

DESIGN ACCESS AND PLANNING STATEMENT

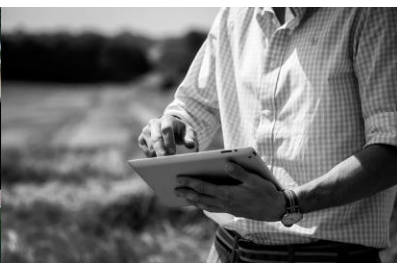
**Retrospective Planning Application for The Demolition of the Existing Barn and
Replacement With a New Building to be Used for Commercial Space**

at

**Corner Barn, Court Lane, Avon,
Christchurch, Hampshire, BH23 7BG**

Ref: 10505

November 2023



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1. Introduction and Proposal

- 1.1 The application seeks full planning consent for the retrospective erection of a barn for commercial use, following the demolition of the existing barn that had been deemed structurally dangerous.
- 1.2 Change of use had already been granted on the existing barn as set out below: -
“Conversion of agricultural buildings to B1 Offices at Court Farm, Court Lane/ Ringwood Road, Avon, Sopley NFDC reference: -70755”.
- 1.3 The above planning consent was implemented, and the pre-commencement conditions discharged.
- 1.4 The proposal will make use of the existing vehicular access onto the adjacent highway network.
- 1.5 The application has been submitted against National and Local Planning Policies, whilst having strong regard to the rural setting and the planning consent for the new build commercial barns to the northeast of the proposed site.
- 1.6 The permitted application to the northeast is as follows: -
“Redevelopment of farm buildings to provide new Class 'E' units; parking; landscaping; demolition of existing buildings at Court Farm, Ringwood Road, Avon, Sopley BH23 7BG NFDC reference: -22/10127”.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The statement sets out how the proposed scheme meets the requirements of the relevant local and national planning policies, as well as precedence from adjacent planning decisions.
- 2.2 The New Forest District Council Local Plan Policies and National Planning Policy Framework have been considered in detail when preparing this planning application.
- 2.3 It is accepted that the site lies within the Green Belt where 'openness' is a key consideration of the acceptability of a particular development. However, the council has accepted redevelopment of many Green Belt sites (mainly for housing) where those sites have been regarded as previously developed land (PDL) or 'Brown Field'.
- 2.4 The application sets out how the building became structurally unsafe, and being adjacent to two roads, immediate action was required.
- 2.5 When reviewing the landscape interactions, the proposal will offer planning gain through its choice of materials and careful design sitting comfortably in the backdrop of the farm yard.

- 2.6 There are no obvious constraints to affect the deliverability of the project as the land use/proposal will be able to be assimilated within the environment.

3. Planning Policy

- 3.1 As stated above, the site is within the Green Belt and the national guidance in the NPPF Chapters 12 and 13 apply as well as that in Chapter 6 regarding “Building a strong competitive economy”.

- 3.2 With regard to the local development plan, the principal policies are CS21 – Rural Economy, ENV2 - Green Belt and ECON1 - Employment Land & Development. Saved policy DM22 - Employment Development in the Countryside is also relevant.

- 3.3 Noting the requirements of a Green Belt assessment the tests can be considered as follows:

- i. Is it appropriate development in the Green Belt?
- ii. Would the development affect the openness of the Green Belt?

(As noted above, the test must be whether the impact is greater than that before).

- iii. Is there other non-Green Belt harm?
- iv. Considerations weighing in favour of the development?

There are therefore employment and economic benefits which would be harmed if the site could not continue to be used by the applicants.

- v. Do the benefits outweigh any harm to the Green Belt?

3.4 Planning Assessment in relation to the Green Belt

- 3.4.1 In the case of Court Farm, whilst some of the buildings remain in agricultural use, others are now used for commercial purposes on the back of permissions for conversion to B1 uses.

- 3.4.2 The current Core Strategy and Local Plan Part 2 policies do provide support for new employment opportunities. Whilst in the case of rural sites this is aimed at change of use and conversion of existing buildings, the replacement of existing structures and buildings which are harmful to the appearance of the area with better designed ones of similar floor area should not be resisted purely on a policy-based assessment. If, as in this case, those existing redundant buildings are not capable of conversion for whatever reason, replacement of them with better designed buildings having no impact on the openness of the Green Belt retaining the visual appearance should be considered acceptable.

- 3.4.3 The assessment of the five tests set out above are considered as follows: -

- i. As the proposal is for a new build on land which is not PDL then it can be considered that the development is 'inappropriate development' and 'very special circumstances' need to be put forward in this overall assessment.

- 3.4.4 Paragraph 146 of the NPPF confirms that certain other forms of development, so long as they preserve the Green Belt's openness and do not conflict with its purposes, are not inappropriate, including re-use of permanent buildings.
- 3.4.5 In this case, the 'very special circumstances' relates to an overall improvement in the appearance of the site, including greater biodiversity opportunities, and improving employment opportunities in the area, both in terms of construction work and longer-term employment in the resultant buildings.
- 3.4.6 The replacement buildings would enable the farming business to invest capital and diversify into an area that would provide an alternative income stream which is integral to the ongoing success of the farm enterprise. There is therefore a commercial imperative and underlying justification for the development.
- ii. On the subject of openness, the issue is: - "whether there is a significant detrimental impact on openness is not the test, the question is whether the impact on openness is greater than before or not".
- 3.4.7 The essential characteristics of Green Belt land are its openness and its permanence. These characteristics serve all five purposes of the Green Belt against which the proposed development will be assessed.
- 3.4.8 Openness is not defined in the NPPF but is commonly taken to be the absence of built development. It is acknowledged that there is an important distinction between openness as being the absence of built development and openness as being the absence of visual impact. However, the visual impact is also an intrinsic part of the assessment of a development against the five purposes of the Green Belt and the two meanings cannot therefore be completely separate. A development may be acceptable in terms of its visual impact on the surrounding landscape but still be unacceptable spatially as it would be contrary to the essential and enduring function of government policy for the Green Belt in keeping land free from development. In this case, the land is already developed having buildings on it which are being used for commercial purposes or had a live commercial planning consent.
- iii. Other Green Belt harm – see points 6.1 to 6.3 of this statement
 - iv. The considerations weighing in favour of the development have largely been set out above in respect of (iii). These relate to improvement in the appearance of the site, improved employment opportunities, farm diversification and economic considerations for the overall farming business. These are supported by the development plan policies.
 - v. Matters weighing in favour of the development outweighing harm to the Green Belt are as set out above. It does not impact upon any of the objectives of the Green Belt that has led to its designation in this part of the New Forest as the replacement building will be like for like.
- 3.4.9 In summary therefore, when taken collectively, the social, economic, and environmental benefits of the proposals would be significant and overall, substantial weight should be given

to this. Other considerations outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

3.5 Structural Stability of Existing Barn

3.5.1 Please see below photographs of the existing barn before being demolished.



Photographs 1 and 2 showing the northeastern gable end if the barn, taken internally.



Photograph 3 showing the southeastern elevation, noting the power cables adjacent the southwestern gable end.

3.5.2 The Health and Safety consultants, in consultation with our structural engineer, visually reviewed the barn and deemed it unsafe for access.

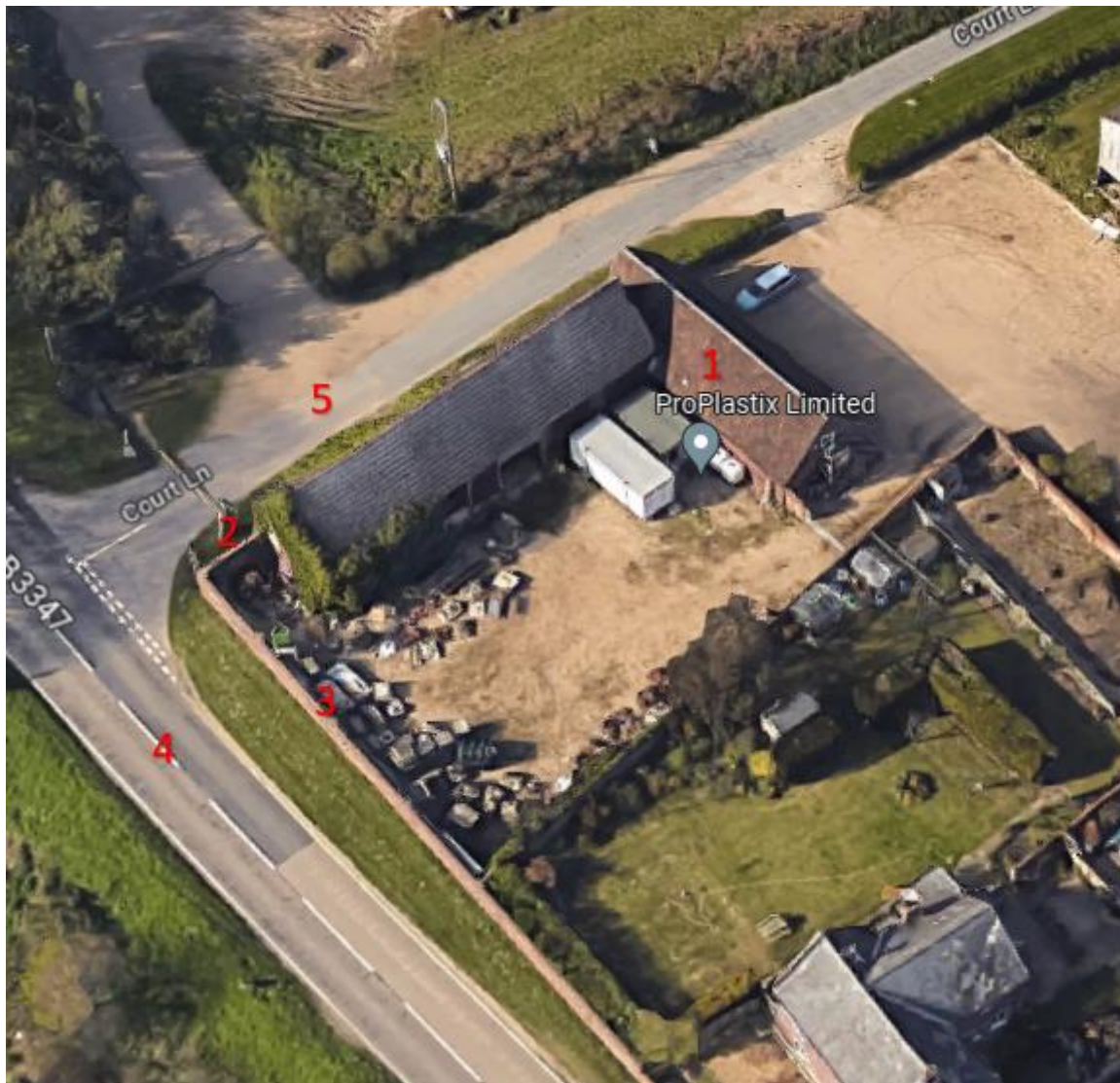
3.5.3 BCM engaged the help of a structural engineer to review the barn and confirm if the works could be undertaken to make the barn safe to access and eventually work upon. The engineers concluded the following: -

“In the long term, achieving a safe and compliant structure would require extensive replacement and rebuilding of the oak frame and masonry, where working inside would be considered unsafe. It is very likely that there are insufficient or non-existent foundations to support both the masonry and oak frame. Given the scope of the required work, desire to adhere to Building Regulations and provide longevity to the structure, it is our opinion that it would be wise to rebuild the barn entirely, incorporating new foundations and superstructure to modern codes and standards.”

A copy of the letter provided by AWA Structural and Civil Engineers has been included with this planning application.

3.5.4 The applicant approached two local scaffolding contractors about erecting a structural scaffolding frame within the building. Both contractors on inspection declined to quote as they felt due to the condition of the building, adjacent two roads this was no possible.

3.5.5 The plan below shows the constraints of the site, should the existing barn collapse.



Key

1. Existing barn that was part of the original “Change of Use” application that has been converted to commercial and is connected to the barn that has been demolished.
 2. Existing power cables that run along the southeastern gable end of the barn that is to be demolished.
 3. Brick boundary wall that runs along the southeastern boundary of the site.
 4. Ringwood Road (B3347) that runs from Ringwood to Sopley.
 5. Court Lane, that runs from the junction of Ringwood Road to Ripley along the rural road network.
- 3.5.6 For the above reasons, it was determined that in the interest of public safety, the barn should be demolished and reconstructed taking the same form as that which was previously permitted.

3.6 Local Precedent

- 3.6.1 As already stated, in March 2023, planning consent was awarded for the following proposal that is located to the northeast of the proposed site.

“Redevelopment of farm buildings to provide new Class 'E' units; parking; landscaping; demolition of existing buildings at Court Farm, Ringwood Road, Avon, Sopley BH23 7BG NFDC reference: -22/10127”.

- 3.6.2 The proposed application was for the demolition of a series of agricultural barns, not fit for conversion, and replacement with two new buildings. This application was determined at committee with the members seeing the proposal as a pragmatic scheme to provide commercial floor space, whilst removing two barns that were structurally unsound and unsightly.

4. **Design and Layout**

- 4.1 The proposed design will replicate the already approved Change of Use to this building with a series of minor changes to the fenestration. The changes reflected are to meet the updated requirement of the Building Regulations, to remove the need for rooflights as shown on the original design that are seen as not in keeping, and to maximise the amount of natural light and ventilation to make the replacement building more highly efficient.
- 4.2 A copy of the original design under planning approval reference: - 70755 has been included with this submission for reference.
- 4.3 The same materials and form are to be used that were permitted on the original planning approval (reference: - 70755) with the bricks from the original barn having been retained and used to reinstate the plinth detail.
- 4.4 The proposed building is to be constructed of a steel portal frame, with blockwork infill panels and finished externally with timber cladding. The base of the walls are to be constructed in reclaimed brickwork to form a plinth detail. The windows are to be grey powder coated aluminium, with the access doors formed of hardwood timber.
- 4.5 The proposed design is felt to reflect the already approved and implemented barn conversion, with the minor changes seen to be an improvement on the original consented scheme.

5. **Access**

- 5.1 The site is currently accessed as existing from Court Lane. The access track is shared with the yet to be constructed commercial units to the northeast.
- 5.2 Due to the alignment of the road and existing boundary there is a clear line of sight, making the visibility splays optimum. It should be noted that as part of the planning consent for the

commercial development to the northeast, improvement works are to be carried out at the junction with Ringwood Road. This will be a benefit to the proposed site.

- 5.3 The approved parking arrangements from the original application remain in place and these will be retained.

6.0 Context, Setting and Landscape Interactions

- 6.1 The context, setting and landscape interactions are important. They have a direct correlation to the Local and National Planning policies which have been taken into consideration as part of the proposed scheme. It is felt that the existing barn, that is clearly visible from outside of the site, is a key feature of the farmyard setting.

- 6.2 As the design reflects the original building, it is felt that the impact will be minimal. The careful selection of materials and form will enable the building to sit conformably in the backdrop of the farmyard.

- 6.3 There are no proposals to remove any existing trees or mature hedgerows, neither will any trees be impacted following the development. Additional planting is to be considered in and around the site as part of the biodiversity enhancement.

6.4 Ecology

- 6.4.1 Due to the structural condition of the building, we were unable to allow consultants to enter them to undertake any form of work. Therefore, no ecological surveys have been undertaken. There were no visible signs of protected species using the building prior demolition.

- 6.4.2 As part of the scheme, we are proposing to include both bird and bat boxes into the design. The location of these is proposed to be at high level on the gable end buildings.

6.5 Flooding

6.8 As can be seen from the Government mapping below, the site is not within an area at risk of flooding.



<https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk>

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 For the reasons set out above this application should be approved in order to provide a replacement building on the site which already contains an element of commercial floorspace. It would assist with the overall financial position of the farming enterprise as 'farm diversification'.
- 7.2 The buildings would increase employment opportunities in the area by creating floorspace suitable for small and medium sized enterprises.
- 7.3 The demolished building, whilst important in its setting, was in a dangerous condition and reinstatement will retain the important feature of the farmyard setting.
- 7.4 There will be biodiversity gains arising from the development through the inclusion of bat and bird boxes.
- 7.5 Whilst it is a Green Belt site, it is considered that there are 'very special circumstances' that can allow this development to take place without harm to the openness of the Green Belt or any of the other objectives of Green Belt designation.
- 7.6 For the above reasons, the retrospective application is commended to you.

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