



ALSTON OLD HALL FARM, ALSTON, PR3 3BN

Application for Prior Approval: Change of Use of Agricultural Building to 5No. Dwellings

PLANNING STATEMENT

February 2021



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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION
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2	SITE AND LOCALITY DESCRIPTION
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3	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
---	----------------------

4	PLANNING ASSESSMENT
---	---------------------

5	CONCLUSIONS
---	-------------

/1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. PWA Planning is retained by Mrs Patricia Hewitt ('the Applicant') to prepare and submit an application for Prior Approval, for the change of use of an agricultural building into 5no dwellings at Alston Old Hall Farm, Alston, Longridge ('the application site').
- 1.2. The application is made to Ribble Valley Borough Council under the prior approval procedure; Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q (a) and (b) of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order (GPDO) 2015, as amended. This Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposal would involve permitted development in accordance with the GPDO.
- 1.3. This Planning Statement, alongside a review of the legislation, provides a description of the proposed development together with an appraisal of the scheme in relation to the legislation and should be read in conjunction with the following suite of supporting documents:
 - 1APP Form;
 - Drawn Information:
 - Location Plan (EAD_116_P_01);
 - Existing Site Plan (EAD_116_P_02);
 - Existing Plan & Elevations (EAD_116_P_03);
 - Proposed Site Plan (EAD_116_P_04);
 - Proposed Plan and Elevations (EAD_116_P-05);
 - Front and Rear CGIs;
 - Contamination Land Phase I Report; and
 - Structural Condition Survey.

/2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site relates to an agricultural building at Alston Old Hall Farm, Alston, an active sheep farm with a flock of 400 sheep. As shown by the Existing Site Plan (EAD_116_P_02), the barn sits centrally along the eastern boundary of the site. A grassed paddock is located within the site directly to the south east of the barn and a yard area is located to the north and west of the barn. The site is located to the south west of Alston Lane, with a private road leading off Alston Lane providing access to the agricultural building and wider farmstead.



Figure 1: Aerial image of the site (Source: Google Earth)

- 2.2. Further buildings associated with Alston Old Hall Farm are located to the west of the application site. These include the main dwelling of Alston Old Hall, a single storey workshop building and a large barn, all of which are arranged around a courtyard. The wider surrounding area is characterised by agricultural land and farmsteads. Alston is located approximately 2km to the north west of the site and Longridge is located

approximately 4km to the north. The Existing Site Plan shows the site within its close setting and an aerial image of the site is shown in Figure 1 above.

- 2.3. The building subject to this application is a typical agricultural building, which is of a steel framed construction. The elevations consist of lower concrete block walls with timber cladding to the upper sections. The western elevation of the building is largely open, with no openings to the remaining elevations. Internally, the building has concrete flooring. The pitched timber purlin roof is covered with corrugated cement sheet roofing, with rooflights present. The existing building is served by guttering and downspouts.

- 2.4. There is an existing access driveway on the south west part of the site which serves the application building. This driveway leads off the private access road which connects with Alston Lane to the north east.

/3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1. This application seeks prior approval for the conversion of the agricultural building to 5no. dwellings under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q (a) and (b) of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order (GPDO) 2015.
- 3.2. The proposed development is shown on the accompanying Proposed Site Plan (EAD_116_9_04) which demonstrates the arrangement of the conversion to form 5no. dwellings, the access arrangements, and the proposed curtilage areas, including parking spaces and garden areas. A landscaped area would be provided at either side of the access road leading to the properties. A schedule of the accommodation proposed is provided at Table 3.1 below:

Unit	GIA	Garden/Curtilage	Parking spaces
1	465	336	3
2	90	56	2
3	88	56	2
4	88	56	2
5	90	56	2

Table 3.1 – Schedule of Accommodation

- 3.3. As demonstrated by the accompanying Proposed Plans & Elevations (EAD_116_P_05), the proposed development would provide 1no. four-bedroom dwellings and 4no. two-bedroom dwellings. The dwellings would be two-storeys in height. The steel frame and lower concrete blockwork plinth would be retained, with timber cladding to the elevations as per the existing agricultural building. The existing corrugated cement roofing would be replaced with a new slate roof. Five openings would be introduced to both the north and south elevations of the building, to allow both access to the dwellings and to provide natural light. The recessed openings would comprise aluminium framed glazing. Three new openings would be provided to the east elevation of the building. No new openings are proposed to the west elevation, with new timber

cladding introduced to this elevation. New internal walls would be provided to create the individual dwellings and living accommodation.

- 3.4. Further details in relation to the method of construction are contained within the supporting Structural Condition Survey. The survey concludes that the existing building is in good condition and is suitable for conversion to dwellings.
- 3.5. Vehicles would access the site using the existing agricultural access to the south west of the site, which connects to Alston Lane to the north east. The existing access driveway would be extended to provide access to the dwellings. Parking provision would be provided to the front or side of each property, with three spaces allocated to Unit 1 and two spaces allocated to Units 2-5.
- 3.6. Each of the smaller dwellinghouses (Units 2-5) would have a front garden. While the larger dwellinghouse (Unit 1) would have both a front and rear garden.

/4 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

4.1. The GPDO, as amended, provides that the following changes of use under Class Q and works are permitted development:

(a) a 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; or

(b) development referred to in paragraph (a) together with building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building referred to in paragraph (a) to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Schedule.

4.2. It is not considered that the proposal would conflict with any of the limitations highlighted within this Part of the GPDO, which are discussed in turn below.

4.3. Q.1 (a) states that development would not be permitted by Class Q if:

"The site was not solely used for an agricultural use as part of an established agricultural unit –

i) On 20th March 2013, or

ii) In the case of a building which was in use before that date but was not in use on that date when it was last in use, or

iii) In the case of a site which was brought into use after 20th March 2013, for a period of at least 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins."

4.4. In accordance with Q.1 (a) the last use of the building was for agricultural purposes, with the building being in use for this purpose on and prior to the 20th March 2013.

4.5. Q.1(b) – (d) states that:

(b) in the case of—

(i) a larger dwellinghouse, within an established agricultural unit—

(aa) the cumulative number of separate larger dwellinghouses developed under Class Q exceeds 3; or

(bb) the cumulative floor space of the existing building or buildings changing use to a larger dwellinghouse or dwellinghouses under Class Q exceeds 465 square metres;

(ba) the floor space of any dwellinghouse developed under Class Q having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order exceeds 465 square metres;

(c) in the case of—

(i) a smaller dwellinghouse, within an established agricultural unit—

(aa) the cumulative number of separate smaller dwellinghouses developed under Class Q exceeds 5; or

(bb) the floor space of any one separate smaller dwellinghouse having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order exceeds 100 square metres;

(d) the development under Class Q (together with any previous development under Class Q) within an established agricultural unit would result in either or both of the following—

(i) a larger dwellinghouse or larger dwellinghouses having more than 465 square metres of floor space having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order;

(ii) the cumulative number of separate dwellinghouses having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order exceeding 5;

4.6. The development would create 1no. larger dwellinghouse and 4no. smaller dwellinghouses. The larger dwellinghouse would have a floorspace of 465 sq.m gross and each of the smaller dwellinghouses would provide a floorspace of between 88 and 90 sq.m gross. Therefore, the proposal does not exceed the threshold for the number of large dwellinghouses or cumulative floorspace for larger dwellinghouses in

accordance with Q.1 (b). In addition, the proposal does not exceed the threshold for the number of smaller dwellinghouses or maximum floorspace for smaller dwellinghouses in accordance with Q.1 (c). On the basis that there have been no other developments under Class Q within the established agricultural unit, the proposal is for 5no. dwellings in total and the floorspace of the larger dwellinghouse does not exceed 465 sq.m, the requirement of Q.1 (d) is met.

4.7. The site is not occupied under an agricultural tenancy, nor has it been less than 1 year ago, in accordance with Q.1 (e) and (f).

4.8. There have been no other developments under Class A or Class B of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO on the agricultural unit since 2013 Q.1 (g).

4.9. Q.1 (h) and (i) deal with the physical conversion of the building:

(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;

(i) the development under Class Q(b) 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(i)(i);

4.10. In accordance with Q.1 (h), the conversion would take place within the frame of the existing building, with no extensions beyond the external dimensions of the existing building. In addition, the proposed development would comprise of operations solely outlined within Q.1 (i). The building operations to facilitate the conversion would involve the retention of the existing steel frame and concrete blockwork plinth walls. The external elevations would comprise timber cladding. An inner skin to the blockwork and

cladding would be required for insulation and load-bearing purposes. New window and door openings would be created with aluminium framed glazing. The roof will be replaced with slate roofing, this will require the replacement of the existing purlins. The submitted structural survey confirms that the building is in good structural condition suitable for conversion, with no operations required which are above those reasonably necessary for the building to function as a dwellinghouse, in line with Q. (i) (i).

- 4.11. The NPPG (2018 update, Paragraph: 105 Reference ID: 13-105-20180615) provides clarification that internal alterations not prohibited under Class Q, provided the building is suitable for conversion:

"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."

- 4.12. The application site is not located on article 2(3) land, does not form part of an area of special scientific interest, a safety hazard area or a military explosives storage area. Nor is the site within the proximity of any scheduled ancient monuments or listed buildings and consequently the proposal is consistent with the provisions of Q.1 (j) – (m).

- 4.13. Part 3 X provides interpretation of some of the terminology used under Part 3. Under this section, it is stated that:

"curtilage" means, for the purposes of Class Q, R or S only—

(a) the piece of land, whether enclosed or unenclosed, immediately beside or around the agricultural building, closely associated with and serving the purposes of the agricultural building, or

(b) an area of land immediately beside or around the agricultural building no larger than the land area occupied by the agricultural building, whichever is the lesser;

- 4.14. As stated earlier, Class Q allows for:
*"Development consisting of—
(a) a change of use of a building **and any land within its curtilage** from a use as an agricultural building to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order"*
- 4.15. The existing building has a footprint of 560sqm. In compliance with the above, the total curtilage area of the 5no. dwellings is 560sqm.
- 4.16. Having assessed the proposals against the provisions of Class Q, it is considered that as a matter of principle the proposed change of use would represent permitted development.
- 4.17. The following criteria can be assessed by the Local Authority to determine whether prior approval is required:

Transport and Highways Impacts

- 4.18. The proposed access to the site will utilise the existing agricultural access point at the south west corner of the site, which connects to Alston Lane to the north east. This access point is already established off the road and is considered to provide safe and suitable access arrangements for the 5no. dwellings. The existing driveway will be extended within the site to provide vehicular access to both the north and south sides of the site. It is considered that the addition of 5no. dwellings will have a negligible impact on the surrounding highway network. The parking arrangements for the dwellings will provide 11no. spaces, in line with parking standards.

Noise Impacts

- 4.19. There would be no negative noise impacts caused by the proposed development which might affect neighbouring land uses. The noise levels from the residential use of the building are not expected to exceed those of an agricultural use. The nearest buildings to the barn are the main farm buildings which are located to the south west of the site.

There are sufficient separation distances between the barn and this property to ensure there are no harmful impacts in relation to noise.

Contamination Risks

- 4.20. The application has been submitted alongside a Contaminated Land Phase I report, prepared by Martin Environmental Solutions. This report confirms that no contamination exists which poses a significant risk of harm to identified receptors either on site or in the immediate vicinity and the site is considered safe for residential use. The report makes some recommendations, including a watching brief during development works to identify and deal with any potential contamination.

Flooding Risk

- 4.21. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 in accordance with the Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps, and accordingly is at low risk of flooding. The proposed development would not increase the risk of flooding on the site.

Location

- 4.22. Local Planning Authorities are also required to consider whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change from agricultural use to a dwelling(s). Planning Practice Guidance clarifies the manner in which the Government expects local planning authorities to consider this matter. It confirms that in particular, there is no sustainability test associated with the condition (Paragraph: 108 Reference ID: 13-108-20150305):

"The permitted development right does not apply a test in relation to sustainability of location. This is deliberate as the right recognises that many agricultural buildings will not be in village settlements and may not be able to rely on public transport for their daily needs. Instead, the local planning authority can consider whether the location and siting of the building would make it impractical or undesirable to change use to a house."

4.23. The siting of the proposal is considered to be appropriate given the nature of the surrounding area. There is an existing private access road leading to the application site from Alston Lane. This existing access arrangement is considered appropriate to serve the 5no. dwellings. There are other existing buildings within the vicinity of the barn, including the cluster of farm buildings at Alston Old Hall Farm, with the necessary services in place within the vicinity of the site.

Design and External Appearance

4.24. The design and external appearance of the building are acceptable under the context of Class Q, as demonstrated on the Proposed Plan & Elevations (EAD_116_P-05). The 5no. proposed dwellings would be located within the existing steel framed structure of the agricultural building. The proposed timber cladding above the blockwork plinth and slate roof would complement the character of the rural location. The timber clad elevations are reflective of the existing building, while the slate roof will form an improvement over the existing cement profiled sheeting. The insertion of aluminium framed glazing to the building will create an attractive scheme, ensuring that each dwelling benefits from natural light and views across the surrounding area. To assist the Council, two CGIs have been provided which demonstrate how the building would look once converted.

4.25. As shown on the Proposed Site Plan (EAD_116_P_04), sufficient amenity space will be provided for each of the 5no. dwellings. Each of the smaller dwellinghouses will have a front garden, while the larger dwellinghouse will have front and rear gardens. Each of the dwellings would have 2 or 3 private parking spaces, with suitable shared access arrangements leading to these spaces. As demonstrated in the CGIs of the proposal, some low landscaping would be provided to delineate the garden areas.

The Provision of Adequate Natural Light in All Habitable Rooms

4.26. As demonstrated by the Proposed Plan and Elevations (EAD_116_P_05) each of the dwellinghouses would have adequate provision of natural light in all habitable rooms. New aluminium framed glazing is proposed to both the north and south elevations of

the building, along with new openings in the east elevation to provide natural light to all habitable rooms on both the first and second floor.

/5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. It is concluded that the proposed development represents permitted development and that, for the reasons highlighted within this Statement, the proposals do not conflict with the limitations as set out in the GPDO.

- 5.2. Moreover, it is considered that there should be no reason for the Local Planning Authority to require prior approval to any aspect of the development, or where such prior approval is required, that it should not be granted.



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