

Planning Statement

**Conversion of an Agricultural Barn to 1x
Residential Dwelling with an Ancillary Annexe**

In respect of:

Barn at Furnace Barns, Furnace Lane, Newent, Gloucestershire, GL18 1DD

By

McLoughlin Planning Ltd (HB/0768)

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McLOUGHLIN
PLANNING



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. McLoughlin Planning has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Martin (“The Applicant”) to prepare and submit a planning application for the conversion and change of use of an agricultural barn to provide one new residential dwelling, with an ancillary annexe.
- 1.2. The purpose of this Planning Statement is to demonstrate that the proposed development complies with the relevant local and national policies and the reasons why planning permission should be granted.
- 1.3. In the making of this case for the proposed development and for ease of reference, this Planning Statement is structured as follows:
 - Section 2 - Site Description and Planning History
 - Section 3 – The Proposal
 - Section 4 – Planning Policies
 - Section 5 – Planning Assessment
 - Section 6 – Material Considerations
 - Section 7 – Conclusion
- 1.4. In addition to this planning statement, this planning application is supported by the following plans and documents:
 - Supporting Plans and Images produced by RRA Architects
 - Heritage Statement by Robinson Wild Consulting
 - Ecological Impact Assessment by Arbor Vitae Environment Ltd
- 1.5. In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF, the applicant would like to work proactively with Forest of Dean District Council (hereby referred to as the “LPA”) to use the full range of planning tools available to reach a positive conclusion.

2.0 The Site, Designations and Planning History

Site Description

- 2.1. The application site is an agricultural barn located on the northern edge of Newent. The site can be accessed by Furnace Lane, off the B4215 Bridge Street.
- 2.2. The existing barn is a well-maintained structure consisting of a mix of block work, steel framing and timber construction. The barn is enclosed on all sides, with some ventilation openings in the timber cladding on the side elevations. The site benefits from an established access point and hardstanding to the north, with proposed curtilage (of equal size to the proposed barn conversion) located to the south and west.
- 2.3. The barn is sited on an established concrete platform, keeping the structure level, despite topographical changes in the landscape to the west and north. Whilst the barn was use for agriculture, it is presently a disused barn.

Site Designations

- 2.4. Forest of Dean District Council's planning proposals map advises that the barn lies in the open countryside. There are no further environmental or heritage designations.
- 2.5. The Environment Agency's flood risk map advises that the barn lies in Flood Zone 1 (low risk).

Planning History

- 2.6. The barn's planning history has been provided in the table below for ease of reference:

Year	Reference	Description	Decision
June 2023	P0532/23/PQ3PA	Prior approval for the change of use of an agricultural barn to 2 residential dwellings and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion.	Approve
January 2023	P1643/22/PQ3PA	Prior approval for the proposed change of use of agricultural building to 2no. dwellinghouses	Refuse

		(Class C3) and associated operational development.	
October 2022	P1212/22/PQ3PA	Prior approval for the proposed change of use to agricultural building to 2no. dwellinghouses (Class C3) and associated operational development.	Refuse
June 2022	P0373/22/PQ3PA	Prior notification for the conversion of an agricultural building to 2 residential dwellings with associated building operations.	Refuse

- 2.7. It is acknowledged that the applicant has recently gained approval to secure Class Q prior consent from the Council. The Class Q consent has allowed for two dwellings – one larger, one smaller.

3.0 The Proposal

- 3.1. The proposal seeks to convert an existing steel framed agricultural barn into one residential dwelling, with an ancillary annexe.
- 3.2. The existing barn is a well-maintained structure consisting of a mix block work, steel framing and timber construction. The barn is enclosed on all sides, with some ventilation openings in the timber cladding on the site elevations. The site benefits from an established access point and hardstanding to north, with proposed enlarged curtilage (which includes a walled garden).
- 3.3. The barn is sited on an established concrete platform, keeping the structure level, despite topographical changes in the landscape to the west and north. Whilst the barn was use for agriculture, it is presently a disused barn.

Design Approach

- 3.4. The proposals have been designed to ensure that the development is sympathetic to its surroundings, as well as keeping exterior changes to a minimum to ensure compliance with national and local policy.
- 3.5. The barn will be enclosed on all sides with the northern and southern elevations containing barn doors as openings. To the west there is an external terrace area, providing a 'recessed courtyard'. This will be incorporated into the residential design for outdoor amenity space.
- 3.6. The materials to be used are reclaimed brick, oak framing, powder coated aluminium fenestration, red sandstone and vertical timber cladding; this is in keeping with the surrounding area and reflecting commonly used agricultural materials found on barns across the District. Therefore, the conversion will continue to respect the building and surrounding contexts previous land use.
- 3.7. With regards to insulation, the barn will benefit from the use of a 'skin' meaning that minimal external alterations will take place in order to keep the converted barn insulated. There are no major external changes that would be out of keeping with surrounding barns. The barn will be divided into two units, a larger main dwelling, and an adjoining smaller ancillary annexe.

- 3.8. The proposed development area will provide space for a landscaped garden area to be created with beehives, a walled garden, and a lean-to greenhouse. As well, the development would provide space for four parking spaces. Cycle storage will also be provided.

4.0 Planning Policies

- 4.1. As set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2 of the national Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), an application for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2. In this instance, the development plan comprises of the Forest of Dean Core Strategy (2012), the Allocations Plan (2018) and any supplementary guidance. In terms of material considerations, both the NPPF and the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are material in the determination of the planning application.
- 4.3. It is noted that the Forest of Dean are in the process of preparing a new Local Plan. Following feedback received from the Issues and Options and Preferred Options Consultation, a second Preferred Option Strategy has been developed and consulted on. The consultation ran between August 2022 and October 2022. The next formal stage will be to seek guidance for the draft Local Plan and confirm its onward strategy – this is likely to take place at a Full Council meeting.
- 4.4. For the purposes of determining this planning proposal, it is considered that the following policies are relevant:

Core Strategy (2012)

- CSP.1 Design and Environmental Protection
- CSP.2 Climate Change
- CSP.4 Development at Settlements
- CPS.5 Housing
- CSP.16 Development Proposals in Villages

Allocations Plan (2018)

- AP1 Sustainable Development
- AP4 Design of Development
- AP7: Biodiversity
- AP8: Green Infrastructure

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- Chapter 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Chapter 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes
- Chapter 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Chapter 11 – Making Effective Use of Land
- Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed Places
- Chapter 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change
- Chapter 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
- Chapter 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

5.0 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 5.1. The proposal site is located within a cluster of existing dwellings within the open countryside, which can be accessed by a private road that feeds into Furnace Road. As the proposal site lies in the open countryside, the relevant Local Plan policies are CSP4, AP1 and paragraph 80 for assessing the principle of development.
- 5.2. Policy CSP4 of the Core Strategy, in principle, supports the redevelopment of disused buildings in the open countryside. Therefore, the proposal would comply with this Local Plan policy. The NPPF also promotes sustainable development, which is further echoed under Allocations Plan Policy AP1. Whilst the NPPF states that isolated dwellings in rural areas should be avoided, paragraph 80 provides some exceptions to this, one of which is 'the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting'.
- 5.3. The barn was previously used for agricultural but can now be considered disused. As a result, the proposal to convert the barn to one residential dwelling and associated ancillary annexe is in accordance with AP1 of the Allocations Plan and Paragraph 80 of the NPPF.
- 5.4. For the proposed annexe, the applicant is happy to work with the Council to agree to a suitably worded planning condition to ensure the annexe remains ancillary in use to the host dwelling. A template planning condition has been provided below for ease of reference:

"The annexe building hereby permitted shall be used solely for purposes ancillary to the occupation and enjoyment of the existing property and shall not be occupied as an independent planning unit of residential accommodation".
- 5.5. Given the previous approval of the Class Q application attached to the Site, the applicant also has a realistic fallback position which is a material consideration in favour of the proposed conversion.
- 5.6. Based on the information provided above, it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable, and the proposal complies with the requirements of CSP1, AP1, CSP4 and paragraph 80 of the NPPF.

Local Character and Design

- 5.7. The NPPF states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is the fundamental underpinning of what the planning process should achieve. Paragraph 130 sets out what plan making and decision taking must ensure for all developments, in particular it states that development should be 'sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting'.
- 5.8. Similarly, Policy CSP 1 of the Local Plan states that the design and construction of new development must take into account important characteristics of the environment. In particular, the policy pays attention to the sensitivity of the rural landscape and how the redevelopment of dwellings or conversion of buildings may impact this.
- 5.9. The proposed development is sited within a largely rural area and sits on the edge an agglomeration of agricultural buildings – some in use and some redundant. Approximately 60m to the south of the site is Ell Brook. The Site is surrounded by open fields, trees and hedges.
- 5.10. The proposed development is sympathetic to the surrounding landscape, through the use of materials and the architectural approach. The proposed development seeks to avoid looking overly domesticated, which it does by using materials sympathetic to the existing building and retaining the structures where possible. New features that have been added, such as windows and balconies, have been designed to retain the agricultural features of the barn but provide a residential essence.
- 5.11. There are no public rights of way surrounding the site, with access only permitted onto the application site via a private road off Furnace Lane. With no public rights of way identified, it means that no walking or cycling routes will be disrupted by the proposed development.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

- 5.12. Consideration of the impact of development on the neighbouring amenity will need to be assessed, in particular the impact to the privacy and living conditions of neighbours, as reflected in policy AP4 of the Allocations Plan.

- 5.13. The barn is sited away from neighbouring properties located to the north and east. In addition to the established separation distances, there are topographical, landscape and other built forms which break up any site lines from the new barn conversion to neighbouring amenity.
- 5.14. The design focuses key openings into the existing ones located on the northern and southern elevations. This further ensures that the development does not have window openings directly facing neighbouring amenity, thereby protecting future occupants and neighbouring residents' privacy.
- 5.15. Therefore, the proposed creation of one dwelling with an ancillary annexe would have minimal impact on the neighbouring amenity. There is no evidence that the proposal will result in harm to neighbouring living conditions. Consequently, the proposed conversion complies with the requirements of Allocations Plan Policy AP4.

Ecology

- 5.16. Paragraph 174 of the NPPF advises that applications should seek to enhance the natural environment. This includes protecting existing valued habitat and looking for opportunities to enhance habitat. The objectives of paragraph 174 are briefly echoed under policies CSP1, CSP2 and AP7. AP7 seeks to ensure that protected species habitat is conserved and enhanced.
- 5.17. An Ecological Appraisal has been provided, which states that the barn would have 'negligible' potential as a roosting site for bats as well as finding that there is no evidence to suggest that bats have ever used the structure; thus concluding that the conversion would have no impact on bats or their roosting sites.
- 5.18. The report did find that artificial light may cause a minor ecological impact, as such an appropriately worded condition requiring the use of a Wildlife Sensitive Plan before the construction of the proposed development is suggested.
- 5.19. In the interest of supporting local wildlife and biodiversity net gain, implementation of regenerative grazing, woodland planting along the brook, hedge planting, as well as bird and bat boxes on the site are proposed. The previous disused concrete yard area will be transformed into an area of green space also. All of the above considered, the proposed development will create a rich ecological impact.

Highways and Access

- 5.20. The proposed development benefits from an established vehicular access which was previously used as the main point of access for agricultural vehicles on a regular basis. The proposal will seek to continue to use this established access point and the associated lane.
- 5.21. The proposed access point and use of the lane was accepted by Gloucestershire County Council and the Forest of Dean District Council through the permitted Class Q application. Therefore, as no amendments are proposal's highway access arrangements, it is considered that consistency in decision making applies in this instance.
- 5.22. Suitable off-street parking provision has been provided within the proposed curtilage of the property for up to 4 vehicles. Referring to Gloucestershire County Council's Manual for Streets (2020), the provision of spaces accords with the rural parking standards for new residential homes.
- 5.23. Taking the above into consideration, the proposal complies with the overarching objectives of paragraph 104 of the NPPF and Gloucestershire Manual for Streets (2020).

Heritage

- 5.24. Policy CSP.1 of the Core Strategy states that the design and construction of new development must consider the important characteristics of the environment. In the case of heritage assets, policy CSP.1 requires developments to demonstrate that they will protect or provide enhancements to the identified asset. This is further supported by the NPPF, paragraph 199, where great weight should be placed on the conservation of the heritage assets significance.
- 5.25. The proposed development falls into the setting of a Grade II listed building, the Former Charcoal Store (as well as a further two Grade II listed buildings in the vicinity), which could be considered an important characteristic of the environment.
- 5.26. The proposed development has been assessed within the supporting heritage statement by a qualified heritage professional, in compliance with paragraph 194 of the NPPF. The report submitted provides a detailed breakdown of the heritage assets significance and the potential impacts of the proposed development on this listed building's setting.

- 5.27. The report finds that the proposed development would have a neutral impact on the significance of the building and of the setting of the building, as well it would not impact the historicity of the asset. The report also finds that, apart from being within the same boundary, there is no significant relationship between the barn and the highlighted listed building.
- 5.28. After a thorough assessment set out in the submitted heritage statement, the proposed development would create no harm on the existing listed building, thus complying with policy CSP.1 of the Core Strategy and National Planning Policy as a whole.

6.0 Material Considerations

Fallback Position & Consistency in Decision Making

- 6.1. In June 2023, the scheme was granted Class Q permission. The consent granted approval for *'prior approval for the change of use of an agricultural barn to 2 residential dwellings and for building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion.'*
- 6.2. Whilst it is accepted that each case should be considered on its own merits, consistency in the application of planning policies, and what this means to planning judgement, remains a material consideration.
- 6.3. Of particular importance to this proposal, the Class Q prior approval consent demonstrates an acceptance in principle for the conversion of the barn to one residential dwelling, with an ancillary annexe. Therefore, it is considered that the principle remains acceptable, as it is a realistic fallback position for the applicant to proceed with implementing this conversion.
- 6.4. However, due to the limitations of Class Q, the applicant has submitted this planning application to offer an improved design which is considered to enhance the wider context and generally lift the quality of the overall new homes compared to the approved prior approval. This is considered to wholly comply with the spirit of the policies objectives set out in the Local Plan.
- 6.5. Finally, in the past few years, the LPA has approved other nearby barn conversions of a similar nature to the proposal before you here. All with varying degrees of architectural change and input. In all instances, the principle of development was considered acceptable. For the purposes of considering this planning proposal, it is respectfully requested that planning policies are applied in a consistent manner.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared to set out the case of the proposed conversion of a disused agricultural barn into one residential dwelling, with an ancillary annexe.
- 7.2. In the first instance, it has demonstrated that the barn has been used for agricultural purposes and has reached the end of its useful lifespan for this intended use.
- 7.3. The statement has assessed the proposed development's compliance with local and national policy, the concluding issues have been summarised below:
- The proposed development does reside in the countryside, and the proposed dwelling and ancillary annexe would be considered to be rural. This is considered to be acceptable in principle, in accordance with Paragraph 80 of the NPPF.
 - A supporting Ecology Assessment has been provided and proposed methods of enhancement in the interest of biodiversity net gain have been provided in both the report and supporting plans provided.
 - A supporting Heritage Statement has found that the proposed development would have a neutral impact on the listed building (Former Charcoal Store).
 - Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused if there would be an unacceptable impact on safety or the impacts would be severe. The development proposal will provide limited impact on highways, as demonstrated within paragraphs 5.19 to 5.22 of this statement thus complying with policy.
- 7.4. Based on the information provided and evidence of the proposals compliance with both Local and National Planning Policies, it is respectfully requested that Planning Permission is granted.

