

Prior Approval for the Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings to 4no. Dwellings.

Demesne Farm
Gunnerton
Northumberland
NE48 4EA

February 2022



Document Review Schedule

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Hedley Planning Services (the “Agent”) are submitting prior approval application in relation to a Class Q change of use of agricultural buildings to 4no. dwellings at Demesne Farm, Gunnerton, Northumberland, NE48 4EA on behalf of Jonathan Elkington (the “Applicant”).

1.2 The application is made under Class Q ‘agricultural buildings to dwellinghouses’ Schedule 2, Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2018.

1.3 Northumberland County Council produced a guide to validation and determination of application for prior approval in 2016; since then, the Class Q regulations have been amended in 2018 with substantial updates, therefore this document holds little weight in the determination of this application.

1.4 The Order permits 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; or

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

1.5 The Order grants the conversion of up to five new properties within an ‘established agricultural unit’. Permission can be granted of up to three larger properties, as long as the area converted does not exceed 465m²; or five smaller properties totaling 100m² each; or a combination of three large properties (as long as the total floorspace does not exceed 465m²) and two smaller units of 100m² each.

1.6 A ‘smaller unit’ is defined as dwellinghouses which has a floorspace of up to 100m², with ‘Larger units’ defined as having a floorspace between 100m² and 465m².

1.7 An agricultural unit is defined within Part 3, paragraph ‘X’ as agricultural land occupied as a unit for the purposes of agriculture (and which was in use for that purpose on or before the relevant qualifying date under Class Q – March 2013).

1.8 The other definition granted is within Part 6, paragraph ‘D.1’ as:

“agricultural land which is occupied as a unit for the purposes of agriculture, including
—

(a) any dwelling or other building on that land occupied for the purpose of farming the land by the person who occupies the unit, or

(b) any dwelling on that land occupied by a farmworker”

- 1.9 It is important to note that one agricultural unit may not necessarily be the same as a single planning unit, with agricultural units often spread over multiple areas of land and/or farms
- 1.10 This statement forms part of a wider submission package, containing the following plans and documents which should be read in conjunction with this statement:

Plans	Reference
Barn One Existing Floor Plans and Elevations	G395 Gunnerton - Topographic & Measured Survey Survey-A1 1-100 Barn 1 (3)
Barn One Proposed Elevations	GNF-NOR-B1-ZZ-DR-A-00101_P02 - GA ELEVATIONS - BARN ONE - SHEET 1
Barn One Proposed Floor Plans	GNF-NOR-B1-00-DR-A-00101_P03 - GA PLANS - BARN ONE - LEVELS 00-01
Barn One Proposed Sections	GNF-NOR-B1-ZZ-DR-A-00201_P01 - GA SECTIONS - BARN ONE
Barn Two Existing Floor Plans and Elevations	G395 Gunnerton - Topographic & Measured Survey Survey-A1 1-100 Barn 2
Barn Two Proposed Elevations	GNF-NOR-B2-ZZ-DR-A-00201_P02-GA ELEVATIONS - BARN TWO - SHEET 1
Barn Two Proposed Floor Plans	GNF-NOR-B2-00-DR-A-00201_P03 - -GA PLAN - BARN TWO - LEVELS 00-01
Barn Two Proposed Sections	GNF-NOR-B2-ZZ-DR-A-00210_P01 - GA SECTIONS - BARN TWO
Barn Three Existing Elevations	G395 Gunnerton - Topographic & Measured Survey Survey-A0 1-100 Building 3 Elevations (5)
Barn Three Existing Floor Plans and Elevations	G395 Gunnerton - Topographic & Measured Survey Survey-A1 1-100 Barn 3 Floor Plans (6)
Barn Three Proposed Elevations	GNF-NOR-B3-00-DR-A-00301_P02-GA PLAN - BARN THREE - LEVELS 00-01
Barn Three Proposed Floor Plans	GNF-NOR-B3-00-DR-A-00301_P03 - -GA PLAN - BARN THREE - LEVELS 00-0
Barn Three Proposed Sections	GNF-NOR-B3-ZZ-DR-A-00310_P01 - GA SECTIONS - BARN THREE
Barn Four Existing Elevations	G395 Gunnerton - Topographic & Measured Survey Survey-A0 1-100 Building 3 Elevations (5)
Barn Four Existing Floor Plans and Elevations	G395 Gunnerton - Topographic & Measured Survey Survey-A1 1-100 Barn 3 Floor Plans (6)
Barn Four Proposed Elevations	GNF-NOR-B4-ZZ-DR-A-00401_P02 - GA ELEVATIONS - BARN FOUR - SHEET 1
Barn Four Proposed Floor Plans	GNF-NOR-B4-00-DR-A-00401_P03 - GA PLAN - BARN FOUR - LEVEL 00

Barn Four Proposed Sections	GNF-NOR-B4-ZZ-DR-A-00410_P01- GA SECTIONS - BARN FOUR
Existing Site Plan	GNF-NOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-90001_P04 - SITE - EXISTING PLAN - CLASS Q
Existing Site Sections/Levels	GNF-NOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-900200_P02 - SITE - EXISTING SITE SECTIONS - CLASS Q
Landscaping Details	GGNF-NOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-90004_P03 - SITE PROPOSED LANDSCAPING PLAN - CLASS Q
Location Plan	GNF-NOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-90000_P03 - SITE - LOCATION PLAN - CLASS Q
Proposed Site Plan	GNF-NOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-90002_P05 - SITE - PROPOSED SITE PLAN - CLASS Q
Proposed Site Sections/Levels	GNF-NOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-90201_P02 - SITE - SITE SECTIONS - CLASS Q
Topographical Surveys	G395 Gunnerton - Topographic & Measured Survey Survey-A0 1-200(1)
	G395 Gunnerton - Topographic & Measured Survey Survey-A0 1-200(2)

Documents	Reference
Application Form	
Bat Survey	21173 Bat Survey V2
Design and Access Statement	Gunnerton - Design and Access Statement - Class Q - P03
Evidence of Class Q Consent	Evidence of Class Q Consent
Noise Assessment	Noise Report Demesne Farm
Phase 1 Geo-Environmental and Coal Mining Risk Assessment	211009.R.001
Prior Approval Statement	This Document
Structural Survey	Structural Survey 040422
Transport Statement	2022-01 Transport Statement 21-173-N Demesne Farm with appendices

2.0 Site Description and Planning History

- 2.1 The site located at Demesne Farm, north west of the small village of Gunnerton, west Northumberland, 10 miles north of the large market town of Hexham.
- 2.2 The village of Gunnerton contains a collection of dwellings, the Parish of Chollerton Church (Grade II listed building) and Southlands Farm Cottage which is utilised as visitor accommodation. Additionally, there is a post office (east) and Kennels (south) on the edge of the village.
- 2.3 Pedestrian and vehicular access to the site is via an unnamed road which connects from the A6079, which branches north from the A69. The village bus stop provides connections to Hexham (service 882: West Woodburn - Hexham), and subsequent rail network providing access to Newcastle and beyond.
- 2.4 The site is bound by agricultural fields to the north, north-east and west, with the village of Gunnerton to the east and Gunnerton Burn and mature tree-line to the south. The site is situated within Flood Zone 1 and therefore poses no risk of flooding.
- 2.5 The site is well-related to the existing built development of Gunnerton. The site has no policy allocations or land designations, including Green Belt, AONB or Conservation Area.
- 2.6 The site is currently occupied by number of outbuildings associated with Demesne Farm with the existing house situated on the southern boundary, adjacent to two existing stone structures.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, 2019

- 2.7 The proposed site was identified within the Northumberland County Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (2019) as part of the evidence base within the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.
- 2.8 The site assessment, referenced 2528, encompassed a 2.71ha parcel of land which include the outbuildings associated with Demesne Farm and adjacent land to the south and north east.
- 2.9 The assessment identified the site as available, suitable in part and achievable in part. Concerns expressed were due to the requirement of barn clearance/conversion and the requirement of a transport assessment to determine the appropriateness of accessibility.
- 2.10 These concerns have been addressed within the submitted structural report, architectural plans and transport assessment in support of this application and will be discussed within Section 4.0.

- 2.11 Overall, the assessment concluded that the conversion of farm buildings and limited new build in areas close to existing access road may be appropriate if adoptable standards are achieved.



SHLAA Ref: 2528

Planning History:

- 2.12 The site has the following planning history:

T/950092 | Change of use of redundant farm buildings into four workshop units. Permitted 1995.

- 2.13 The following applications are situated within close proximity to the proposed site:

19/04602/OUT | Outline planning permission for one house and garage. This is the last plot in a group of five. | Plot 3 Bracken Hill Gunnerton Northumberland NE48 4BF. Permitted 2020

- 2.14 The current structures on site are as follows:

Barn 1: Two-storey masonry structure with a timber first floor and slate roof.

Barn 2: Two-storey masonry structure with timber first floor with a single storey extension on the northern elevation.

Barn 3: Two-storey masonry structure with timber floor and slate roof.

Barn 4: Single/two-storey masonry structure with a slate roof to the end sections with corrugated metal to the central section.

Shed 1: Timber framed construction with corrugated sheet roofing and wall cladding.

Shed 2: Pre-cast concrete portal framed structure.

- 2.15 For further details on the materials and current state of the structures, please review the structural survey submitted in support of the application.

3.0 Proposed Development

- 3.1 This Class Q application seeks permission for conversion of existing agricultural buildings into 4no. residential dwellings at Demesne Farm, Gunnerton, NE48 4EA.
- 3.2 The external appearance of the existing structures will remain the same with the stone exterior walls being retained and subject to slight repair work. Additional rooflights are proposed to all first-floor rooms to increase natural light and ventilation.
- 3.3 The proposed dwellings will comprise of the following:

Barn	No. of Bedrooms	Sqm (m ²)	Allocated Parking Spaces
Barn 1	3 Bed 6 Person	137	2
Barn 2	3 Bed 6 Person	115	2
Barn 3	4 Bed 8 Person	211	3
Barn 4	3 Bed 6 Person	93	2

- 3.4 All dwellings will have associated private amenity space, as well as community garden areas. The scheme aims to replace, reuse and maintain the existing fabric. Existing gravel will be reused, with gravel grid grates ensuring longevity, close boarded timber fencing will be installed between gardens for privacy, and post and rail fencing will be utilised where possible (where gardens are not overlooked)
- 3.5 Existing slate roof tiles will be reused where possible and stonework will be replaced with lime mortar. Painted softwood windows will be installed in tangent with larger openings (which be either be timber framed or aluminium powder coated).
- 3.6 Access to the site will utilise the existing track which enters the site from the north east of the site. Each barn has been allocated parking with the breakdown provided in the above table.
- 3.7 For further information, please review the submitted plans and Design and Access Statement.

4.0 Assessment of Class Q of the Order

4.1 The proposed development will convert existing agricultural outbuildings into 4no. dwellings on land at Demesne Farm, Gunnerton, NE48 4EA in accordance with Class Q Regulations within Schedule 2, Part 3 of the General Permitted Development Order.

4.2 Class Q, Part 3, Schedule 2 permits 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; or

(b) development referred to in paragraph (a) together with building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building referred to in the paragraph (a) to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule.”

4.3 Development is permitted subject to certain criterion as set out within paragraph Q.1 and associated sub-texts. The conversion of agricultural buildings into 4no. dwellings falls within the scope of limitations as set out below:

Q.1 Development is not permitted by Class Q if –

(a) The site was not used solely for an agricultural use as part of an established agricultural unit –

- (i) On 20th March 2013; or*
- (ii) In the case of a building which was in use before that date but was not in use on that date, when it was last in use, or*
- (iii) In the case of a site which was brought into use after 20th March 2013, for a period of at least 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins;*

4.4 Part 3, paragraph X and Part 6, paragraph D.1 define an established agricultural unit as agricultural land occupied by a unit for the purposes of agriculture, including dwellings/buildings occupied for the purpose of farming and agriculture or occupied by a farm worker.

4.5 The site has been a tenanted farm for two generations, with the most recent tenant due to vacate the premises as they no longer require Demesne Farm operations.

(b) In case of –

- (i) A larger dwellinghouse, within an established agricultural unit –*

(aa) the cumulative number of separate larger dwellinghouses developed under Class Q exceeds 3; or

(bb) the cumulative floorspace of the existing building or buildings changing use to a larger dwellinghouse or dwellinghouses under Class Q exceeds 465 square metres;

(ba) the floor space of any dwellinghouse developed under Class Q having a use falling within C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order exceeds 465 square meters;

4.6 Within the Order, 'larger dwellinghouses' are defined as measuring between 100m² and 465m².

4.7 Three larger units (Barn one, two and three) are proposed on site. Barn one measures 137m², Barn two 115m² and Barn three 211m². In total, the three barns have a measured floorspace of 463m²; thereby under the maximum allowed and thus complying with part b of Class Q.

4.8 All proposed units have a measured floorspace below the 465 square meter requirement.

(c) In the case of –

(i) A smaller dwellinghouse, within an established agricultural unit –

(aa) the cumulative number of separate smaller dwellinghouses developed under Class Q exceeds 5; or

(bb) the floor space of any one separate smaller dwellinghouse having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order exceeds 100 square metres

4.9 'Smaller dwellinghouses' are defined within the Order as having a measured floorspace no greater than 100m². A single smaller dwellinghouse is proposed on site (Barn 4) and measures 93m².

(d) The development under Class Q (together with any previous development under Class Q) within an established agricultural unit would result in either or both of the following –

(i) A larger dwellinghouse or larger dwellinghouses having more than 465 square metres of floorspace having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order;

(ii) *The cumulative number of separate dwellinghouses having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order exceeding 5;*

4.10 There has been no previous development on site under Class Q. As set out above, 3no. 'larger' dwellings are proposed, which total 463m² and a single 'smaller' dwelling which measures 93m². The proposal does not exceed 5no. dwellings or 465m² for larger units.

(e) *The site is occupied under an agricultural tenancy, unless the express consent of both the landlord and the tenant has been obtained;*

(f) *Less than 1 year before the date development begins –*

(i) *An agricultural tenancy over the site has been terminated, and*

(ii) *The termination was for the purpose of carrying out development under Class Q.*

Unless both the landlord and the tenant have agreed in writing that the site is no longer required for agricultural use;

4.11 The agricultural tenancy on site is due to cease this autumn as the existing tenant no longer requires Demesne Farm for agricultural operations. The Class Q Consent document details signed consent from the existing tenant confirming this.

(g) *Development under Class A(a) or Class B(a) of Part 6 of this Schedule (agricultural buildings and operations) has been carried out on the established agricultural unit*

–

(i) *since 20th March 2013; or*

(ii) *where development under Class Q begins after 20th March 2021, during the period which is 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins.*

4.12 Class A(a) development consists of permitted development rights for 'agricultural development on units of 5 hectares or more' and Class B(a) consists of permitted development rights for 'agricultural development on units of less than 5 hectares'. There is no relevant planning history on site, thus neither of these works have been conducted since March 2013.

(h) *The development would result in the external dimensions of the building extending beyond the external dimensions of the existing building at any given point;*

4.13 All the units have been converted based on the original structures present on site thus do not exceed existing, external dimensions.

(i) The development under Class Q(b) would consist of building operations other than

–

(i) the installation or replacement of –

(aa) windows, doors, roofs or exterior walls, or

(bb) water, drainage, electricity, gas or other services

to the extent reasonably necessary for the building to function as a dwellinghouse; and

(ii) partial demolition to the extent reasonably necessary to carry out building operations allowed by paragraph Q.1(i)(i);

4.14 All agricultural outbuildings will be subject to conversion and replacement of windows, doors and roofs. First-floor units will benefit from additional skylights to enhance natural light and ventilation within dwellings. Please see submitted plans for further details.

4.15 The structural survey concludes the barn are suitable for habitable conversion, subject to minor repair work on exterior walls. The plans accord with the building operations set out within part i.

(j) The site is on article 2(3) land;

4.16 Designations of Article 2(3) land are set out within Schedule 1, Part 1 of the General Permitted Development Order. These include: Conservation Area; Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); area for enhancement and protection of natural beauty and amenity of the countryside; the Broads; a National Park; or World Heritage Site.

4.17 As per saved policies within the Tynedale Local Plan and policies within the emerging Northumberland Local Plan no part of the site, and surrounding area, is situated on Article 2(3) land.

(k) The site is, or forms part of –

(i) A site of special scientific interest;

(ii) A safety hazard area;

(iii) A military explosives storage area;

4.18 As per saved policies within Tynedale Local Plan and policies within the emerging Northumberland Local Plan, the site is not situated on, or does not form part of any of the above designated sites.

(l) The site is, or contains, a scheduled monument; or

4.19 As per Historic England’s website, there are no scheduled monuments within the site boundary.

(m) The building is a listed building.

4.20 None of the agricultural buildings proposed for conversion are listed buildings. The only listed building within Gunnerton is the Church of St Christopher which is listed as Grade II. The church is not within close proximity of the site and will therefore not be adversely impacted by the proposed conversions.

4.21 It has been demonstrated the proposed conversion of existing agricultural outbuildings to 4no. dwellinghouses is appropriate when assessed against limitations set out within Class Q legislation. Prior approval should therefore be granted without delay.

Conditions of Class Q Prior Approval

4.22 Given the assessment of limitations above, attention must turn towards conditions which are applied within Class Q developments. Relevant conditions are set out within paragraph Q.2, with legislation stating:

(1) Where the development proposed is development under Class Q(a) together with development under Class Q(b), development is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to –

(a) Transport and highways impacts on the development,

4.23 A Transport Statement has been submitted in support of this application. It concludes that the accessibility of the site reflects the rural location but is well-served by bus, cycle and walking routes. A review of person injury collision data additionally shows there have been no accidents on the highway network in the vicinity of Gunnerton between 2017-2020. The traffic impact has been assessed as low level and as such, would not result in any significant impacts to the wider highway network.

(b) Noise impacts of the development,

4.24 A noise assessment has been undertaken and submitted in support of this application. The results from appropriate surveys do not indicate there are any issues with regard to noise and the resulting noise exposure. There are no requirements for additional noise amelioration over and above that afforded by typical current building practice.

(c) Contamination risks on the site,

4.25 Land contamination and any risk from historic coal mining has been assessed within the submitted Phase 1 report. The report concludes that the environmental risk arising from the ground conditions, taking into account the sites current status and usage, is low to medium.

(d) Flooding risks on the site,

4.26 The site is situated within Flood Zone 1, and is not at risk from flooding.

(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 use falling within Use Class C3 (dwellinghouse) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order, and

4.27 The context of the site is set within the wider residential context of Gunnerton, there is already an existing farmhouse on site so the proposed dwellings will assimilate well within the immediate and wider context.

(f) The design or external appearance of the building

4.28 The external appearance is not subject to material change, minor repairs to exterior walls are proposed, as well as the additional of windows/roof-lights. Specific details of the external appearance and design of converted dwellings are can be reviewed within the Design and Access Statement and submitted plans.

(g) The provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses

and the provisions of paragraph W (prior approval) of this Part apply in relation to that application.

4.29 Additional roof-lights and windows have been designed to increase the amount of natural light within dwelling spaces.

(2) Where the development proposed is development under Class Q(a) only, development is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to items referred to in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) to (e) and the provisions of paragraph W (prior approval) of this Part apply in relation to that application.

4.30 This prior approval application has been submitted to accord with paragraph Q.2 (2) before development has commenced. This statement and suite of documents forms the submission package

(3) Development under Class Q is permitted subject to the condition that development Class Q(a), and under Class Q(b), if any, must be completed within a period of 3 years starting with the prior approval date.

- 4.31 The applicant is aware of the 3-year completion date and will accord with the commencement of development within three years of decision issue. This can be controlled by a suitably worded condition.

Interpretation of Class Q

- 4.32 Within the 2018 amendment of the General Permitted Development Order, paragraph Q.3 was inserted which states:

Q.3 For the purpose of Class Q –

“larger dwellinghouse” means a dwellinghouse developed under Class Q which has a floor space of more than 100 square metres and no more than 465 square metres having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order;

“smaller dwellinghouse” means a dwellinghouse developed under Class Q which has a floor space of no more than 100 square metres having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order

- 4.33 As stated above, the total number of agricultural structures converted to dwellinghouses total 4no. with 3 ‘larger dwellings’ combining for a measured floorspace of 463m² and a single ‘smaller dwelling’ having a measured floorspace of 93m².

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Hedley Planning Services are submitting an application for prior approval with regard to a Class Q conversion of existing agricultural structures to 4no. dwellings at Demesne Farm, Gunnerton, Northumberland, NE48 4EA.
- 5.2 For the reasons as set out within this statement, the proposed development complies with the limitations and conditions as set out within Paragraph Q.1; Q.2; and Q.3 of Part 3, Schedule 2 for the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) 2018.
- 5.3 It is the view of both the agent and applicant that prior approval should be granted. The suite of documents submitted in support of this application are in accordance with the requirements of the legislation and the application should be valid on receipt.