

PLANNING STATEMENT

IN RELATION THE CONVERSION OF 2 AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS INTO 7 CLASS Q DWELLINGS

BUILDINGS AT GREAT COTTON FARM, DARTMOUTH, TQ6 0LB

ON BEHALF OF MR & MRS ROBERT PERRY

REF: AMB

MARCH 2025

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Residential

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62 Fore Street, Kingsbridge,
TQ7 1PP
01548 857474

Totnes
59 Fore Street, Totnes,
TQ9 5NJ
01803 869920

Lettings

Modbury
3 Church Street, Modbury,
PL21 0QW
01548 830831

Yealmpton
The Old Bakery, Yealmpton,
PL8 2EA
01752 880044

Newton Ferrers
Newton Hill, Newton Ferrers,
PL8 1AA
01752 872417

Exeter
The Amory Building, Cheriton
Bishop, Exeter, EX6 6JH
01392 908137

Property Professionals

Salcombe
2 Island Square, Island Street,
Salcombe, TQ8 8DP
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BACKGROUND

The Applicants Mr and Mrs Robert Perry own and utilise the farmbuildings at Great Cotton Farm in association with their agricultural business under Holding number 10/300/0042. The farmholding has hosted a range of agricultural activities over the years including dairy cows, pig rearing and more recently has been home to beef cattle which graze the adjacent 90 acres of land owned by the Applicants off Venn Lane.

The cluster of buildings to which this application relates have consequently been used for a variety of uses, initially built as the base for a dairy business with an old parlour building, cattle shed and silage barn, but after the dairy use ceased the buildings were used for pig fattening and then, over the last 10 or so years, for the winter housing of beef cattle fattened on the grass at Great Cotton Farm through the summer.

The buildings are a cluster of buildings with the old dairy and surrounding buildings comprising concrete block structures which are externally rendered with corrugated fibre cement roofing. The larger former silage building, now used for cattle housing, comprises a portal frame building with corrugated tin and timber weatherboard cladding, with some concrete block work walls and a corrugate fibre cement roof.

The majority of the buildings have concrete floors and there is a concrete yard in between the buildings with a compacted stone floor in the cattle building/silage barn.

PLANNING HISTORY

A previous Class Q submission was made for this site Ref: 3315/21/PDM which was dealt with by Claire Boobier. The application met all the Class Q criteria and was supported except for an objection received from DCC Highways due to the inadequate access onto Venn Cross.

It was explained that since the site of the buildings at Great Cotton Farm are surrounded on 3 sides by the new Dartmouth development, a new road access was in the process of being constructed with the access through the new roads of this development. It was therefore agreed to withdraw the previous application and wait for the new road network to be constructed before the Class Q application would be resubmitted.

The new road network leading to the site is now complete providing access through the Great Cotton Farm development to these buildings. Laburnum Avenue provides access to the existing access to the northwest of the barns as is indicated on the site location plan. The Applicants met Richard Jackson from DCC Highways on the site in November 2024 when he was visiting the Baker Estates team, and he confirmed he was now happy with the constructed access comprising Laburnum Avenue and its access to the site and was happy for the Class Q to be resubmitted when he would raise no objections.

PROPOSAL

It is proposed to convert the range of farmbuildings into 7 residential dwellings under Class Q. The application is supported by a Structural Appraisal for the buildings prepared by HB Surveying Ltd which confirms that the barns are in good structural order and can therefore be converted under the Class Q criteria.

The Structural Appraisal contains a Schedule of Construction Elements confirming that the proposal will involve the conversion of each of the buildings utilising the existing materials and structure.

Detailed as-existing and as-proposed elevation drawings and floor plans accompany the application showing how the site is to be laid out.

The existing silage barn, comprising the larger building to the north, will be split into 4 3-bedroom units, each having a floor area of 100m². The cluster of 3 dairy buildings to the south will each be converted into 2 1-bedroom units, comprising 50m² and 54m² and a 2-bedroom unit of 70m² internal floor area respectively.

The application is also supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal confirming that no protected species will be impacted by this proposal, but wildlife provision is made in the plans with the insertion of bat and bird boxes as per the recommendations.

The detailed plans as submitted with the application demonstrate that the cluster of buildings can be converted into 7 residential dwellings under the Class Q legislation, which are each surrounded by their own domestic curtilage and parking spaces to serve each residential dwelling.

The site is adjacent to the new Great Cotton Farm development and is on the edge of Dartmouth which is a sustainable settlement and this proposal will deliver a mix of 1-3 bedroom dwellings.

CLASS Q POLICY

This application is for prior approval under Class Q of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2024 (as amended).

It is considered that the buildings meet with the criteria within the Class Q legislation and will create a good mix of 1 to 3 bedroom homes utilising existing well-built and structurally sound buildings to create contemporary dwellings. This application seeks consent under Class Q (a) and (b) and therefore covers not only the principle of conversion to dwellings but also the design, external appearance and the necessary building operations to convert the buildings in to dwellings.

The conversion of agricultural buildings into residential use is permitted where it meets with the following criteria.

Q.1(A) The site was solely in agricultural use as part of an established agricultural unit –

- i) On or before the 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,***

The buildings proposed for conversion have been occupied for agricultural use as part of an agricultural business and have been in agricultural use since before the 24th March 2023. The buildings were built to serve a dairy farm but have since been used for pig rearing and more recently beef cattle and are in use in association with the Applicants' agricultural business under Holding Number 10/300/0042.

The land is all still farmed and therefore the site continues to operate as an established agricultural unit and is therefore in accordance with Q.1(b).

Q.1.(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 150m²

The scheme seeks approval for the conversion of the range of buildings into 7 residential dwellings with 4 3-bedroom 100sqm dwellings, 1 2-bedroom dwelling of 70sqm and 2 1-bedroom units of 50sqm and 54 sqm. No dwelling proposed for conversion will exceed the maximum floor area of 150m².

Q.1.(d) The development under Class Q (together with any previous development under Class Q) within an established agricultural unit would result in:

- i) The cumulative number of separate dwellinghouses having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order exceeding 10.***
- ii) The cumulative floor space of dwellinghouses having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of Schedule 1 to the Use Classes Order exceeding 1000 square metres.***

The scheme proposes the conversion of agricultural buildings to provide 7 dwellings which is well within the maximum of 10 dwellings permissible under the new Class Q legislation. The total combined floor area of the proposed conversions will be 574 sqm and therefore is under the 1000m² limit available for conversion under the Class Q legislation.

E and F. The site has not been occupied under any agricultural tenancy agreement and a tenancy has not been terminated within the previous year.

It is confirmed that all the land and buildings are owned and occupied by the Applicants and no agricultural tenancies have been terminated within the previous year.

G. No development under Class A(a) or B(a) of Part 6 of this Schedule 2 has been carried out on the established agricultural unit –

- i) Since the 20th March 2013; or***

- ii) Where development under Class Q begins after March 2021, during the period which is 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins.***

There has been no agricultural development on the unit on a Prior Notification basis for in excess of 10 years.

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(i)(i)***

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 wall 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 begins.***

No extensions to the existing buildings are proposed in order to facilitate their conversion.

J. (i) The development under Class Q(b) would not necessitate building operations other than 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):

This application is accompanied by Structural Appraisals prepared by HB Surveying Limited who confirmed that the structures of the buildings are sound and suitable for conversion. To enable the buildings to function as dwellings, windows and doors will be inserted as permitted by the legislation.

The barns are all well-constructed buildings with the main silage building comprising a concrete framed building with concrete block walls, corrugated tin cladding and timber weatherboarding above under a corrugated fibre cement roof. The smaller buildings to the south comprise all concrete block structure which are rendered externally with a corrugated fibre cement roof. All of the buildings have concrete/stone floors with a surrounding concrete yard and are therefore structurally well-built which is confirmed in the Structural Appraisal by HB Surveying Limited attached to this application, which also includes a Schedule of Construction Elements which confirms that the proposal as submitted is a conversion where the 5 residential units will be created with only the insertion of windows and doors to provide sufficient access, light and ventilation to the proposed new dwellings.

The Structural Appraisal also confirms that the plans attached demonstrate there is sufficient natural light created by the new window and door openings proposed to accord with the Class Q legislation introduced in August 2020.

The detailed plans contained within this application show that the barns are able to be converted under the Class Q criteria into dwellings utilising their existing structures.

The site is connected to mains electricity and mains water; therefore, it is not considered problematic to connect the dwelling to the existing supplies.

K. The site is not on article 2(3) land

Article 2(3) land comprises designated land that is defined within a conservation area, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, an area specified by the Secretary of State for the purposes of enhancement and protection of the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside, the Broads, a National Park, or World Heritage Site.

L. The site does not form or is part of –

i) A site of SSSI

ii) A safety hazard area

iii) A military explosives storage area

M. The site is, or contains, a scheduled monument; or

N. The building is a listed building

The barns and their proposed curtilage that will accompany the conversions are not situated within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a Conservation Area, World Heritage Site, SSSI, Safety Hazard Area, or Military Explosive Storage Area.

In addition, the barns do not have listed status, and the site and wider holding does not contain a scheduled monument.

We confirm that the buildings and associated holding are not on article 2(3) land and are therefore eligible for Class Q.

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 issues by the Department for Communities and Local Government on 27th March 2015(1)

It is confirmed that the dwellings proposed will comply with nationally described space standards.

P. The building does not have suitable existing access to a public highway.

The site access called Laburnum Avenue has been created to serve the new Great Cotton Farm development by Baker Estates and already provides access to serve both the agricultural and residential use and therefore the proposed conversions will not introduce an incompatible use with the rest of the site. Richard Jackson who previously objected to the Class Q scheme due to the inadequate access from Venn Lane has inspected the access and is now happy that Laburnum Avenue leads to the site. Therefore, the access is suitable and since no changes to the proposed access are considered to be necessary to provide future residents with suitable access to the public highway, the previous DCC Highways objection will be removed.

Ample turning space is provided within the development which ensures that future residents will be able to enter and exit the site safely onto the public highway.

CONDITIONS FOR A CLASS Q APPLICATION - Q.2

(1) Where the development proposed is development under Class Q(a) together with development under Class Q(b), development is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to —

A) Transport and Highways impacts of the development

The buildings at Great Cotton Farm are located on the edge of the newly grown town of Dartmouth in a truly sustainable location with access to shops, schools, health centre, leisure centre all in walking distance as well as the main town's facilities down the hill and with access to public transport.

The proposed site has adequate space around to not only host their own parking areas but also provide suitable turning areas which will ensure that future residents are able to exit the site onto the public highway safely.

B) Noise impacts of the development

The barns are situated within a cluster of farmbuildings which are now surrounded by new houses. There are no activities within the vicinity or involved in the conversions that will create an unacceptable level of noise. Consequently, we consider that there will be negligible noise impacts associated with the proposed conversions.

C) Contamination risks on the site

The barns proposed for conversion have been used for various agricultural purposes including livestock housing and a dairy. Providing the buildings are carefully cleared before works begin, it is considered that the contamination risk is negligible.

D) Flooding risks on the site

As indicated on the attached Flood Map, the barns and associated farm holding lie outside of any Flood risk zone and therefore the risk of flooding is negligible. On the contrary, the change of use of the existing barns on the site will involve the enhancement of the existing drainage systems, and the addition of permeable surfaces such as lawns to improve the drainage situation on the site.

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

The buildings at Great Cotton Farm are located close to the town of Dartmouth which offers a full array of services and in walking distance of shops, leisure centre, health centre, schools and a bus service and therefore is fully sustainable. It is therefore considered that the dwellings will not be isolated in the landscape.

The barns lie within a cluster of buildings, and it is believed that the conversion of the barns will not have a negative impact upon the visual amenity of the area, nor the amenity value of the neighbouring dwellings. Therefore, nothing about the location or siting of the buildings makes the change of use impractical or undesirable.

An ecological survey has been undertaken by Wills Ecology and the report is included within this application. The provision of the bat and bird boxes will be included in the design as per the survey's recommendations.

F) The design or external appearance of the building

Detailed as-existing and as-proposed plans are attached together with a Structural Appraisal from HB Surveying Limited.

The attached plans demonstrate that the barns can be converted without significant alterations to their structure. The buildings are structurally sound and can be converted using their existing fabric and structure in accordance with Building Regulations. For this reason, the barns meet with the Class Q criteria and will be converted in accordance with the Schedule of Construction Elements within the Structural Appraisal.

The attached plans illustrate a scheme that represents a true conversion of the existing barns. The scheme reflects contemporary conversions which will provide a good mix of 1 to 3 bedroom units.

Each of the units provide open plan living/kitchen/dining areas and associated bathrooms and bedrooms. The design meets the Space standards and provide sufficient natural light to each room.

Whilst the new Class Q criteria provides for smaller dwellings, there is a transition period when the former large Class Q approvals can be achieved, the Applicants are keen on providing modest sized family homes that meet a variety of needs for different buyers and those seeking to enter the property ladder.

G) Provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms.

The insertion of new poly carbonate aluminium windows and doors as permitted within Class Q will ensure that the dwellings will achieve adequate lighting. From the 1st August 2020, the Permitted Development Rights requires the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwelling houses approved under Class Q. This application has sufficient light in accordance with the Building Regulations as confirmed within the Structural Appraisal and method statement prepared by HB Surveying Ltd.

SUMMARY

This application recognises and confirms that the proposed development meets with the Class Q legislation, that all the relevant criteria have been met, and the proposal will represent "conversions" in the true meaning of the word, retaining the barns' existing walls and their full structures. It is confirmed that thermal insulation will be inserted, and new windows and doors will be inserted in accordance with the Class Q legislation as supported by the Schedule of Construction Elements within the Structural Appraisal prepared by HB Surveying Limited. The design of the proposed dwellings is in accordance with the new Class Q legislation.

LUSCOMBE MAYE
MARCH 2025