

Design and Access Statement

Conversion of Agricultural Building to Office Use and Parking

at

Manor Farm, Little Bedwyn, Wiltshire

On behalf of
Mawley Hall LLP

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1. Introduction

Purpose of the Statement:

This Planning Design and Access Statement has been prepared to supplement the submission of a detailed planning application for the conversion of an existing building, The Estate Office, Manor Farm, Little Bedwyn to B1 Office Use, with parking for vehicles associated with this use.

The proposed conversion of the remainder of this building would significantly enhance the building without causing harm to the appearance of the site or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in which the building is located.

The proposed use would not have any adverse highways impact, which will be referred to later in this statement.

This application proposes changes to the building in question and therefore planning permission is sought and this statement will aim to describe the application building and its proposed conversion.

It is thought that the proposal would accord with the National Planning Policy Framework and make beneficial use of building whilst enhancing its appearance, without causing harm to any interest of acknowledged importance.

2. Site Context

Location and Surroundings

The Estate Office is located to the southeast of Little Bedwyn on High Street, approximately 100m from the Little Bedwyn settlement and the nearest houses. It is situated on the southwest side of the road that runs from Little Bedwyn towards Stype and Bagshot.

Existing Site Features

The building subject to this application is positioned at right angles to High Street, which runs along the front of the site, with its northeastern gable facing the road.

The structure proposed for conversion comprises six open-fronted bays currently used for parking. It is constructed from concrete blockwork with a profiled sheet metal roof, which was replaced during the previous conversion works.

The building forms part of a small complex of former farm buildings, surrounded by open fields to the northeast, southwest, and southeast. A road runs along the northeastern boundary, beyond which further fields extend.

Access to the site is via a single vehicular and pedestrian entrance from High Street, located to the northeast. There is no alternative vehicular access. A gate at the southwestern end of the building leads to an area of hardstanding, which will accommodate some of the proposed parking provision.

The site currently contains no soft landscaping, other than the surrounding agricultural fields.

Planning History

The building that is the subject of this application, was partially converted to offices in 2015. Planning Ref: 14/08066/FUL.

The proposed B1 use will operate normal office working hours where staff arrive between the hours of 8.00 and 9.00am and leave between the hours of 4.30-5.30pm.

3. Design Principles

Use

The proposal is to convert the remaining six bays of the open fronted agricultural building constructed of concrete blocks with metal sheet roofing, to office space, to accommodate the same use that was permitted for the other half of the building in 2015 (Ref: 14/08066/FUL).

As part of the previous works, the roof has already been replaced and photovoltaic cells installed. The current proposal includes to install rooflights to the northwest facing roof slope to allow some natural light into the rear of the building.

The proposed design would replicate what has been done before and the appearance of the bays will remain, with five bays to have glazed screens installed and the remaining bay to have timber gates leading into the existing plant area.

This will result in the building looking complete, whilst being in keeping with the previous conversion and the other buildings located within the site.

Amount

The conversion would be of six bays and would provide an additional three offices, one meeting room and welfare facilities for staff, to include 3no. WC's (incl. 1 accessible WC) and a small kitchenette.

Layout

There will be no change to the layout of the overall site, other than the reallocation of the parking spaces as shown on the drawing.

The hardstanding between the proposed office and the existing stables will remain, as will the access to the hardstanding which will lead to the proposed parking areas.

The site is predominantly hardstanding, which limits opportunities for introducing new planting. However, should it be considered that some planting would help soften the visual impact of the conversion, we are fully prepared to discuss suitable options during the application process.

With regards to the internal layout of the building, this will be very similar to the layout of the existing office accommodation, proposing office space and welfare facilities for staff.

Scale

The height and size of the overall building will not change as part of the proposed design.

Appearance

The design approach focuses on converting the building in a manner that respects its existing character while maintaining its simple and functional appearance.

The rear elevation, which faces towards Little Bedwyn, was previously painted during an earlier conversion and now matches the colour palette of other buildings within the site.

Similarly, the roof was upgraded as part of the previous works to accommodate photovoltaic panels, supporting sustainable energy generation.

The only significant alteration proposed is to the front elevation, where the existing open-fronted bays will be infilled with glazed screens. These will be designed to complement the previous conversion and maintain visual consistency across the site.

Landscaping

There are no proposals for any new soft landscaping and the existing hard landscaping will remain, with no additional hard landscaping proposed.

If there is a need for any planting, then this can be discussed during the planning application process.

4. Access

Inclusive Access

A ramp has been shown to the front entrance to provide an accessible entrance to the building. However, if this is viewed as too intrusive, a potentially alternative accessible entrance solution could be discussed.

An accessible WC has been incorporated into the design which focuses on providing inclusive access and facilities for all building users.

The design incorporates adequate circulation space, door widths, and clear routes to accommodate wheelchair users.

Vehicular and Pedestrian Access

Access to the site for vehicles will utilise the existing entrance from the public highway. The visibility splays will be kept free of all obstruction and will be cut back as and when required.

An additional 6 car parking spaces will be provided creating a total of 15 in total on the site, with the potential to increase this number if required.

With regards to the increase in the amount of traffic to the site, the use as offices would mean that staff would generally be arriving early morning, between the hours of 8am and 9am and be leaving late afternoon between 4.30pm and 5.30pm.

These vehicles will predominantly be cars with the occasional delivery van and the traffic flow will not impact on the parking situation along the High Street.

As some of the staff reside in the Stype and Bagshot areas, they would not require to pass through the village to access or exit the site.

In light of the above it is anticipated that there will be no access, visibility or parking problems associated with the proposed use.

Public Transport Links

The site is well-connected to local and regional transport networks. The nearest railway station is located in Great Bedwyn, approximately 1.6 miles from Little Bedwyn. This is a mainline station offering regular services to London and other destinations, providing excellent accessibility for future office users.

In addition, Little Bedwyn is served by two bus services Wiltshire Connect, an on-demand service operating Monday to Friday between 6:00 am and 8:00 pm, bookable via app or phone and Routes 110 and 120 – scheduled services providing further connectivity to surrounding areas.

These transport options ensure that the proposed development benefits from sustainable travel choices, supporting accessibility for employees and visitors.

5. Sustainability and Environmental Considerations

As part of the original conversion, photovoltaic panels were installed on the roof, providing renewable electricity to the existing offices. Any surplus energy generated is exported back to the national grid, supporting wider sustainability objectives.

To encourage sustainable travel, a covered bike rack has been introduced within the plant room area, offering secure storage for staff who choose to cycle to work, in addition to an external cycle store adjacent to the parking area.

This provision will benefit employees living locally and aligns with the commitment to reducing reliance on car travel.

6. Heritage and Conservation

The building is not listed but it is located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The proposed conversion has been designed to remain in keeping with the existing structure and surrounding farm buildings.

As a result, the visual and environmental impact on the local landscape will be minimal, preserving the character and quality of the AONB.

7. Conclusion

The proposed conversion of the existing building to office use, together with associated parking provision, will enhance the overall appearance of both the building and the wider site. The design has been carefully considered to ensure it is in keeping with the character of its surroundings.

The development will have no adverse impact on the nearby village of Little Bedwyn or on the wider Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in which the site is located. The proposal respects the local context and preserves the rural character of the area.

By repurposing the building for office use, the scheme will create a valuable workplace within a rural setting, making efficient and beneficial use of an existing structure while supporting local economic activity.

The design has been developed to ensure that the building is accessible and usable by all occupants and visitors. Key provisions include step free access, accessible sanitary facilities and adequate circulation space.

These measures collectively meet statutory requirements and promote an inclusive environment for all users.

The proposed conversion to office use will not result in a significant increase in traffic. Office operations typically generate only car and light vehicle movements, which are considerably lower than other potential uses of the site.

The scheme includes adequate visibility splays and sufficient on-site parking provision to accommodate anticipated demand. These measures ensure safe and efficient access, and as such, there should be no grounds for objection from the highway's authority.

We respectfully request that planning permission be granted for this proposal. However should you require any additional information or clarification, we would be pleased to provide further details or respond to any queries.