

**Notification for prior approval for the
proposed change of use of an agricultural
building to one dwellinghouse (Class C3) and
associated operational development**

At

**Crowfields Farm, Fockbury Road, Dodford,
Bromsgrove, B61 9AW**

Planning Statement

February 2024

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This document comprises information to support the application for prior notification of the change of use of an agricultural building to residential (C3) use including associated building works at Crowfields Farm, Dodford.

1.2 This application is made under the Town & Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2 Part 3 Class Q parts (a) and (b) as amended.

1.3 The location and nature of the existing agricultural building can be seen in the submitted plans.

2.0 Overview of Site and Planning History

2.1 The site consists of the existing detached dual-pitched roof barn, set within the holding. Access to the barn is via an existing private hardstanding access off the public highway to the north-west.

2.2 The proposals would see the creation of 1no. single-storey residential unit.

2.3 The agricultural building consists of a simple rectangular barn with a dual pitched roof. The building consists of a timber framed building with external steel and timber cladding. More details can be found in the submitted Structural Report undertaken by Shire Consultants.

2.4 The proposed conversion of the building can be seen in the submitted plans. The proposed conversion seeks to make the most use of the existing openings in the building, and provide minimal new openings to provide natural light in habitable rooms, whilst maintaining the traditional appearance of the barn. The proposals would create a single three-bed property, set on one level, with associated outside parking and amenity areas.

2.5 The barn was used for many years for the storage of agricultural machinery / equipment in association with the holding, together with use during lambing season. The need for this existing barn for agricultural purposes has reduced in the past number of years.

3.0 Criteria under Q.1 of Class Q

3.1 (a) Agricultural Use – The barn has been in active agricultural use for the storage of agricultural machinery and equipment for a number of years, as well as during lambing season. The barn was in active agricultural use on 20th March 2013 for these purposes, and is still in such use, albeit to a lesser degree.

- 3.2 (b) Larger dwellinghouse – The proposals would create 1no. larger dwellinghouse only, of under 465 sq.m.
- 3.3 (c) Smaller dwellinghouse – The proposal is to create 1no. larger dwellinghouse only, where no previous dwellinghouses have been provided on the holding.
- 3.4 (d) Combined Class Q development – No other barns on the holding have been granted permission under Class Q.
- 3.5 (e) Agricultural tenancy – The site is not occupied under an agricultural tenancy.
- 3.6 (f) Termination of agricultural tenancy – Not applicable.
- 3.7 (g) Use of permitted development rights – No development under Class A(a) or Class B(a) of Part 6 of the GPDO has been carried out on the holding since 20th March 2013.
- 3.8 (h) External dimensions - The proposed development would not result in the external dimensions of the building extending beyond the external dimensions of the existing building at any given point, as shown on the submitted plans.
- 3.9 (i) Building operations – The conversion works are shown on the submitted plans. Few building operations are required and no new structural alterations or additions are necessary as part of the proposed development. The timber frame, internal boarding, external cladding, roof cladding and floor slab are all in good condition as set out in the structural report. The existing walls, floor, roof, and structure would all be retained as part of the proposed conversion.
- The submitted structural report confirms that overall the building is structurally sound and in good condition, suitable for residential conversion without the requirement of any structural remedial repairs.
- The building operations do not include the construction of new structural elements of the building, and are in accordance with the criteria set out in the legislation and the subsequent supporting Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) published in March 2015. The submitted Schedule of Works also sets out how the existing barn would be converted to residential use.
- Furthermore, the updated PPG advice is highlighted, which states: *“Internal works are not generally development. For the building to function as a dwelling it may be appropriate to undertake internal structural works, including to allow for a floor, the insertion of a mezzanine or upper floors within the overall residential floor space permitted, or internal walls, which are not prohibited by Class Q.”*
- 3.10 (j) Article 2(3) land – The site is not on article 2(3) land.
- 3.11 (k) Restricted sites – The site is not, and does not form part of: a site of special scientific interest; a safety hazard area; or a military explosives storage area.
- 3.12 (l) Scheduled Monument – The site is not, and does not contain, a scheduled monument.
- 3.13 (m) Listed Building – The barn is not a listed building.

4.0 Conditions under Q.2 of Class Q

4.1 (a) Transport and Highways - The barn can be accessed via the existing vehicular entrance off the Fockbury Road public highway to the north-west. This is an existing open clear access offering good visibility in both directions. The proposed change of use of the barn to residential use would not result in any significant increase in vehicular traffic to and from the site, and the associated vehicular movements can be safely accommodated within the local highway network. Parking of vehicles would be to the front (north-east facing) elevation.

4.2 (b) Noise – The barn is not located in close proximity to another existing in active use agricultural building, or other potentially noise generating development. The nearest neighbouring buildings to the barn are in residential use and as such the proposed residential conversion would not generate noise concerns in such a setting. As such there are no noise implications either from or to the proposed residential use of the building.

4.3 (c) Contamination - There are no contamination risks identified on the site. The building has not been used to store pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, bactericides, sewage sludge, farm waste, hydrocarbons from farm machinery or for asbestos disposal. There are no known cases of spills or leaks which would give rise to contamination concerns.

4.4 (d) Flooding Risks - The barn and access are outside any areas at risk of flooding as shown on the EA flood mapping system, and no known flooding issues have occurred on the site.

4.5 (e) Location / Siting - The location allows for reasonable connection to services, access etc and the proposed use of the barn for residential purposes is not unrealistic or unfeasible. The location, siting and orientation of the building is considered suitable and acceptable for residential use, being sited adjacent to existing residential properties. The amenity of the existing neighbouring residential properties would not be impacted by the proposals.

4.6 (f) Design / External Appearance - The proposals for the design and appearance of the building are shown on the submitted plans. The nature and appearance of the building will not be inappropriate in the setting, and would retain its original agricultural character. Existing openings are fully utilised. The design of the conversion has been carefully considered to enhance the visual appearance of the building, maximise the use of the space available and ensure the practicality and usefulness of the living space. Materials used will be of a high quality and works will be carried out to the highest standard, to ensure that the building is well constructed and energy efficient. By bringing a disused building into use through a modest but attractive conversion that blends into the rural setting, this development provides enhancement to the local area.

4.7 (g) Natural Light - The submitted plans demonstrate the dimensions of each room, its proposed use, and the openings proposed to provide natural light into each habitable room.

4.8 As demonstrated above, the proposals would provide a single three-bed residential property, in excess of the national space standards.

4.9 The curtilage of the proposed dwelling is shown on the submitted plans, and is no greater than the footprint of the barn.

5.0 Ecology

5.1 As can be seen in the photographs of the barn found in the Structural Report, it does not provide suitable or feasible habitat for bats or nesting birds.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The proposal for the change of use of the agricultural building to residential (C3) is in accordance with the criteria set out within The Town & Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), Schedule 2 Part 3 Class Q parts (a) and (b). The proposals represent permitted development and the prior approval of the council is not reasonably required.