

PLANNING STATEMENT

**STEWARTS FARM
BROOKHOUSE LANE, STOKE-ON-TRENT**

AUGUST 2026

Site Address:

Stewarts Farm, Brookhouse Lane, Stoke-on-Trent, ST2 8NE

Applicant:

Mr. & Mrs. Holder

Proposal:

Prior Notification for change of use of agricultural buildings to form 3no.
dwellinghouses and associated building operations
(Class Q Permitted Development)

Planning Statement:

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Job Reference: RDP/2026/089

Report Prepared By:

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Holder to lodge a prior approval submission pursuant to the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (As Amended) for the change of use of an agricultural building at Stewarts Farm, Brookhouse Lane, Stoke-on-Trent to form 3no. dwellinghouses.
- 1.2 The Local Authority should note that this is a cross-boundary planning application, as the red line defining the extent of the application site incorporates land that is located within the administrative boundaries of both Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council.
- 1.3 The building proposed for conversion, along with the surrounding land and the majority of the means of access is located wholly within the administrative area of the Staffordshire Moorlands. A small portion of the vehicular access, including the part where it connects with Brookhouse Lane, is located within the administrative boundary of Stoke-on-Trent City Council.
- 1.4 The Planning Practice Guidance confirms that where a site straddles one or more local planning authority boundaries, the applicant must submit identical applications to each local planning authority, and that the planning fee is only payable to the authority whose area contains the largest part of the site, which in this case is Staffordshire Moorlands.
- 1.5 The existing building comprises a single storey timber framed agricultural building, which has timber cladding to its elevations and a corrugated steel sheet roof above, along with a solid concrete floor. The application proposes the change of use of the building to form 3no. dwellinghouses.

- 1.6 The application also proposes associated operational development in the form of replacement Siberian larchwood cladding to the elevations of the building, and the provision of a Catnic Urban standing seam metal roof to its roof. The southwest facing roofslope will also be provided with integrated Catnic Solar PV panels to provide the dwellings with a renewable source of electricity.
- 1.7 Each dwelling will have a gross internal floor area of 149.6 square metres and will have accommodation comprising of an open plan lounge / kitchen /dining room, three ensuite bedrooms, entrance hall and cloakroom. To the northeast of the building it is proposed to provide each dwelling with two off-street parking spaces, whilst to the southwest of the building each dwelling will be provided with an area of private amenity space.
- 1.8 Vehicular access to the site is to be taken via the existing access serving the farm off Brookhouse Lane to the west of the building. That access will continue to be shared with the farmhouse, with the existing agricultural use of the site ceasing. No alterations are proposed to the existing means of vehicular access.

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 (As Amended) allow for development consisting of the change of use of a building that is part of an established agricultural unit and any land within that building's curtilage, or a former agricultural building that was (but is no longer) part of an established agricultural unit and any land within that building's curtilage to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order.
- 2.2 The Order also makes provision for the extension of such a building in certain circumstances (Class Q(b) refers), as well as building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) (Class Q(c) refers).
- 2.3 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; and partial demolition to the extent reasonably necessary to carry out these building operations.
- 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.
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- 2.5 This guidance is reflective of 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 judgement recognised that in many permitted developments the work might be extensive, yet that does not thereby disqualify a development from automatic permission. The building the subject of the *Hibbitt* judgment was a portal framed building, but one which had minimal external cladding and which was open on four sides. The judgement concluded that the construction of all four external walls would have resulted in a rebuild rather than a conversion.
- 2.7 This application is accompanied by a Structural Survey prepared by Fairclough Consulting Engineers, which has assessed the structural integrity of the building to determine whether it is currently suitable for conversion to residential use without additional structural works.
- 2.8 The Structural Survey confirms that the existing timber-framed structure is structurally stable, with no significant structural defects, movement or distortion identified. The engineer has specifically concluded that the structure, in its current condition, is capable of supporting an external envelope associated with conversion to habitable use. Minor localised timber decay, principally at the bases of some posts, can be addressed by straightforward repairs.
- 2.9 Overall, the Structural Survey concludes the building to be structurally stable and able to support the external envelope of a conversion to habitable use. The proposal therefore does not require the construction of a any new

structural elements or the creation of a new building envelope in order to facilitate the residential conversion. The building is consequently held to benefit from the permitted development rights set out under Class Q.

2.10 The permitted development right allows for building operations in the form of replacement exterior walls and roofs, along with the provision of new windows and doors (amongst other permitted works). In this case, the application proposes to retain the existing timber frame in its entirety along with the existing external concrete flooring. 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.

2.11 Insulation is to be applied internally behind the existing timber frame with replacement larch and standing seam cladding applied to the elevations and roof in place of the existing materials. New windows and doors are also to be introduced in order to facilitate the conversion of the building to a dwellinghouse. All of these works amount to building operations that are permissible under Class Q. No new structural elements are required nor proposed.

2.12 Having regard to the above, it is concluded that the proposed development can be held to involve the *conversion* of the building rather than being tantamount to a new build, and consequently the building benefits from the rights afforded under Class Q subject to compliance with the specific criteria set out in Class Q.1, which are discussed below.

2.13 Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q.1 confirms that development is not permitted if:

(a) the site was not used solely for an agricultural use, as part of an 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

- 2.14 The site was in agricultural use as part of an established agricultural unit as of 24th July 2023 and remains in agricultural use to this present day, being currently used for the keeping of pigs and goats that the applicant rears for meat. The proposal therefore derives no conflict with the requirements of criterion Q.1(a) of the Order.

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

(i) The site ss part of an established agricultural unit on 24th July 2023,

(ii) Where the use 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,

- 2.15 The site is part of an established agricultural unit and therefore no conflict with the requirements of criterion Q.1(b) of the Order will arise.

(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,

- 2.16 The proposed dwellinghouses will each have a gross internal floor area of 149.6 square metres and therefore the proposal does not derive any conflict with the requirements of criterion Q.1(c) 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,***

- 2.17 There has been no previous Class Q development carried out within the existing agricultural unit. The proposal will result in the creation of 3no. dwellinghouses whose collective floor area (448.8 square metres) falls well below the maximum threshold of 1000 square metres. No conflict with criterion Q.1(d) will therefore arise.

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

- 2.18 The site is not occupied under an agricultural tenancy and as a consequence the proposal derives no conflict with the requirements of criterion (e).

(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;

2.19 There are no existing agricultural tenancies on the site, nor have there been within the last 12 months, and consequently no termination of a tenancy can, will, or has occurred. The proposed development therefore derives no conflict with the requirements of criterion Q.1(f).

(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.

2.20 No development under Class A(a) or Class B(b) has been carried out on the established agricultural unit in the preceding 10 years. The proposed development therefore meets the requirements of criterion (g).

(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 accommodation building operations allowed by paragraph Q.1(j)(i).***

2.21 The submitted proposal will not result in the external dimensions of the building extending beyond the external dimensions of the existing building at any given point, other than the proposed photovoltaic panels on the southwest facing roofslope, but these are integrated to the roofing system and will not project more than 0.2 metres from the roofslope. No conflict with criterion Q.1(h) will therefore arise.

- (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) 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,

2.22 The submitted proposal does not propose an extension to the building so no conflict with criterion Q.1(i) will arise.

(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);

2.23 The building operations proposed within the application comprise to the following:

- The insertion of new windows and doors
- Installation of replacement external cladding
- Installation of replacement roof cladding
- Installation of service connections
- Internal works to provide insulation, flooring, internal walls etc.

- 2.24 All of the above works amount to building operations that are permissible under criterion (j) and are reasonably required to facilitate the conversion of the building to dwellinghouses. The proposed formation of internal walls, provision of insulation etc. do not amount to development that requires consent, as confirmed by the Planning Practice Guidance. The proposal therefore derives no conflict with criterion Q.1(j).

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

- 2.25 The site does not lie on article 2(3) land and as a consequence the proposal derives no conflict with criterion Q.1(k).

(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;***

- 2.26 The site is not in, and does not form part of, a site of special scientific interest, a safety hazard area, or a military explosives storage area, and as a consequence no conflict with criterion Q.1(l) will arise.

(m) The site is not, nor does it contain, a scheduled monument;

- 2.27 The site does not comprise, nor does it contain a scheduled monument and the proposal therefore meets the requirements of criterion (m).

(n) the building is a listed building.

- 2.28 The building proposed for conversion is not statutorily listed, and as a consequence the derives no conflict with criterion Q.1(m).

(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 2015⁶⁵ as read with the notes dated 19th May 2016 which apply to it,

- 2.29 The gross internal floor area of the proposed dwellings (149.6 square metres) exceeds the minimum required floorspace set out within the Nationally Described Space Standard for a three bedroomed / six person dwelling (95 square metres). No conflict with criterion Q.1(o) will therefore arise.

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

- 2.30 The building and the wider site benefits from an existing and long established means of access onto Brookhouse Lane which serves both the farmyard, as well as the existing farmhouse. The agricultural use of the site will cease as a consequence of the development, removing slow moving vehicles from the public highway. It is submitted that the proposed development will have no greater degree of impact on highway safety than that associated with the existing site. No conflict with criterion Q.1(p) will therefore arise.

- 2.31 Consideration of prior approval matters are set out overleaf.

3 Class Q Conditions

3.1 Class Q.2(1) also 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 Schedule 1 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 provisions of the Planning Practice Guidance.

(a) Transport & Highways Impacts

3.3 The proposed dwellings will each be provided with an area of off-street parking to the northeast of the building with space for the parking of two vehicles (6no. parking spaces in total). That level of parking provision meets the required car parking standard for a three bedroomed dwelling.

3.4 Vehicular access to the site will be taken via the existing vehicular access to the site off Brookhouse Lane which currently serves the farmyard and the

farmhouse. The agricultural use of the site will cease as a consequence of the development, removing slow moving vehicles from the public highway, and it is submitted that the proposed development will have no greater degree of impact on highway safety than that associated with the existing site. 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).

(b) Noise Impacts

- 3.5 The proposed conversion of the existing agricultural building to form 3no. dwellinghouses will not derive any adverse noise impacts in itself. There are furthermore no uses within the immediate surrounding area that would otherwise present a risk of noise disturbance to future occupiers of the dwellings. The proposed development will therefore not be adversely affected by noise, and is acceptable in the content of criterion Q.2(1)(b).

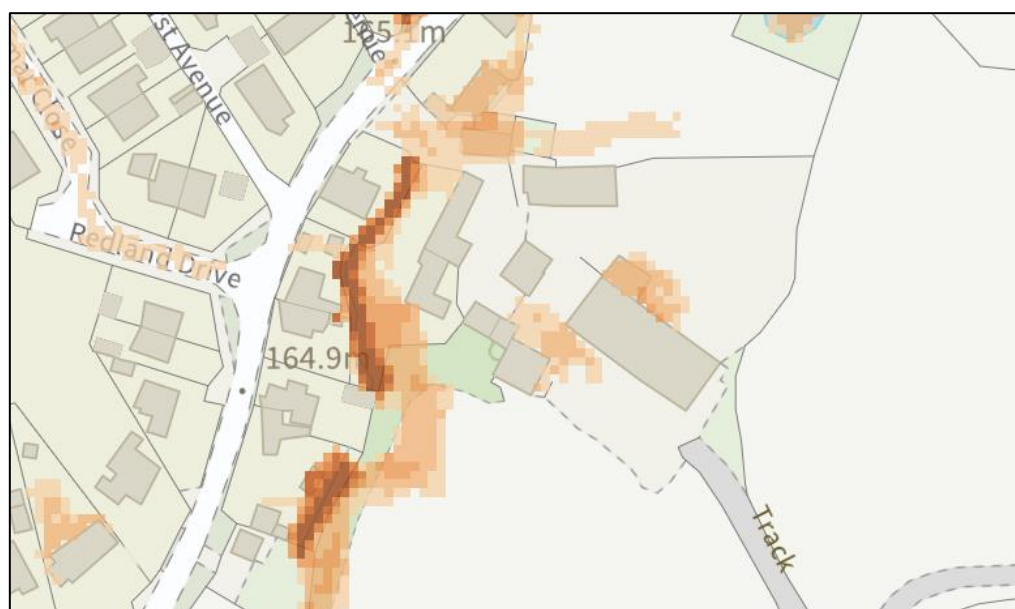
(c) Contamination

- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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).

(d) Flood Risks

- 3.8 A review of the Environment Agency's Flood Map For Planning confirms that the site lies within Flood Zone 1 (low-probability of flooding). The surface water flood map (extract shown in Figure 1) shows that there are some localised areas of potential surface water flooding to the northeast and southwest of the building.

Figure 1 – Extract of EA Surface Water Flood Map



- 3.9 As this proposal comprises the conversion of the existing building, rather than the erection of a new build dwelling, it is submitted that the adoption of flood resilience measures within the build, including raised internal floor levels, flood resilient thresholds and doors, raised electrical equipment and use of permeable surfacing for the parking / garden areas will be sufficient to avoid any risk of flooding to future occupiers of the dwellings. Consequently, the development is not at risk of flooding and as such is acceptable in the context of criterion Q.2(1)(d).

(e) Impractical or Undesirable?

- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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 (448.4 square metres) does not exceed the footprint of the existing building being converted (495 square metres), 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).

(f) Design & External Appearance

- 3.12 The existing building has a functional, utilitarian appearance, clad in timber with a sheet metal roof. It has a long, low-profile, single storey form, with a simple pitched roof and large agricultural openings, particularly on the northwest elevation.
- 3.13 The proposed development has been carefully designed to retain the agricultural character and simple form of the existing building. The proposal retains this established building form, scale, roof profile and overall massing, with the operational development limited to those necessary to facilitate its conversion to residential use. The elevations have been designed to ensure that the building remains clearly legible as a converted agricultural structure rather than appearing as a purpose-built residential development.
- 3.14 The proposed external materials have been selected to provide a contemporary but appropriately rural appearance. The use of vertically

boarded Siberian larchwood cladding reflects the vertical boarded character commonly associated with agricultural buildings, including that of the existing building, whilst the standing-seam roof comprises a simple, functional roof treatment.

3.15 Openings are arranged in a restrained manner across the elevations, with the existing long, horizontal proportions of the building retained. Integrated solar PV is proposed within the southwest roof slope, providing the dwellings with a renewable source of electricity.

3.16 The resultant building will retain its agrarian form, and have a pleasant aesthetic which is in keeping with the agrarian character of its surroundings. The design and layout of the proposal is therefore concluded to be acceptable in the context of criterion Q.2(1)(f).

(g) Provision of Natural Light

3.17 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.

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 not required.