

**APPLICATION FOR PRIOR APPROVAL  
FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OF AN  
AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO A SINGLE  
DWELLING (CLASS C3) WITH  
ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT**

**AT**

**BARN ADJACENT TO WHITE HOUSE,  
LONG ROAD, SILFIELD, NORFOLK,  
NR18 9NT**



## **CONTENTS:**

- 1.0** The Site and Proposal
- 2.0** Background
- 3.0** Compliance with Class Q
- 4.0** Prior Approval Procedure
- 5.0** Transport and Highway Impacts of the Development
- 6.0** Noise Impacts
- 7.0** Contamination Risks
- 8.0** Flood Risks
- 9.0** Practicability and Desirability of a Residential Change of Use
- 10.0** Design and External Appearance
- 11.0** Provision of Adequate Natural Light into all Habitable Rooms
- 12.0** Summary



## **1.0 The Site and Proposal**

- 1.1 The building subject to this application comprises a duo-pitched steel framed agricultural barn clad with cement corrugated sheeting above concrete block walls. Timber eaves beams and purlins spanning between the rafters support corrugated cement roof sheeting forming the roof structure. Apart from some very low-key storage of agricultural implements, the building is now underutilised.
- 1.2 This application is submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to convert the building into a single dwelling as part of the conditions of Class Q for determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required in regard to the design or external appearance of the building.
- 1.3 The proposed conversion of the barn will provide accommodation over two levels. The main front entrance accesses a central hallway off which is a lounge, bedroom, toilet, and open kitchen/ dining area with an associated utility room. The first floor is accessed by a staircase from the central hallway leading to a landing off which are three smaller bedrooms, a bathroom and one larger bedroom with an adjoining en suite. The building is to be treated sensitively with existing external materials to be retained and sufficient space exists on the site to provide a discreet curtilage in compliance with the size constraints set down by Class Q.
- 1.4 These operational works fall under those permitted by Class Q of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, and subsequent amendments.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The barn was clearly designed for agricultural purposes and historically has been used for machinery storage but is now underutilised for continued viable commercial agricultural uses, being largely restricted to occasional machinery storage during winter. There is



consequently insufficient justification to warrant the buildings continued upkeep and use on site for agricultural purposes. The conversion of the building for residential use will therefore represent a sustainable use of an existing underutilised resource, which will make a small, but meaningful contribution to the rural housing supply within the district.

### **3.0 Compliance with Class Q of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (and amendments).**

3.1 In preparing this prior approval submission, regard has been given to Class Q of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (and amendments).

Here it is stated that 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 (dwelling houses) of the Schedule to the Use Class Order; and
- b. building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building referred to above, is permitted development, and therefore does not require express planning permission.

3.2 The proposed conversion and adaption of the building as detailed in this application constitutes permitted development in this regard as set out by Class Q. However, under the class, the permitted development rights are subject to a series of conditions, which are discussed and responded to as follows.

3.3 Development is not permitted by Class Q under part (a) where the site was not used solely for an agricultural use, as part of an established agricultural unit on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013, or if the site was not in use on that date, when it was last in use. In response, the building was in agricultural use on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013 and has only ever been used since its construction for agricultural purposes and has never been put to any other use other than agriculture for the



purposes of trade/business. The proposed development therefore fully accords with Class Q in this respect.

- 3.4 Part (b) stipulates that for a 'larger dwellinghouse' within an established agricultural unit, the cumulative number of separate larger dwellinghouses developed under Class Q should not exceed 3, or the cumulative floor space of the existing building changing use to a larger dwelling house under Class Q should not exceed 465 square metres. Part (c) goes on to stipulate that for a 'smaller dwellinghouse' within an established agricultural unit, the cumulative number of separate smaller dwellinghouses developed under Class Q should not exceed 5 or any separate smaller dwellinghouse exceed 100 square metres. Part (d) stipulates that development under Class Q, together with any previous development under the same Class should not result in larger dwellinghouse/s having more than 465 square metres of floor space or the cumulative number of 'separate dwellinghouses' exceed 5. In response, no other dwellings have been developed within the established agricultural unit under Class Q. Furthermore, this proposal under Class Q will only result in a single 'larger' dwellinghouse of some 228 square metres (GIA), well below the 465 square metre threshold.
- 3.5 The site is not occupied under an agricultural tenancy and no such agricultural tenancies have been terminated within the past 12 months in compliance with part (e) & (f).
- 3.6 No development under Class (A) or Class (B) of Part 6 of this same schedule has been carried out on the established agricultural unit since 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013, which satisfies part (g).
- 3.7 Under part (h), the proposal is compliant in that the development would not result in the external dimensions of the converted building extending beyond the external dimensions of the existing building at any given point as can be seen from the submitted drawings.
- 3.8 Also, in regard to part (i), the development is compliant in that it will not consist of building operations other than the installation or replacement of windows, doors, roofs, or exterior



walls or, water, drainage, electricity, gas or other services to the extent reasonably necessary for the building to function as a dwelling house.

3.9 Furthermore in compliance with parts (j), (k), (l) and (m), the site is not on article 2(3) land or forms part of a site of special scientific interest, safety hazard area or military explosives storage area. The site also does not contain a scheduled monument and the building is not listed as a heritage asset.

3.10 In addition, the Council is also required to consider under Conditions Q.2 – (1) whether its prior approval is required for the proposed works in terms of;

- a) transport and highways impact of the development
- b) noise impacts of the development
- c) contamination risks on the site
- d) flooding risks on the site, or
- 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 dwelling house.
- f) the design or external appearance of the building, and
- g) the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses

#### **4.0 Prior Approval Procedure**

4.1 Comments and observations in respect of the stated Prior Approval Procedure are set out below:

- As set out in section 1 of this report, the proposed development relates to the conversion of an agricultural building into a single dwelling (Class C3)
- The attached site location plan, block plan, floor plans and elevation drawings identify the site and illustrates the proposed development.
- The applicant is Newall Plant Ltd (c/o Leigh Allison and Rupert Baker) of White House, Long Road, Silfield, Wymondham, c/o Sworders.



## **5.0 Transport and Highway Impacts of the Development**

5.1 The barn benefits from an existing vehicular access from the public highway (Long Road) via a gravel track with a metal gate leading to a small gravel yard area which also provides access to the farmhouse. The vehicular access joins a section of the public highway, which has historically provided access to the farmstead for both small vehicles and larger farm vehicles. It provides safe ingress and egress from the public highway, with good visibility in either direction and has sufficient capacity to safely accommodate the dwelling proposed. Minimal traffic will be generated by the development, and traffic movements will not be to any sort of degree that would likely give rise to a material increase or change in the character of traffic using the driveway or local road network. The proposal will not therefore give rise to implications for highway safety or amenity. Furthermore, there is ample room for the parking of vehicles within the Class Q curtilage adjacent to the application building.

## **6.0 Noise Impacts**

6.1 The barn is set in a quiet location with excellent levels of amenity. As the farmstead is redundant, no intensive agricultural operations likely to cause disturbance, will take place in close proximity to the resultant dwelling. The residential occupation of the building will result in less farm traffic passing the farmhouse, which occupies a separate curtilage some 25 metres away and is screened by hedging and trees. No harm will therefore be caused to the residential amenity of this neighbouring property which is within retained ownership.

## **7.0 Contamination**

7.1 Given the nature of the barns past use for agricultural purposes, and more specifically for the storage of machinery, it is considered that the site does not present a significant



contamination risk. The barn has no known use for the storage of fuels, agricultural chemicals, farm waste or similar that would likely give rise to contamination.

## **8.0 Flood Risks**

8.1 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is not in an area that has a critical drainage issue. A flood risk assessment is therefore not required.

## **9.0 Practicability and Desirability of a Residential Change of Use**

9.1 The proposed change of use of the barn into a residential dwelling is considered entirely practical and desirable, providing a generous family dwelling that meets current local housing needs. As with the vast majority of farm buildings, the barn is located within the countryside as opposed to an urban setting, although the application represents a sustainable use of an existing resource. The change of use of the barn will enhance the locality and will not give rise to any demonstrable harm and in this regard the proposal does not conflict with the provisions of the NPPF, which is supportive of the re-use of rural buildings in the countryside. Furthermore, guidance has been issued by Government as part of the Planning Practice Guidance, which stipulates that Local Planning Authorities should not be determining prior approval applications on the basis of sustainability.

9.2 The principle of the change of use is considered acceptable by Central Government, who have altered the General Permitted Development Order to facilitate and encourage this type of proposal, without the need for express planning consent.

9.3 The proposed dwelling can be provided with a practical sized curtilage (although no bigger than the resultant dwelling) and sufficient parking can be provided, suitable for a dwelling of this size.



9.4 The building is structurally sound and capable of residential conversion (please see the accompanying Structural Appraisal from 'Frith Blake Consulting Ltd', which accompanies this application) and is suited for use and occupation as an independent residential dwelling. The entire framework of the building will be retained as part of the conversion and is suitable to sustain a conversion to residential purposes without requiring structural alterations/strengthening. All existing blockwork and cladding to the elevations and roof will be retained as part of the conversion.

#### **10.0 Design and External Appearance**

10.1 The chosen design, provides a contemporary design solution, which makes reference to the commercial past of the building. It purposely seeks to avoid a conventional domestic type of arrangement in fenestration terms, which often leads to bland uninspiring conversions under Class Q. The design and external treatment of fenestration ensures that the amenity afforded by the internal living space is of a very high standard and the resultant dwelling is in keeping with the agricultural character, form and massing of the building.

#### **11.0 Provision of Adequate Natural Light in all Habitable Rooms**

11.1 A detailed scaled floor plan accompanies this application, which clearly demonstrates that the use of fenestration in the proposed design, allows excellent levels of natural light into all habitable rooms i.e. the lounge, open kitchen/ dining area and dining area and all five bedrooms. In this sense the proposed dwelling will provide a very high standard of accommodation.

#### **12.0 Summary**

12.1 In light of the above, this proposed change of use satisfies all the conditions set out within Class Q of Part 3, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (and amendments) and so therefore constitutes



permitted development. No prior approval is required given that there will be no material highway impacts, noise, contamination or flooding issues and the barn is suitable for residential use, subject to the building operations permitted under the Order.