

# **Statement**

## **Prior Notification for Agricultural Barn (Revised Scheme)**

*Land South of the Haven  
Hillis Gate Road  
Northwood  
Cowes*



**Prepared by**

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared in support of a further Prior Notification submission for an agricultural barn on land south of the Haven, at Hillis Gate Road. This is to serve Comforts Farm, Pallance Road, including the fields at Rolls Hill Road and Hillis Gate Road. This is a further revised submission following a previous refusal. It is submitted under the requirements for Prior Notification as set by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order, 2015, Schedule 2, Part 6.

1.2 The reason for refusal (issued on 21 December 2020) is as follows :

*1. The proposal fails to meet the criteria to qualify as permitted development as it has not been fully demonstrated that the proposed barn is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture. Moreover, the Council is not satisfied that the siting and design of the building would be appropriate. Therefore, the development would not meet the requirements of Class A of Part 6 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.*

1.3 The application submission seeks to address directly the reasons for refusal and the objections raised by the local planning authority and neighbourhood consultees. The key issue outlined is one of need, specifically based on agricultural requirements, and in context of the farm itself. Evidence is also presented that shows that the position of the proposed barn is the most appropriate given the topography of the site, the landscape impacts and the existing surrounding buildings.

## 2. Comforts Farm Permitted Development Rights

2.1. The application site meets the requirements of the general permitted development order for agricultural prior notification in that the agricultural holding is more than 5 ha in size. The proposals comply with the GPDO (2015) in that the proposal falls within the category as '*a building / a significant alteration of the building, to be used for the purpose of agriculture*'.

2.2. Under the GPDO, the developer is required to submit a prior notification to the local planning authority. The authority then has 28 days in which to let the applicant know of its decision as to whether a full application is required or to inform the applicant of its decision to allow or refuse approval.

### 3. Background to Proposals

- 3.1 The applicants are somewhat aggrieved that they have been questioned by respondents to previous proposals as to the legitimacy of the Comforts Farm agricultural business. Nevertheless, they submit further information to confirm the background to the business and the need for the barn.
- 3.2 Comfort's Farm has been within the same family ownership since 1956. An island based family took over the farm in that year having moved from Westover. The farm business managed a dairy herd as well as pigs and sheep. Overtime, the farm business has diversified and has mixed food and feed production with holiday accommodation, campsites and a livery facility.
- 3.3 The farm business continues to operate but also maintains a diversified structure as a means of ensuring that the business is sustainable the medium long term and is able to be taken on by subsequent generations of the farm owning family. This is a common business approach undertaken by farm businesses.
- 3.4 Comfort's Farm itself has extremely limited availability of agricultural storage. Moreover, the buildings that do exist accommodate the livery business and storage capacity in support of the holiday accommodation and campsite.
- 3.5 Agricultural equipment is unfortunately stored outside which is far from ideal as this limits the life of the equipment itself and leads to more frequent maintenance.



Outside Tractor Storage Comforts Farm



**Outside Farm Equipment Storage Comforts Farm**

- 3.5 The farm's business strategy is to maintain hay production for sale to livestock farmers, supported by the livery business and the holiday accommodation / camping element. The fields can also be used as grazing pasture in the event that livestock farming is to be reintroduced. The business will be taken forward by the next generation within the farm owning family.
- 3.6 The specific need for the barn is outlined in section 5 below, based on requirements for farm equipment storage and the storage of hay, based on acreage yield.

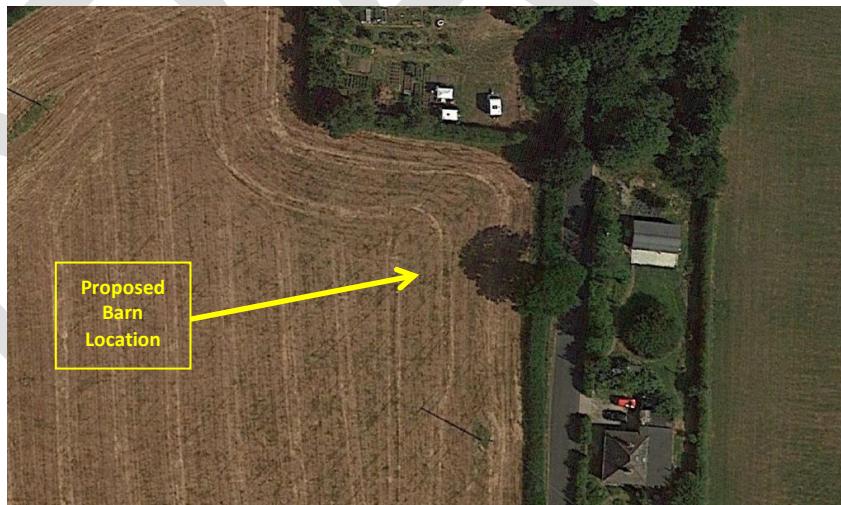
#### **4. The Application Site**

- 4.1. The application site comprises of a 6.4 Ha field, sub-dived by a hedgerow. It currently has one point of access onto Rolls Hill Road. This is an extremely dangerous access point and the planning proposal for its relocation to Hillis Gate road has been approved by the local planning authority.
- 4.2. The field is open but surrounded by mature hedgerows, punctuated with mature trees (Hillis Gate Road frontage).
- 4.3. The area in which the barn is proposed is within relatively close proximity to a group of existing buildings which are mixed in scale and design, but are all distinctly rural in character. Most properties are private residential properties, agricultural dwellings or used as holiday accommodation.

4.4. The photograph below is taken from the Hillis Gate Road access lane, looking westwards over an existing hedge and across the proposed barn position.

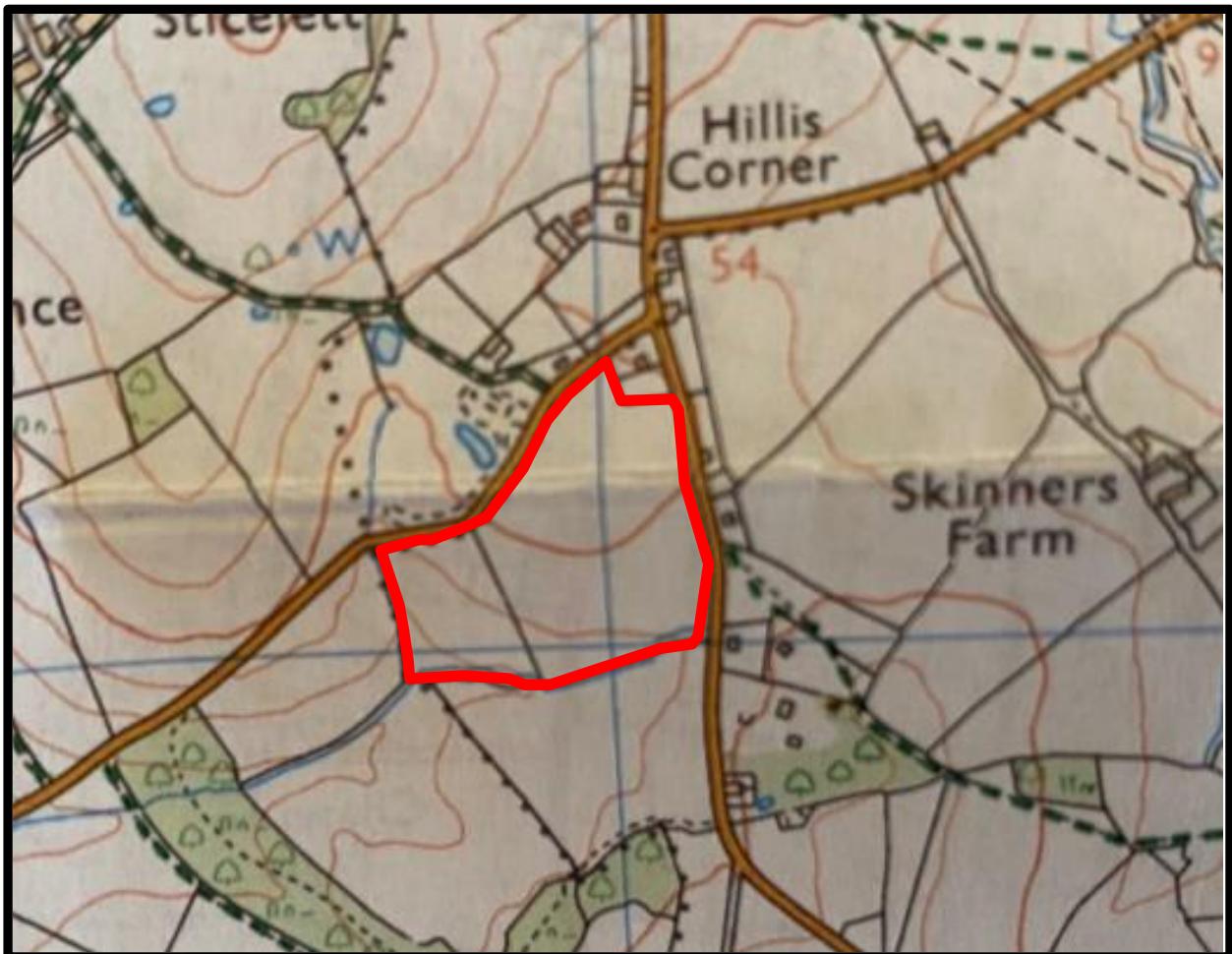


4.5. The proposed site comprises of an area of ground immediately to the south of existing properties on Hillis Gate Road. The site in question is currently part of an arable field also used for grazing.



***Aerial View of Farm Site and proposed barn position (from Google Earth)***

4.6. The fields for which the barn is proposed to serve slope from the south west to north east with a drop of some 10m. This is illustrated in the section below taken form the OS Explorer plan indicating the onsite contour lines.



*Section OS Explorer Map – indicating circa 10m drop from south west  
to north east corner of site.*

- 4.7. The photographs below illustrate the slope of the fields as it descends towards the position of the proposed barn. The photographs were taken from a position to the south of the site on Hillis Gate Road.



*View of Field from Hillis Gate Road viewed from the south*

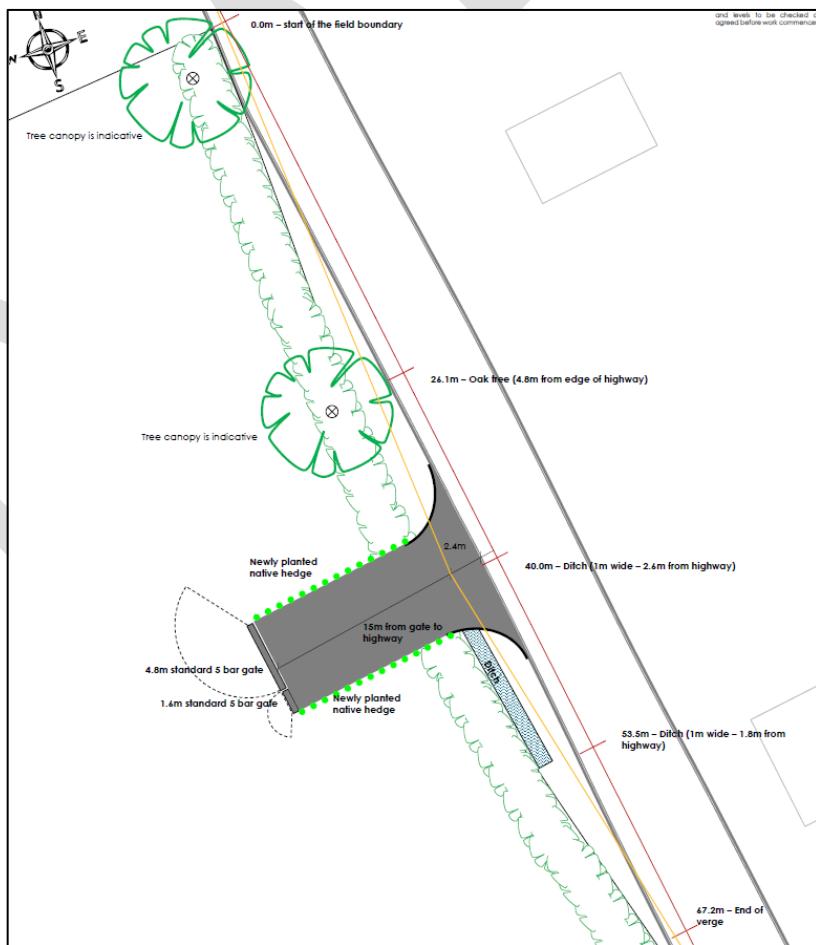


*View of Field from Hillis Gate Road illustrating slope upwards in westerly direction, from point of approved new access*

4.8. The images below illustrate the recently approved new access onto Hillis Gate Road.



**Approved Access Site plan (including visibility splays) Hillis Gate Road**

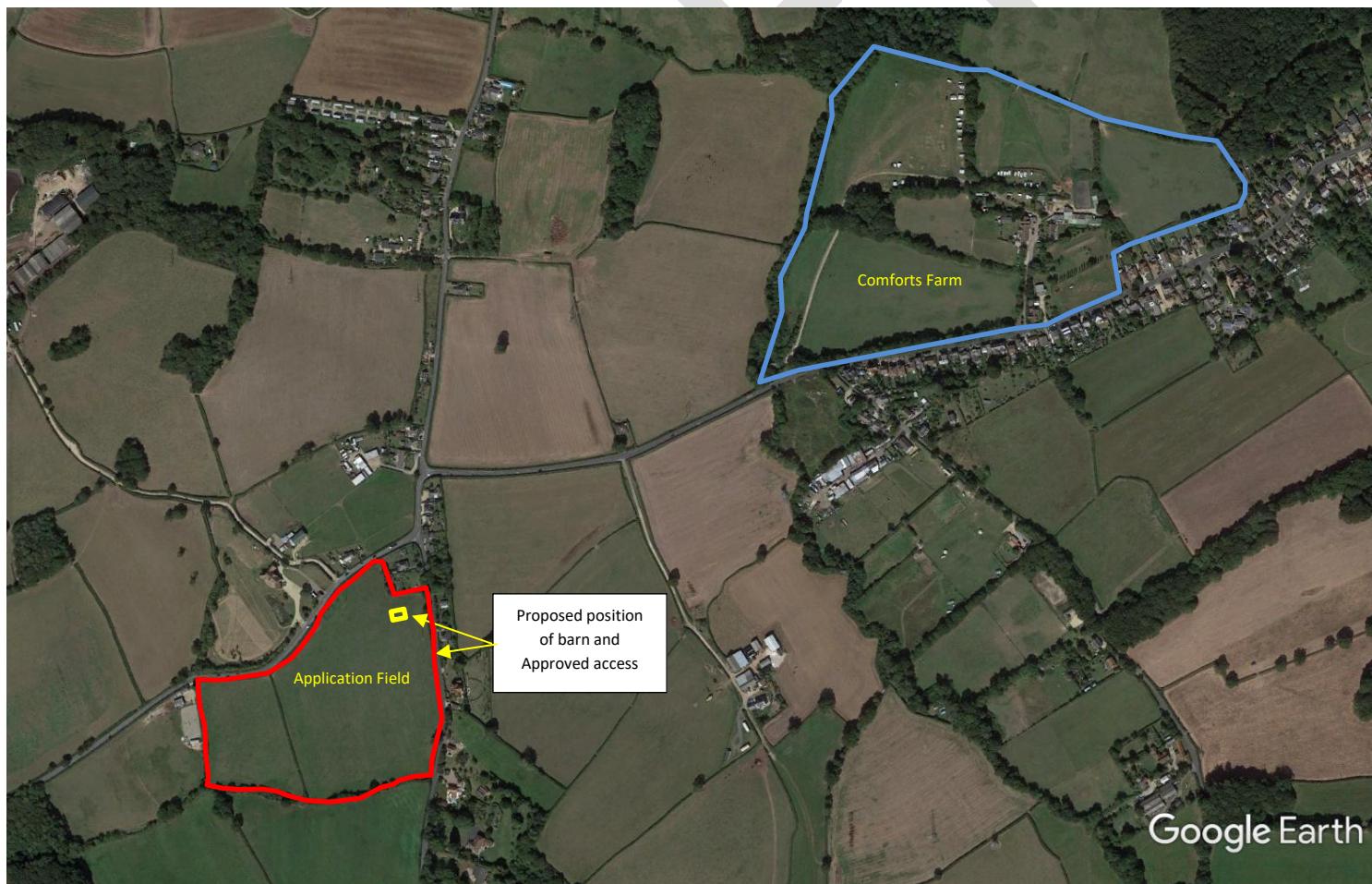


**Approved Access Layout Hillis Gate Road**

## 5. Need

### *Future Farming Programme*

5.1. Comforts Farm is a long-established agricultural holding that has primarily been operated for farming of arable crops, animal feed etc. Whilst it has diversified in recent years to accommodate a livery yard and holiday accommodation at Pallance Road, the farm itself will continue to operate as an agricultural business. Comforts Farm at Pallance Road, is surrounded by 64 acres of arable and grazing land. This farm site is already served by existing barns and agricultural buildings. The distance between Comforts Farm and the application fields, via the existing dangerously positioned access gate, on Rolls Hill Road is 3.2 km.



***Comforts Farm in relation to Application Site***

5.2. The proposed barn is to serve primarily two large agricultural fields with plot numbers 9912 and 8601. These total an area of 6.4 hectares. The fields share a common access in the boundary hedgerow that links them. Both fields are to utilise the new vehicular access onto Hillis Gate Road.



4.3 The barn will enable storage of hay and farm machinery without the need for further agricultural traffic on Pallance Road, Rolls Hill Road and Hillis Gate Road.

#### *Need for Barn and Space Capacity*

4.4 In broad terms, there is a need for additional covered storage space to ensure that equipment is kept out of the weather and to protect stored hay cut the purpose of feeding livestock. The equipment to be stored includes hay-making trailers, hay bale wrapping machinery, and various items of farming accoutrements.

4.5 The internal capacity of the barn proposed equates to (floor to eaves height) is 567 cubic metres (length 18m x width 9m x height to eaves 3.5m).

- 4.6 A single standard large size of hay bale measures 1.83m x 1.2m x 1.2m, providing a volume of 2.63 cubic metres.
- 4.7 The potential capacity of the 6.4 hectare field area to produce hay annually taking account is **1580 bales** (standard large size), based on a standard figure of 247 bales produced per hectare annually.
- 4.8 The barn as proposed, and if used only for the storage of hay, has a capacity for circa 215 bales.
- 4.9 The field area for which the barn will serve can produce more hay than can actually be stored internal within the barn (circa 1500 bales per year based on 247 bales of hay produced per hectare each year).
- 4.10 Not all hay produced on site will need to be stored within the barn. Some will be taken away to other sites once baled (the hay will be produced for other farmers and keepers of food producing livestock).
- 4.11 It is envisaged that some 100 to 200 hundred bales of hay will be stored within the barn as stored winter feed. This would take up between half and two thirds of the internal capacity of the barn itself. The remainder of the floor space area would be utilised for storage of equipment, including two tractors, hay baling machine, and trailers.



***Production of large hay bales***



*Example of barn storage of large hay bales*

4.12 The new barn cannot be located at Comforts Farm itself since there would be no advantage in reducing agricultural traffic flow, whilst on site within the 6.4 HA fields is the optimum position for sustainable farm management.

4.13 Greater barn capacity is needed to service more intense food production activities. As stated above, an internal covered space capacity to accommodate circa 100 to 200 bales is required, on site to store hay.

## **6. The Application Proposal**

1.4 The scheme has been revised further by the following measures:

- a/ The proposed barn has been repositioned to a point 15m further southeast from the boundary fence of 'The Haven';
- b/ The scheme is based on a requirement for an improved access to the field. A new gated access has been granted planning permission on 13 November 2020, that provides a safe and much improved access to the field in question, for which this barn proposal is set to serve.
- c/ The barn position is shown to be at the lower level within the field site so as to reduce impact within the wider landscape.

6.1. The design proposals comprise of the construction of a steel framed pitched roof barn. The design is a standard steel frame construction that includes 'Eternit' fibre cement roofing accommodating GRP roof lights. It is intended to partially enclose the barn.

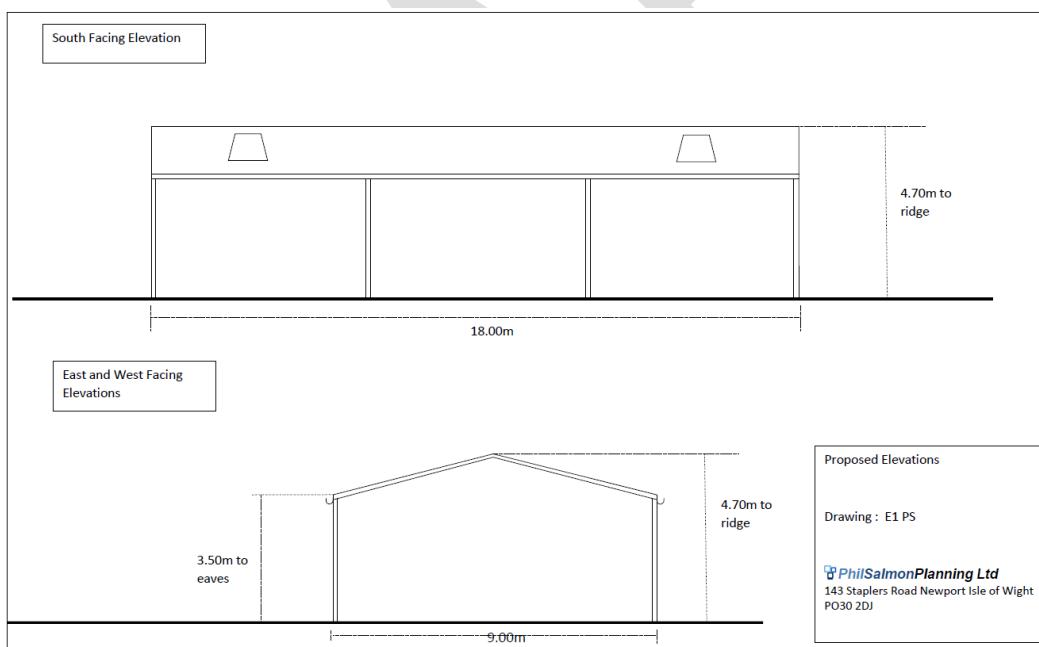
at a future date by cladding three sides with brick / block work. The southern end of the barn would remain partially open but inclusive of door-way opening.

6.2. The floor would comprise of a hard core base, raised by 100mm above existing ground level.

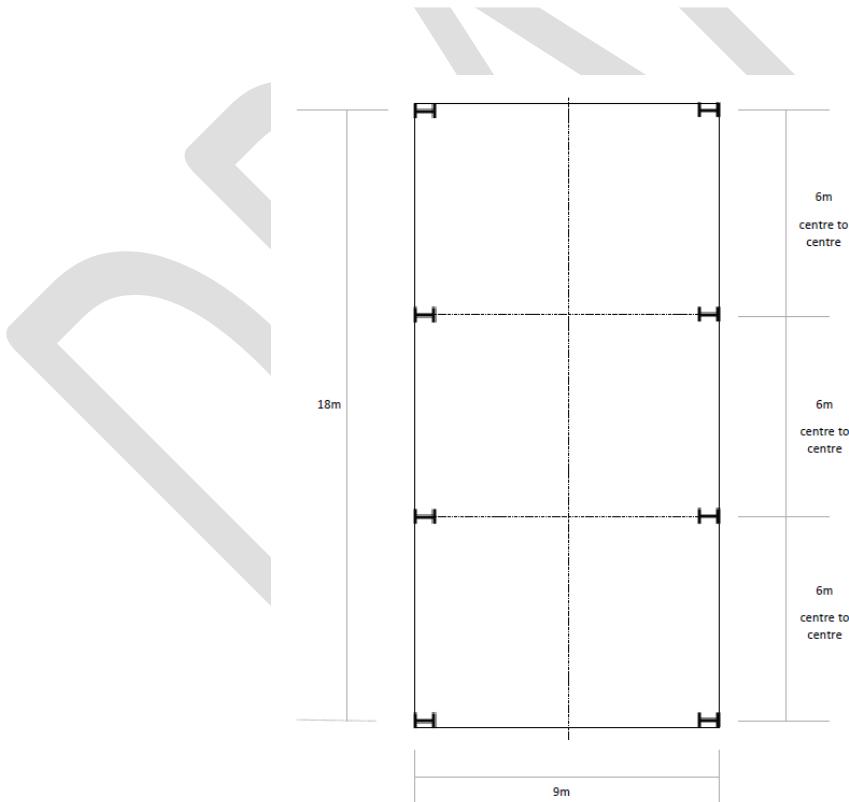
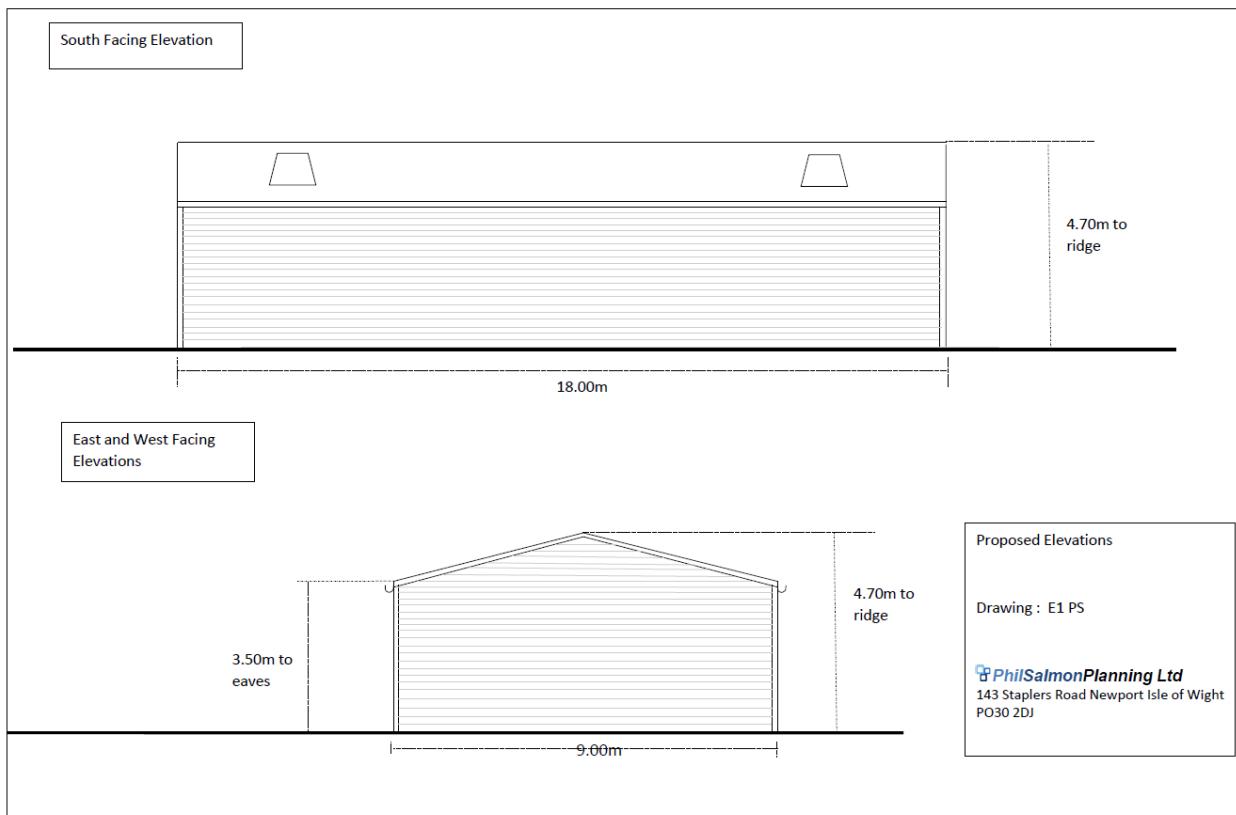
6.3. Guttering and down pipes would channel surface water capture to soakaways and culverts diverting flow towards existing ditches.

6.4. The field entrance is currently via the approved.

6.5. gated access from Rolls Hill Road. This is a substandard access (in terms of visibility) and it is intended to implement the recently approved new gateway access from Hillis Gate Road. The applicant is agreeable to a tie linking the implementation of the barn to the delivery of the new approved access.



*Plans and Elevations (without cladding)*



*Plans and Elevations, Floor plan*

## 7. Planning Considerations

### *Need for Agricultural Use*

- 7.1. The application farm remains a busy holding that plays an important role in the management of livestock on the Island. It also serves as an important facilitator of countryside management that protects habitats.
- 7.2. The need for the proposed barn has become increasingly important as a means to store equipment and feed in a manner that is more sustainable and efficient reducing impacts from the weather. The proposals will enable the farm to be operated more efficiently and potentially increasing yield/productivity.

### *Design and Landscape Impact*

- 7.3. The site falls outside of the AONB. Design and positioning however is nevertheless sympathetic to landscape protection given that the barn would be sited close to existing buildings, and as such would not have a significant landscape impact.
- 7.4. A review of the topographical levels of the site confirm that the proposed position of the barn, as now submitted, will have no wider landscape impact. It will also have a closer relationship with the approved site access onto Hillis Gate Road.
- 7.5. The proposed design is of a typical agricultural building that would sit well within the immediate surrounding rural landscape, particularly with its close proximity to existing rural buildings on Hillis Gate Road

## 8. Response to Objections

- 8.1. The previous two prior notification submissions have given rise to a comments from a number of people including local residents and people from further afield including the mainland. a number of legitimate planning issues have been raised and these are addressed as follows :
  - ***Impact on residential amenity*** : the revised submission relocates the barn further away from existing residential properties and reduces all risk have any impact on residential amenity;

- **Impact on landscape :** the barn is now proposed to be positioned in the lowest point of the application fields and as such would have minimal wider landscape impact. It is nevertheless accepted that as with any building in rural areas the band would have a built form affect in immediate area within which it sits. However, it is an agricultural building that will serve to support an agricultural operation within the countryside. The proposals have been revised further to reduce any detrimental effects;
- **Design :** the barn is of a classic design that is seen throughout rural Britain and which supports effectively, agricultural operations and processes to ensure efficient crop and livestock management;
- **Need :** need for the barn is based on the case set out in this report.

8.2. Comments that are based on personal perceptions of the applicants themselves and reflecting supposition have no place in the determination off the proposals. the local planning authority must determine this application on its merits only and not perceptions of local residents. Moreover, comments that have been previously made are misplaced, irrelevant and incorrect.

## 9. Summary

9.1. The current proposal have overcome previous reasons for refusal.

9.2. It is clear that the proposal complies with the parameters of the General Permitted Development Order. This report, along with the submitted plans, should be accepted by the local planning authority that the applicant is informing them of their intentions to construct the barn as proposed as it is fundamental for the purposes of agriculture, as per the agricultural justification.

9.3. The materials to be used will be suitable and durable and it is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture. It will weather over time, minimising any visual impact.

9.4. In accordance with the GPDO, it is considered that the barn can be assessed and permitted without the need for a formal planning application.