



acorus[®]

**PROVISION OF A
DWELLING AND
ASSOCIATED WORKS**

PREPARED FOR


Windyridge
Tewkesbury Road
Coombe Hill
Gloucestershire
GL19 4AR

18th May 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of [REDACTED] (the Applicant), and sets out the background and information considered relevant to the proposal, which relates to the provision of a dwelling house on land at Windy Ridge, Tewkesbury Road, Coombe Hill, Gloucestershire, GL19 4AR.

1.2 There is an existing agricultural building on the holding which currently benefits from prior approval for the change of use and conversion of an agricultural building to a dwelling under the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (GPDO), Class Q (reference 20/00588/PDAD), with the proposed design and external appearance granted prior approval on 18th September 2020.

1.3 Whilst it was the intention of the Applicant to continue the Permitted Development, in considering the fact that there is a time restriction on the Class Q prior approval, rather than submitting a new prior notification to the Council, the Applicant would prefer to explore the possibility of pursuing planning for the dwelling through a full planning application (as a replacement to the Class Q approval – ‘fall back’). This would give the applicant more scope for fully establishing all aspects of the external appearance, address any necessary additional landscaping, the provision of residential amenity space and other minor issues such as flues/chimneys.

1.4 In exploring the alternative full application option, on the basis of a ‘fall back’ provision relating to the Class Q prior approval, it allows a more holistic approach to be taken, to ensure the proposed dwelling remains in keeping with the rural setting and provides adequate and appropriate accommodation for future occupants, and not simply be a case of the building being developed to conform to the requirements of the permitted development rights.

1.5 This report should be read in conjunction with the proposals shown on the submitted planning drawings.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 Considering the available planning history, the following planning history is deemed relevant to this proposal (details can be found on Tewkesbury Borough Council’s online system):

- **Application No:** 17/00756/PDAD



Location: Windy Ridge, Tewkesbury Road, Coombe Hill, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL19 4AR

Proposal: Prior Approval for Change of Use of Agricultural Building to a Residential Use (C3) – New Dwelling

Decision: Prior Approval Refused (24/10/2017)

- **Application No:** 18/00711/FUL

Location: Windy Ridge, Tewkesbury Road, Coombe Hill, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL19 4AR

Proposal: Demolish redundant Agricultural Building and construct a 5 bedroom 2 storey house

Decision: Refused (08/04/2019)

- **Application No:** 20/00588/PDAD

Location: Windy Ridge, Tewkesbury Road, Coombe Hill, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL19 4AR

Proposal: Prior Approval for conversion of Agricultural Buildings into 1no. larger dwelling house (Use Class C3) and associated building operations

Decision: Prior Approval Approved (18/09/2020)

3. THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The proposed development relates to the provision of a single dwelling on the land at Windy Ridge, Tewkesbury Road, Coombe Hill, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL19 4AR. As already mentioned, there is a recently approved Class Q scheme for the site (reference 20/00588/PDAD), however the Applicant wishes to enhance the development through a full planning application. It is deemed that the new dwellings will provide an opportunity for betterment in terms of the final dwelling design, appearance, siting within the landscape and ability to meet the needs and requirements of the intended occupiers.
- 3.2 The proposed conversion of the existing agricultural building will look to enhance much of the design and appearance of the dwelling approved under the previous Class Q scheme. This new and improved design will ensure that the proposal reflects its rural surroundings, enhances the character of the site, and provides comfortable and flexible accommodation for the Applicant.
- 3.3 The proposed development intends to use a variety of materials across the proposed unit. These are outlined overleaf:

Proposed Unit – 4 bedroom dwelling (2 storey)

- Timber/composite cladding to walls
- Zinc with powder coated aluminum to the main roof and roof of the extruded box
- Sarnafil to the flat roof
- Powder coated aluminum and hardwood timber doors and windows
- Metal framed sliding screens with horizontal timber battens

3.4 The proposed design for the new dwelling is detailed on the submitted planning drawings.

4. PLANNING POLICY

4.1 Within both national and local planning policy, there is a general core principle and focus on sustainable development.

4.2 As the LPA are aware, following the 2013 Budget Statement the Government consulted on, and introduced new permitted development rights for various situations including rights to assist the change of use and the associated physical works from existing buildings used for agricultural purposes to residential use (C3) under Class Q.

4.3 The Government clearly believed that the change of use of agricultural buildings to dwellings is in line with the NPPF and therefore the development allowed is sustainable.

4.4 The Class Q approval (the 'fall back provision') is a material consideration in this instance, and the principle of a dwelling on the holding should be deemed acceptable.

4.5 The proposed design seeks to improve the character of the existing building and make best use of the site. The proposals for the site intend to reflect good quality construction and material quality, making use of existing materials where possible. The design seeks to reflect other similar dwellings in the area and retain the character of the rural nature of the building.

5. FALLBACK PRINCIPLE

5.1 It is suggested that there are clear benefits in considering the changes proposed as part of this development under a full planning application. The Applicant wishes to provide an improved design and consider the wider landscaping and other relevant factors affecting the development. The scope of Class Q is limited and these wider considerations would not be possible under permitted development.

5.2 A recent appeal case (reference: APP/D3830/W/16/3156030) is noted, where by the Inspector considered a similar proposal which sought to replace a permitted Class Q proposal with a new dwelling under full planning). The Inspector stated:

“of critical importance to this appeal is that prior approval was granted by the Council for the change of use of an agricultural building to a dwelling at Great Wapses Farm on 22 December 2015 (the ‘2015 permission’). I understand that the 2015 permission remains extant and there is no evidence before me to indicate that it is unlikely to come forward were this appeal to be dismissed.

As set out in the application form to which this appeal relates the proposal before me is for a differently designed dwelling in place of that permitted via the 2015 permission rather than for an additional dwelling. Consequently the appeal proposal, if allowed, would result in no net addition of dwellings in this location”.

5.3 Acorus also understands that this approach (consideration of a full planning application following prior approval, or where PD rights are not permitted) is being considered as a possibility by a number of LPAs across the country, such as Wealden District Council and Cornwall Council.

5.4 Wealden District Council has adapted their planning guidance with regard to conversions, stating that they will *“take a flexible & proactive interpretation on those cases where planning applications are required”*.

5.5 The guidance goes on to say *“this will apply to both ‘change of use’ and ‘rebuilding’ of unsightly, substantial agricultural buildings where Class Q permitted development rights for new dwellings would otherwise apply (or are excluded purely on the basis of Article 2(3) (AONB, etc.) only”*.

- 5.6 Cornwall Council has also taken a positive view of the potential benefits of a full planning application, stating in their guidance (Class Q Prior Notification Guidance Note - amended/updated 25 October 2018) that:

“Prior Notification v Planning Application:

It is acknowledged that, in certain cases, an application for planning permission may result in a better scheme in terms of building design and amenity provision than Class Q criteria would allow. While it would normally be preferable for an approval under Class Q to be issued before consideration is given to the submission of a planning application for extensions and alterations or complete rebuilds, the Council will take a pragmatic approach if, in the case officer’s opinion on the balance of probability, had the prior notification process been followed first, an approval under Class Q would likely have been issued. In such cases, the planning application should include a statement to demonstrate how the conversion of the building(s) to a dwelling(s) would meet the criteria set out in Class Q. Where there is reasonable doubt regarding compliance with Class Q, the case officer will request that the applicant follows the prior notification process first. With regard to replacement buildings generally, the applicant will be expected to demonstrate how the proposal would result in a clear visual enhancement to the character and appearance of the area”.

- 5.7 As a result of the aforementioned appeal, and guidance notes such as those produced by Wealden District Council and Cornwall Council, it is suggested that LPAs could consider the merits and ‘planning gain’ of proposals seeking improvement through a full application, particularly where an improved scheme could be approved on a conversion site that would otherwise yield a poorer design outcome.

- 5.8 It is noted that in the Mansell v Tonbridge and Malling BC case, the proposal allowed the development of 3No. detached properties that were larger in size and in alternative positions on the site than would have been created if the fall back provision of the barn conversion had taken place.

6. DESIGN

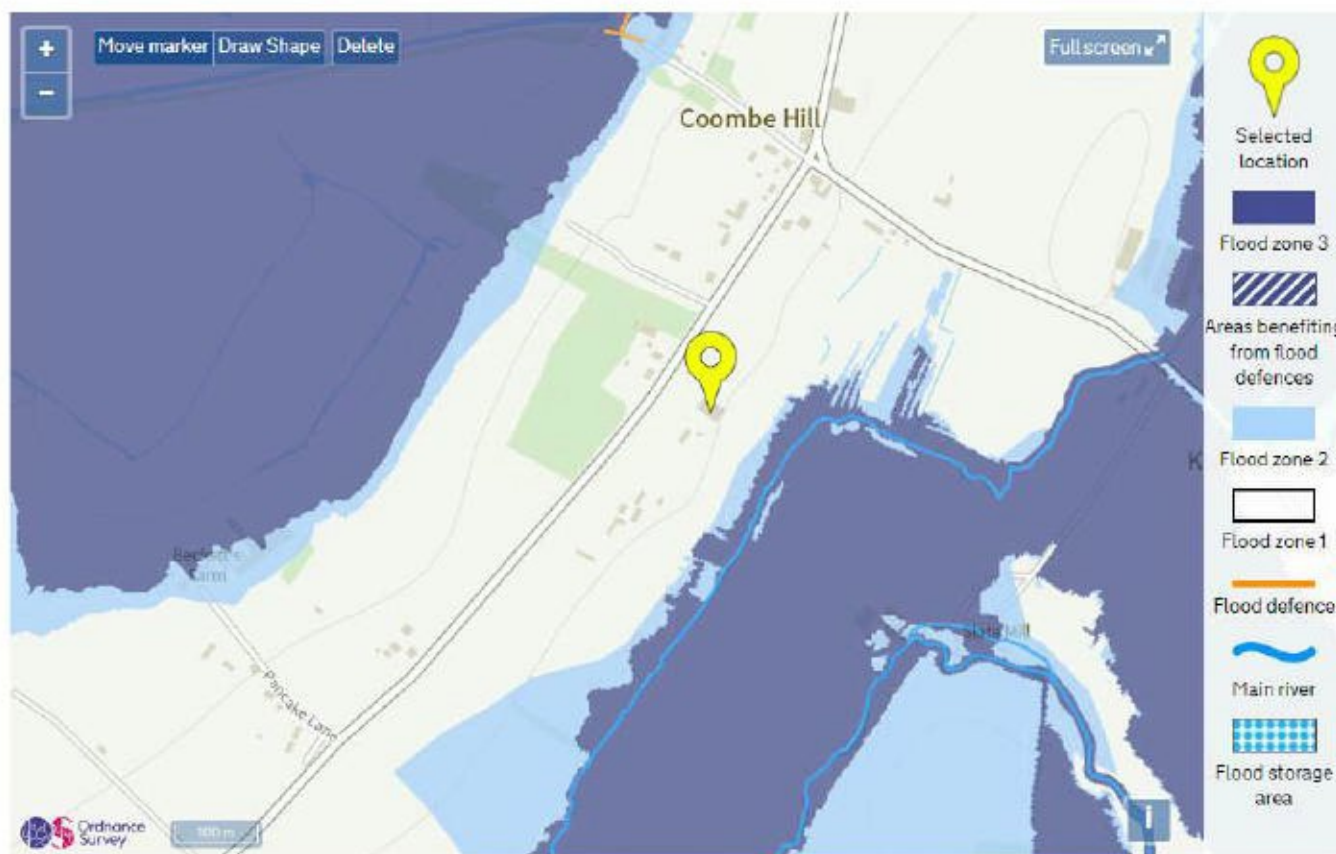
- 6.1 Prior approval was received for the change of use of one agricultural building and the land to a single dwelling house, under planning reference 20/00588/PDAD. The proposals, originally designed under permitted development and constrained to the original footprint of the buildings and limited to its existing materials and structure, is not considered the most appropriate or sustainable.

- 6.2 The proposed development has been designed and considered to reflect that of the traditional farm building which it currently is, but the emphasis on contemporary agricultural vernacular and a sustainable fabric first approach. The proposal, therefore is to provide a betterment.
- 6.3 The proposals have been designed in conjunction with our client to enable a coherent and functional building design. The Covid-19 pandemic has enabled our client to assess his business plan and values and incorporate both the current and future needs into the project with much care and consideration.
- 6.4 As an existing agricultural farm setting, the proposed building will sit within the natural levels of the land to enable it to blend well within the landscape and alongside the existing dwelling, in the same development pattern and location as the existing barn. As this is much lower than the road level to the North West, it will sit discreetly in the landscape. The proposed new dwelling will be two storeys, with a sensitive palette of natural materials, timber cladding, metal roof, dark grey aluminium windows and doors, metal rainwater goods, with a simple pitch roof profile.
- 6.5 The materiality proposed, references the local agricultural vernacular, as described above, to match that of the existing local building in the area, further enriching/referencing its context and allowing it to blend into the natural landscape.
- 6.6 The proposals seek to provide a Low Carbon, healthy, efficient use of the site, resilient, adaptable, spacious, safe and secure, connected, building and will contribute to a sense of place.
- 6.7 Siting, layout, density, form, scale, height, massing, detailing, colour, materials, are informed by and respect the character and distinctiveness of the site and the locality.
- 6.8 The proposed building is of a scale and character appropriate to the site and as aforementioned, in the form of the local agricultural vernacular to match / reflect that of the surrounds and the immediate neighbouring settlement.

7. FLOODING

- 7.1 As identified in the recently approved Class Q scheme for the site (reference 20/00588/PDAD), the site is not within an identified flood risk zone and there is no history of flooding issues on the site.

7.2 As illustrated below, using the EA Flood Map for Planning, the site lies within Flood Zone 1, with the overall flood risk from rivers or the sea being very low which means that each year this has a chance of flooding of less than 0.1%.



Source: Flood Map for Planning GOV.UK

8. ECOLOGY

8.1 An ecological survey was undertaken by Wilder Ecology on the 7th May 2021. This report has been submitted as part of this application.

8.2 A lack of evidence of Bat activity within the building suggests that there are no bats currently using the building for roosting. The reason for this may be due to high natural light level throughout due to the Perspex roof lights and glazed windows and the construction being comprised primarily of breeze block walls which are well sealed providing no cracks or crevices and the corrugated roofing sheets having adverse thermal properties for bats.

8.3 There was evidence of nesting birds within the barn. As a result, any works to the central part of the barn will have to be carried out outside of when the jackdaws are nesting in this part of the barn. The main nesting season is considered to be April to August.

- 8.4 Even though no evidence of bats was found, and the majority of the adjacent habitats are hard standing and tightly grazed pasture, a careful precautionary approach to dismantling of the rest of the barn and works to converting the barn will be taken so that all impacts can be avoided for the identified nesting birds.
- 8.5 Although the nearest pond is 175m away and identified as having below average suitability for Great Crested Newts, a precautionary approach is also recommended to avoid any potential harm to either amphibians or reptiles however unlikely their presence.
- 8.6 To ensure that the proposal enhances the biodiversity of the site, a number of schemes will be proposed to ensure enhancements for bats, birds, insects, hedgehogs, reptiles and amphibians. Two stone open fronted bird boxes will be incorporated into the converted barn wall on the side elevation, and several integral bat boxes such as soffit bat boxes will be included at the edge of the roof of the converted barn to encourage future use of the barn by bats. An insect house shall be erected on the southern elevation of the converted barn and a hedgehog house positioned at the edge of the gardens of the converted barn by the proposed native fruit tree planting area.

9. SUSTAINABILITY

- 9.1 Regarding sustainability, the proposal is for one bespoke new dwelling which has been designed to exceed the current requirements of the Building Regulations and aim to be energy efficient and utilise renewable energy.
- 9.2 The potential key characteristics of the design are:
- High levels of insulation.
 - High level of air tightness, achieving close to the passive house standards.
 - Double glazed thermally efficient glazing.
 - Mechanical ventilation heat recovery (ASHP).
 - Solar Photovoltaics on the garage roof or externally within development area.

10. EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Whilst the Council has previously granted prior approval (and there is no reason why they would not do so again), the proposed development is deemed to provide a better scheme than could be achieved through a Class Q conversion.
- 10.2 The initial prior notification proposal, which was granted in 2020, sought the conversion of the agricultural barn to a single dwelling house. This conversion proposed a single (partially two storey) dwelling within the external dimensions of the building, providing a total floor space amounting to 455m².
- 10.3 The proposed dwelling will provide for 246m² of internal floor space, over a two storey structure, as detailed on the proposal planning drawings. Additional space in the form of a garage/utility/shower will provide for 43m² of floor space and a balcony space provide for 24m² of floor space.
- 10.4 The materials to be used on the exterior of the building reflect the rural nature of the location and that of many rural buildings, whilst also being of high standards and quality.
- 10.5 Whilst the original provision for the dwelling was allowed under permitted development following the grant of prior approval, it is suggested that the proposal is now deemed to represent a significant enhancement to both the site and the surrounding area.
- 10.6 The proposals do not impact on any surrounding properties and the principle of the development should be acceptable, as the Class Q approval should be seen as a material consideration.
- 10.7 The Applicant deems that it has been demonstrated that a more appropriate design can be secured through this full planning application compared to that previously considered under the prior notification. Therefore we trust that a positive determination will be forthcoming.

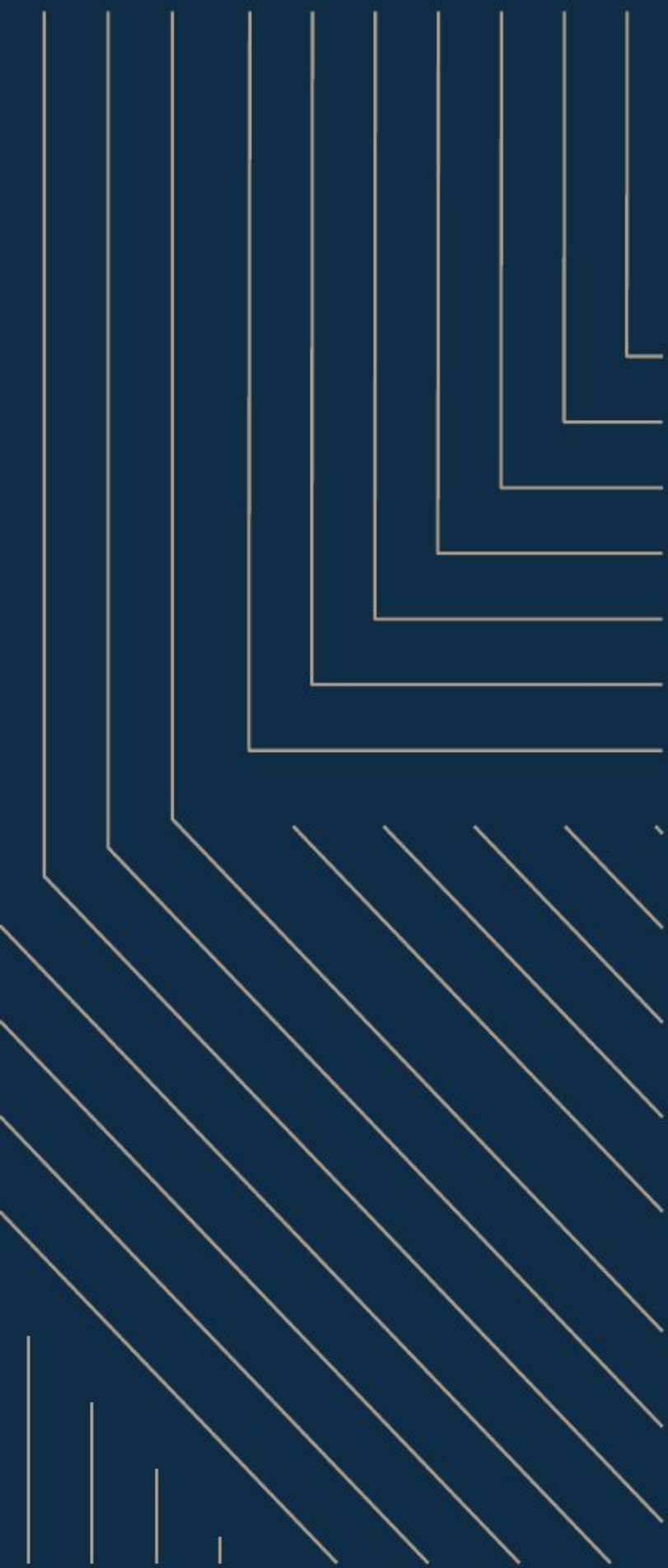
APPENDIX – SKETCH EXAMPLES





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