

PLANNING STATEMENT

Application to determine if prior approval is required for the proposed conversion of an agricultural building into two dwellings under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) – Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q.

**Barn at Weekstone Farm
Weekstone Farm
Pancrasweek
EX22 7JB**

May 2022

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1 INTRODUCTION

Context

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by DPA Planning Ltd on behalf of Mr and Mrs Darby (the "Applicant") to accompany a prior notification application for the conversion of an agricultural building into two dwellings ("the Proposed Development") Weekstone Farm ("the application site").
- 1.2 This planning statement is to be read alongside the submitted proposed plans.

Application Site

- 1.3 The site is located 2 miles north-west of the Main Centre of Holsworthy, accessed from the A3072, the site consists of a main farmhouse and a small number of agricultural buildings.
- 1.4 The barn is typical of agricultural buildings constructed since the 1980s has been in agricultural use since that date by the farm. The building is mainly used for equipment and machinery storage as well as hay which is taken from the surrounding fields.

Proposed Development

- 1.5 The application proposed the change of use of the agricultural barn to two residential properties under Class Q of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 2015. It is envisaged that these will be holiday lets used as part of the diversification of the farm unit however this has not yet been confirmed.
- 1.6 We do not propose to make any structural alterations to the building other than the following in order to comply with Part 3:
 - Existing cladding to be retained and made good;
 - Existing blockwork to be rendered;
 - Existing roof material to be retained and made good;
 - Window and door openings; and
 - Mezzanine floor used and improved where necessary to provide accommodation at first floor.

- 1.7 The proposed external garden area is no larger than the footprint of the barn and boundary treatments are to be retained as existing.
- 1.8 The submitted drawings show the existing and proposed floor plans and elevations.

2 PLANNING POLICY

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

- 2.1 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended, in Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q permits development consisting of (a) a change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from use as an agricultural building to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order; or (b) development referred to in paragraph (a) together with building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building referred to in paragraph (a) to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Schedule.
- 2.2 Paragraph 105 (Ref: 13-105-20180615) of the Planning Practice Guidance states that only where existing buildings which are suitable for conversion to residential use, benefit from the permitted development right. The Class Q right permits building operations which are reasonably necessary to convert the building which may include those changes which affect the external appearance of the building.
- 2.3 Internal works are not generally development. For the building to function as a dwelling it may be appropriate to undertake internal structural works, including to allow for a floor, the insertion of a mezzanine or upper floors within the overall residential floor space permitted or internal walls which are not prohibited by Class Q.
- 2.4 The residential curtilage is the area immediately beside or around the agricultural building no larger than the land area occupied by the agricultural building.
- 2.5 There are some conditions attached to the change to residential use. Before beginning the development, an individual will need to apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether its prior approval is necessary. This prior approval will be in respect of transport, highways and noise impacts of the development, and also as to the flooding and contamination risks on the site, and 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. In addition, applicants will need to check whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the design or external appearance of the building.

- 2.6 The procedure for prior approval is set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended. This procedure was amended in April 2014 to make clear that the local planning authority must only consider the National Planning Policy Framework to the extent that it is relevant to the matter on which prior approval is sought, for example, transport, highways, noise etc.

3 ASSESSMENT

Acceptability in Principle

- 3.1 The barn was constructed around the 1980s and has been in agricultural use since that date by the farm. The building is mainly used for equipment and machinery storage as well as hay.
- 3.2 The continued agricultural use of the building will be evident when visiting the site.
- 3.3 The proposed development meets the criteria of Class Q and the works required to convert to a dwelling are reasonably necessary, furthermore the residential curtilage as proposed and shown on the submitted plans is no larger than the land area occupied by the agricultural building and therefore this application is in principle considered acceptable. The following sections provide further evidence for consideration against the Class Q criteria.

Building Works

- 3.4 The Class Q regulations allow either the change of use (a), or the change of use together with reasonably necessary building operations (b).
- 3.5 Building works are allowed under the right permitting agricultural buildings to change to residential use: Class Q of Part 3 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. However, the right assumes that the agricultural building is capable of functioning as a dwelling. The right permits building operations which are reasonably necessary to convert the building, which may include those which would affect the external appearance of the building and would otherwise require planning permission. This includes the installation or replacement of windows, doors, roofs, exterior walls, water, drainage, electricity, gas or other services to the extent reasonably necessary for the building to function as a dwelling house; and partial demolition to the extent reasonably necessary to carry out these building operations. It is not the intention of the permitted development right to allow rebuilding work which would go beyond what is reasonably necessary for the conversion of the building to residential use.

Therefore, it is only where the existing building is already suitable for conversion to residential use that the building would be considered to have the permitted development right.

- 3.6 Internal works are not generally development. For the building to function as a dwelling it may be appropriate to undertake internal structural works, including to allow for a floor, the insertion of a mezzanine or upper floors within the overall residential floor space permitted, or internal walls, which are not prohibited by Class Q. The submitted plans demonstrate just this and demonstrate that the proposed development can be implemented in full compliance with the Class Q permitted development regulations.

Structural Integrity

- 3.7 The structure of the barn is sufficiently good without any irreparable defects for conversion to residential use and presents few problems. A structural survey has not been provided as the barn is of steel frame and considered more than acceptable for conversion without structural alterations. This will be readily apparent when visiting the site.

Drainage and Flooding

- 3.8 The site falls within flood zone 1 and therefore does not require a flood risk assessment to be undertaken. There is already an existing soakaway connected to the building and so only a foul water connection would be needed. It is proposed to connect the foul water to either the existing septic tank on site or a new standalone one if necessary.

Highways

- 3.9 Existing access would be maintained and off-street parking would be provided behind the unit.

Contamination

- 3.10 The barn has only been used as storage and not for any livestock and therefore there are no contamination concerns with the proposed change of use to residential.

Noise

- 3.11 Whilst on a farm holding the development can be brought forward without any risks of unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of residents. Whilst on a large land holding the farm has been downscaling its intensive activities which are focused on the land to the south and north of the application site. As such the site can come forward in isolation without concerns.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Paragraph 38 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. It goes on to state that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 4.2 It has been detailed in this statement that the proposal represents an appropriate form of Class Q conversion. All works required for conversion are considered reasonably necessary and are capable without structural alterations to the existing building.
- 4.3 Given the above the local planning authority is respectfully requested to view the proposal favourably.

