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Planning, Design and Access Statement

On behalf of

Mr K and Mrs J Williams

Demolition of existing buildings. Extension and external alterations to farmhouse and associated external works

At

Great Thornham Farm, Seend, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12

6PN

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Introduction

This Supporting Statement has been prepared by Dolman Building Surveyors on behalf of Mr K and Mrs J Williams for proposed development at Great Thornham Farm, Seend, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6PN.

The application is described as follows:

Demolition of 1no. existing farm outbuilding and lean-to shed. Extension and external alterations to farmhouse including new porch, terrace and veranda.

This Statement should be read alongside the submitted plans and drawings that describe the proposal. The remainder of this Statement is structured as follows:

- Site Context, including a description of the site and planning context;
- The Proposal, including a summary of the design approach;
- Planning Assessment, to assess the proposed development against key planning policy considerations;
- Summary, to conclude the Statement.

Site Context

Site Description

The site comprises an existing farm. The wider complex includes a traditional farmhouse, residential annexe, outbuildings and a range of modern and traditional agricultural buildings. Specifically, the application site includes the farmhouse, lean-to shed and one outbuilding. Access is via an existing access drive that leads to the farm from Trowbridge Road.

The main farmhouse is made up of a rectangular footprint up to two and a half storeys in height including a ground floor, first floor and attic, which is height restricted. There is a single storey lean-to at the east elevation, which houses the kitchen with vaulted ceiling and a lean-to shed along the west elevation. The current entrance is via a low ceiling hall with a mono-pitched roof. The main roof is pitched with a hipped roof over a section of the first floor (over Bedroom 1 – northwest corner of the house). The adjoining lean-to has a monopitch roof.

In terms of materiality, the primary roof material is double roman clay tiles. South, east and north elevations are finished with rubble stone, red brick quoins and brick window surrounds. The west elevation features red brick and render with stone lintels/headers over windows. At ground floor on the south elevation, the windows feature masonry window surrounds painted in white colour with arched window heads.

The outbuilding proposed for demolition is a traditional-style single storey outbuilding with a pitched roof. This building is sited immediately to the north of the main farmhouse, obscuring the front elevation of the property.

Planning Context

The site is located at the southern edge of the village of Seend Cleeve. Seend Cleeve is designated as a small village in the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

The site is not within any designated landscape, ecological or heritage site. There are no listed buildings on or near to the site.

The site falls within Flood Zone 1 (low risk of flooding) shown on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning. There is also low likelihood of surface water flooding within the site boundary.

Planning History

A planning history search has revealed the following applications at Great Thornham Farm:

- K/12368 – Conversion of shed and garage to form bedroom accommodation. Approved 23rd August 1988.
- K/38270 - Change of use of farm building to cutting room and farm shop with addition of fridge container and store room. Approved 14th December 1999.

- K/38269 - Change of use of farm building to 'farmed game' processing facility. Approved 14th December 1999.
- K/40757 - The erection of timber stables on a hardstanding for personal use only. Approved 14th March 2001.
- 15/12500/FUL - Change of use of farm tea rooms to residential annexe. Approved 24th February 2016. *This building falls outside of the red line for this application but forms part of the residential planning unit and is an ancillary annexe to the farmhouse.*
- PL/2025/07787 – Agricultural building (prior notification). Approved 22nd October 2025.

The Proposal

The application proposes demolition of an existing outbuilding and the lean-to shed along the west elevation, together with extension and alterations to the farmhouse.

The existing residential use comprises the farmhouse and annexe building. The annexe is outside of the red line for this application but is ancillary to the dwelling (as confirmed by planning condition attached to permission ref. 15/12500/FUL). This annexe should benefit from Council Tax discount as it only to be used for a family member or will be empty. No change of use from the existing situation is proposed.

The proposal rationalises existing built development on the site and will enhance the legibility and prominence of the farmhouse's principal entrance. It will remodel and alter the farmhouse to improve the internal layout and liveability of the property. The proposed extension to the north elevation is modest and proportionate to the scale of the existing building. To make the front elevation more prominent a new gable elevation has been designed. It mimics the existing gable to the west (with a hipped roof) and creates a 'natural' and aesthetically desired support to the existing mono-pitched roof over the eastern lean-to.

The proposed floor plan introduces a more spacious entrance hall with a roof light and vaulted ceiling together with a south-facing open plan kitchen and dining room, a dedicated office space and a pantry and utility/boot room at ground floor. The extended first floor is proposed to be rearranged to deliver a master bedroom with an associated dressing room.

Externally, a new terrace is proposed to wrap around the southeast corner of the building with a covered veranda facing the view south. Access to the terrace will be provided by alterations to openings in the south and east elevations to introduce glazed sliding doors and side screens.

The existing porch and monopitch roof over the existing hall will be removed and replaced with a new porch and monopitch hall roof with a roof light. A zinc standing seam roof material is proposed to these elements.

The design of the proposed extension delivers a well-proportioned, balanced north elevation to the building. The new gable elevation is proposed to be finished with rubble stone and red brick quoins to match existing materials. The new hipped roof is designed to have the same pitch and material finishes as the existing northwest gable.

Planning Assessment

Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 confirms that applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for the site comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015), saved policies from the Kennet District Local Plan 2004 and the Seend Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2021). We have reviewed saved policies from the Kennet District Local Plan and these are not considered relevant to the proposed development. The Kennet District Local Plan is not therefore considered further within this Statement.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and adopted Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance represent material considerations.

Planning Considerations

At the core of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which includes economic, social and environmental objectives (Paragraph 8).

Paragraph 11 states that where proposals accord with an up-to-date Development Plan, they should be approved without delay. Where there are no relevant Development Plan policies, or such policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless:

- i) The application of policies within the NPPF provide a strong reason for refusing development; or
- ii) The adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy relate to the settlement and delivery strategies for new development. Together, these policies seek to direct development towards settlements to deliver a sustainable pattern of growth. Development outside of the settlement limits is strictly controlled.

Demolition of the existing outbuilding will remove a poor quality building from the plot to allow for the farmhouse's principal elevation to be revealed. The outbuildings around the site are piecemeal and not of design quality and the proposed demolition will benefit the layout and design of the dwelling.

Extension and alterations are proposed to the existing dwelling, which is acceptable in principle subject to meeting the technical requirements of other policies in the Development Plan.

Design and Landscape Impact

Section 12 of the NPPF and Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy require a high standard of design for extensions and alterations to existing buildings and consideration of how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire. Core Policy 51 seeks to protect and conserve landscape character and states that negative impacts should be mitigated.

Policy SP1 of the Seend Neighbourhood Plan also seeks for new development to demonstrate locally distinctive, high-quality design.

The proposal is assessed against the criteria in Core Policy 57 below.

Criterion	Assessment
Enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment, relating positively to its landscape setting and the existing pattern of development and responding to local topography by ensuring that important views into, within and out of the site are to be retained and enhanced.	The removal of the outbuilding will reveal the front elevation of the building and improve its relationship with the site access drive. The farmstead is in Key Local View 'J' shown on Figure 10 of the Seend Neighbourhood Plan. This is a wide-ranging view southwest from the ridge at Seend. Given the modest nature of the proposed development, the impact on this view will be imperceptible. As such, the proposal is consistent with the rural character of the site's surroundings and the wider Wiltshire landscape setting.
The retention and enhancement of existing important landscaping and natural features, (e.g. trees, hedges, banks and watercourses), in order to take opportunities to enhance biodiversity, create wildlife and recreational corridors, effectively integrate the development into its setting and to justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development.	The proposal will retain existing landscaping including trees and grassed areas.
Responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting.	The scale of the proposed extension is proportionate to the existing building. The proposed design reflects the existing built form in terms of roof profile and materials so that the extension appears as a comfortable addition to the building. The proposed alterations to openings have

	been carefully designed to maintain balance in the south and east elevations.
Being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and historic landscapes.	The building is not listed, nor is it within a Conservation Area or designated heritage landscape. There are no listed buildings near to the site.
The maximisation of opportunities for sustainable construction techniques, use of renewable energy sources and ensuring buildings and spaces are orientated to gain maximum benefit from sunlight and passive solar energy, in accordance with Core Policy 41 (Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy).	The proposed extension is designed to meet Building Regulations. The introduction of additional glazing to the south and east elevations will maximise opportunities for solar gain.
Making efficient use of land whilst taking account of the characteristics of the site and the local context to deliver an appropriate development which relates effectively to the immediate setting and to the wider character of the area.	The proposal will rationalise buildings on the site and improve the immediate setting of the farmhouse. It will deliver investment in the existing dwelling so that it better meets the requirements of modern living.
Having regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, the impact on the amenities of existing occupants, and ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself, including the consideration of privacy, overshadowing, vibration, and pollution (e.g. light intrusion, noise, smoke, fumes, effluent, waste or litter).	The farmhouse is part of a wider farmstead. There is separation between the residential and agricultural uses, and the proposal will not change this existing arrangement. There are no nearby neighbours that will be impacted by the proposed development. Similarly, there will be very limited impact on the adjacent residential annexe as its immediate setting will be retained.
Incorporating measures to reduce any actual or perceived opportunities for crime or antisocial behaviour on the site and in the surrounding area through the creation of visually attractive frontages that have windows and doors located to assist in the informal surveillance of public and shared areas by occupants of the site.	The proposal will remodel the front elevation of the farmhouse and demolish an existing outbuilding that currently obscures the principal building entrance. This will create an attractive frontage.
Ensuring that the public realm, including new roads and other rights	This criterion is not applicable to the proposed development.

of way, are designed to create places of character which are legible, safe and accessible in accordance with Core Policy 66 (Strategic Transport Network).	
The sensitive design of advertisements and signage, which are appropriate and sympathetic to their local setting by means of scale, design, lighting and materials.	This criterion is not applicable to the proposed development.
Taking account of the needs of potential occupants, through planning for diversity and adaptability, and considering how buildings and space will be used in the immediate and long-term future.	The internal layout changes will improve the liveability of the building and ensure it is fit for purpose for modern living now and into the future.
The use of high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping, including the provision of street furniture and the integration of art and design in the public realm.	The proposal uses traditional detailing and materials to match the existing building and ensure a high-quality finish.
The case of major developments, ensuring they are accompanied by a detailed design statement and masterplan, which is based on an analysis of the local context and assessment of constraints and opportunities of the site and is informed by a development concept, including clearly stated design principles, which will underpin the character of the new place.	This criterion is not applicable to the proposed development.
Meeting the requirements of Core Policy 61 (Transport and New Development).	The proposal relates to an existing dwelling. No new uses are proposed and the existing access arrangement will be retained. New parking spaces will be delivered through demolition of the outbuilding.

The Seend Parish Character Statement has been consulted. This document provides a detailed review of the character of the settlements within the Parish. It notes that there are several buildings outside the main settlement groupings, in particular many farmsteads. This would include Great Thornham Farm, which falls within the southern part of the Parish.

The proposal is modest development at an existing farmstead that will consolidate built form and enhance the appearance of the principal farmhouse. The design responds to the character and materiality of the existing building and the locality.

The proposed development therefore represents high-quality design that accords with Core Policies 51 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Policy SP1 of the Seend Neighbourhood Plan.

Ecology

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity. The proposal includes demolition of, and alterations to, existing buildings. Ecological surveys were carried out in August-September 2025 to assess these buildings, and the report is submitted with the application. This concludes that:

- There are low numbers of common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats roosting in the farmhouse and outbuilding. The bat roost resource is not considered significant for the conservation of local bat populations;
- There are no other protected species that pose a constraint to the proposed development;
- There is no predicted impact pathway between the development and any nearby statutory designated wildlife site;
- The proposed development will not result in any significant loss or damage to the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat SAC, or populations of the qualifying bat species it supports;
- It will be necessary to obtain a bat mitigation licence from Natural England.

Precautionary measures and enhancement features are proposed including bat boxes, lifted roof tiles, hedgehog shelter and swift boxes, together with a sensitive lighting strategy.

The application has considered the value of the site for nature and the proposal includes adequate mitigation and enhancement measures to protect and enhance biodiversity. It therefore complies with Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Summary

This Supporting Statement has been prepared by Dolman Building Surveyors on behalf of Mr K and Mrs J Williams for proposed development at Great Thornham Farm Seend, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6PN.

The application is described as follows:

Demolition of 1no. existing farm outbuilding and lean-to shed. Extension and external alterations to farmhouse including new porch, terrace and veranda.

The proposed development relates to the alteration and modest extension of an existing dwelling. It will not result in new isolated development in the open countryside. The removal of the existing outbuilding and consolidation of built form will enhance the immediate setting of the dwelling and improve the legibility of the principal entrance.

The modest scale and high-quality design that responds to the character of the existing building ensures that the development will integrate comfortably into its surroundings. This ensures that there will be no adverse impact on local landscape character. Biodiversity mitigation and enhancement measures are proposed that will ensure that there are no adverse impacts to the biodiversity value of the site.

The proposal is proportionate in scale, locally responsive and will not give rise to adverse environmental, heritage, landscape or amenity impacts. The proposed development therefore accords with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.