

Smithwick Farm
Rowde
Devizes
SN10 1TA

4th June 2026

Planning Team
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Dear Planning Team,

This statement is prepared to support a planning application for a material **Change of Use** of the converted farm building at **Smithwick Farm, Rowde**. As outlined in red on the attached Location Plan.

The application seeks to transition the property from its currently restricted use as ancillary staff accommodation to a commercial **Class C5 (Short-Term Let)** use.

1. Background and Context

The application site comprises a single-storey detached farm building, which was granted full planning permission on **6th June 2005** under reference **K/52046/F** for conversion into ancillary staff accommodation. This building is not currently required by the new owner for ancillary staff, as no staff are employed. The farm is now operated a family run business since 2024 and no requirement for ancillary staff is expected in the coming years.

Condition 2 of that permission explicitly restricts its occupation:

"The additional residential accommodation hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than as staff accommodation for persons working at Smithwick Farm, Rowde."

The original justification for this tie, as outlined in the 2005 decision notice, was rooted in concerns regarding residential amenity, access, and wider rural planning policies that prohibited the creation of a *wholly separate, unrestricted private dwelling* at the site.

Following the planning approval, full compliance with building standards was sought and achieved. A Building Control application (**Application Name: 2005/0407/BN**) was submitted as a Building Notice on **29th July 2005** for the "Conversion of existing farm building to staff accommodation." Following relevant inspections, the works were officially completed and signed off on **24th February 2006**.

This application does **not** seek the creation of an unrestricted, permanent C3 dwellinghouse. Instead, it proposes a managed shift to a short-term holiday let (Class C5). This pivot maintains a strict tier of restriction on the property while repurposing an underutilised, fully building-regulations-compliant rural asset to meet modern economic needs.

2. Policy Support & Justification for Class C5

The original decision notice cited Kennet Local Plan 2011 Policies **PD1, HH8, and HC26**. While local plans have updated since 2005, the core planning principles regarding the diversification of the rural economy and the conversion of redundant rural buildings remain highly relevant.

The proposed change of use aligns closely with standard sustainable development frameworks for the following reasons:

- **Supporting the Rural Tourism Economy:** The conversion of an underutilised, tied asset into high-quality holiday accommodation provides a direct benefit to the Wiltshire tourism ecosystem. It

drives visitor spend to local businesses, shops, and food establishments in Rowde and the wider Devizes area.

- **Preservation of Rural Character:** The physical conversion of the single-storey farm building has already been successfully executed and legally completed since February 2006. No further external expansions or structural modifications are proposed that would harm the character or appearance of the open countryside.
- **A Compromise on Restricted Use:** The local authority's historic concern was the creation of a standalone private home. Class C5 status ensures that the property remains a restricted, commercial asset. It cannot be sold off as a standard open-market house, thereby preventing the strain on local residential infrastructure that a full removal of the condition might cause.

3. Amenity, Access, and Highways

The original refusal to allow an independent dwelling focused heavily on "*reasonable standards of residential amenity [and] access*". A short-term visitor use effectively mitigates these historical concerns:

- **Residential Amenity:** The occupancy of a holiday let is transient. The level of day-to-day domestic activity, storage, and associated residential paraphernalia is substantially lower than that of a permanent, full-time C3 dwelling. It will not conflict with the ongoing operational activities of Smithwick Farm.
- **Highways and Access:** Traffic generated by a single holiday let is intermittent and largely mirrors or falls below the vehicular impact of full-time residential staff commuting to and from the site daily. Adequate parking and turning space already exist within the established farm boundary.

4. Conclusion

The proposed change of use to **Class C5** represents a pragmatic approach to the historic planning constraints on the site. It fulfills the council's original objective of preventing a severed, open-market residential dwelling in this location while breathing new economic purpose into an existing, building-regulation compliant building.

We respectfully request that planning permission be granted for this sustainable, tourism-led diversification.

On behalf of the Burrough Family