

**DAVID CAMPION MRICS FBIAC**  
Chartered Surveyor & Planning Consultant  
www.david@dcampion.com

**THE ESTATE OFFICE**  
**ALBION HOUSE**  
**LEWES**  
**EAST SUSSEX BN7 2NF**  
Direct Dial/Voicemail: 01273 407914  
Mobile: 07803 720338

**PROPOSED CONVERSION AND EXTENSION OF EXISTING RURAL BUILDING  
TO PROVIDE AN AGRICULTURAL DWELLING**

**J MONNINGTON (FARMS) LTD**

**PRESTON COURT FARM**

**LITTLE DENE**

**GLYNDE**

**EAST SUSSEX**



---

**REQUEST FOR PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE**

---



Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Tony Monnington is the farming Tenant of approximately 1,050 acres (424 hectares) of land held under an Agricultural Holdings Act (1986) tenancy from his Landlord, the Trustees of the Glynde Estate. These tenanted farms include Blackcap Farm and Preston Court Farm which are situated in the parishes of Beddingham and South Highton.
- 1.2 In addition, the family rents a further 200 acres (80 hectares) at Furlongs Farm, Glynde under a Farm Business Tenancy from the Glynde Estate and owns and farms a total of 235 acres (95 hectares) of which 76 acres (31 hectares) are at Little Dene and the remainder at Wellingham. This is a significant farming business totalling 1,485 acres (600 hectares).
- 1.3 Henry Monnington is the son of Mr and Mrs Monnington and is a Director with his father of J Monnington (Farms) Ltd.

## **2.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 Tony Monnington is approaching retirement age. The family is therefore looking at how to secure the future of the farming business when Henry eventually takes majority control.
- 2.2 An appraisal of the farming business recognised that land held under Agricultural Holdings Act (AHA) and Farm Business (FBT) tenancy agreements offers no guarantees of security of tenure for Henry and successive generations. A succession plan should recognise that, with Henry being a second generation AHA Tenant, the Act does not provide long term security of tenure for the family. It is therefore sensible and good business management to invest in the sustainability and viability of the family's own land.

- 2.3 The proposal is therefore to provide a dwelling on the farm located on the family's freehold land to serve the farming needs of the established business. Initially, this will be occupied by Mr and Mrs Monnington until such time as Henry eventually takes full control of the family farming enterprise.
- 2.4 A number of potential sites for the new dwelling have been examined but discounted to avoid building in the open countryside. The most obvious site for the new dwelling is a former cart lodge at Little Dene which has been improved and restored over many years. The single storey building is of brick and tile construction, structurally sound and has a footprint of approximately 75 square metres.
- 2.5 The proposal is to convert and extend this building to provide a farmhouse to serve the needs of the farming business. The building is currently used a personal gym/store room and capable of conversion without significant structural works, although the extension will require new build in materials to match. Photographs are attached to this paper for reference.

### **3.0 PLANNING POLICY ANALYSIS**

- 3.1 On 20 April 2021, in response to a pre-application enquiry regarding a proposed change of use of this building (SDNP/21/01179/PRE) the LPA advised that *"it would appear that the proposed development is permitted under Class R of Part 3, Schedule 2, of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (as amended) and the Prior Approval procedure is not invoked under Class W because the floor area of the agricultural building is less than 150 square metres"*.
- 3.2 From the above, it is clear that the subject building is in established lawful use. The proposal therefore relies on planning policies that support the conversion of rural buildings and also those that support agricultural dwellings.

- 3.3 The relevant planning policies are to be found in the South Downs Local Plan. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material planning consideration.
- 3.4 I am aware that the Local Plan is “Landscape Led”, hence the preference to convert an existing building rather than on a green field site in open countryside.
- 3.5 The purpose of this enquiry is to obtain advice as to how the Park Authority views the principle of a proposal which seeks to convert and extend an existing building that is structurally sound into a farm dwelling.
- 3.6 On re-use of rural buildings, I note in particular **Development Management Policy SD41: Conversion of Redundant Agricultural or Forestry Buildings** which says that *“The conversion of redundant agricultural or forestry buildings outside of defined settlement boundaries to an alternative use will be permitted”* in circumstances where, in order of priority, it is for *“housing for essential agricultural or forestry workers, or **succession housing** (my emphasis) for former agricultural or forestry workers”*. In this instance, the dwelling will be part of a succession plan and meet an essential farming need.
- 3.7 The NPPF also appears to support the principle of the proposal. It defines sustainability as *“meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*. Paragraph 79 allows isolated rural dwellings where there is an *“essential need for a rural worker, **including those taking majority control of a farm business**, (my emphasis) to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside”*. Paragraph 117 says that *“Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses”*.

## **4.0 SUMMARY**

- 4.1 The applicants are considering how best to secure the future of their farming business which relies on both tenanted and freehold land. The solution is to ensure the economic viability of their freehold land when Henry takes majority control of the farming business.
- 4.2 The solution includes a new dwelling to service the freehold farming unit. That dwelling can be provided through the conversion an extension of an existing traditional building on the applicant's land.
- 4.3 The Local Planning Authority is asked to advise on how it views the principle of using an existing farm building to meet that essential need and to set out the information it will require to support a full planning application.

*David Campion*

**DAVID CAMPION MRICS FBIAC**

July 2021







**North Elevation**



**South Elevation**





Interior looking west



Interior looking north