



de Courcy
town planning consultants

Planning Statement

**The Barns, Aldermoor
Farm, Reading Road,
Heckfield RG27 0LB**

Prepared For
Mrs J Selfe

1207
September 2023

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	THE SITE AND PROPOSAL	2
3	RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY	6
4	RELEVANT POLICY CONSIDERATIONS	7
5	CONCLUSIONS	11

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted on behalf of Mrs Selfe, the owner of The Barns at Aldermoor Farm, to provide background information to assist the Council in its consideration of the proposals for the site.
- 1.2 The application seeks retrospective planning permission to retain a recently completed office building at Aldermoor Farm and use of former office building as a beauty studio.
- 1.3 The following plans are submitted with the application:
- Site location plan
 - Block plan GP/02/23
 - Existing plans and elevations GP/01/23

2 THE SITE AND PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The site lies in open countryside and accessed from the B3011 Reading Road via an access track. The site comprises a number of former agricultural barns now converted to a dwelling and offices. The access road is also a public footpath.
- 2.2 The access road serves a dwelling which is sited about 100 metres to the east of the application site. To the west of the site are further barns and equestrian business which are served by the same access road.



Photo.1 – Front elevations of former office space in the foreground and new office building beyond

- 2.3 To the west side of the yard are two office buildings (buildings B and C). The smaller office building (building B) was used until recently by the applicant's business and has stood on the site since 2015. This building is now used as a beauty studio by the applicant's daughter who has been operating her beauty business from the applicant's house for 1.5 years.



Figure.1 – Site layout showing the buildings A, B and C

- 2.4 The larger office building (building C) has recently been completed and occupied by staff employed by the applicant’s business who have moved from the adjacent smaller office. The new building provides improved space/working environment for staff employed in the existing business on the site.
- 2.5 Parking for the house and the businesses is mainly with the yard area, although there is some parking to the west of the recently completed office building.
- 2.6 The application seeks to retain office building C and use building B as a beauty studio.



Photo.2 – Rear elevations of new and old office buildings



Photo.3 – Parking area in yard and dwelling



Photos.3 and 4 - Interior of beauty studio (building B)



3 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The following planning history is relevant to the proposal:

Reference	Description	Decision
06/00743/COU	Retrospective change of use of existing buildings to B1 offices and B8 storage	Approved 2006
15/01606/PRIOR	Prior Notification under Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) of Proposed Change of use from office under Class B1(a) to dwelling under Class C3	Prior approval not required 2015
21/02124/PREAPP	Pre-application submission relating to new outbuilding adjacent to existing outbuilding for operation of a beauty treatment business	Advice given December 2021

3.2 Planning permission was initially granted for the use of the building to the east of the office building subject to this application as offices (06/00743/COU). The prior approval application confirmed the conversion of this office to residential use. The residential use was commenced and is lived in by the applicant.

3.3 The pre-application feedback (21/02124/PREAPP) confirmed that the site of the proposed building (now building C) could be regarded as previously developed land and therefore policy ED1 of the Hart Local Plan is complied with. The building would also stand in the context of a range of other buildings spread across the site. In view of these factors, the advice indicated that the principle of a new building on the site could be acceptable.

3.4 Buildings B on the site have been completed for in excess of 4 years and are therefore deemed to be lawful.

4 RELEVANT POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the development plan comprises the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032 (HLP32) and the saved policies of the Hart Local Plan 1996-2006.

4.2 The policies of the development plan relevant to the consideration of this application are as follows:

HLP32

SD1 Sustainable Development

SS1 Spatial Strategy and Distribution of Growth

ED1 New Employment

NBE1 Development in the Countryside

NBE7

NBE9 Design

INF3 Transport

Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006 - Saved Policies

GEN1 - General Policy for Development

4.3 Also, material to the consideration of the application are paragraphs 81 and 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 81 requires that planning decisions help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Paragraph 84 relates specifically to rural employment and requires that planning decisions enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new building.

4.4 Policy ED1 of the HLP32 supports employment proposals which are on previously developed land or where an overriding need for the development is demonstrated. Policy

ED3 relates specifically to the rural economy and, inter alia, supports the continuing sustainability or expansion of a business.

- 4.5 The recently completed building C is used in relation to the applicant's established business which operates from the site and is required to provide an improved working environment for the existing staff.
- 4.6 This new office building is used by staff who previously worked in the adjoining smaller office building B. Working conditions in the smaller office were poor due to the limited space available and poor insulation of the building. This former office space lacked meeting or break out space.



Photo.4 – Internal cramped former working space in building B

- 4.7 The applicant's business Tigerlike is an events company which administers and delivers corporate events and VIP concierge services globally. The business has been established for in excess of 25 years and employs 7 staff and the applicant, who owns the business,

lives in the adjacent dwelling. The business uses local services and has been operating from the site since 1996.

- 4.8 The business does not intend to increase the number of staff employed on the site in the short term, although the increased floor space would allow for some modest growth in the future. The business hours are 9.30 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Friday with occasional working for one or two staff at weekends.



Photo.5 – New office space in building C

- 4.9 The proposal meets the requirement of policy ED3 as it will ensure the continued sustainability of the business operating from the building. The proposal is also supported by national policy set out in the NPPF. It also satisfies policy ED1 in that there is an overriding need for the development in this location to improve working conditions and to give the business flexibility in the future. This conclusion is supported by the pre-application response given by the Council in December 2021.

- 4.10 The same applies to the use of building B by the applicant's daughter who has since qualifying and leaving college, been operating her own beauty business from the applicant's home. This business has up to four clients a day visiting the site (2 hour booking slots). The number of visitors to the site has not changed and there are no plans to intensify/expand the use. Moving the business from the home to building B has improved the working environment and experience of customers. It has also allowed a wider range of treatments to be offered to clients. The applicant's daughter's business is successful and the new studio space will allow her business to thrive.
- 4.11 Saved policy GEN1 of the Hart Local Plan seeks to ensure that new development is well-designed and in keeping with the local area. The new building C has a functional appearance which is in keeping with the existing timber clad buildings on the site and on the adjacent land.
- 4.12 Policy GEN1 also seeks to ensure that access arrangements for new development has suitable access and parking. In this case, the proposals would not lead to a material change in the number of vehicles entering and leaving the site. There is also ample parking on site for the existing dwelling, office and beauty studio.
- 4.13 In terms of energy, the new building is more energy efficient than the old office space and is more water efficient. This represents a significant gain compared to the former office building. The new building would therefore achieve the objective of policy NBE7 and NBE9 of the HLP32.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The proposals are supported by policy which seek to encourage rural enterprises and would allow the established business on the site to be sustainable.
- 5.2 The new office building sits within a group of established barns and would be of similar appearance. This building is therefore in keeping and does not intrude into the countryside.
- 5.3 Both the use new office building and the beauty studio building are already established on the site.
- 5.4 In view of the above, it is considered that the proposals comply with the requirements of the development plan and national policy set out in the NPPF.