

PLANNING STATEMENT

**APESFORD FARM
BRADNOP**

NOVEMBER 2025

Site Address:

Apesford Farm, 1 Apesford Lane, Bradnop, Staffordshire, ST13 7EX

Applicants:

Mr. & Mrs. J. Harrison

Proposal:

Prior Notification for change of use of agricultural buildings to form 2no.
dwellinghouses and associated building operations
(Class Q Permitted Development)

Planning Statement:

Date Issued: 18th November 2025

Job Reference: RDP/2025/099

Report Prepared By:

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. J. Harrison to lodge a prior approval submission pursuant to Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (As Amended) for the change of use of two agricultural buildings at Apesford Farm, 1 Apesford Lane, Bradnop, to form 2no. dwellinghouses along with associated building operations.
- 1.2 The application represents a resubmission following the previous grant of prior approval or the change of use of these buildings to residential use under application DET/2024/0005. Works to implement that consent have not been commenced. The existing buildings comprise of a part steel / part timber framed structure, with blockwork walls to their lower elevations and timber cladding above. The buildings have solid concrete floors, with openings on their side elevations and have metal sheet roofs atop.
- 1.3 As with the previous application, it is proposed to change of use of these buildings to form 2no. dwellinghouses. Associated with the proposal is operational development in the form of the insertion of a new wall to the existing open elevation of each building along with the insertion of new windows, doors and roof lights and provision of replacement cladding.
- 1.4 The proposed dwellings will each have a gross internal floor area of 136 square metres, and have their own areas of private amenity space, along with two off-street parking spaces. Vehicular access to the site is to be taken via the existing vehicular access off Apesford Lane which serving the existing buildings as well as three other dwellings at Apesford Farm.

2 Class Q Criteria

- 2.1 The provisions of Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 allow for development consisting of the change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from use as an agricultural building to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order. It also allows for building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses).
- 2.2 The Planning Practice Guidance confirms that the right under Class Q permits building operations which are reasonably necessary to convert the building, which may include those which would affect the external appearance of the building and would otherwise require planning permission. This includes the installation or replacement of windows, doors, roofs, exterior walls, water, drainage, electricity, gas or other services to the extent reasonably necessary for the building to function as a dwelling house.
- 2.3 The Planning Practice Guidance also confirms that:

“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”.

- 2.4 The Planning Practice Guidance goes on to confirm that It is not the intention of the permitted development right to allow rebuilding work which would go beyond what is reasonably necessary for the conversion of the building to residential use. Therefore it is only where the existing building is already suitable for conversion to residential use that the building would be considered to have the permitted development right.
- 2.5 This guidance reflects the judgement in *Hibbitt and Another v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Rushcliffe Borough Council [2016]* which considered the meaning of ‘convert’ in the context of a proposal for the conversion of an agricultural building to residential use under Class Q Permitted Development.
- 2.6 The *Hibbitt* judgement recognised that in many permitted developments the work proposed might be extensive, yet that does not disqualify a development from automatic permission. The building the subject of the *Hibbitt* judgment comprised a portal framed building that had minimal external cladding and was essentially open on all four sides. The *Hibbitt* judgement concluded that the necessary construction of all four external walls would have amounted to a rebuild rather than a conversion.
- 2.7 The application is accompanied by two Structural Surveys prepared by Mark Dady Associates Ltd (Consulting Structural Engineers) which has assessed the structural integrity of each of the buildings to determine whether they are suitable for conversion to residential use without additional structural works. The Structural Surveys confirm that:

“the timber structural elements have successfully supported the loads applied to them during the current use of the building and they will remain suitable for that purpose in a change of use”
(our emphasis)

- 2.8 The Structural Survey also confirms that the roof structure will also remain suitable for supporting the loads applied to it in a change of use. No issues are raised with regards to the structural suitability of the building for conversion.
- 2.9 The Structural Survey comments that a secondary internal structure will be required in the normal way and attention is drawn in this regard to the Planning Practice Guidance which confirms that:

*“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**”. (our emphasis)*

- 2.10 The application proposes to retain the existing structural frame of the building in its entirety along with the existing external concrete block walls, concrete flooring and footings and its roof purlins. Underfloor insulation and any required damp proofing / gas membranes are to be applied above the existing concrete floor slab with the finished flooring sat atop. Insulation is to be applied internally behind the existing frame and cladding as shown on the plans, in order to thermally upgrade the building, with new windows and doors

inserted. Internal walls, including subdividing walls, will also be erected as detailed on the submitted plans. A new wall is also to be erected to each of the buildings to infill the openings that currently exist.

- 2.11 The proposed building operations are reasonably required to facilitate the change of use of the buildings to residential use, and do not go beyond what could be considered as a 'conversion'. We draw the Local Authority's attention in this regard to appeal decision 3208377 enclosed as Appendix A which relates to a prior approval application for the conversion of an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse at The Old Smithy near Launceston. The existing and proposed plans floor plans relating to that development are enclosed as Appendices B and C. An image of the building in question is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Image of Building granted prior approval under appeal 3208377



- 2.12 The original application for the change of use of that building under Class Q had been refused by the Local Authority on the grounds that the extent of alterations proposed went beyond what could be classed as a 'conversion'. As can be observed from the plans enclosed as Appendices B and C and the photograph in Figure 1 above, the building in question comprised of a portal framed agricultural building that was open on one whole side, with concrete panel walls to its lower elevation, a concrete slab floor, with vertical cladding above. The application had proposed the replacement of *all the cladding along with the provision of a new wall to the open elevation*, as well as the installation of new windows and doors.
- 2.13 In allowing the appeal the Planning Inspector noted the judgement in *Hibbitt and Another v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Rushcliffe Borough Council [2016]* and confirmed that if operations proposed would amount to rebuilding, the appeal should be dismissed on the basis that the development would be outside the relevant Class (Class Q). The Planning Inspector nevertheless went on to observe that:

*"Notwithstanding the similarly structurally sound frames of the barn which is the subject of this appeal, **the barn in the Hibbitt Judgement was open on three sides and would have been stripped down to the frame.** However, the appeal property would **retain its metal and timber frame, concrete floor and footings, timber roof purlins, and its existing concrete block walls on the east, west and south elevations, with openings inserted to reasonably facilitate its conversion to dwellings**" (our emphasis)*

2.14 The Planning Inspector also commented that:

“While the corrugated fibre sheeting on the side elevations and roof would be replaced, and new openings would be inserted to provide windows and doors, Class Q.1 (i) allows for the installation or replacement of roofs, exterior walls, windows and doors. I consider that, in terms of the overall scale of the structure, the proposed alterations would not be excessive. Internal works such as the installation of partition walls and a first floor would not necessarily constitute development” (our emphasis)

2.15 As a consequence of the above, the Planning Inspector concluded that:

“As the barn’s structural integrity would not, on the evidence before me, be harmed and a considerable proportion of it would remain, I find that the building operations would be reasonably necessary in this instance and would not constitute a rebuild as described in the Hibbitt Judgement. Accordingly, I conclude that the development would not exceed the limitations set out in paragraph Q.1(i) of the GPDO. (our emphasis)

2.16 We draw favourable comparisons between that appeal scheme and the submitted proposal in that they both involve the retention of the existing structural frame, concrete floor and footings, roof purlins and the existing concrete block walls. It is therefore a very similar proposal to the one that the

Planning Inspector had found to be compliant with the Hibbitt Judgement in the above appeal.

- 2.17 Having regard to the conclusions in appeal decision 3208377, along with the provisions of the Planning Practice Guidance, the submitted proposal is consequently concluded to amount to a 'conversion' and thus is capable of amounting to Permitted Development subject to compliance with the specific criteria laid out under Class Q. The Local Authority concluded likewise in its assessment of application DET/2024/0005.

Class Q.1 Criteria

- 2.18 Section Q.1 confirms that development is not permitted by Class Q if:

(a) In the case of a site that is part of an established agricultural unit, the site was not part of the established agricultural unit—

- i. on 24th July 2023, or***
- ii. where the site became part of the established agricultural unit after 24th July 2023, for a period of at least 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins,***

(b) in the case of a site that was (but is no longer) part of an established agricultural unit—

- i. the site was part of an established agricultural unit on 24th July 2023,***
- ii. where the site ceased to be part of an established agricultural unit after 24th July 2023, the site has not been part of the established agricultural unit for a period of at least 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins, or***
- iii. since ceasing to be part of an established agricultural unit, the site has been used for any non-agricultural purpose,***

- 2.19 The site has long been in agricultural use, and was last used for such purposes in approximately 2018 when the applicant purchased the site from the previous owner who kept livestock and farmed the surrounding land to the east, south and west. The buildings had been used for the keeping of pigs, cattle and some sheep. The buildings were therefore in use for agricultural purposes as of 20th March 2013 as part of an established agricultural unit, and consequently the proposal is in accordance with the requirements of criterion Q.1(a) of the Order.

(c) The floor space of any dwellinghouse developed under Class Q having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of Schedule 1 to the Use Classes Order exceeds 150 square metres.

- 2.20 None of the dwellinghouses proposed will exceed 150 square metres, each have a gross internal floor area of 136 square metres. The proposal therefore meets the requirements of criterion Q.1(b)(a) of the Order.

(d) the development under Class Q, together with any previous development under Class Q, within the original limits of an established agricultural unit (see paragraph Q.3(2) of this Part) would result in—

- i. the cumulative number of separate dwellinghouses having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of Schedule 1 to the Use Classes Order exceeding 10, or***
- ii. the cumulative floor space of dwellinghouses having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of Schedule 1 to the Use Classes Order exceeding 1,000 square metres,***

- 2.21 The cumulative number of dwellinghouses being proposed within the agricultural unit will not exceed 10, nor will the cumulative floor area of the dwellings proposed exceed 1000 square metres (272 square metres). The proposal consequently derives no conflict with criterion Q.1(d) of the Order.

(e) The site is occupied under an agricultural tenancy, unless the express consent of both the landlord and the tenant has been obtained,

- 2.22 The site is not occupied under an agricultural tenancy, and consequently the proposal derives no conflict with criterion Q.1(e) of the Order.

(f) Less than 1 year before the date development begins—

- i. an agricultural tenancy over the site has been terminated, and***
- ii. the termination was for the purpose of carrying out development under Class Q,***
unless both the landlord and the tenant have agreed in writing that the site is no longer required for agricultural use,

- 2.23 The site was not subject to any agricultural tenancies within the 12 month period preceding the application and the applicant has no intention of entering into any. The proposal therefore derives no conflict with criterion Q.1(f) of the Order.

(g) development under Class A(a) or Class B(a) of Part 6 of this Schedule (agricultural buildings and operations) has been carried out on the established agricultural unit during the period which is 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins

- 2.24 No development pursuant to Class A(a) or Class B(a) of Part 6 of the Order has been carried out on the agricultural unit within the last 10 years. The proposal therefore derives no conflict with criterion Q.1(g) of the Order.

(h) the development would result in the external dimensions of the building extending beyond the external dimensions of the existing building at any given point, other than—

- i. extension of the building allowed by paragraph Q.1(i);***
- ii. protrusions of up to 0.2 metres to accommodate building operations allowed by paragraph Q.1(j)(i),***

- 2.25 The proposed operational development will not result in the external dimensions of the building extending beyond that of the existing building by more than 0.2 metres. No extensions are proposed. The proposal therefore derives no conflict with criterion Q.1(h) of the Order.

(i) the development under Class Q(b) would result in an extension that—

- i. has more than one storey,***
- ii. is sited anywhere other than to the rear of the existing building,***
- iii. extends beyond the rear wall of the existing building by more than 4 metres,***
- iv. has eaves the height of which exceed the height of the eaves of the existing building,***
- v. is higher than whichever is the lower of—***
 - (aa) the highest part of the roof of the existing building, or***
 - (bb) a height of 4 metres above the ground,***

- vi. extends beyond a wall that forms a side or principal elevation of the existing building, or
- vii. would be sited on land that, before the development under Class Q(b), is not covered by a hard surface that was provided on the land by virtue of any development, and—
 - (aa) the hard surface was not provided on the land on or before 24th July 2023, or
 - (bb) (bb) where the hard surface was provided on the land after 24th July 2023, the hard surface has not been situated on the land for a period of at least 10 years before the date development under Class Q(b) begins,

2.26 The proposal does not entail the provision of any extension, and consequently derives no conflict with criterion Q.1(i) of the Order.

(j) the development under Class Q(c) would consist of building operations other than—

- i. the installation or replacement of—***
 - (aa) windows, doors, roofs, or exterior walls, or***
 - (bb) water, drainage, electricity, gas or other services, to the extent reasonably necessary for the building to function as a dwellinghouse, and***
- ii. partial demolition to the extent reasonably necessary to carry out building operations allowed by paragraph Q.1(j)(i),***

2.27 The building operations proposed within the application amount to the following:

- The insertion of new windows and doors

- Installation of service connections
- Internal works to provide insulation, flooring, internal walls etc.
- Installation of new wall to side elevation
- Provision of replacement cladding to upper elevations

2.28 All of the above works amount to building operations that are permissible under criterion (j) and which are reasonably required to facilitate the conversion of the buildings to dwellinghouses. The proposed formation of internal walls and ceilings within the building does not amount to development that requires consent, as confirmed by the Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph 2.5 above refers). The proposal therefore derives no conflict with criterion Q.1(j) of the Order.

(k) the site is on article 2(3) land

2.29 The site is not on article 2(3) land and the proposal therefore derives no conflict with criterion Q.1(k) of the Order.

(l) the site is, or forms part of—

- i. a site of special scientific interest;***
- ii. a safety hazard area;***
- iii. a military explosives storage area,***

2.30 The site does not comprise, nor does it form part of a site of special scientific interest, a safety hazard area or a military explosives storage area. The proposal therefore derives no conflict with criterion Q.1(l) of the Order.

(m) the site is, or contains, a scheduled monument

- 2.31 The site does not comprise, nor does it contain a scheduled monument. The proposal therefore derives no conflict with criterion Q.1(m) of the Order.

(n) the building is a listed building,

- 2.32 The building does not comprise a listed building and consequently the proposal derives no conflict with criterion Q.1(n) of the Order.

(o) the existing building, excluding any proposed extension under Class Q(b) but including any proposed building operations under Class Q(c), would not be capable of complying with the nationally described space standard issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government on 27th March 2015 as read with the notes dated 19th May 2016 which apply to it, or

- 2.33 Each of the dwellings proposed has been designed to meet the minimum floorspace requirements as set out within the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). The NDSS dictate that for a three bedroomed, six person, single storey dwelling there must be a minimum floor area of 95 square metres. The proposed dwellings will each have a floor area of 136 square metres and thus comfortably exceed the minimum floorspace requirements as set out within the NDSS. The proposal therefore derives no conflict with criterion Q.1(o) of the Order.

(p) the building does not have suitable existing access to a public highway.

- 2.34 The building has a long established and suitable means of access to the public highway via the existing farmyard and associated access track. The access affords good visibility in both directions on egress and is wide enough for two vehicles to pass one another. No objections were raised to the proposed access arrangements under the previous prior approval application for the same development (DET/2024/0005). The proposal will consequently derive no conflict with criterion Q.1(p) of the Order.
- 2.35 The submitted proposal is consequently held to amount to permitted development pursuant to the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Permitted Development Order, subject to the Local Authority's prior approval of certain planning matters which are discussed overleaf.

3 Class Q Conditions

- 3.1 Class Q.2(1) requires that before beginning the development, the developer shall apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the following:

- (a) transport and highways impact of the development,*
- (b) noise impacts of the development,*
- (c) contamination risks on the site,*
- (d) flooding risks on the site, or*
- (e) whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change from agricultural use to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order;*
- (f) the design and external appearance of the building; and*
- (g) the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses*

- 3.2 This Statement will now consider the proposal in the context of the above matters. In doing so consideration has been given to the relevant provisions of the Planning Practice Guidance.

(a) Transport & Highways Impacts

- 3.3 The proposed dwellings will each be provided with two off-street parking spaces to meet the needs of future occupants, and will connect with the public highway (Apesford Lane) by way of the existing vehicular access that runs to the east / northeast of the buildings. The access onto Apesford Lane affords good visibility in both directions on egress and there is also ample space within

the site for vehicles to turn around. The proposed development will therefore not give rise to any harm to highway safety and is acceptable in the context of criterion Q.2(1)(a). No concerns were raised in this regard when the previous application for the change of use of these buildings was considered (DET/2024/0005).

(b) Noise Impacts

- 3.4 The proposed conversion of the existing agricultural buildings to form 2no. dwellinghouses will not derive any adverse noise impacts in itself. There are furthermore no uses within the immediate surrounding area that would present a risk of noise disturbance to future occupiers of the dwellings. The proposed development is therefore acceptable in the content of criterion Q.2(1)(b). No concerns were raised in this regard when the previous application for the change of use of these buildings was considered (DET/2024/0005).

(c) Contamination

- 3.5 Land can only be declared contaminated if it either contains a source of pollution, that a pollutant could affect a receptor, and that the pollution can get to the receptor. The site has historically been used for agricultural purposes and is not considered to have been subject to any previous uses that may have resulted in concerns about contamination. Furthermore, there are no uses in the immediate vicinity of the site which may give rise to pollutants. The above notwithstanding, the applicant would be agreeable to installing a gas membrane as part of the conversion works in order to ensure that future occupiers are safeguarded in the event of any unidentified contaminants being present. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in the context of criterion Q.2(1)(c). No concerns were raised in this regard when the previous

application for the change of use of these buildings was considered (DET/2024/0005).

(d) Flood Risks

- 3.6 A review of the Environment Agency's Flood Map For Planning confirms that the site within Flood Zone 1 (low-probability of flooding). Consequently, the development is not at risk of flooding and as such is acceptable in the context of criterion Q.2(1)(d). No concerns were raised in this regard when the previous application for the change of use of these buildings was considered (DET/2024/0005).

(e) Impractical or Undesirable?

- 3.7 The siting of the building is not considered to give rise to any concerns about the location being impractical or undesirable for the buildings to change to residential use having regard to the provisions set out within the Planning Practice Guidance.
- 3.8 Paragraph X of the Permitted Development Order stipulates that the curtilage provided for any dwelling cannot exceed the area of the footprint of the building being converted. In this case the cumulative area of domestic curtilage proposed does not exceed the footprint of the existing buildings, and consequently the proposal accords with the provisions of paragraph X in this regard. The proposal is therefore acceptable in the context of criterion Q.2(1)(e). No concerns were raised in this regard when the previous application for the change of use of these buildings was considered (DET/2024/0005).

(f) Design & External Appearance

- 3.9 The alterations to the building will give it a pleasing aesthetic and one which is in keeping with its agrarian character, with vertically proportioned openings and a high solid to void ratio retained. The general form of the existing building will also be preserved. Consequently, the development will ensure that the resultant building maintains an agrarian character and appearance. The design and layout of the proposal is therefore concluded to be acceptable in the context of criterion Q.2(1)(f). No concerns were raised in this regard when the previous application for the change of use of these buildings was considered (DET/2024/0005).

(g) Provision of Natural Light

- 3.10 The submitted proposal demonstrates that each of the habitable rooms within the proposed dwellinghouse will be served by adequate natural light, and as such the proposal is acceptable in the context of criterion Q.2(1)(g) above. No concerns were raised in this regard when the previous application for the change of use of these buildings was considered (DET/2024/0005).

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 Having regard to the commentary set out above it is submitted that the proposed development is fully in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (As Amended) and we invite the Local Authority to confirm that their prior approval is granted.