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# DESIGN, ACCESS AND PLANNING STATEMENT

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**Full planning consent**

**For Change Of Use of existing agricultural barn and associated land**

**to**

**B8 Storage**

**at**

**Sopley Barns,**

**Derritt Lane,**

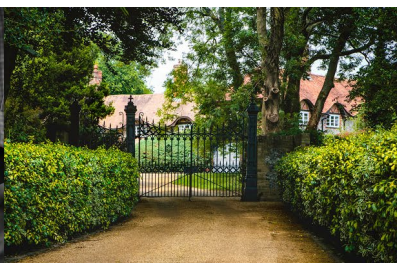
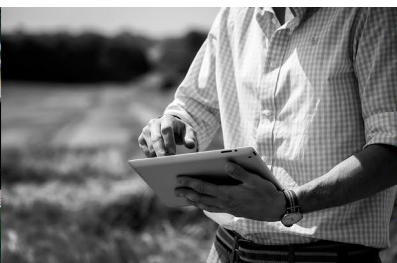
**Sopley,**

**Hampshire,**

**BH23 8AX**

**Ref: 11057**

**July 2023**



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## 1.0 Introduction and Proposal

- 1.1 The retrospective application seeks full planning consent for a change of use of an existing agricultural barn and associated land to be used for B8 Storage.
- 1.2 In 2014, the farm business found that the agricultural barn was surplus to requirement and chose to diversify the use of the site to generate an alternative source of income which complies with the National Planning Policy Framework, which promotes the need to deliver growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprises in rural areas. Since diversifying, the site has been rented out to a third party, providing general storage for boats and cars.
- 1.3 Over the last nine years, the business renting the site from the farm has slowly adapted the site to suit their requirements adding storage containers around the main agricultural building, which this application seeks to formalise.
- 1.4 The site is used for long-term storage, and therefore, the site is not heavily used.
- 1.5 The Technical Note from the Highways Consultant states that the use generates very few daily traffic movements, which are indeterminable to surrounding residents and result in no adverse impact on highway safety. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable from a highway point of view.
- 1.6 The drawings in support of this application are: -
  - 11057-BCM-101 – Location Plan
  - 11057-BCM-102 – Site Plan
  - 11057-BCM-103 – Ground and Floor Plans
  - 11057-BCM-201 – Site Elevations

## 2.0 Site Surroundings

- 2.1 The building is situated on the eastern outskirts of Sopley village, accessed off Derritt Lane. As shown below in Figure 1.

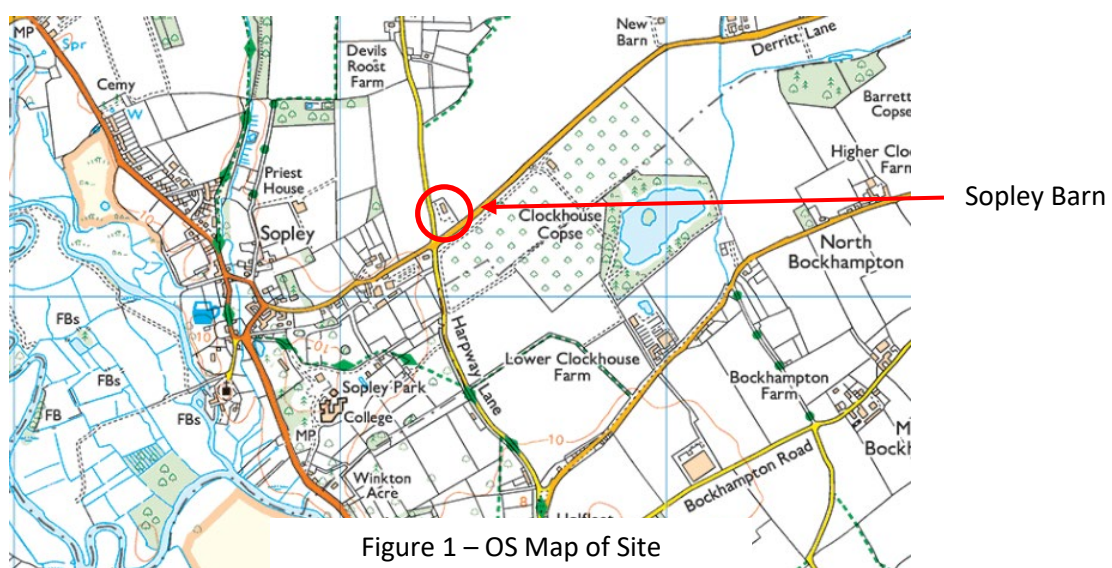


Figure 1 – OS Map of Site

- 2.2 The land is located within The New Forest District Council area and within the parish of Sopley Council, and within the Green Belt area.
- 2.3 The site is predominantly hard standing, with trees along its southern boundary screening it from Derritt Road and buildings along the road. A 1.8m hedge is also along the western boundary bordering Harpway Lane. It uses an existing access entrance off Derritt Lane on its southern boundary, shown on the Location Plan (11057-BCM-101).

### 3.0 Planning Policy

#### 3.1 National Policy

- 3.1.1 Paragraph 81 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should help to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, considering both local business needs and wider development opportunities. Additionally, it states that decisions should enable:

*“a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*

*b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;”*

#### Response

The retrospective planning application will formalise and allow the existing farm business to diversify and allow the business which is currently occupying the site to help continue to support the local economy in a lawful manner.

#### 3.2 Core Policy

- 3.2.1 Policy CS21 Rural economy

*“The strategy for the rural economy is to:*

*(a) encourage agricultural, horticultural and forestry enterprises and farm diversification projects where this would be consistent with maintaining and enhancing the environment, and contribute to local distinctiveness;*

*(d) support local business development through the conversion of existing buildings, with particular encouragement of enterprises that have little adverse environmental impacts (e.g. design/research activities);*

#### Response

The retrospective application for the change of use of an agricultural building and associated land to B8 Storage will support the diversification of the local farming business and allow the existing business which rents the site to continue to contribute to the local economy. The business which rents the site is a successful long-standing business which provides a demanded service to the local area. The site also offers the possibility of future employment, further contributing to the local rural economy.

Additionally, it has been proved below that the environment and landscape will have little impact due to the proposal.

### 3.3 **Local Policy**

The New Forest District Council: Local Plan 2016-2036 addresses local policies. This statement has responded to them accordingly below.

#### 3.1.1 Policy 'STR1: Achieving sustainable development' states the following: -

*"All new development will be expected to make a positive social, economic and environmental contribution to community and business life in the Plan Area by:*

*Meeting most development needs within settlement boundaries, in a manner that is appropriate for and proportionate to the nature and size of the settlement, and where there is or will be sufficient supporting infrastructure and services;*

*ii. Taking a context and landscape-led approach to the siting and design of development to deliver high quality design that maintains local distinctiveness, creates high quality new landscapes and townscapes, safeguards the Green Belt and AONB, sustains and enhances the heritage, scenic and amenity value of the Plan Area, and has appropriate regard to and the purposes of the adjoining New Forest National Park;*

#### Response

The proposal for the change will allow for positive economic growth for the existing farming business by allowing them to diversify to generate an alternative source of income. Additionally, it will allow the existing business which is currently using the site to continue to make a positive economic contribution to the local area, as already discussed in 3.2.1 of this statement.

Even though the site is outside the settlement boundary of Sopley, the existing business, which has rented the site for over nine years, has found that there is sufficient supporting infrastructure and services and the demand from the local area for the business to continue to be successful.

Although the application is being made retrospectively, nine years after the unlawful change of use, the existing design of the site maintains its agricultural aesthetic and has minimal impact on the landscape and Green Belt, which is further supported by the surrounding hedges and trees. In addition, the site is outside the New Forest National Park and will therefore not affect the important landscape character of The New Forest Park.

#### 3.1.2 Policy 'STR6: Sustainable economic growth' states the following: -

*"The Council strategy for sustainable economic growth is to maintain and enable a vibrant and prosperous local economy offering a diverse range of local employment opportunities, where existing businesses continue to thrive and new businesses have sufficient and suitable opportunities to form and grow in appropriate locations. This will be achieved by:*

*i. The provision of sufficient land to meet the identified need for 126,000sqm of employment floorspace. This will comprise of:*

*vi. Supporting a sustainable rural economy including low environmental impact businesses and tourism;*

Response

The retrospective planning application will allow for an existing farm business to diversify and allow the existing business to continue to support the local economy as stated in 3.1.1 of this statement. Although the existing business renting the site does not currently have any employees, the approval of this application will give more business security and provide scope for employment.

The site has proved over the last nine years that it is located in an appropriate location for the business to form, grow and continue to be a successful business offering a demanded service to the local area.

The site covers 7,255m<sup>2</sup>, the steel portal frame building footprint is 374m<sup>2</sup>, and the containers make up 316 m<sup>2</sup>. The total building footprint takes up 9.5% of the site, and, therefore, it is felt that the building is proportional to the size of the site and continues to maintain an agricultural aesthetic.

3.1.3 Policy 'ENV2: The South West Hampshire Green Belt' states the following: -

*"The openness and permanence of the South West Hampshire Green Belt will be preserved with particular regard to its stated purposes and those of national policy for the Green Belt.*

*Development proposals in the Green Belt will be determined in accordance with national planning policy."*

The National Planning Policy Framework states:

*"138. Green Belt serves 5 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 special character of historic towns; and*

*(e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

.....

*150. Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:*

*(d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;"*

Response

The site is located within the South West Hampshire Green Belt area. The Greenbelt area should be accepted as long as the nature of the Greenbelt area, such as the open character of the area, is not adversely affected. As the proposal is for a change of use to an agricultural building which already exists within the Green Belt area, the change of use will not change the openness.

Furthermore, the change of use proposal will not contradict or adversely affect a) to e) of 138. of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Additionally, the National Planning Policy Framework “150. d)” states that the reuse of existing buildings which are sited within the Green Belt area does not conflict with the Green Belt Policies.

3.1.4 Policy ‘ENV3: Design quality and local distinctiveness’ states the following: -

*“All development should achieve high quality design that contributes positively to local distinctiveness, quality of life and enhances the character and identity of the locality by creating buildings, streets, places and spaces”*

Response

The low-impact reuse of the existing building and associated land ensure that the existing quality and land distinctions are not altered from the present lawful form and use of the site and building.

3.1.5 Policy ‘ENV4: Landscape character and quality’ states the following: -

*“Where development is proposed there is a requirement to retain and/or enhance the following landscape features and characteristics through sensitive design, mitigation and enhancement measures, to successfully integrate new development into the local landscape context:*

*ii. Features that screen existing development that would otherwise have an unacceptable visual impact;*

*iii. Existing or potential wildlife corridors, footpath connections and other green links that do, or could, connect the site to form part of an integrated green infrastructure network;*

*iv. The landscape setting of the settlement and the transition between the settlement fringe and open countryside or coast;*

*v. Important or locally distinctive views, topographical features and skylines; and*

*vi. Areas of tranquillity and areas of intrinsically dark skies.”*

Response

The retrospective proposal does not change the site's impact from the existing lawful use of the site, which has not impacted landscape features such as existing trees and hedgerows. These features assist in containing any impact of the proposal and mitigating any adverse impact on the tranquillity of the area.

The proposal is sensitive to the landscape it sits within due to the heavy screening along the southern and western boundaries from existing trees and hedges, which is further discussed within “Context, Setting and Landscape Interactions” section of this statement.

There are no topographical features, skylines, areas of tranquillity or intrinsically dark skies that will be affected due to the proposal as the building and associated land already exist.

No existing wildlife corridors, footpath connections or other green links will be affected due to the proposal, which forms the green infrastructure network.

No important or locally distinctive views, topographical features and skylines will be affected due to the proposed change of use as it does not seek permission for any additional development at the site and due to the existing vegetation surrounding the site, none of the above will be adversely impacted.

The proposal will have minimal impact on intrinsically dark skies as the building is proposed to be used for B8 Storage and will only be used and accessed within typical working hours and does not seek permission for any external lighting.

#### **4.0 Design and Layout**

- 4.1 As previously stated, the application seeks full planning consent for the use of the existing main building and various containers around the site as general B8 Storage from an agricultural building and associated land. The site is made up of a steel portal frame building and an element of external storage.
- 4.2 The site is currently occupied by a car and boat storage business storing cars and boats internally and externally.
- 4.3 Due to the above, the design and layout have already been defined by the existing building and structures on the site, which have previously been in lawful agricultural use.

#### **5.0 Access and Highways**

- 5.1 Due to the nature of the application being B8 Storage, a report has been prepared by Nick Culhane, Highway Consultant. The report concludes the following: -
  - The site is served by an existing access where visibility can be provided in accordance with the HCC document TG3, and commensurate with the posted 40mph speed limit.
  - Using TRICS Data, it has been demonstrated that the use generates very few daily traffic movements which are indeterminable to surrounding residents and result in no adverse impact to highway safety.
  - The development is therefore considered to be acceptable from a highway point of view.



## 6.0 Context, Setting and Landscape Interactions

- 6.1 The site is located east of Sopley. It has existing access in the direction of Derritt Lane. The site compromises a steel portal frame building and multiple storage containers. The surrounding area is rural in character, and the site shares a boundary with an agricultural field on its eastern and northern boundaries.
- 6.2 The key consideration when reviewing the landscape interactions is the impact of the existing buildings and associated land applying for planning permission. The site was originally used for agriculture; therefore, the agricultural building and associated land have an agricultural appearance and sit naturally within the landscape shown below in Figure 2, a photograph taken from Google Street View. The photograph shows the view from the north, looking south down Harpway Lane. The site has been used unlawfully for nine years and, in that time, has shown not to have a negative impact on the rural character of the landscape, as shown in the photograph dated May 2021.



Figure 2 – Photograph facing south down Harpway Lane

- 6.3 Along Derritt Lane, as shown below in Figure 3. The photograph is taken facing west, showing the site access and the densely populated boundary line with trees and hedging, which screens the site, mitigating any adverse impact the site has on the street scene and neighbouring areas.



Figure 3 - Photograph facing west down Derritt Lane

6.4 The proposed retrospective change of use application does not affect the agricultural aesthetic of the site and or landscape features, as shown above in Figures 2 and 3. Existing mature hedgerows and trees will not be affected or lost as part of this application.

6.5 Ecology

An ecological survey is not required as the application seeks retrospective approval for an existing use without any changes.

6.6 Noise Impact

The site is being rented on a long-term basis as long-term storage for boat and car storage. Therefore, the site traffic movements will be minimal and have a low noise impact on their surroundings. The closest neighbouring buildings are over 100m away; therefore, it is felt that any noise impact will be negligible and will be no greater than the current lawful use on neighbouring buildings.

**7.0 Conclusion**

7.1 The application seeks retrospective full planning consent for Sopley Barns to be used as B8 Storage.

7.2 The existing buildings have a low visual impact due to the existing hedges and trees on its southern boundary, screening it from its nearest neighbouring property.

7.3 The site's current use as general storage retains its original /lawful agricultural form and feel, ensuring it is suitably contained within the area's surrounding rural landscape and character.

- 7.4 When balancing all the material considerations of this retrospective application, it is felt that the proposal is compliant, has no obvious constraints that would affect the deliverability and should be granted approval.

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