



Bourne Valley Associates Ltd

Planning Statement

To support a retrospective application for a

Change of use of agricultural barns

Units 5, 6 & 7 to B2 Workshop

At

East Farm, Church Lane, Codford,

Warminster, BA12 0PG

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Project: East Farm Barns COU

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1. Introduction

This Statement accompanies and supports a full planning application made to Wiltshire Council. This planning application is for a retrospective change of use of existing agricultural barns (Units 5, 6 and 7) to B2 workshop.

The application is submitted by Bourne Valley Associates, acting as agent on behalf of Mr Josh Stratton who is the owner of the site. The farm has had to diversify away from dairy farming and concentrating on arable production, as well as converting other redundant buildings to industrial use. A number of businesses now successfully reside at the site.

2. Site context, and planning history

2.1. Site Context

East Farm immediately adjoins Codford Highstreet in proximity to the eastern intersection with the A36. The A303 is approximately 2 miles to the southeast (Deptford Junction). Warminster is 8.5 miles to the northwest. East Farm is a working farm and commercial business premises consisting of a range of traditional and modern agricultural barns, and commercial buildings shown within the blue line on the site location plan.

Codford is located parallel to the A36 with excellent road links to Warminster and Salisbury, both within 15 minutes, and to the A303 east and west giving a high level of access to road links across the south of England. East Farm is positioned at the eastern extent of Codford High Street with immediate access onto the A36.

The application site is located within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty/National Landscape and is also within the Salisbury and West Wiltshire Downs National Character Area (NE479).

The Environment Agency flood risk maps confirm the site lies within flood zone 1 (lowest probability of flooding).

The application site is shown within the red line on the submitted location plan, Drawing 01973-00-D, Sheet 01, which is submitted with this application. The wider agricultural holding is shown in blue. The overall geographical context is shown in Figure 1. The Rights of Way are shown as the dashed and solid green lines shown in Figure 2. There are no rights of way running within close proximity to the site, there is a footpath to the church from the High Street, to the south of the site.

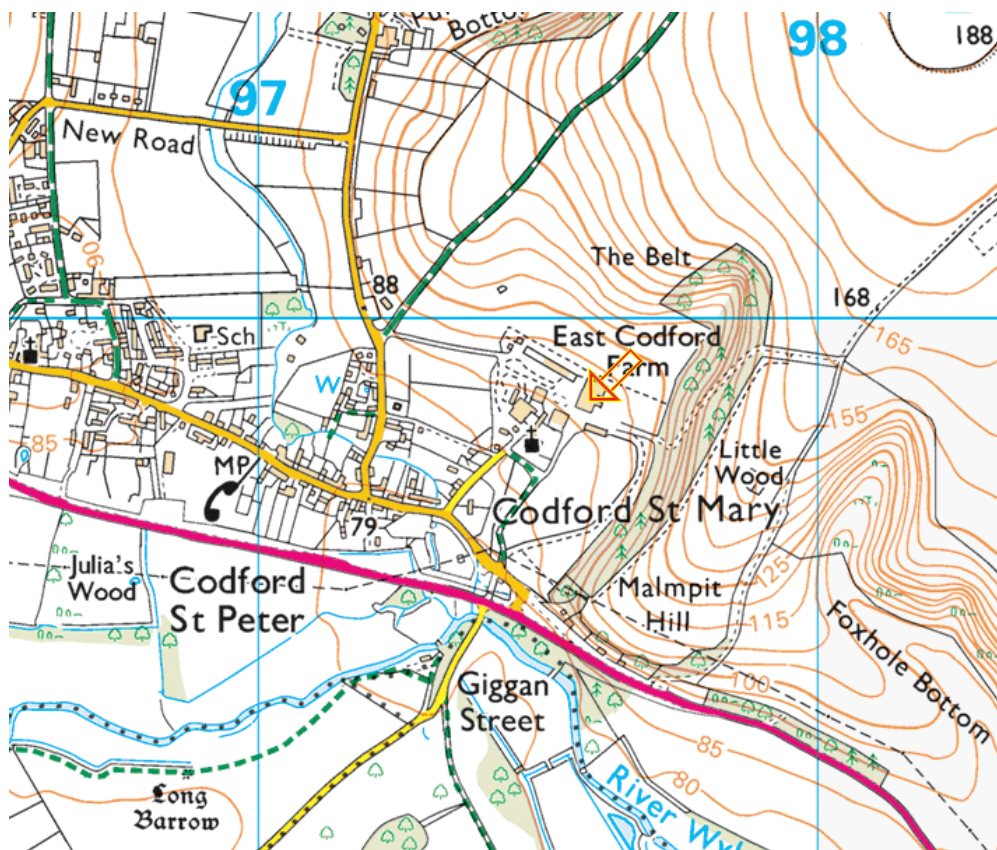


Figure 1 - Geographic context of East Farm

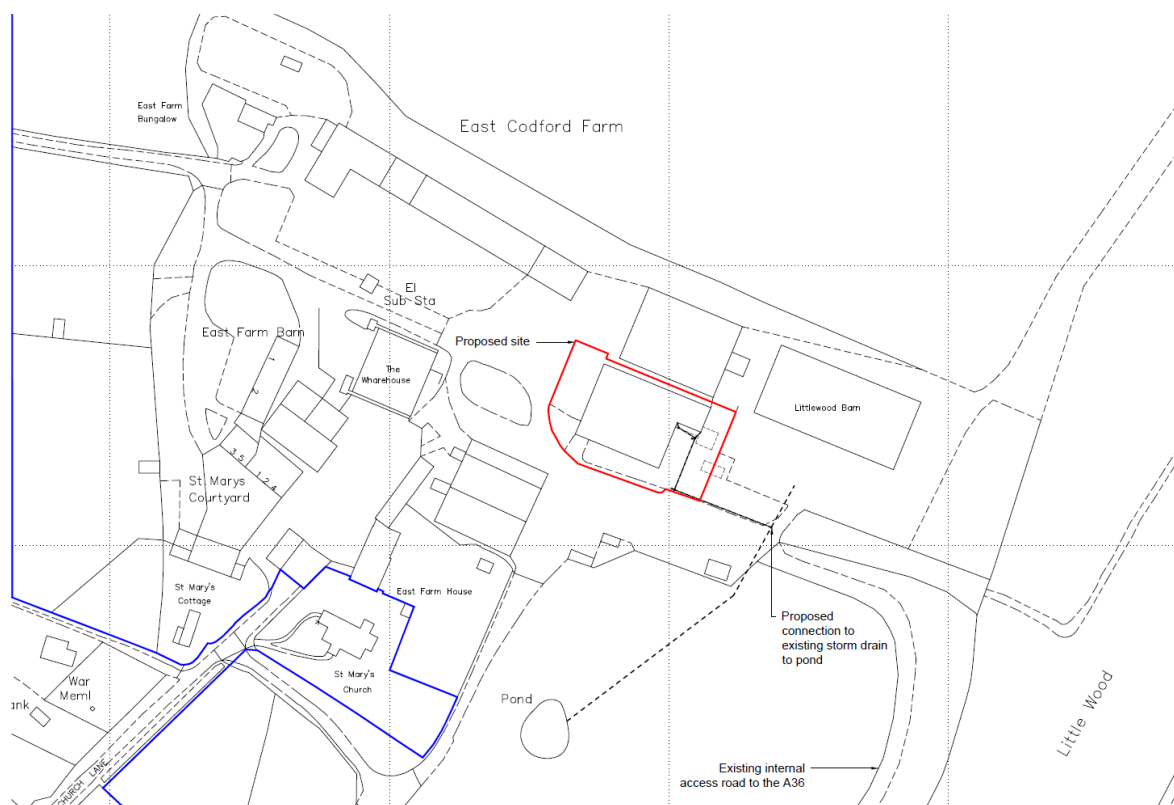


Figure 2 - Site Location Plan



Figure 3 - Aerial photograph of East Farm

2.2. Planning History

There is no planning history on these barns. The barns were built in 1958 and have been used for agricultural grain storage. Some of the other barns within the farm complex have been granted planning permission to change their use to B2/B8.

3. Proposal

4.1. The Client and the requirement for development

J.M Stratton & Co farm approximately 2,180 hectares (5,386 acres) of land near and within the parishes of Codford, Stockton and Steeple Langford and is based primarily at East Farm, Codford. J.M Stratton & Co was founded in 1914 and has expanded and diversified but agriculture remains the core trading activity of the business. The barns are not currently fit for purpose for grain storage, however are structurally sound and capable for conversion for a B2 use.

The barns proposed occupants will be:

- Unit 5 – ‘RPM England’ which will employ 3 mechanics and 1 part time administrator. They have occupied the lean to since 2021 and will be occupying the rest of the unit once COU has been granted.
- Unit 6 – ‘P A Peckett’ which will employ 2 mechanics.
- Unit 7 – A self-employed fencing contractor to use as a base.



4.2. Design

The design for the site will be such that the external appearance will be altered very little from the existing situation. There will be a small aspect of demolition, removing a small lean-to aspect and a lean-to corridor:

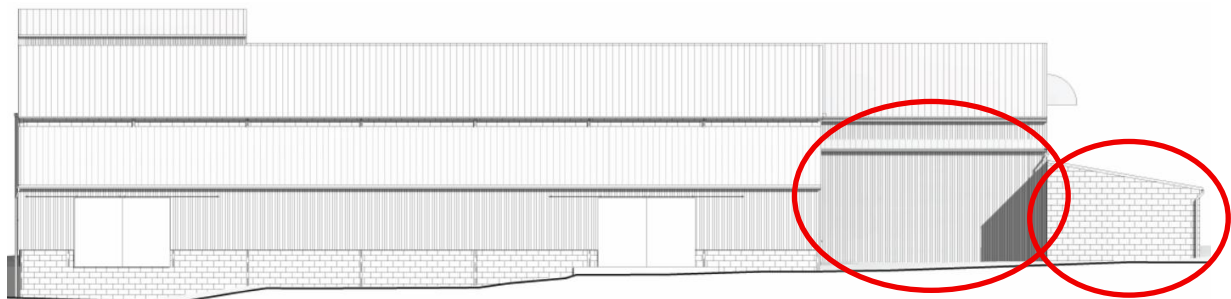


Figure 4 - Existing Buildings

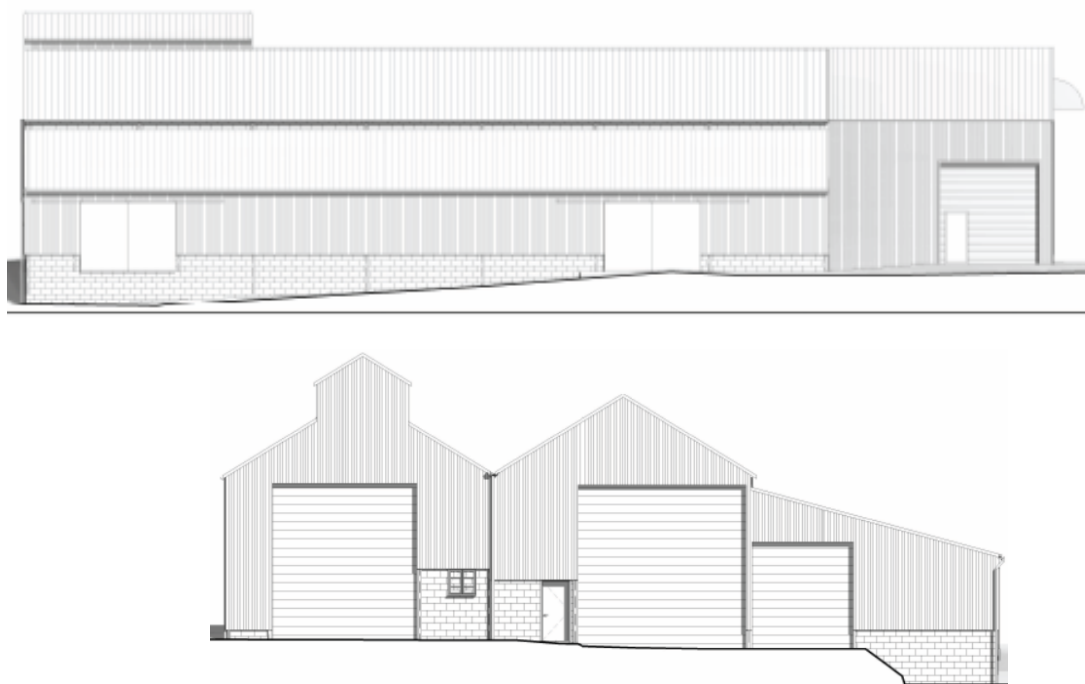


Figure 5 - Proposed Elevations

The proposal seeks to use the existing hardstanding areas for parking of the employees and the visitors. It is apparent, from the isolation of the site within a rural area, that it is not considered that public transport would represent a likely practical choice of mode for employees. The existing concrete apron which surrounds the existing buildings on site will provide ample parking for the business, however an indicative layout has been provided on the Block Plan 01973-00-D which shows the parking provision.



4. *Principle of development*

The proposal accords with the development plan because Wiltshire's Core Strategy (within the Wiltshire Local Plan) positively supports the conversion and re-use of rural buildings for employment purposes. Core Policy 48 states that proposals to convert or re-use buildings for employment uses will be supported where the building is permanent and structurally sound, the conversion can be achieved without major rebuilding, the scheme integrates with its setting and respects rural character, and there are no unacceptable environmental, amenity or highway impacts, with safe access and traffic at a level the local roads can accommodate. Core Policy 34 further underpins the principle by promoting additional employment provision that supports the rural economy and the diversification of agricultural enterprises, including appropriate B uses, where scale and location are suitable.

National policy reinforces this local stance. The National Planning Policy Framework requires decision-makers to enable the sustainable growth and expansion of businesses in rural areas "through conversion of existing buildings," and recognises that sites to meet local business needs may lie adjacent to or beyond settlements, provided development is sensitive to its surroundings, avoids unacceptable impacts on local roads, and takes opportunities to improve sustainability. On this basis, the re-use of the existing agricultural barns for B2 (general industrial) activity represents effective use of existing assets and is acceptable in principle, subject only to the detailed CP48 criteria on design, amenity and access being met.

5. *Impact on the Character and appearance of the area*

The proposal would preserve the area's rural character because no external alterations are proposed. The barns' established form, massing and materials would be retained, so the development would remain visually read as part of the existing farm group and landscape pattern. This approach aligns with Core Policy 57, which expects changes of use to be "complementary to the locality" and to respond positively to existing townscape and landscape features in terms of layout, built form, height, mass and materials, thereby making a positive contribution to local character without introducing new visual effects. It also satisfies Core Policy 51's requirement to protect and conserve landscape character through sensitive design and accords with the NPPF's direction that rural economic development should be "sensitive to its surroundings".

6. *Flood Risk*

The site lies within Flood Zone One, suggesting that the risk of flooding is very low. The application site is not in a known flow area in times of flood. There will be no increase in impermeable surface at the site, so flood risk from the development is very low at the site.

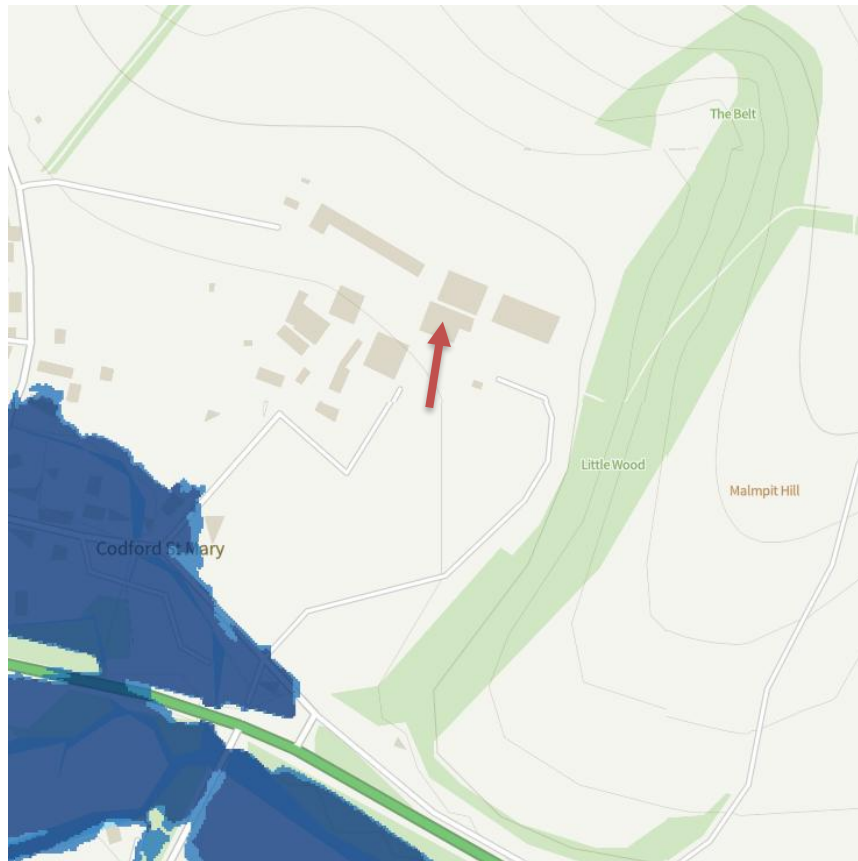


Figure 7 - EA Flood Map

7. *Impact on neighbours*

7.1. Noise Impacts

The site is located a sufficient distance away from neighbouring dwellings for there not to be concerns. In comparison the noise associated with the agricultural use, grain deliveries and the drying associated with the grain stores the proposed B2 use will be contained wholly within the existing buildings and less noisy than an agricultural use. The site is not located within close proximity to any neighbouring dwellings which are unrelated to the farm, to cause noise concerns.

The existing and previous agricultural activities at the site worked on an unrestricted basis with background noise from the grain drying operation, vehicles, and deliveries etc all contributing to the environment around the site.

8. *Ecology*

The application site is of low ecological value, and there would not be any loss of habitat given that the site consists of the buildings and existing hardstanding for the industrial and agricultural premises. There would be no implications for ecology/biodiversity. The existing landscaping outside of the red line site is to be retained. The site has no habitat designations and there will be no need to demolish any buildings which have potential to be used as habitat for nesting birds or bats; therefore, no Phase 1 habitat survey has been undertaken.



9. Highways/ Access and Parking



Figure 8 - Existing and proposed access route to the barns

It is accepted that vehicle movements associated with a B2 use could be different to that of the existing agricultural use in the form of types of vehicles and number of movements however, the existing use already sees tractor and trailer deliveries and large grain lorry collections alongside staff movements.

When in use as grain store it is filled and emptied twice each year which equates to 3,600 tonnes of grain. To empty 129 lorries (in and out being 2) 258 movements. To fill 257 tractors and trailers, 514 movements. Repairs, servicing, sampling, rodent control, 104 movements. Total 876 movements or 17 per week.

It is also accepted that the size of the proposed units Unit 5 - 549m², Unit 6 - 284m² and Unit 7 - 79m², so units of this size are unlikely to result in a large industrial premises with significant traffic generation.

- Unit 5, 3.5 employees, plus maybe 10 clients and parts deliveries per day = 85 movements per week. (in and out being 2)
- Unit 6, 2 employees, plus maybe 5 clients and parts deliveries per day = 45 movements per week
- Unit 7, once in the morning once at the end of the day = 10 movements per week
- Total 140 movements per week.



- The proposed users of the converted site will derive a good 50% of their business from the Stratton group of companies (all on site) therefore proportion of vehicles would be travelling to the farm anyway.

As such it is considered that the change of use would not result in an adverse increase in traffic movements that would have a severe adverse impact upon the highway network. There would also be sufficient space for the parking of vehicles.

Whilst there will be an increase in traffic movements, the access road was upgraded by Mr Stratton within application W/08/02696/FUL which is suitable to accommodate the likely number of vehicles associated with this use. The existing road network connecting to the A36 is capable of handling the traffic volumes.

10. Contamination

There is no history of contaminated materials being deposited at the site. The buildings were erected by Mr Stratton's father in the 1958, prior to that the land was used for agriculture.

11. Planning Policy

11.1. Introduction

This part of the planning statement seeks to review whether the proposals of the planning application accord with policy. Under the “plan-led” approach of the English planning system, proposals should accord with the development plan, which encapsulates policy from governmental through to site-specific level. This is detailed in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, there is an examination of the implications of Government policy, specifically through its National Planning Policy Framework; and to local policy, both statutory and non-statutory. The statement considers how development proposals either accord with policy or there is a justifiable exception to policy. In this case, the local policy is set by Wiltshire Council.

11.2. The National Planning Policy Framework

In December 2024, the Government published its revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the Government's policies for England and how it expects them to be applied. This section of the statement sets out elements of the NPPF pertinent to this application, and considers whether the proposals are consistent with the document and its principles.

For decision-taking this means:

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

The NPPF (para 11) sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support



growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure; In this case, the proposal reuses a vacant agricultural barn for B2, ensuring brownfield land can be reused for employment efficiently and productively. It supports local farming with secure, flexible space, creates direct jobs, and contributes to the strength and competitiveness of the local economy.

- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; In this case the development provides an existing business with additional space for growth. Also bringing the disused agricultural building back into productive use generates local spend and prosperity.
- c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy. The B2 use proposes reusing brownfield land and reducing the demand on green undeveloped land for business premises.

Making Effective Use of Land & Brownfield Redevelopment

- Para 119–123: Planning should promote an effective use of land in meeting needs for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment.
- Significant weight should be given to the use of suitable brownfield land for development (para 123).

The proposal re-uses a previously developed agricultural barn, in line with national policy aims to regenerate redundant land and reduce pressure on greenfield sites.

Building a Strong, Competitive Economy

- Section 6 (paras 82–84): Planning policies and decisions should help create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.

Planning should:

- Recognise and address specific locational requirements of different sectors (para 84a).
- Be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in plans and enable sectors to adapt to rapid changes (para 82c).
- Support a strong rural and urban economy by re-using brownfield sites and supporting economic growth in all areas.

B2 has clear locational requirements (access to road networks, proximity to customer base) and provides adaptable space for individuals and businesses.

Para 88 – Supporting a prosperous rural economy

The development represents the sustainable growth and expansion of a rural business through a well-designed converted building that sits with the existing converted agricultural unit. It maintains a rural



form/finish, limits spread by using land functionally related to the existing premises and retains surrounding landscaping and ecological measures—thereby enabling rural economic activity while respecting countryside character.

Para 89 – Appropriate rural siting and impacts

Recognising that rural business needs can be met adjacent to or beyond settlements, the barn is positioned to be physically well-related to the existing complex and retained design to be sensitive to its surroundings. The scheme favours previously developed/operational land fully reflecting para 89's tests.

Overall: Taken together, the proposal accords with NPPF 86–89 by enabling rural business expansion through a well-designed, operationally necessary building in a sensitive rural location, with managed transport effects and landscape/ecology retention to safeguard local character.

This proposed development will enable the existing businesses on the site to have stability and remain competitive into the future retaining the existing number of employees, and have an indirect impact of allowing an existing business to continue to operate in the local area is also important. As well as encouraging new businesses to the area.

Achieving Well-Designed and Safe Places

- Section 12 (paras 130–136): Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

While functional in nature, B2 developments should contribute positively to the area, provide safe access, and not harm local amenity. Opportunity has been taken to improve the site's appearance and integrate it with its surroundings.

Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Flooding

- Section 14: New development should support the transition to a low-carbon future, minimise energy consumption, and avoid flood risk.

Brownfield re-use is inherently more sustainable. Proposals should demonstrate energy efficiency and consider climate resilience in design.

Protecting the Natural and Historic Environment

- Section 15–16: Development should minimise impacts on biodiversity, enhance green infrastructure where possible, and protect heritage assets.

Redevelopment of a brownfield site provides scope for landscape improvements, and minimal impact on heritage.

Summary of review of the NPPF

This proposal for B2 units within vacant agricultural barns is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024). The Framework (para 11) sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, requiring approval of applications that accord with the development plan, or where policies are absent or out of date, granting permission unless adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh benefits.



The development secures clear economic, social and environmental benefits (para 8). It will generate employment, support local businesses and provide flexible B2 space, thereby contributing to a strong and competitive economy in accordance with paragraph 85. The NPPF also recognises the specific locational requirements of storage and distribution uses (para 87b), and the site is well placed to meet such needs.

Substantial weight is given by the NPPF to the reuse of brownfield land (paras 119–123). Bringing a vacant agricultural barn site back into beneficial use represents an efficient and sustainable use of land, avoiding the unnecessary release of greenfield sites and contributing positively to regeneration.

In transport terms, the proposal is low trip-generating compared with other B2 operations and provides safe and suitable access in line with NPPF paragraphs 110–116. Retention of the barns agricultural appearance will ensure the site's appearance is typical for the surrounding farmstead and rural landscape, and ensure security, consistent with the guidance on well-designed places (paras 130–136). The re-use of brownfield land inherently supports the transition to a low-carbon economy (para 152) and offers opportunities for biodiversity and environmental enhancements (paras 179–182).

In conclusion, the development accords with the NPPF by re-using a redundant barn, supporting economic growth and job creation, and contributing to good rural design and environmental objectives. It therefore benefits from the presumption in favour of sustainable development and should be supported accordingly.

11.3. Local Planning Policy – Wiltshire Core Strategy

At the local level, the Wiltshire Core strategy (adopted in 2015) is explicitly economy-led and seeks to create the right conditions for business growth across towns and rural communities. Core policies direct a flexible approach to rural employment and are framed to support rural life and additional employment land where appropriate to context. The scheme aligns with this approach by intensifying an existing enterprise on land physically related to the current premises, thereby minimising new countryside encroachment and supporting jobs locally.

Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy

The strategy does allow for carefully managed development outside of settlement boundaries in specific cases, such as new employment investment where there is an overriding strategic interest, or for other local circumstances such as providing affordable housing, allowing new tourist accommodation or supporting diversification of the rural economy.

Core Policy 34 Additional employment land

Proposals for employment development (use classes B1, B2 or B8) will be supported within the Principal Settlements, Market Towns and Local Service Centres, in addition to the employment land allocated in the Core Strategy.

Outside the Principal Settlements, Market Towns and Local Service Centres, developments will be supported that:



- i. are adjacent to these settlements and seek to retain or expand businesses currently located within or adjacent to the settlements; or

The proposed building is adjacent to existing buildings which are in agricultural and industrial use, and a small area of this building the mechanic business currently resides.

- ii. support sustainable farming and food production through allowing development required to adapt to modern agricultural practices and diversification; or

The landowner JM Stratton primary business is agriculture therefore the new building use supports agricultural diversification.

- iii. are for new and existing rural based businesses within or adjacent to Large and Small Villages; or

There is an existing mechanics business currently operating on this site.

- iv. are considered essential to the wider strategic interest of the economic development of Wiltshire, as determined by the council.

All rural businesses contribute to the wider economic interest of Wiltshire.

Where they:

- a. meet sustainable development objectives as set out in the policies of this Core Strategy and
- b. are consistent in scale with their location, do not adversely affect nearby buildings and the surrounding area or detract from residential amenity and

The site is a sustainable option for the business growth and new business opportunities as the building and hardstanding are already in existence, it is not close to residential and would not affect any nearby buildings.

- c. are supported by evidence that they are required to benefit the local economic and social needs and

The existing mechanic business needs additional space to expand and remain competitive to be able to remain on this site.

- d. would not undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations and
- e. are supported by adequate infrastructure

The business provides employment and would not undermine any strategic employment objectives. The infrastructure in terms of road network has already been improved to facilitate industrial and agricultural activity at this site. The access road was improved as a condition within the approved application 18/01947/FUL, with passing bays being constructed to allow for vehicles to pass along the lane. As such the existing lane is suitable for the proposed units' associated vehicular movements.

Core Policy 48 – Supporting Rural Life

Conversion and re-use of rural buildings Proposals to convert and re-use rural buildings for employment, tourism, cultural and community uses will be supported where they satisfy the following criteria:

- i. *The building(s) is/are structurally sound and capable of conversion without major rebuilding, and with only necessary extension or modification which preserves the character of the original building.*
- ii. *The use would not detract from the character or appearance of the landscape or settlement and would not be detrimental to the amenities of residential areas.*
- iii. *The building can be served by adequate access and infrastructure.*



- iv. *The site has reasonable access to local services.*
- v. *The conversion or re-use of a heritage asset would lead to its viable long term safeguarding.*

The barns are structurally sound, and the use will not have any impact on the character of the surrounding landscape. The access has been upgraded and there is adequate access to local services with Codford.

Core Policy 51 - Landscape

“Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. Proposals should be informed by and sympathetic to the distinctive character areas identified in the relevant Landscape Character Assessment(s) and any other relevant assessments and studies. In particular, proposals will need to demonstrate that the following aspects of landscape character have been conserved and where possible enhanced through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures.”

Whilst due consideration has been given to the site being within the AONB, the character of the site will not be significantly altered as the buildings scale and appearance are not proposed to be altered significantly and these barns are centrally positioned with the farmstead. The landscape character of the area will not therefore be significantly harmed. The nearest public right of way is to the church, south of the farm. The impacts to the wider AONB landscape will not be significant.

Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

“A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality. Applications for new development must be accompanied by appropriate information to demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire.”

Whilst the development is fit-for-purpose in terms of appearance, it retains the existing agricultural/industrial character and as it is sensitively sited within the existing site, it will not look intrusive in its setting.

A key objective of the Core Strategy is to deliver a thriving economy and in particular resilient rural communities. It recognises that facilitating the modernisation and diversification of agricultural enterprises will be important to ensure appropriate employment opportunities for Wiltshire's residents providing opportunity for people to live and work locally. Support for rural based businesses is recognised as being important for Wiltshire, as new investment in main settlements.

The proposed development is within an existing agricultural site with some aspects of industrial following successful COU applications. This proposal will therefore have a negligible effect on the wider landscape characteristics of the area.



12. Conclusion

The site lies in the countryside where new development is generally unacceptable unless it accords with one of the exceptions policies contained within the WCS, however the proposal complies with the criteria listed in Core Policy 34 and 48 which is one of said exceptions policies, and therefore, the diversification of the agricultural site to provide an existing business with additional space and encourage new businesses to the area, should be considered to be in accordance with Local and National Planning Policy.

The visual impacts are minimal as the site retains its agricultural character and appearance and would preserve the landscape, and AONB.

This proposal will enable rural businesses to prosper and operate effectively. It is recognised that modernisation and diversification of agricultural enterprises is important to ensure appropriate employment opportunities are available for people in rural areas, providing opportunity for people to live and work locally. Support for rural based businesses is recognised as being important for Wiltshire's economy.

The traffic generation from the development would be an acceptable increase in comparison with the existing agricultural use, with a significant size reduction in the vehicles used.

At the national level, the scheme accords with the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development by delivering economic, social and environmental benefits in balance. It will secure investment and provide space to support local businesses and individuals, and makes efficient use of previously developed land.

At the local level, the development is fully consistent with the Core Strategy. It safeguards and re-uses an existing barn in accordance with CP34 and CP48, provides employment, and protects and enhances nature conservation and landscape in line with CP51, and Ensures High Quality Design and Place Shaping (CP57). The site can be developed safely in respect of ecology, flooding, drainage and highways, and that there will be no unacceptable impacts on amenity.

The scheme therefore represents a high-quality, low-impact employment development that achieves the efficient and sustainable re-use of land, supports the local economy, and aligns with both national and local planning policy. In accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted without delay.