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Our Ref: DC/LJ/25038

Your Ref:

Mr Richard Hughes
Planning Team Leader - South
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
BA14 8JN

16th March 2026

Dear Mr Hughes

Re: Convert barn to single dwelling and workshop - Land at Burton, Mere, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 6BR

Further to the approval to convert an agricultural building into 3 dwellings (under the Class Q process), I am instructed to seek Full Planning Permission for an amended proposal comprising conversion of part of the building to residential use (in line with approval PL/2025/09388) and for the remainder of the building to be used as a workshop.

The application is submitted electronically via the Planning Portal and comprises the following:

- Full Application for Planning Permission form
- Drawing 25038-12 - Location Plan at 1:1250 scale, showing the application site edged red to include the access track from the site to Southbrook
- Drawing 25038-14 - Block Plan as existing at 1:500 scale
- Drawing 25038-11 -Block Plan as Proposed at 1:500 scale showing proposed works to access track
- Drawing 2085-1A -Floor Plan and Elevations as Existing at 1:50 and 1:100 scale
- Drawing 25038-10 - Floor Plan and Elevations as Proposed at 1:100 scale
- The Planning Statement is contained within this Covering Letter
- Flood Risk Assessment – Calibro Consulting
- Specification of repairs to access track shown on Drawing 25038-11
- CIL form 1 – Additional information

Notice has been served on all parties with an interest in the land – including the access track which forms part of the adopted highway network.

The proposal is exempt from the BNG requirements as the dwelling is self-build and the workshop satisfies the de minimis exemption.

The application fee of £1,176.00 plus £85.00 processing charge has been paid to the Planning Portal.

Information within the following Planning Statement should be considered in support of the proposal:

Planning Statement

Application site and planning history

The application site comprises an agricultural building, adjacent hardstanding, a small area of agricultural land and an existing track which connects the site to Southbrook – the metalled road that runs from the A303 to the north back to Mere to the south-west.

The track connecting Southbrook to the site forms part of the adopted highway network.

By virtue of application PL/2025/09388, prior approval was granted to convert the building into 3 dwellings with associated curtilage areas comprising gardens and parking space. The approval is conditional and requires a foul and surface water drainage strategy to be agreed prior to works commencing. Additionally, it requires the access track between the site and Southbrook to be upgraded in accordance with a specification detailed on the drawings. These works (to the adopted highway) require the applicant to enter a mini S.278 Highways' work permit agreement with Wiltshire Council.

Proposal

Following informal consultation with the Highway Authority, this application now seeks Full Planning Permission to convert the northern third of the barn into a single dwelling (of the same size as previously agreed) but to retain the remaining two-thirds of the building to be used as a workshop operated by the occupier of the attached dwelling.

The proposed workshop would be used for the repair of classic cars, with the business being operated by one of the occupants of the dwelling. The proposed business is of a specialised nature whereby only a small number (2 or 3) vehicles will be repaired at any one time – often involving significant restoration.

Cars being worked on are likely to be on-site for an extensive period i.e. the activity is completely different to a standard car workshop, with work being of a specialised nature and the throughput of vehicles being very low.

With the vehicles to be repaired/restored being classic cars, these will be delivered to site or returned to the owner using the operator's vehicle (car and trailer). Occasionally, drop off or collection will be by the customer.

Because the number of vehicles being repaired at any one time will be low, customer visits are anticipated to be no more than 2 per week i.e. 4 movements per week which equates to 0.57 traffic movements per day.

Vehicles associated with the delivery of parts will not exceed 1 small van per day.

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There will be no paint spraying booth.

In discussion with the Highways Officer, it was agreed, if the barn was converted into 3 dwellings (as approved), this would result in an anticipated 18-24 traffic movements per day.

The proposed level of use (with the operator living on site) is unlikely to exceed 10 traffic movements per day as detailed above.

The Highways Officer has confirmed, for a business of this kind, the highway impact would be positive i.e. there would be a net reduction in traffic relative to the approved fallback position.

The Highway Officer has commented that his support is based on the likely traffic movements generated by the specific use. It is recognised that appropriately worded conditions may need to be applied:

It is suggested these could be:

- to restrict operation of the workshop to a person(s) living in the adjacent dwelling.
- the use of the workshop is restricted to the repair/restoration of classic cars/vehicles (with this being defined as vehicles manufactured pre-2000) only.
- the total number of vehicles to be stored or worked upon in the building not to exceed 6 at any one time.
- No external storage of vehicles or parts other than the operator's private vehicles or vehicles used by customers visiting or delivering/collecting their car prior to or after restoration/repair
- Workshop to be insulated to ensure no noise escape
- No paint spraying
- Details of foul and surface water drainage to be agreed (as imposed on the Class Q approval)
- The access road to be improved to the stated specification (as imposed upon the Class Q approval)

Further information in relation to the nature and detail of the proposed business can be provided if required.

In terms of the alterations to the building, these will now be less than has been permitted under the Class Q approval. The northern third of the building (which is set furthest away from the track and public right of way passing the site to the south) will be converted to residential use as already approved. The garden areas to serve the dwelling will be to the north and west of that part of the barn (as has been already approved) in an entirely inconspicuous location.

The remaining two-thirds of the building will stay largely unaltered and there is no need for any change to the existing consolidated yard area that fronts the barn on the east side.

In terms of potential impact on residential amenity (of nearby houses), any noise generated is likely to be contained within the building and no greater than associated with the comings and goings of agricultural equipment, e.g. loading/unloading of fertilizer etc. As suggested above, if considered necessary, it would be possible to provide insulation to the interior of the workshop guaranteeing there would be no noise heard from the nearest properties which are more than 100m away from the site.

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Planning policy position

Assessment of the proposal against relevant Development Plan policies and guidance/policy within the National Planning Policy Framework, must start from the position that the site benefits from an extant permission to be converted into 3 dwellings. This approval permits a significantly greater amount of alteration to the building and a higher level of traffic movements than what is now proposed.

Significant weight must be given to this 'fallback' position.

In terms of relevant Development Plan policies, Core Strategy Policy 48 (Supporting Rural Life) is a permissive policy which supports the conversion and re-use of rural buildings for employment, tourism, cultural and community uses, subject to the building being structurally sound, the use safeguarding the character and appearance of the landscape and surrounding area, the building having adequate access and infrastructure, and the site having reasonable access to local services.

The proposal satisfies all these requirements and will provide a low-key economically beneficial re-use of the building and a less intensive residential use than was previously approved. The proposed commercial use will be operated by the person(s) living in the attached dwelling.

The NPPF provides strong support for a prosperous rural economy. At paragraph 88, it advises:

"Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- (a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, beautiful new buildings;*
- (b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- (c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside;*
- (d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open spaces, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship;"*

At paragraph 89, it continues:

"Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements and in locations that are not well-served by public transport..."

"In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport)."

The proposal satisfies all requirements of CP48 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. The site adjoins a public right of way which provides direct access back into Mere (approx. 500-600m walk) which, as a Local Service Centre, provides a wide range of essential and local services within a

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short distance. That said, the proposed use comprising a single dwelling and a low-key business operated by a person(s) living within the dwelling, results in significantly less use (and need for access to services) than the extant Class Q approval.

A similar proposal a short distance beyond the settlement boundary for Shaftesbury (with the application site being within the Wiltshire Council area) – PL/2023/05387 - was subject to a recent appeal decision (allowing the proposal) – determined on 18.12.2024.

Under the section of the appeal decision letter titled “The suitability of the location”, the Inspector stated...*“It is absolutely clear that the Development Plan must be read as a whole. Indeed, in addition to proposals that accord with the general spatial strategy for the area, other policies allow further forms of development. Policy CP48 provides a set of tests that are very specific to the conversion and re-use of rural buildings. Development proposals that meet the requirements of this policy are therefore likely to be appropriate in principle, even if they may not conform with some aspects of the adopted spatial strategy or generally. For this reason I am firmly of the view that it is Policy CP48 that is central to the consideration of this main issue...”*.

The Inspector confirmed that both the LPA and Appellant agreed there was compliance with Parts (i), (iii) and (iv) of Policy CP48. With respect to Part (iv) he advised *“Part (iv) of the policy sets a slightly lower bar than is perhaps the case for other forms of development, in that the conversion or re-use of rural buildings only need to have reasonable access to local services. This is reflective of paragraph 89 of the Framework which recognises that sites to meet local business needs might be located in areas that are not well served by public transport. In this instance the appeal site is situated in very close proximity to a multitude of services and facilities within Shaftesbury. This part of the policy is therefore satisfied.”*

Whilst the barn location at Burton is (as the crow flies) slightly further from the edge of a sustainable settlement than the case to the north of Shaftesbury, in reality, access from the current application site to services within Mere is easier and safer – being by public right of way along the entire route - than was the case in Shaftesbury. Equally, in terms of actual distance to usable facilities, the site at Burton is closer than the site at Shaftesbury considering the significant distance from the northern edge of the settlement boundary of Shaftesbury to most of the facilities closer to the town centre.

Conclusions

Considering all the above, the proposal, subject to appropriate conditions to restrict the operation and scale of the business use, is policy compliant and unobjectionable.

There will be less alteration required to the building and the level of traffic movements will be lower than those that would arise if the Class Q permission was undertaken.

This proposal presents a less intensive and visually intrusive form of development than has already been permitted.

The improvements to the access track between the site and Southbrook can still be secured through mini S.278 permit.

With the proposal being fully in compliance with Policy CP48 (as clearly evidenced from the appeal decision referred to close to Shaftesbury) as well as being in line with the positive support for a use of this kind set out within the NPPF, the proposal should be supported.

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I look forward to a positive determination within the statutory 8-week period. Should you require further information, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

Diccon Carpendale

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Encs

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