

Benchmark

Benchmark Development Planning Ltd

Chartered Town Planners & Development Advisers

Planning Statement – Elston Farm (17/04/26)

Proposed 150 sqm Agricultural Barn (Class A Prior Approval)

This Statement accompanies an application under Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

This Statement is submitted on behalf of the owners of Elston Farm in support of a prior approval application for a modest agricultural barn required to sustain the long-established agricultural use of the holding. The landholding is being used for grazing and hay production.

1. Agricultural Use and Functional Need

The land has been in continuous agricultural use for more than two decades, under the Sturdy Family's ownership. There are no existing buildings on the site and the proposed barn is required for the Storage of hay and secure machinery and vet supplies.

The absence of any secure, weather-protected storage results in operational inefficiencies and exposes valuable machinery and winter forage to weathering and theft. The proposed barn—**10m x 15m (150 sqm)** with a **5m ridge height**—is the minimum size necessary to store hay, machinery and veterinary supplies safely and efficiently.

The holding exceeds 5 hectares and the building is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture on the unit, satisfying the Class A statutory test.

2. Site Context and Landscape Considerations

The proposed barn is located within a sheltered location behind tree belts using the topography of the land.

The applicant has undertaken a detailed siting and height analysis, to find the optimal location following site analysis for the barn so it will be visually contained

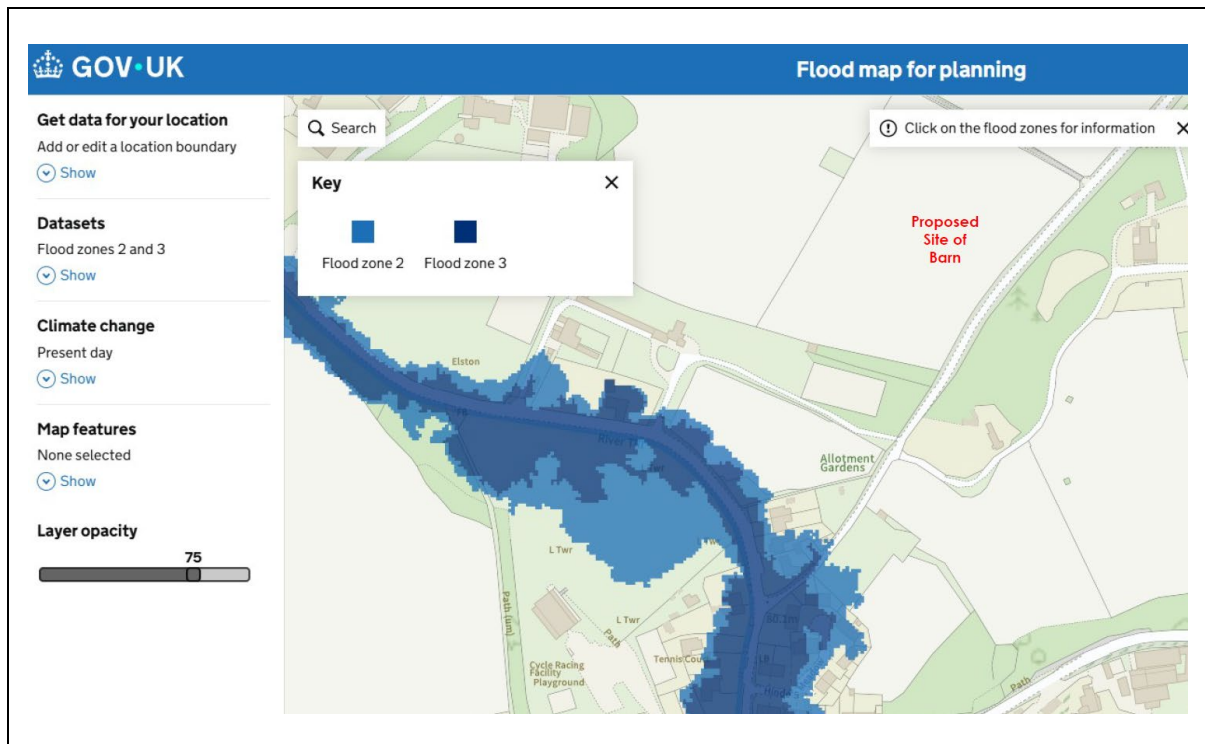
within existing landform and vegetation in its Moorland Green 'colours' from most public viewpoints.

The barn will be clad entirely in **Moorland Green sheeting**, with **no rooflights or external lighting**, as confirmed in both documents: *"Concrete slab and steel frame clad in Moorland green sheeting... no roof lights or external lights."* This ensures compliance with dark-sky principles and minimises visual impact.

3. Environmental, Heritage and Access Matters

The farm is **not** a SSSI, Local Nature Reserve, SAC or SPA.

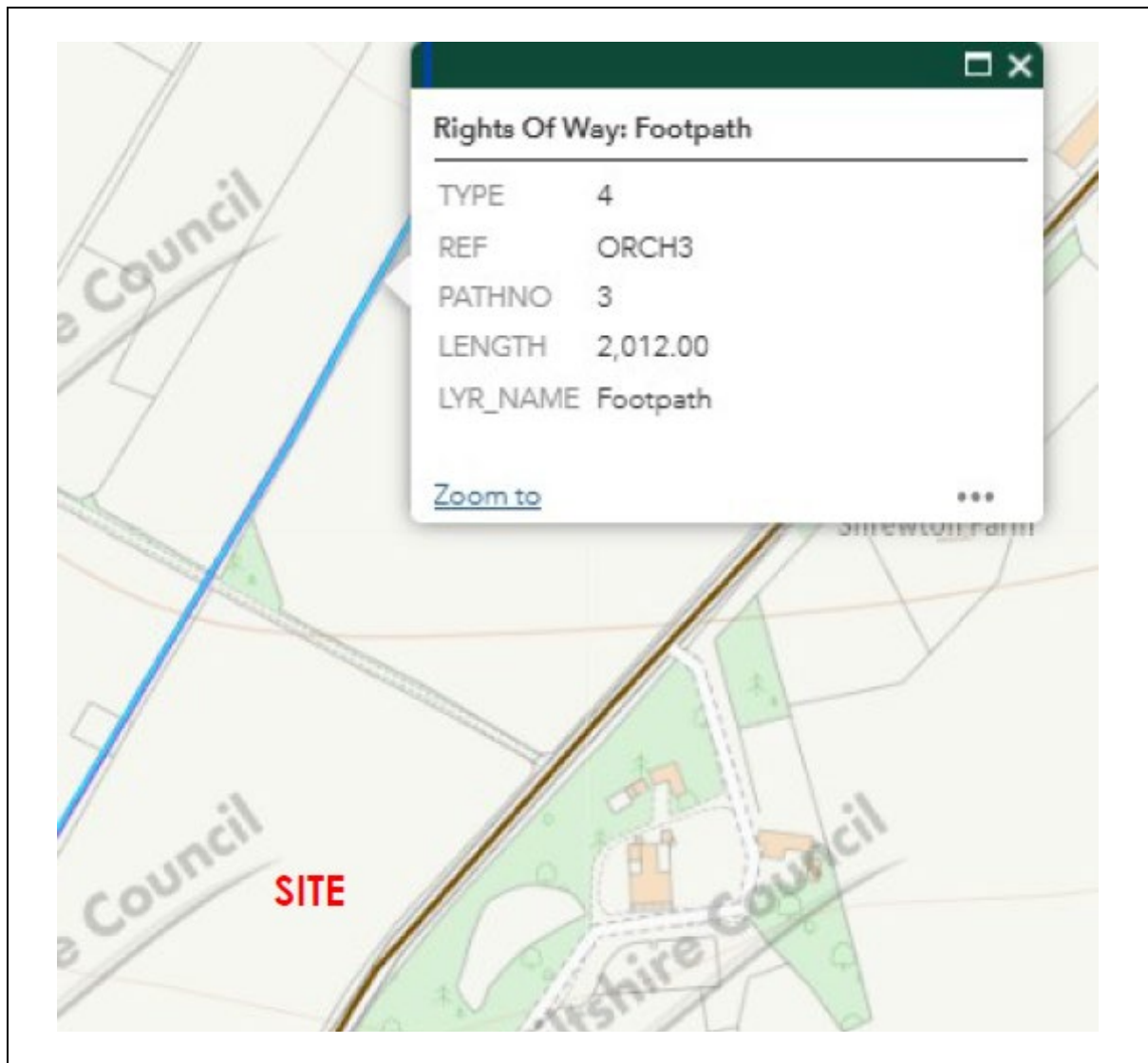
However, the River Till is a Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI) and this lies about 250m to the south of the proposed barn. The Environment Agency's recent Flood Risk Map confirms the site for the proposed barn is high and dry:



All of this area falls within the Special Landscape Area; therefore, we have attached considerable significance to this designation and ensured this modest building is sensitive and discreet, to the SLA.

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments nearby. Shrewton House is a listed Grade II home sheltered behind trees and this lies more than 110 metres to the east; and its setting will not be affected.

There is a Public Right of Way (PROW): the "ORCH3" (blue line below) – a footpath that passes north / south some 100m away from the proposed barn, on the other side of a fence.



There will be views from the footpath of the proposed small Moorland Green barn, in the context of a backdrop of hedges and trees.

Likewise, the road leading to Shrewton Farm, is a PROW, that is a 2.2km long byway (SHRE29 – the brown line on the plan above). The proposed barn is more than 35m from the tarmac surface of this track (the Class A proposals requires at least 25m). There will be glimpsed views from the Byway of the proposed small Moorland Green barn, in the context of a backdrop of hedges and trees.

Access is via two existing farm gateways from SHRE 29 and the western byway ("ORCH25") – the latter is about 550m from the proposed barn; well out of sight. No new access is required onto the public highway or PROWs.

There is a large gap in the hedge for the access track to the barn (no hedging needs to be removed) – just a few panels of fencing – to be replaced by an agricultural gate.

4. Conclusion

The proposal represents a proportionate, landscape-sensitive agricultural building required to support the efficient functioning of a conservation grazing enterprise. The siting, height and materials have been carefully selected to ensure the barn is discreet, functional and compliant with the Special Landscape's objectives. No change of use is involved. The proposal meets the **Class A criteria** and does not exceed any of the limitations. The application is therefore commended for approval.

Richard Greenwood BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

Director