 2020	No response
Summary of comments: No response received.		

##### Statutory consultees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Highways Department	9 December 2020	21 December 2020
Summary of comments: No objection.		

##### Non statutory consultees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Environmental Protection	9 December 2020	No response
Summary of comments: No response received.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Landscape Team	20 January 2021	5 February 2021
Summary of comments: No objection. Internal consultee - comments included within reporting.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Ecology	20 January 2021	18 February 2021
Summary of comments: No objection (subject to conditions). Internal consultee - comments included within reporting.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Coasts and Heaths Project	20 January 2021	8 February 2021
Summary of comments: No objection (subject to conditions).		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Suffolk Wildlife Trust	20 January 2021	No response
Summary of comments: No response received.		

### **Publicity**

None

### **Site notices**

General Site Notice

Reason for site notice: New Dwelling

Date posted: 23 December 2020

Expiry date: 15 January 2021

## **5. Planning policy**

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

SCLP3.2 - Settlement Hierarchy (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP4.6 - Conversion and Replacement of Rural Buildings for Employment Use (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP10.1 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP10.4 - Landscape Character (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP11.1 – Design Quality (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP11.2 - Residential Amenity (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

## **6. Planning considerations**

- 6.1. The proposal seeks to change part of the use of the building to B8 (storage) for Labelcraft Signs Limited, which is located to west of the site. It is understood that the change of use has already occurred (in part).

### Permitted development rights

- 6.2. Under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order (2015), development consisting of a change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use as an agricultural building to a flexible use falling within Class B8 (storage or distribution) is deemed permitted development where specified criteria are met, and subject to the Prior Notification process, prior to the commencement of the use.
- 6.3. In this case, the overall floor area of the unit exceeds the 500 sq. m. threshold (albeit by 9 sq. m.) and as such requires planning permission. As the use has also commenced, the Prior Notification Process can not be used and as such the scheme also requires planning permission because the use has commenced.

### Principle

- 6.4. The site is located outside the settlement boundary for Trimley St Martin and is, therefore, considered as countryside. The type and scale of development that would be supported within this hierarchy level includes the conversion and replacement of rural buildings for employment uses (Policy SCLP4.6), among other policy approaches. As such, the proposal is acceptable in principle subject to compliance with the respective policy.
- 6.5. Policy SCLP4.6 states that the conversion of rural buildings for employment use will be permitted where:
- a. The business use is of a scale and character that is appropriate to its location in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy;
  - b. The proposal does not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, local roads or the living conditions of local residents and exploits opportunities to make the location more sustainable by walking, cycling or public transport;

- c. The proposal would not conflict with neighbouring uses;
  - d. The proposal is complementary to the setting of any historic or architecturally important buildings and reflects the form and character of the existing buildings; and
  - e. The design and construction avoids, or adequately mitigates, any adverse impact on the character of the surrounding landscape, the AONB and its setting, or the natural or historic environment. The building already exists and is currently permitted to be in agricultural use.
- 6.6. The application will be assessed on the above criteria (with the exception of criteria d) - as set out below.

#### Business use

- 6.7. New employment development will not be permitted in the Countryside except where specific policies in the Development Plan - in this instance, the application relies on Policy SCLP4.6 (Conversion and Replacement of Rural Buildings for Employment Use). This policy acknowledges that when buildings in the countryside are no longer required for their original purpose or become under-used, their re-use and conversion to appropriate uses for employment can represent a sustainable form of development. Buildings in the rural areas can also provide opportunities to enhance local prosperity.
- 6.8. The storage element of the proposal is linked with the business use associated with the adjacent building and any traffic associated with the proposed conversion would be related to the host business and would not result in any increase in vehicle movements, as stated with the submitted planning statement.
- 6.9. Visually, the building already exists, and the proposal requires no increase in scale. The design of the building will remain unchanged, except for addition of cladding along three bays on the south east elevation of the building, which is required for both for security and screening purposes - this detail will retain the typical agricultural character of the building and is considered to be in keeping with its setting.
- 6.10. Overall, the proposal satisfies the requirements of criteria a.

#### Highway safety

- 6.11. There have been concerns raised relating to the means of access along the narrow and unmetalled road (Grimston Lane), as well as the frequency and quantity of traffic that will be accessing the site, resulting in potential traffic safety issues.
- 6.12. As the building will be occupied in conjunction with Alston Barns, providing additional storage space as required by the business, there will be no change in the number of vehicle movements at the site. A condition of consent will apply to ensure the proposed use is operated in this manner, which will ensure vehicle movements are inline with those outlined within the application for the host building (DC/19/1967/COU).
- 6.13. For reference, upon review of the nature of the road and frequency of proposed traffic relating to the previous permission (DC/19/1967/COU), the local highway authority concluded that the proposal would not lead to traffic movements that would prejudice highway safety, the free flow of traffic, or materially harm the living conditions of local residents. Further detail and reasoning was requested from the highways authority to demonstrate how there are no concerns regarding traffic safety. It has been advised, that an

objection was not raised based on the knowledge that the site already maintains a permitted agricultural use, and because of this, the proposal is not seen as intensification against the existing use, which although not currently active could be re-established at any point in time.

- 6.14. Access to the site will be controlled by the existing gate, which will be closed outside operating hours. No car parking is shown within the subject site, a parking area is provided to the south of the adjacent building, which is out of view from the neighbouring residential property. The highways authority has raised no objection.
- 6.15. Overall, it is considered that the proposal change of use is in accordance with criteria b (in part) as well as Paragraph 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

#### Residential amenity

- 6.16. Due to the relatively remote location of the site and with what are likely to be low background noise levels, the proposed B8 (storage) use class should be able to co-exist with residential without causing detrimental harm to amenity. The proposed floor plan shows areas for storage only, with no indication that the area will be used for cutting or use of machinery - which are located within the adjacent building. As such, there is no reason for concern relating to any increase in noise disturbance, any movement of materials would not be dissimilar or any greater than that of an agricultural use.
- 6.17. To ensure any associated noise is mitigated, a condition of consent will apply to ensure that the hours of use requested are adhered to and to prevent uncontrolled use - the suggested hours will mirror that of the adjacent premise (Monday to Friday (07h00 - 17h00); Saturday (08h00 - 17h00); and Sunday/Bank Holiday (no use)).
- 6.18. The proposed cladding along three of the bays would offer screening for means of security, provide an improved outlook and would retain privacy/limit overlooking for the neighbouring property. Access to daylight and sunlight is not affected, and there will no associated light spillage (other than within the building and during operating hours). Due to the nature of use, the storage of materials will not impact air quality or result in any other forms of pollution.
- 6.19. Overall, the proposal is deemed in accordance with criteria b (in part) and criteria c, as well as Policy SCLP11.2 (Residential Amenity).

#### Design quality, landscape and visual amenity

- 6.20. Located within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the proposal must not result in harm to the setting of this landscape. As the proposal comprises the change of use of an existing building, with no additions to height or building coverage proposed, it is considered that the unit is of a scale that relates well to its setting, as it is already established within the environment.
- 6.21. The proposal has been reviewed by East Suffolk Council Landscape Manager, with no objections raised relating to landscape impact.
- 6.22. Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB note that no landscaping has been proposed as part of the proposal, which is a missed opportunity to deliver landscape enhancements within the area. While the proposal will amend the physical appearance of the barns through the addition of

timber cladding no measures have been proposed to enhance the site surroundings through for example the installation of new boundary treatments to replace existing damaged fences and new hedge or tree planting. As such, a condition requiring the submission of a landscape strategy to address these issues will apply, ensuring the scheme satisfies the requirement to enhance the AONB and not just mitigate any landscape or visual impacts.

- 6.23. As a result, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with criteria e (in part), as well as Policy SCLP10.4 (Landscape Character) and Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), which seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment.
- 6.24. The proposed addition of elevational screening is considered to provide a visual enhancement to the surrounding area, comprising materials that are similar in appearance and complement local character. With the proposed condition ensuring the implementation of a soft landscaping scheme and the association with the host business providing suitable areas for parking/waste storage, the proposal is also deemed in accordance with Policy SCLP11.1 (Design Quality).

### Ecology

- 6.25. The Council has a legal obligation to consider whether protected species are likely to be affected by a proposed development.
- 6.26. An updated preliminary ecological appraisal report was formally submitted, following a request by Suffolk County Council Ecologist. As recognised in the respective report, the building proposed for conversion contains a barn owl nest box, which is understood to be regularly used by this species (either for roosting or nesting). From the information provided it appears that the location of this box is within one of the bays to be clad and therefore it will no longer be available for birds to use. To ensure that the nesting opportunities on site are not lost as a result of this proposal the box should be relocated to an alternative suitable location and an additional box should also be installed elsewhere on the site. The existing box should only be removed in accordance with the timings/procedure set out in the report, the relocation and new boxes will be secured by condition.
- 6.27. As a result, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with criteria e (in part), as well as Policy SCLP10.1 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), which seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1. The reuse and conversion of the redundant agricultural building to B8 use (storage) ancillary to the existing adjacent business use, represents a sustainable form of development, preventing the visual impact of a derelict building within the countryside. Although the site is located some distance from a sustainable settlement, the proposed change of use and is deemed to be relative to the respective countryside hierarchy, where the conversion of agricultural buildings for employment use is an appropriate scale of development. Furthermore, the proposal provides an opportunity to maximise the economic potential of the rural areas and to secure the retention of a local business and associated employment.
- 7.2. It has been proven that the use will have no adverse impact on the surrounding environment, with conditions imposed to ensure that there are detrimental effects on geodiversity, biodiversity, the natural landscape, highways safety, or residential amenity.

7.3. As such, the application is deemed in accordance with all relevant planning policies (as detailed in the above reporting) and is therefore recommend for approval.

## **8. Recommendation**

8.1. Recommended for approval subject to conditions.

### **Conditions:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: This condition is imposed in accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than in complete accordance with the following drawings:

- Site location plan (A.54.788);
- Proposed floor plan (PS1611-01 Rev.03); and
- Proposed elevation plan (PS1611-02 Rev.03).

Reason: For avoidance of doubt as to what has been considered and approved.

3. The materials and finishes shall be as indicated within the submitted application (to match the existing) and thereafter retained as such, unless otherwise agreed by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development in the interests of visual amenity.

4. Development must be undertaken in accordance with the ecological avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures identified within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (Denny Ecology, February 2021) as submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination.

Reason: To ensure that ecological receptors are adequately protected and enhanced as part of the development.

5. No works to or demolition of buildings or structures that may be used by breeding birds shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check for active birds' nests immediately before work is started and has provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that nesting birds are protected.

6. Prior to commencement, details of barn owl mitigation measures, including the provision of new and relocated nest boxes, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The measures will be delivered and retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not result in an adverse impact on barn owls.

7. Details of any external lighting (including position and height of mounting features, height and angle of lights including aiming points, light fixing type, size and appearance, and the luminance levels) shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. This scheme shall thereafter be implemented and no additional external lighting shall be installed.

Reason: In the interests of amenity, and protection of the local rural environment, including the ecological environment.

8. No activities shall be carried out on the site other than between the following hours, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority:
  - Monday to Friday (07h00 - 17h00);
  - Saturday (08h00 - 17h00); and
  - Sunday/Bank Holiday (no use).

Reason: In the interests of amenity and the protection of the local environment.

9. Within three month(s) of commencement of development, precise details of a scheme of landscape works (which term shall include tree and shrub planting, grass, earthworks, driveway construction, parking areas patios, hard surfaces etc, and other operations as appropriate) at a scale not less than 1:200 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that there is a well laid out landscaping scheme in the interest of visual amenity.

10. The approved landscaping scheme (as per Condition 9) shall be implemented not later than the first planting season following commencement of the development (or within such extended period as the local planning authority may allow) and shall thereafter be retained and maintained for a period of five years. Any plant material removed, dying or becoming seriously damaged or diseased within five years of planting shall be replaced within the first available planting season and shall be retained and maintained.

Reason: To ensure the submission and implementation of a well-laid out scheme of landscaping in the interest of visual amenity.

11. The premises herein referred to, shall be used for B8 (storage) in association with the adjoining business (Labelcraft Signs Ltd) and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning [Use Classes] Order 1987) (or any Order revoking or re-enacting the said Order).

Reasons: In order that the local planning authority may retain control over this development/site in the interests of amenity and the protection of the local environment.

### **Informatives:**

1. The local planning authority has assessed the proposal against all material considerations including planning policies and any comments that may have been received. The planning application has been approved in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and local plan to promote the delivery of sustainable development and to approach decision taking in a positive way.
2. Protected species may be present at the site (bats, slow worms, newts). It is an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill any such creature or to damage or destroy a breeding or resting place. A licence may need to be obtained from Natural England before any work is commenced, including demolition work, site clearance, timber treatment etc.
3. Access to buildings for fire appliances and firefighters must meet with the requirements specified in Building Regulations Approved Document B, (Fire Safety), 2019 Edition, Volume 1 - Part B5, Section 11 dwelling houses, and, similarly, Volume 2, Part B5, Sections 16 and 17 in the case of buildings other than dwelling houses. These requirements may be satisfied with other equivalent standards relating to access for firefighting, in which case those standards should be quoted in correspondence.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service also requires a minimum carrying capacity for hard standing for pumping/high reach appliances of 15/26 tonnes, not 12.5 tonnes as detailed in the Building Regulations 2000 Approved Document B, 2019 Edition.

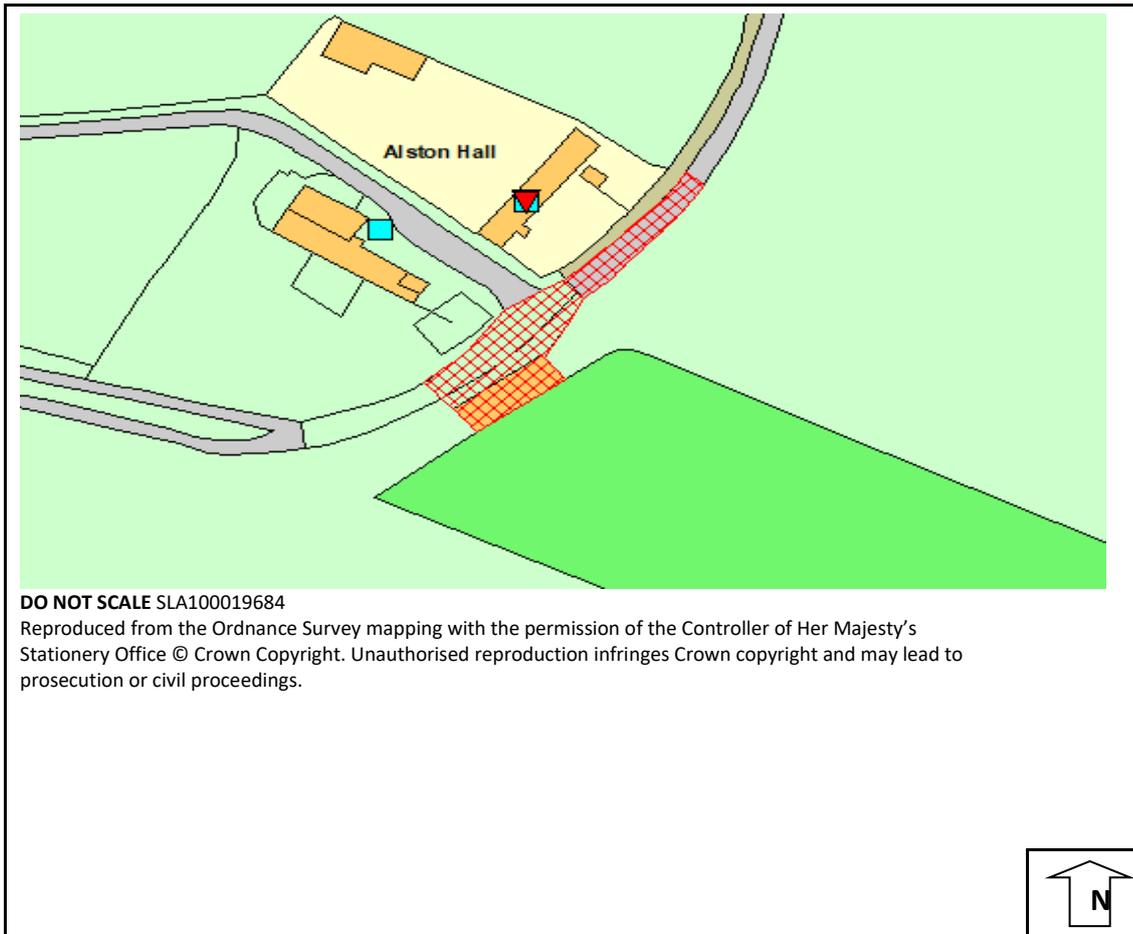
Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service records show that the nearest fire hydrant in this location is over 660 metres from the proposed build site and we therefore recommend that proper consideration be given to the potential life safety, economic, environmental and social benefits derived from the provision of an automatic fire sprinkler system. (Please see sprinkler information enclosed with this letter). Consultation should be made with the Water Authorities to determine flow rates in all cases.

Should you need any further advice or information on access and firefighting facilities, you are advised to contact your local Building Control or appoint Approved Inspector in the first instance. For further advice and information regarding water supplies, please contact the Water Officer at the above headquarters.

### **Background information**

See application reference DC/20/4916/FUL on [Public Access](#)

## Map



## Key

-  Notified, no comments received
-  Objection
-  Representation
-  Support