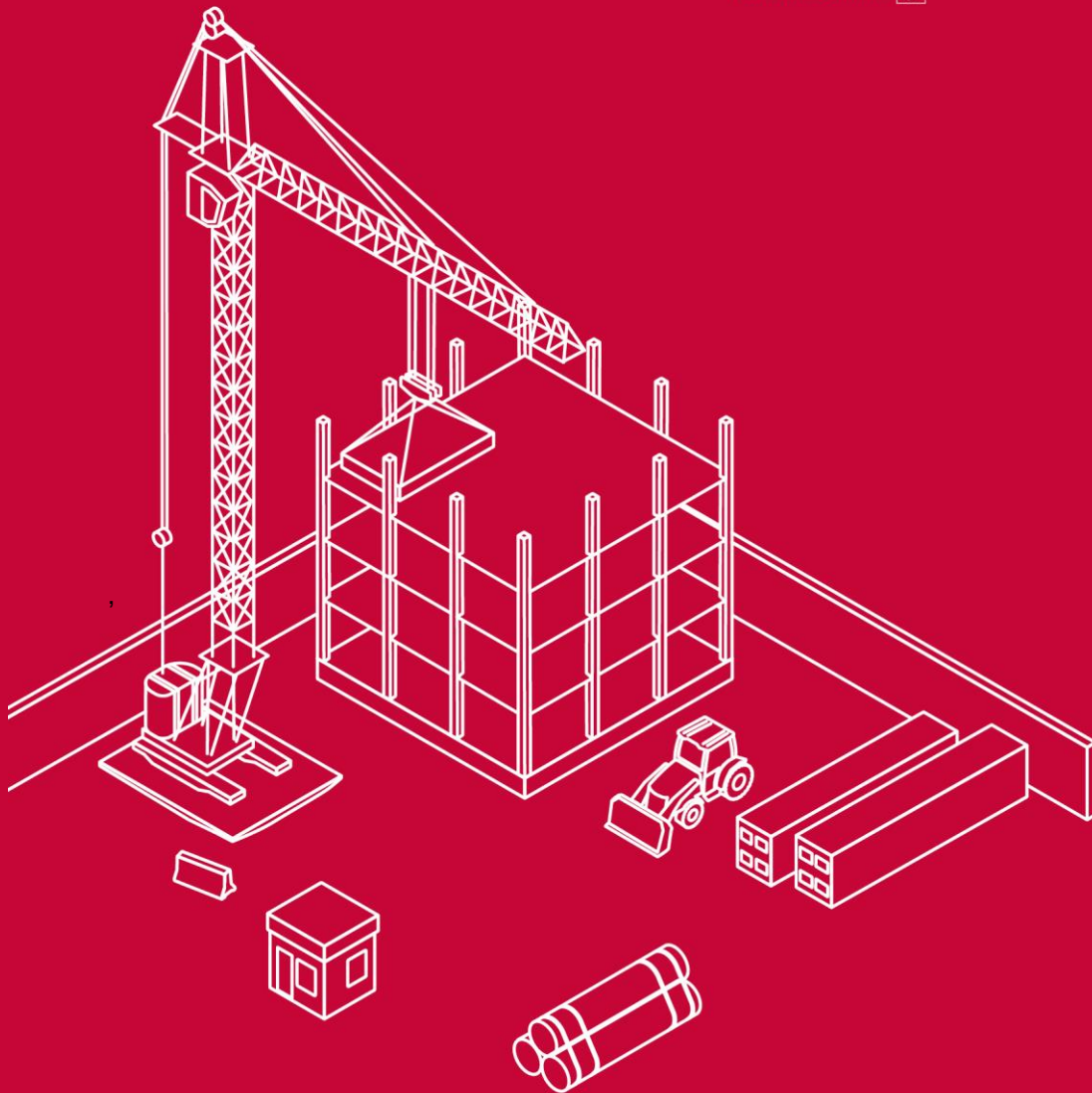


**STRUTT
&PARKER**

BNP PARIBAS GROUP 



**PRIOR APPROVAL
(CLASS Q)**

**Tranwell Airfield,
Morpeth,
Northumberland**

November 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

Strutt & Parker have been instructed by our client, Mr and Mrs Brown (the Applicant), to submit a Notification of Prior Approval for the proposed change of use of an agricultural building to form one dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) at Tranwell Airfield, Morpeth.

The subject building was originally constructed as either a general purpose storage building or aircraft hangar for small planes. While the building has been utilised for the purposes of agriculture, the Applicant now wishes to convert it to form a dwellinghouse, preventing it from falling into disrepair and provide a beneficial use for existing building.

2. PLANNING POLICY

2.1 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The main purpose of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012, was to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development with the overarching principle being the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The latest iteration of the National Planning Policy Framework was published in 2021; this document retains the presumption in favour of sustainable development of the previous iterations.

The site is located approximately 3.7 miles from the centre of Morpeth. The centre of Morpeth has many amenities including eight schools, several supermarkets, a variety of shops and popular restaurants. There is also a rail station providing regular North to Scotland and South to Newcastle and London.

In line with the Policy S5 of the Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan 2005 and the proposed Policy STP8 of the Draft Plan for Northumberland, the revised Green Belt within Northumberland encompasses Tranwell Woods and the site which forms this application. Paragraph 138 of the revised NPPF 2021 states that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) *“To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) *To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) *To preserve the setting and specific character of historic towns; and*
- e) *To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.”*

In accordance with the revised NPPF 2021, it is stated that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt. The exceptions to this are detailed in Paragraph 149, as follows:

- a) *“Buildings for agriculture and forestry;*
- b) *The provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- c) *The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- d) *The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- e) *Limited infilling in villages;*
- f) *Limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*
- g) *Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:*
 - *not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
 - *not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.”*

In line with the exceptions detailed above, it is reasoned that the proposed development is appropriate within the Green Belt as it represents the alteration of an existing agricultural building to form one new dwellinghouse. Accordingly, the proposed development will not result in a disproportionate change in the size or footprint from

the existing building, it will not have an impact of the openness of the Green Belt when compared to the existing building.

Paragraph 84 of the revised NPPF aims to support a prosperous rural economy so that “*planning policies should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings...*”. The principle of conversion is key to the proposed development. This building is surplus to requirements and no longer required for the purposes of agriculture so the Applicant wishes to renovate and utilise the building before it falls into disrepair.

2.2 NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL PLAN

The Publication Draft of the Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to Independent Examination in May 2019. Phase 1 of the Examination in Public took place between October 2019 and February 2020 and there has been a pause in the Examination in Public as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

It is understood that Phase 2 of the Examination hearings commenced in October 2020. If the Publication Draft is found to be sound it will be adopted.

As discussed, the site is located within the Green Belt, in line with the Policy S5 of the Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan 2005 and the proposed Policy STP8 of the Publication Draft Plan for Northumberland. One of the overarching purposes of the Green Belt, as stated in the proposed Policy STP8, is to prevent Morpeth merging with neighbouring settlements and prevent the merger of rural settlements.

Having regard with the purposes of the Green Belt, the circumstances for acceptable development within the Green Belt as previously discussed, the context of the site within Northumberland and particularly in relation to Tranwell Woods and Morpeth, the proposed development is considered appropriate. In particular, Section 4.78 of the Submission Draft of the Northumberland Local Plan states that “*the overarching principle is that the Green Belt should preserve openness and reflect the purposes of the designation*”.

Given the previously developed nature of the site and that the proposed development comprises the conversion of one existing agricultural building to form one dwellinghouse, it is reasoned that the openness of the locality will not be affected by the proposed re-development. Therefore, it is reasoned that the proposal is not harmful to the setting and is in accordance with both national and local Green Belt policy.

The proposed Policy HOU1 of the Publication Draft Local Plan supports making the best use of existing buildings stating that “*sustainable, high quality and attractive residential communities will be created and promoted by supporting the conversion and change of use to residential use of other sustainable redundant premises to housing...*”. The conversion of the existing modern agricultural building is proposed as the building is no longer required for agricultural purposes.

2.3 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT) ORDER 1995 (AS AMENDED)

Under the amended Town & Country Planning Order 1995, Class Q allows for the conversion of agricultural buildings to dwellinghouses. Under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GDPO), Class Q is defined as:

“*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; and*
- b) *building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building referred to in paragraph (a) to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Schedule”.*

Under the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2018 Class Q rights were amended. The conversion of agricultural buildings up to 465m² into five dwellinghouses without planning permission is now permitted if they were in sole agricultural use on 20th March 2013.

The Publication Draft makes reference to Class Q rights within Section 7.46. Accordingly, the proposed Policy HOU8 of the Publication Draft states that:

“Within the open countryside, the conversion and change of use of non-residential buildings, the re-use of redundant or disused buildings to residential use, and the extension or adaptation of existing dwellings, will be supported where:

- a) The existing building or structure is of permanent and substantial construction, is in keeping with and makes a positive contribution to the character and setting of the area and/or if of architectural or historic merit, and is capable of conversion and appropriate enhancement without complete or substantial rebuilding, disproportionate extension or unsympathetic alterations;*
- b) Any extension or other householder development is within the curtilage of the existing property and is incidental and subordinate to the new or existing dwelling(s) in size and massing, uses appropriate materials and would not have an adverse impact on the open character of the area; and*
- c) The development would not result in the unjustified loss of a valued community service or facility, and the applicant has clearly demonstrated that it cannot be viably redeveloped for an employment-generating or tourism use, or otherwise that the proposed residential conversion is subordinate to and a necessary part of the primary business or community use or facilities necessary homeworking.”*

The proposed development is therefore in accordance with Policy HOU8 of the Publication Draft of the Northumberland Local Plan.

3. DESIGN MATTERS

3.1 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal is for the conversion of one existing agricultural building to form one dwellinghouse.

The proposed dwelling will benefit from accommodation provided over one storey, an open-plan kitchen/dining room and four bedrooms.

3.2 AMOUNT

The conversion will provide one new dwellinghouse within the existing donor building.

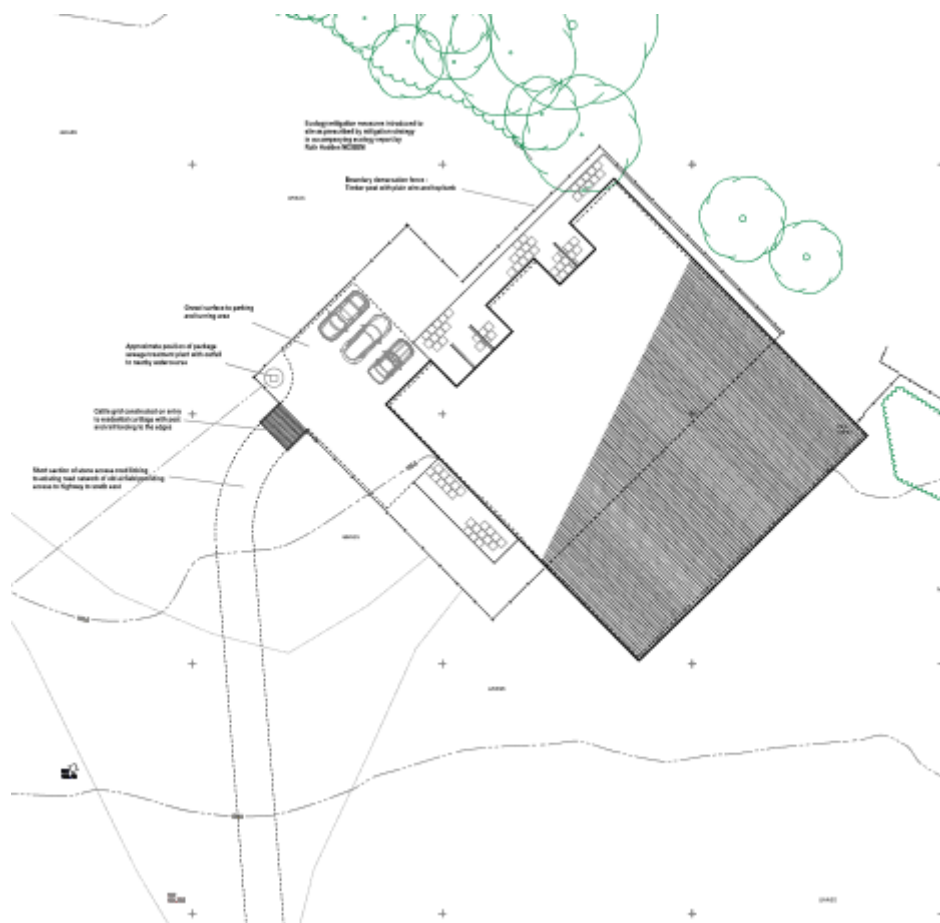
3.3 LAYOUT

As the proposed development is based upon the principle of conversion and development under Class Q, the development is restricted to the change of use of the existing building and its curtilage; the design of the proposed conversion has therefore been dictated by the existing agricultural building, its location, shape and size.

Accordingly, the internal layout of the proposed dwelling has also been dictated by the donor building.

Parking sufficient for three cars is proposed within the curtilage of the conversion; this shall be provided externally.

The proposed site layout submitted as part of this application is shown below.

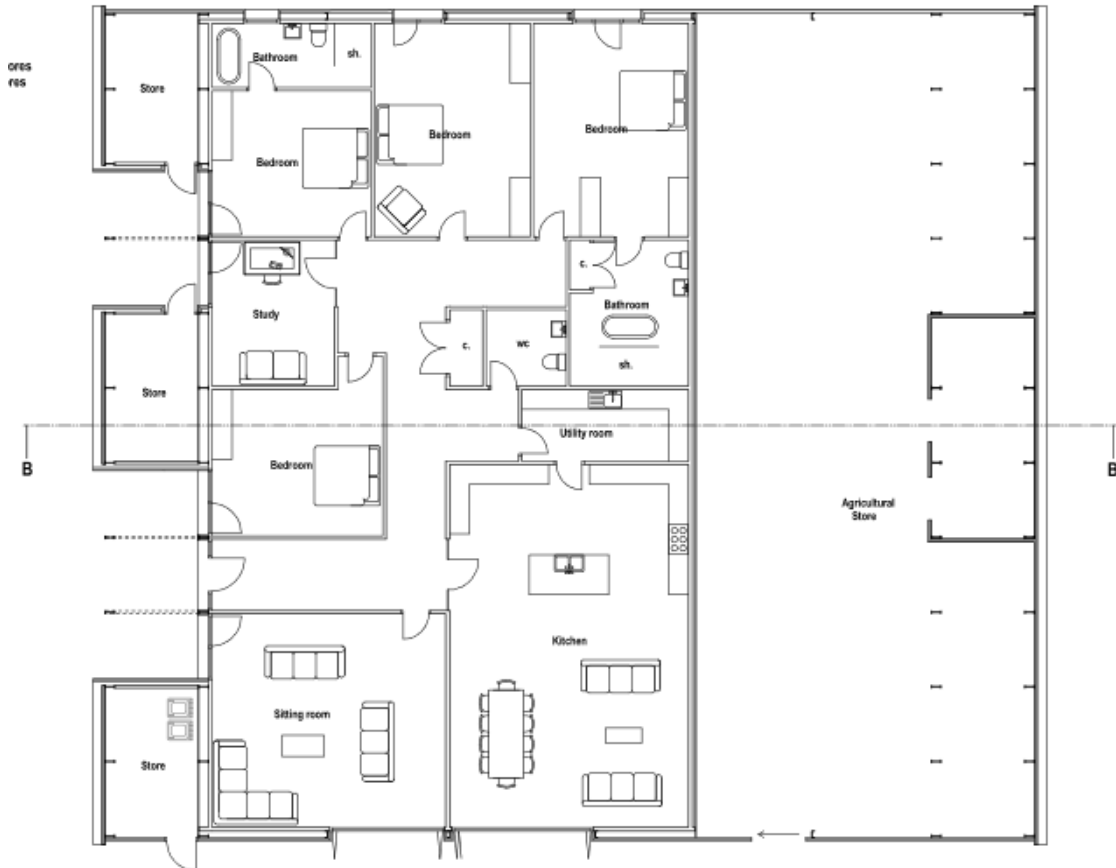


3.4 SCALE

As development is based on the principles of conversion, the development will not alter the external dimensions of the existing building and hence the scale of the building will remain unchanged.

With respect to the proposal, accommodation will be provided over one storey. The dwelling will benefit from an open-plan kitchen-dining room, four bedrooms and three bathrooms.

The proposed floor plans are as below.



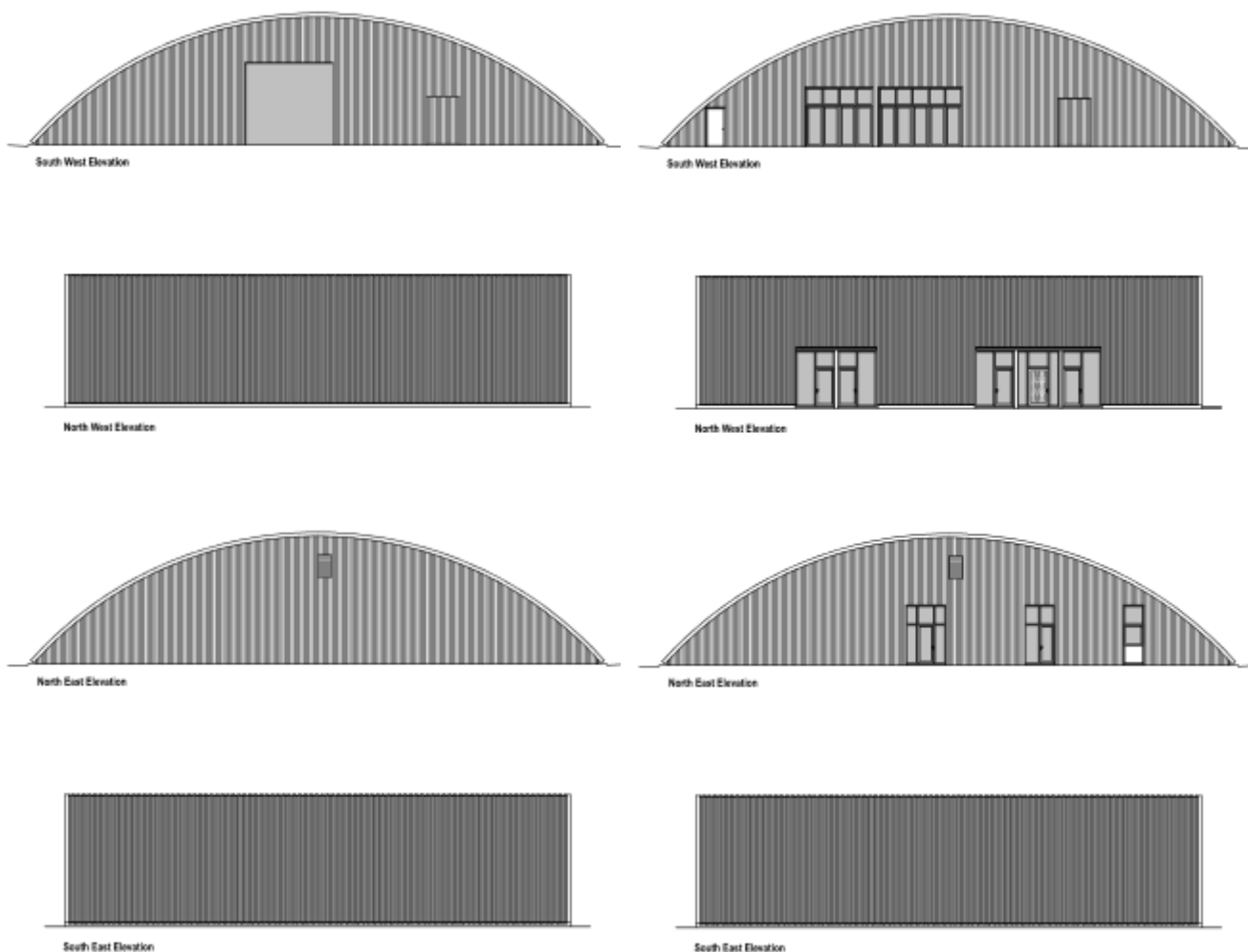
3.5 APPEARANCE

The donor building is a general purpose building, which is constructed with arched steel supports and steel sheeting. The building sits on a concrete pad foundation. All existing steelwork and sheeting is to be retained when the building is converted.

New openings will be created only to make the building suitable for habitable use; these apertures will be inserted directly into the existing external materials. Window and door frames are to be constructed in dark grey powder coated aluminium to maintain an industrial appearance to the exterior of the building and reflect the industrial and agricultural heritage of the existing building.

Where possible, for example on the north-western elevation, windows and doorways are to be installed between the steel roof supports. The modern style glazing will allow the future residents to take full advantage of the modest garden and external space afforded to the proposed dwelling.

The existing and proposed elevations of the converted building are as below. As per the below, the south-eastern elevation is to be retained as an agricultural store; this part of the building will be accessed by means of the existing doorway on the south-west elevation.



3.6 LANDSCAPING

A short section of stone access road will link to the existing road network on the Applicant’s ownership (the old airfield). A gravel surface is proposed to the parking and turning area, while stone paving with permeable joints is proposed directly adjacent to the unit.

As is normal with applications of this nature we would anticipate that the more specific detail of the landscaping will be dealt with as a pre-commencement condition to a planning permission.

4. ACCESS

Access will be via an existing access from the Class C rural road (section 1110C151 100008; U9063 JCT to C152 JCT). This existing access is ample in width to facilitate a shared pedestrian and vehicular use without recourse to a separate footpath.

The layout of the proposed development is such that vehicles will have space to ensure they exist in a forward facing direction.

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