

Planning Statement

Site Address: Folly Cottage Stables, Lower Rudloe, Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 0PB

Original Planning Permission Reference: 20/01105/FUL - PL/2023/04840 and PL/2026/00040

Proposal: Reconstruction and extension of the stable block at Folly Cottage to provide a holiday let, necessitated by structural deficiencies identified during implementation of the previously approved conversion scheme. The proposal is identical in footprint, scale, massing and external appearance to the existing consent, with no change to the approved use, footprint, design or planning parameters.

Applicant: Mr and Mrs P Baker

1. Introduction

This Statement of Case accompanies a full planning application for the reconstruction and extension of the existing stable block at Folly Cottage to provide a holiday let.

The proposal arises following the discovery of significant structural deficiencies within part of the existing building elements during early stages of implementation of the previously approved scheme. These defects render the retention and conversion of the existing centre frame unfeasible.

The proposed development seeks to deliver the same approved end-use and design intent, maintaining the same footprint, scale, massing, form, and external appearance as previously approved, but through reconstruction of the existing centre element due to verified structural failure.

2. Site Context and Planning History

The site comprises a modest former agricultural stable building within the curtilage of Folly Cottage. The site lies within the Green Belt and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The granting of three successive consents for this development reflects the Council's considered view that the conversion of this building to holiday accommodation represents an acceptable and beneficial use in this sensitive location.

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The planning history includes:

- 20/01105/FUL – original consent granted 2020 for conversion of stable block to holiday let
- PL/2023/04840 – subsequent variation consent
- PL/2026/00040 – most recent approval confirming the principle of conversion to holiday accommodation

These consents established the principle that the reuse and extension of the building for holiday accommodation is acceptable in planning terms, subject to detailed design and implementation.

3. Background and Structural Condition

During early stages of works authorised under PL/2026/00040, the building was carefully dismantled for inspection. This revealed that the existing structure is not capable of safe retention or conversion.

A detailed structural assessment by Mann Williams Structural Engineers confirms the following:

- Timber studs are significantly undersized (approximately 38–65mm)
- Sole plates are extensively decayed and largely rotten
- Part of the structure is formed of informal agricultural construction, including telegraph poles and lightweight cladding providing structural support in the absence of a properly designed frame
- Floor construction is of inadequate strength and unsuitable for conversion or underpinning
- The structure lacks the integrity required to support the approved habitable loads (roof, insulation, finishes, and imposed loads)

The report concludes that the existing building cannot be safely retained in any meaningful structural form and requires full replacement of the structural frame.

It is also noted that the original Design and Access Statement approved as part of consent 20/01105/FUL describes the building as an ad-hoc structure. This is entirely consistent with the structural findings on site and confirms that the poor quality of the original construction was apparent from the outset.

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4. Description of Proposed Development

The proposal is for the reconstruction of the existing stable block centre element along with the two new extensions as previously consented, as a holiday let, comprising:

- Rebuilding of the structural timber frame
- Retention of existing footprint
- New extensions as previously consented
- No increase in footprint, height, or massing
- External appearance to match previously approved design
- Replacement of roof structure, external cladding, doors and windows consistent with approved scheme
- Continued use as a single holiday let unit

The design intent is a like-for-like visual replacement, ensuring continuity with the previously approved scheme and maintaining the established planning balance for the site.

5. Planning Assessment

5.1 Principle of Development

The principle of a holiday let at this site has already been established through the three existing planning consents. The current proposal does not alter this principle. The only material change arises from the method of implementation, necessitated by unforeseen structural failure in the existing centre element. The proposal provides an alternative means of delivering the same approved development where the existing structural fabric has proved incapable of safe conversion.

5.2 Conversion vs Reconstruction

The approved scheme was described as a conversion and extension of the existing building. However, structural investigation confirms that the centre existing timber frame element is not capable of safe retention. As a result, the works require the reconstruction of the existing centre element using a new structural timber frame - the same method of construction already approved and accepted for the two new extensions forming part of this scheme.

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It is material to note that under the approved scheme, both the roof and the external cladding were new. The centre structural frame was therefore the only original element theoretically capable of retention. Given its confirmed structural inadequacy and advanced state of deterioration, it is not capable of safe retention.

Notwithstanding this, the resulting proposed development:

- occupies the same footprint
- maintains the same scale and massing
- replicates the external appearance previously approved
- delivers the same approved extensions as previously consented
- delivers the same planning outcome (holiday accommodation reuse)

It is noted that the existing consent itself incorporates two new build extensions to the stable block, approved as new fabric forming part of the overall scheme. It has therefore already been accepted that the development is not reliant solely upon the retention of original building fabric. The structural replacement of the existing centre elements is entirely consistent with this established approach.

The proposal therefore represents a functional and visual continuation of the approved scheme, requiring structural replacement due to condition rather than design intent.

It is noted that the proposed use remains holiday accommodation and not a permanent residential dwelling. The reconstruction does not alter the nature or intensity of the approved use in any respect. The development therefore remains consistent with the basis upon which the existing consents were granted.

5.3 Design, Appearance and Impact

The reconstructed building will be indistinguishable in external terms from the approved scheme. The Design and Planning Statement for the variation consent (PL/2023/04840) describes the building in terms of its simple linear form, timber boarding and traditional agricultural scale, all of which the new structural frame faithfully delivers on the identical footprint.

There will be:

- no increase in bulk or scale
- no change in architectural form
- no intensification of use
- no greater visual impact on the landscape than previously assessed and accepted

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Accordingly, the proposal maintains full compliance with the design parameters previously deemed acceptable by the local planning authority.

5.4 Structural Necessity

The decision to reconstruct is not driven by preference or design change, but by verified structural failure. Professional engineering advice included with the application confirms that:

- retention is not feasible
- partial repair is not viable
- full replacement of the frame is required to deliver a safe, habitable building

The proposed works therefore represent the minimum necessary intervention to achieve the previously approved planning outcome.

5.5 Sustainability and Low Carbon

The proposed reconstruction incorporates the sustainability measures previously approved under PL/2026/00040, including an air source heat pump for heating and hot water, underfloor heating, and GBSOL solar slates integrated into the roof covering. The solar slates already approved are visually indistinguishable from the natural slate roof and enable on-site renewable energy generation with no visual compromise. These low carbon measures are consistent with national policy objectives on climate change and sustainable development and represent a positive planning gain which weighs in favour of the proposed development.

5.6 Planning balance

The proposal represents an exceptional circumstance where unforeseen structural failure has rendered implementation of the previously approved conversion impossible. The reconstruction is not proposed to secure a different or more intensive form of development, but solely to enable delivery of the development already accepted by the Local Planning Authority. No additional planning harm arises beyond that previously assessed, whilst the proposal secures the continued reuse of the building, delivers sustainable holiday accommodation, incorporates low-carbon technologies and preserves the established character and appearance of the site. The planning balance therefore weighs clearly in favour of granting planning permission.

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5.7 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

It is considered that the proposal should be exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements on the following basis:

- The original planning permission (20/01105/FUL) was granted in 2020, approximately four years before mandatory BNG provisions came into force on 12 February 2024
- The current proposal seeks to deliver the same development outcome as previously consented, within the same footprint and site envelope
- The application is effectively a continuation and regularisation of an extant permission rather than a new or greenfield development proposal

It is therefore submitted that the proposal falls within the relevant transitional exemption provisions for pre-existing consents. Should the Local Planning Authority take a different view, we would welcome clarification on the specific BNG requirements applicable.

6. Conclusion

This application seeks planning permission for the reconstruction and extension of the stable block at Folly Cottage to provide a holiday let following the discovery of unforeseen structural deficiencies identified during implementation of an otherwise approved scheme.

The site lies within the Green Belt and AONB, and three successive consents have confirmed the acceptability of this development in planning terms. The proposal;

- maintains the previously accepted planning principle of holiday accommodation
- replicates the approved external design, footprint, and scale
- does not introduce additional visual, landscape, or planning harm
- delivers the same development outcome previously found acceptable by the Council
- arises from structural necessity, not design preference or commercial choice.

Accordingly, the proposal represents a proportionate and necessary response to unforeseen structural circumstances. It preserves the planning objectives of the existing permissions, gives rise to no additional planning harm and enables the delivery of a development whose principle, scale, design and use have already been accepted by the Local Planning Authority on three separate occasions. For these reasons, the applicant respectfully requests that planning permission be granted.



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6th July 2026