



DESIGN AND ACCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENTS

FOR

**PROPOSED CONVERSION OF AN EXISTING
AGRICULTURAL BUILDING ON LAND AT
MANOR FARM, PILTOWN, WEST PENNARD,
GLASTONBURY, SOMERSET, BA6 8NQ**

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BY

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Context Analysis

This statement is submitted in support of a prior approval application made by Della Valle Architects Ltd on behalf of Mrs C. Selwood, on land at Manor Farm, Piltown, West Pennard, Glastonbury, Somerset, BA6 8NQ. It considers the proposal in the context of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) order 2015, specifically Class Q - agricultural buildings to dwelling houses.

The site is situated in Piltown, a small village on the A361 - the main connecting road between Shepton Mallet and Glastonbury - and positioned between the villages of West Pennard and Sticklinch, with the larger village of Pilton further to the east.

Directly to the west of the site is the grade II Listed Piltown Chapel/Gladstone House with 'The Old School House' further west, all now private dwellings. To the east are Middle Farm and Piltown Farm, and to the north is open agricultural land separated from the site by the A361. The sloping agricultural land directly to the south and south-west (as shown on the location plan) is generally in the ownership of the applicant and forms part of the north slope of Pennard Hill.

The site consists of a stone-built main farmhouse, with traditional stone barns to the front and side, and a variety of open and enclosed metal and timber-framed barns to the rear, all accessed from a central driveway/track.



Image 1: Aerial view of the existing site and surrounding area

The proposal is for the conversion of the existing steel framed agricultural barn positioned to the middle of the site into a three-bedroom dwelling. Please refer to the appended drawings submitted with this application for further information.

Class Q – agricultural buildings to dwelling houses

Permitted development

Q. 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 paragraph (a) to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Schedule.

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;

The existing building is an agricultural barn associated with Manor Farm and has been solely used for the purposes of agriculture. The exact time the building was erected cannot be precisely confirmed although its presence can be seen on a 2006 aerial image on the Somerset HER website which demonstrates the building was erected prior to 2013. Please see image 2 below.



Image 2: 2006 aerial view of the existing site and surrounding area

The site has recently been purchased by the applicant, who is the new owner of the land. The applicant however has no use for the barn which will become redundant, and so is therefore considered to be suitable for conversion into a dwelling as it is able to be separated from both the existing residence and former farm.

(b) in the 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 floor space 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 Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order exceeds 465 square metres;]

The cumulative floor space of the existing agricultural building changing use under Class Q is 180 sq.m.

(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;

Please refer to Q.1 part (b)

(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 floor space 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;

Please refer to Q.1 part (b)

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

The site does not form part of an agricultural tenancy.

(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;

Please refer to Q.1 part e)

(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 2023, during the period which is 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins;

Please refer to Q.1 part (a)

(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;

The proposed dwelling as shown on the submitted plans is contained entirely within the footprint and shell of the existing structure.

(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):

As confirmed within the structural report produced by Beveridge Chartered Structural Engineers, they state “...the existing primary structure is adequate to support the loads resulting from the external (wall and roof) works associated with the conversion without significant or substantial improvement or repair.” It also confirms that “The concrete floor slab can be reasonably assumed to be adequate to support the loads associated with new internal load-bearing and non-load-bearing timber frame walls...”

The structural engineer notes that “...on the assumption that external finishes are lightweight ... the structure comprises all the primary and secondary elements required to adequately transfer vertical and lateral loads to ground” which has directly informed the decision to specify a lightweight zinc standing seam roof to replace the existing sheet roof finish, as well as a timber boarding finish to the walls.

They conclude by stating that “The barn appears to be in a suitable condition to be converted into habitable accommodation” demonstrating there would be no significant structural works required to convert the building.

To make the space habitable, the retained existing concrete slab is to be insulated over, and the walls and roof lined with insulated plasterboard. Lightweight timber stud walls are proposed internally to subdivide the space. None of these works will need significant structural modifications to implement.

The recommendations and conclusions from the structural report have been fully considered to inform and enable suitable conversion of the barn by working with the existing structure. The scheme has therefore been designed to enable the conversion limiting the required works, so it accords with the stipulated sub-headings under Q.1 part (h) (i)(i) and (ii).

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

The site is not within any of the following;

- A Conservation Area
- An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- An area specified by the Secretary of State for the purposes of section 41(3) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (enhancement and protection of the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside)(41)
- The Broads
- A National Park
- A World Heritage Site

Therefore, the site is not 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;

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

(m) the building is a listed building.

The site is not, nor does it form a part of, an SSSI, a safety hazard area or a military explosives storage area, contains a scheduled monument or is a listed building.

Conditions

Q.2—(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 of the development,

(b) noise impacts of the development,

(c) contamination risks on the site,

(d) flooding risks on the site,

(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 Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order...

(f) the design or external appearance of the building, and

(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.

(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 the items referred to in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) to (e) and (g), and the provisions of paragraph W (prior approval) of this Part apply in relation to that application.

(3) Development under Class Q is permitted subject to the condition that development under 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.

These points are addressed below.

a) Transport and highways impact of the development

The barn is to be accessed via the existing driveway leading from the A361, which has a 40mph speed limit along this section of road. The entrance to the driveway is set back a minimum of 5m from the road's edge and is surfaced with concrete and serves as the main entrance to the entire farm complex. To each side of the entrance is a stone wall set at 0.9m high at the closest point along the road, with a grass verge separating the wall from the road edge which ensures there is adequate visibility.

This access currently serves the existing farmhouse and other buildings within the site and therefore the visibility onto the main road in both directions should be considered sufficient.

As this proposal is considered a small-scale development, Somerset County Council Highways recommend that this type of development be considered against the 'Standing Advice' document. In accordance with the Somerset Parking Strategy for Zone C (considered applicable for the site), 3-bedroom units should provide 3 car spaces per dwelling. Each car parking space should measure a minimum of 2.4m x 4.8m. It can be seen from the proposed drawings the proposed dwelling therefore has sufficient designated off-street parking with the ability to enter and leave the site in a forward gear.

Emergency vehicles and refuse vehicles will have access to the dwelling via the adjacent main road.

Bicycle storage - The dwelling will have sufficient space to accommodate '1 cycle per bedroom', in accordance with Highway requirements.

An electric, minimum 32-amp, vehicle charging point is also proposed to be located adjacent to the parking spaces.

b) Noise impacts of the development

The nearest road to the barn is the A361 which is an A-road serving traffic between Shepton and Glastonbury, subject to a 40mph limit in this area. The road is positioned over 50m away from this building which will minimise the impact caused by any traffic noise.

The proposed conversion of the barn itself incorporates new double-glazed windows and doors, as well as the installation of internal insulation which will further reduce the impact of any noise.

In a wider context, the site is positioned in an agricultural setting with fields to the side and rear, and therefore some noise associated with this type of land usage could be expected. This relationship between dwellings and agriculture is present throughout much of the county and adjacent villages and is not considered to be an undesirable consequence of rural living.

The proposed use of the building as a dwelling will produce minimal noise and therefore will have negligible impact on any nearby dwellings.

c) Contamination risks on the site

Most recently the barn was used for the storage of general agricultural machinery and equipment and so it is not considered that there would be land contamination issues associated with this use. There are no other known contamination risks on the site.

d) Flood Risk Assessment

The site is not within an area at risk of flooding and has no history of flooding. The site is not in flood zone 2 or 3 of the Environment Agency's Flood Map.

e) Location/Siting

The location of the existing building lies within the curtilage of Manor Farm, which is a farm complex positioned on a large sloping site. The driveway entrance is on the northern boundary at the lowest part of the site and runs up the site parallel to the eastern boundary. The lower part of the site is approximately 30m wide adjacent to the entrance and widens to over 70m further up. The main farmhouse is positioned towards the north of site, near to the road, with a separate smaller dwelling directly positioned to the other side of the driveway to the west.

The barn proposed to be converted is positioned to the middle of the overall site, and adjacent to the western boundary. Directly to the east of the barn is a gravelled turning area and driveway which leads to the main road at the bottom of the site. To the north and west is an overgrown area following the site boundary. Immediately to the south is a levelled-off area of hardstanding and overgrowth, which will become the amenity area for the dwelling, and a variety of more modern dilapidated barns further up the hill.

The position of the barn means it can easily be separated off from the main farmhouse complex with the proposals showing a 4.5m deep garden to the south forming the amenity space to the converted barn, with three designated parking spaces to the east adjacent to the driveway. This will allow the converted barn to operate independently from the main farmhouse.

f) Design/External Appearance

The proposed prior approval application aims to convert the existing steel-framed agricultural building into a single storey, three-bedroom dwelling following the demolition of the poor-quality rear lean-to structure. The proposal also makes an allowance for associated car parking and turning, with provisions also made for bicycle and domestic waste storage.

The total site area includes the access, parking, turning and amenity space. To confirm, the proposed amenity space is of a comparable footprint to the proposed converted building footprint.



Image 3: East elevation of barn viewed from parking/turning area.

As guided by the structural report, the existing floor, external wall structure, and roof structure of the building are all proposed to be retained and repaired as necessary. The existing external high-level timber boarding will be replaced with full height timber boarding, and the roof finish is to be replaced with a lightweight zinc standing seam roof finish to maintain the agricultural character and appearance of the area. The walls and roof are to be insulated internally using a lightweight timber frame contained within the existing structure.



Image 4: South and West elevations of barn viewed from corner of garden.

The landscaping of the site will take the simple form of a domestic garden enclosure by the erection of 0.9m high timber fence to the south and west boundaries, and the planting of native groundcover plants bordering the site. The garden will be laid to lawn with an element of hard landscaping to provide a patio/pathway around the side of the building.

Following the removal of the existing dilapidated lean-to structure to the west of the barn (image 5), this area will form a new patio/terrace accessed directly from the new kitchen/breakfast area. This will be partly bounded by a retaining wall, with a set of steps proposed to access the lower northern side of the building. Native planting is also proposed to the side of the terrace to blend the change in levels.



Image 5: Dilapidated lean-to structure to West of barn.

g) Natural Light

The layout of the dwelling has been designed to enable all rooms to benefit from sufficient natural light. New full height glazed units are proposed to the main open plan living space to ensure this area is well lit. These will incorporate bifold doors to the breakfast and dining area to access the external patio areas, with fixed glazing proposed to the lounge.

The existing window openings to the north elevation (image 6) that serve the bedrooms are to be replaced with modern double-glazed units. Additional windows are proposed to the east and west elevations to serve the proposed utility and shower rooms and main bedroom.

The combination of large and small windows will help retain the character and appearance of the existing agricultural building.



Image 6: Internal view of one of the existing windows to north elevation.

Renewable Energy and Sustainability

The site layout proposed is dictated directly by the existing built form of the site, the surrounding land, parking requirements and position of the existing openings. The orientation and siting of the rooms within the dwelling has been designed to ensure acceptable daylight levels are achieved. These factors have all contributed to the physical layout of the proposal.

The conversion of this building is intended to take into account modern building techniques and maximise their thermal efficiency. Walls, floors, and roofs will be highly insulated to meet and exceed the current building regulations standards.

In supporting the use of energy efficient materials, a highly efficient boiler and heating system will be installed in the proposed dwelling. Windows will be highly efficient, draught free double-glazed units.

Water Usage Provisions: -The dwelling is designed to use no more than 120 litres of water per person per day. This will be achieved by fitting:

- Water butts to collect rainwater for garden watering, car washing etc.
- 6/4 Dual flush WC's.
- Flow reducing / aerated taps throughout.
- 6-9 litres per minute shower.
- 18 litre maximum volume dishwasher.
- 60 litre maximum volume washing machine.

Waste Management and Other Requirements:

- Surface water management using soakaways and areas of porous surfacing.
- Building materials will meet at least a 'D' rating in the BRE's Green Guide where practicable.
- Adequate space for waste storage during the buildings' use, and the provision of storage to fully utilise recycling capacity outside the dwellings' provided by the Local Authority.
- Provision of clothes drying space - external, to minimise the use of a tumble dryer.
- 100% energy efficient lights and fittings to all rooms (including external).
- Prevention of all water run-off from the site into the storm drains in accordance with Somerset County Council Policy.
- Ability to achieve Secured by Design standards.

Foul Sewage Statement

The site is connected to the main foul sewer that is positioned in the A361, and the barn conversion will share this connection.

Secure by Design Principles

Secure by Design principles have been adopted to reduce the likelihood of a security breach. These include a single point of access / entrance (existing), and solid lockable perimeter gates where applicable.

Burglar security lighting with fittings dedicated to luminaries of less than 150w (with movement detection – (PIR) and daylight cut-off), photo-electric cell and passive infrared detector operated lights will be fitted adjacent to front doors. Any other security lighting would have dedicated CFL fittings and have a dawn to dusk sensor or time control.

Windows and doors will be in full compliance with Secure by Design, with ground floor and fire escape windows to be tested to BS 7950 : 1997. SDS.

Conclusions

Careful thought has been given to the design and layout of this prior approval application which fully satisfies and complies with the requirements of Class Q as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) order 2015. The proposal represents a development which will utilise and maximise the potential of the site, with a design that minimises its overall impact on the surrounding area.

The shell of the existing structure will entirely contain the works for the proposed dwelling, and the report and recommendations set out by Beveridge Chartered Structural Engineers demonstrate it is structurally suitable for conversion.

The floor area is also over the minimum required area of 86 sq.m. as specified in the Nationally Described Space Standards for a 3-bed 5-person dwelling, and the windows proposed to all elevations ensure that there is adequate light to the habitable rooms.

Materials and styles have all been chosen to complement the site, retaining the character of the existing setting and the wider local vernacular.

It is therefore considered that the proposed scheme fully complies with the parameters set out in Class Q, and prior approval should be allowed.