MME PLANNING SERVICES

Prior Approval for the change of use of Agricultural Barn to residential (Use Class C3) to form 2no dwellings.

at

Westlands Farm, Billingshurst Road, Ashington, Pulborough, West Sussex, RH20 3BB

Planning Statement

Ref: P-003a

April 2025

Version 1

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Figure 1: Site Location / Red Line Area

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1. Introduction

1.1 MME Planning Services is instructed to submit an application for prior approval in respect of the change of use of an agricultural barn to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses), under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 2015 (as amended).

1.2 This statement sets out the proposed scheme in detail with regard to the following aspects: a description of the site, an explanation of the proposed change of use, and a demonstration that the change of use fully complies with the stipulations and restrictions set out in the GPDO.

1.3 It is noted that this application is essentially a re-submission of a previously permitted Prior Approval application under planning reference DC/19/1421 which was granted in September 2019.

2. Site and Surroundings

2.1 The application site forms part of Westlands Farm which is an agricultural holding located on the southern side of Billingshurst Road, Ashington. The site is located within countryside in policy terms, but no other statutory designations cover the site. The site is within a rural area characterised by farms, commercial uses and individually designed dwellings.

2.2 This application relates to an agricultural building which consists of a predominantly enclosed concrete and steel portal frame. The application building is located in close proximity to the front of the site, positioned to the left of the main entrance upon entering the site. The building has been used for the keeping of livestock, storage of hay, feed and agricultural plant and machinery.

2.3 The application building is located along the eastern boundary of the wider holding which adjoins the Sussex Equine Hospital. The entrance to the application site is relatively well screened from the Billingshurst Road with high hedging and mature trees.

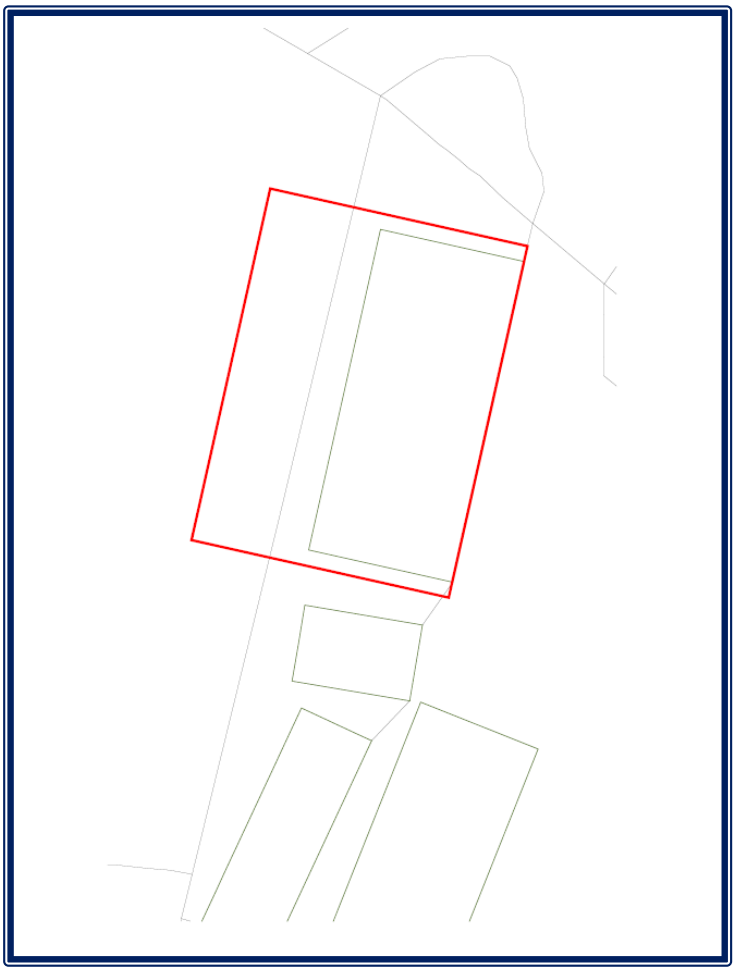


Figure 2: Site / Block Plan

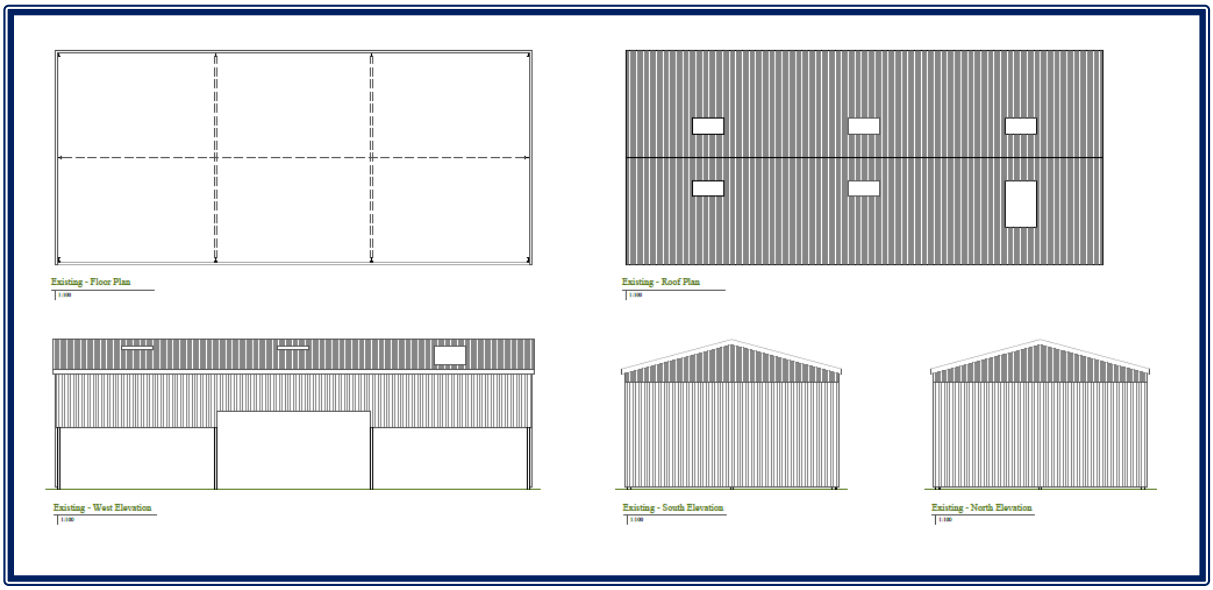


Figure 3: Existing Floor Plan, Roof Plan and Elevations

3. Development Proposal

3.1 It is proposed that the existing agricultural barn be converted to 2no residential dwellings (Use Class C3). The application seeks to ascertain whether the prior approval of the Local Planning Authority is required, under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 2015 (as amended).

3.2 The proposal comprises the creation of 2x 2-bed dwellings. The proposed dwellings would each comprise a living room / kitchen / dining room, 2x bedrooms, a bathroom, and utility / boot room. Each dwelling would have a GIA of approximately 68sqm. The proposals include modest external alterations including the provision of windows and doors, and alterations to the walls. All habitable rooms would benefit from good levels of natural light as they are served by large / multiple external windows. The proposed dwellings would also comply with Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS).

3.3 As detailed above, the proposal is essentially identical to that previously approved under planning reference DC/19/1421.

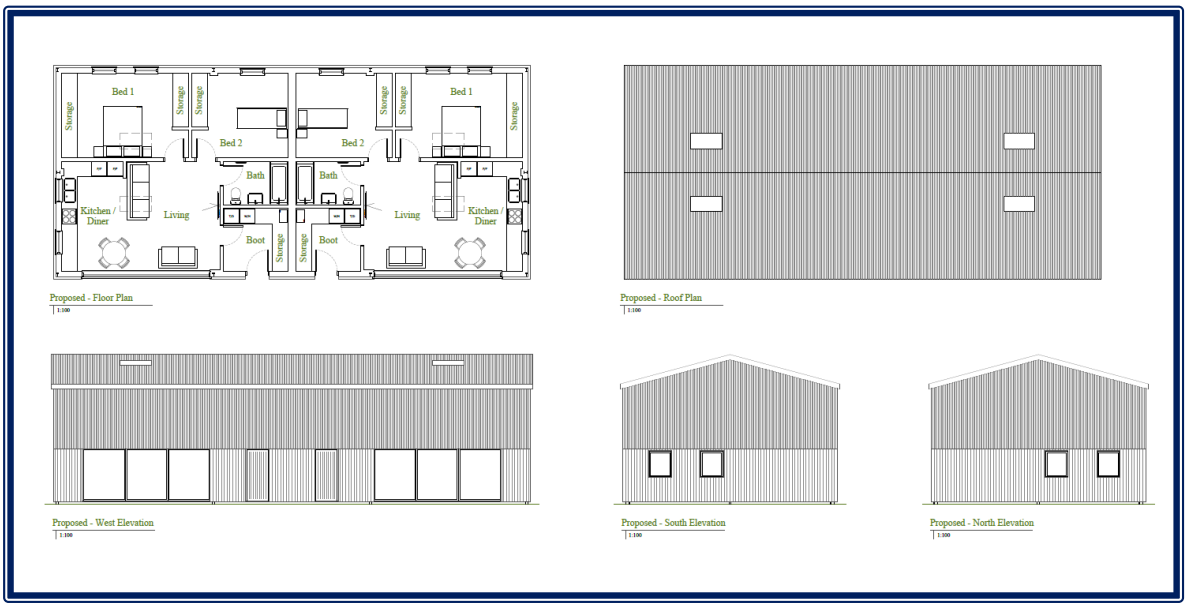


Figure 4: Proposed Floor Plan, Roof Plan and Elevations

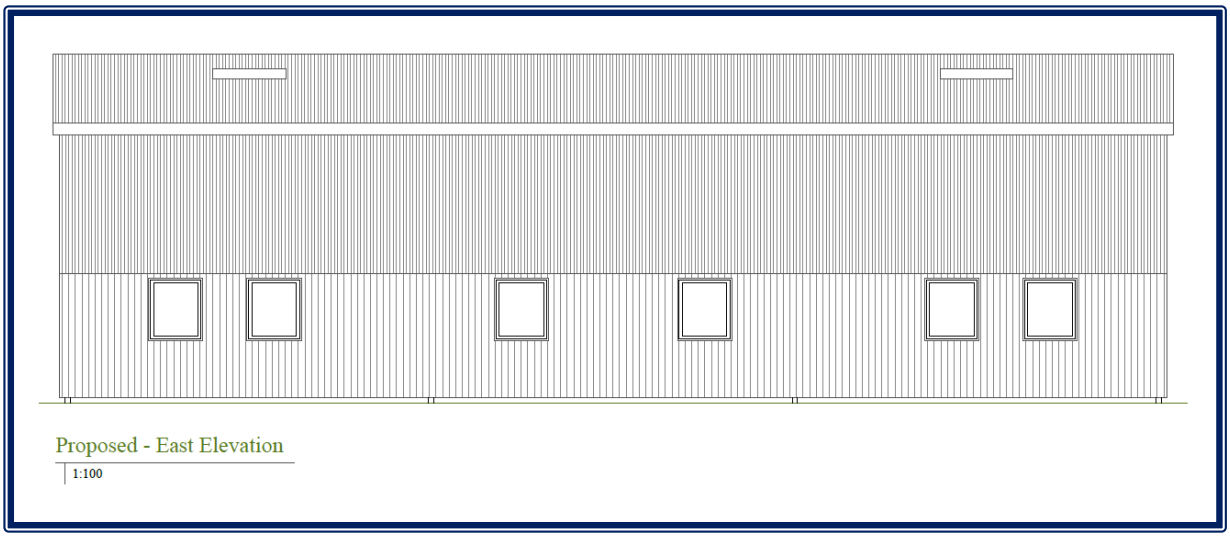


Figure 5: Proposed Elevation

4. Class Q Stipulations and Restrictions

4.1 The proposed change of use from agricultural to 2x residential dwellings (Use Class C3) complies entirely with the restrictions set out in Class Q, as demonstrated below. The proposals would comply with Q.1 and Q.2.

4.2 Class Q. Development consisting of a change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use as an agricultural building of Schedule 2 to the Use Classes Order to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of Schedule 1 to that Order.

4.3 ***Q. Development consisting of—***
(a) a change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use as an agricultural building to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order; or

(b) development referred to in paragraph (a) together with building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building referred to in paragraph (a) to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Schedule.

Development not permitted

Q.1 Development is not permitted by Class Q if—

(a) the site was not used solely for an agricultural use as part of an established agricultural unit—

(i) on 20th March 2013, or

(ii) in the case of a building which was in use before that date but was not in use on that date, when it was last in use, or

(iii) in the case of a site which was brought into use after 20th March 2013, for a period of at least 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins;

The site was in agricultural use as part of an established agricultural unit at the time of this application and the requisite date above. This criteria is therefore met.

b) in the case of—

(i) a larger dwellinghouse, within an established agricultural unit—

(aa) the cumulative number of separate larger dwellinghouses developed under Class Q exceeds 3; or

(bb) the cumulative floor space of the existing building or buildings changing use to a larger dwellinghouse or dwellinghouses under Class Q exceeds 465 square metres;

The GPDO (2015) as amended, defines a larger dwellinghouse as a dwelling that has a floor area of more that 100sqm and no more than 465sqm. Each of the proposed dwellings would have a GIA of approximately 68sqm. The cumulative floorspace of proposed units and indeed the footprint of the entire building, would not exceed 465sqm. Therefore, the requirements of sub-paragraph (b)bb are satisfied in this regard.

(c) in the case of—

(i) a smaller dwellinghouse, within an established agricultural unit—

(aa) the cumulative number of separate smaller dwellinghouses developed under Class Q exceeds 5; or

(bb) the floor space of any one separate smaller dwellinghouse having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order exceeds 100 square metres;

Criteria met. The proposals would create 2no smaller dwellings each having a GIA of approximately 68sqm.

(d) the development under Class Q (together with any previous development under Class Q) within an established agricultural unit would result in either or both of the following—

> ***(i) a larger dwellinghouse or larger dwellinghouses having more than 465 square metres of floor space having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order;***
>
> ***(ii) the cumulative number of separate dwellinghouses having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order exceeding 5;***

Criteria met.

(e) the site is occupied under an agricultural tenancy, unless the express consent of both the landlord and the tenant has been obtained;

The application site is owned by the applicant and as such, the above criteria is met.

(f) less than 1 year before the date development begins—

> ***(i) an agricultural tenancy over the site has been terminated, and***
>
> ***(ii) the termination was for the purpose of carrying out development under Class Q, unless both the landlord and the tenant have agreed in writing that the site is no longer required for agricultural use;***

An agricultural tenancy has not been terminated on the site within the last year. Criteria met.

(g) development under Class A(a) or Class B(a) of Part 6 of this Schedule (agricultural buildings and operations) has been carried out on the established agricultural unit—

> ***(i) since 20th March 2013; or***
>
> ***(ii) where development under Class Q begins after 20th March 2023, during the period which is 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins;***

No development falling under Class A(a) or Class B(a) of Part 6 of Schedule 2 has been undertaken since 20th March 2013. Therefore, the above criteria is met.

(h) the development would result in the external dimensions of the building extending beyond the external dimensions of the existing building at any given point;

As detailed within the submitted plans, the works would not result in any extension or enlargement of the existing building. Therefore, the above criteria is met.

(i) the development under Class Q(b) would consist of building operations other than—

> ***(i) the installation or replacement of—***
>
> ***(aa) windows, doors, roofs, or exterior walls, or***
>
> ***(bb) water, drainage, electricity, gas or other services, to the extent reasonably necessary for the building to function as a dwellinghouse; and***
>
> ***(ii) partial demolition to the extent reasonably necessary to carry out building operations allowed by paragraph Q.1(i)(i);***

The works, as set out within the proposals, detail relatively modest alterations to the existing building, in the form of the installation of fenestration, installation of cladding to the external walls and entrance doors. The building is also structurally sound and capable of conversion, as previously confirmed. It is considered that the proposed works would be 'reasonably necessary' to support the conversion / change of use.

(j) the site is on article 2(3) land;

N/A.

(k) the site is, or forms part of—

> ***(i) a site of special scientific interest;***
>
> ***(ii) a safety hazard area;***
>
> ***(iii) a military explosives storage area;***

N/A

(l) the site is, or contains, a scheduled monument; or

N/A

(m) the building is a listed building.

N/A

4.4 **Conditions**

Q.2.— (1) Development under Class Q is permitted subject to the following conditions and considerations.

(a) transport and highways impacts of the development

With regard to transport implications, the proposed development is likely to lead to a net reduction in vehicle movements when comparing the existing use to the proposed use. The existing access to the north from Billingshurst Road would be used to serve the development. Overall, the proposed development would not result in harmful transport or highways impact.

(b) noise impacts of the development

The proposed development is well located in relation to adjacent residential dwellings / and other buildings. In any event any noise impacts in relation to residential accommodation on the site would be less than the equivalent agricultural activity with associated commercial vehicle movements. No remediation measures proposed or required.

So as to comply with building regulations and meet the current requirements, the level of thermal insulation required within the building will provide significant acoustic insulation. Additional insulation can be used to provide further acoustic properties if required. A typical detail for the frame wall and roof construction for the conversion is included below.

In addition to the above, the residential use of the application building would not have a detrimental impact on neighbouring residential amenity.

(c) contamination risks on the site

It is noted that a contamination condition was agreed on the previous application, under reference DC/19/1421. In order to address this matter and save another condition being added which would require a further application to discharge this condition, a contamination report is provided with this application. Therefore, there would be no reasonable grounds to resist this notification on this basis, however, if required, the applicant would be agreeable to a further condition(s) in this regard..

(d) flooding risks on the site

The proposed development lies outside any area subject to flood risk as such flooding would not be an issue. In any event the impacts in relation to flooding would be no greater than the existing agricultural use. No remediation measures are proposed or required and future residents would not therefore be at high risk of flooding.

(e) whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change from agricultural use to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order

As per the previous notification, the building is accessible via established highway infrastructure and not in a setting where conversion would compromise the operation of surrounding uses. No policy considerations in relation to sustainability or development within the countryside are applicable under Class Q. The surrounding area consists of a mixture of uses where future occupiers would not be harmfully impacted by existing development within the vicinity, as confirmed within the previous approval under reference DC/19/1421.

(f) the design or external appearance of the building, and

As per the previous notification, the proposed plans indicate a resulting building which would largely retain its existing form and character and the building is set back from the public highway. The proposed materials and nature of the alterations would retain is agricultural appearance which would be appropriate within this rural setting.

(g) the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses

As detailed above, all habitable rooms would be served by large / multiple windows which will provide high levels of light. The proposals would therefore be acceptable in this regard.

Other Matters

4.5 As indicated within the application details and plans, the notification would adhere to the requirements of Paragraphs W and X of Part 3 of Schedule 2.

4.6 National Space Standards

In accordance with Section (9A) of Article 3 of the General Permitted Development Order (2021 Amendment), Schedule 2 of the Order only permits development for the creation of new dwellinghouses:

(a) Where the gross internal floor area is less than 37 square metres in size; or

(b) That does not comply with the nationally described space standard issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government on 27th March 2015.

The proposal incorporates the creation of 2x 2-bed (3-person), dwellings, each with GIAs of approximately 68sqm. The proposed dwellings are therefore considered to provide adequate living space in accordance with national space standards and in accordance with Section (9A) of Article 3 of the Order.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The existing building and the proposed development comply with all relevant restrictions set out within Class Q under the transitional arrangements which are in force until May 2025. Furthermore, the proposed development is acceptable with regard to transport impacts, noise impacts, land contamination, flood risk, the location of the building, design and appearance and the provision of adequate natural light. It is therefore respectfully requested that the prior approval application be approved.