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Planning Appeal Statement – Class Q Barn Conversion

Appeal Reference: 25/00496/P3CQ

Decision Date: 11 July 2025

Location: Heath Farm, Bosworth Lane, Osbaston, Leicestershire

Development Description: Notification to determine if prior approval is required for the change of use of an agricultural barn to a single dwelling

1. Introduction

This statement is submitted in support of an appeal against the refusal of a prior approval application under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (pre-21 May 2024).

The appeal relates to application reference 25/00496/P3CQ, which was refused by the Local Planning Authority on 11 July 2025. The application sought a determination as to whether prior approval was required for the change of use of an agricultural barn to a single dwelling at Heath Farm, Bosworth Lane, Osbaston, Leicestershire.

The proposal was submitted in accordance with the provisions of Class Q (pre-21 May 2024) and sought prior approval only in respect of those matters set out in paragraph Q.2 of the GPDO. The appeal building forms part of an established agricultural holding, and the proposal constitutes the change of use of an existing agricultural building to a single dwelling, together with associated building operations reasonably necessary to facilitate that change of use.

This statement addresses each of the reasons for refusal in turn and demonstrates that the proposal fully complies with the requirements and limitations of Class Q (pre-21 May 2024). It is therefore respectfully submitted that the refusal was unfounded and that the appeal should be allowed.

2. Response to Refusal Reason 1 – Agricultural Use of the Building

The Council's first reason for refusal states that insufficient information was provided to demonstrate that the building was used solely for agricultural purposes as part of an established agricultural unit on the relevant dates, as required by paragraph Q.1(a) of Class Q (pre-21 May 2024).

This concern is now fully addressed through the submission of additional photographic evidence, which demonstrates a clear and consistent pattern of agricultural use of the building and the surrounding land over a prolonged period. The appeal building is currently used for the storage of agricultural equipment. Historic photographs dating from 1999, 2006, 2015, 2018 and 2020 have been submitted and collectively demonstrate that the barn has formed an integral part of the wider agricultural holding throughout this period. See Appendix A of this statement.

The photograph from 1999 shows agricultural equipment located outside the barn, together with clearly visible vehicle tracks leading between the barn and the adjacent agricultural field. The 2006 photograph shows cattle grazing within the adjoining field and continued evidence of vehicle tracks to and from the barn, indicating its functional relationship with the agricultural use of the land. Photographs from 2015 and 2018 continue to show vehicle tracks linking the barn to the surrounding fields, further demonstrating ongoing agricultural activity associated with the building. The 2020 photograph shows that the majority of overgrowth around the barn has been removed, which is consistent with continued agricultural use and management rather than abandonment.

Taken together, this photographic evidence clearly demonstrates that the building has been used solely for agricultural purposes as part of an established agricultural unit, including on the relevant qualifying date for the purposes of paragraph Q.1(a) of the GPDO (pre-21 May 2024). There is no evidence to suggest any alternative lawful use of the building at any time. Accordingly, the requirements of paragraph Q.1(a) are met, and the first reason for refusal is not supported by the evidence.

3. Response to Refusal Reason 2 – Conversion of the Existing Building

The Council's second reason for refusal alleges that the proposal does not represent a conversion of the existing building and that the works required would be of such magnitude as to constitute a rebuild, contrary to the limitations of Class Q (pre-21 May 2024).

This conclusion is not supported by the submitted information and misapplies the relevant test under Class Q. Paragraph Q.1(i) of the GPDO (pre-21 May 2024) requires the decision-maker to consider whether the building is capable of functioning as a dwelling following conversion, and whether any building operations are reasonably necessary to facilitate that change of use. The test is not whether the building is capable of conversion without any works, nor whether the works would meet normal planning policy tests, but whether the proposal would amount to a genuine conversion rather than a substantial rebuild.

The appeal proposal retains the existing building in situ, including its overall footprint, height, form and structural frame. No demolition and reconstruction of the building is proposed. The works are limited to those typically associated with a Class Q conversion, including the insertion of openings, internal alterations, insulation, and localised repair or strengthening

where necessary. Such works are expressly contemplated by Class Q and do not amount to a rebuild.

A structural report prepared by Specialist Structural Engineers, Arcelle Consulting, confirms that the existing building is structurally suitable for conversion to a residential dwelling. The report confirms that the main steel frame and existing concrete panels are to be retained, with improvements limited to the façade and roof in the form of internal timber infill and external over-cladding. The report also anticipates the installation of new internal foundations or slab thickenings where required to support floors and internal partitions. The report concludes that, based on site observations and a review of the architectural plans, the building is structurally capable of conversion to a dwellinghouse.

Accordingly, the proposal represents a genuine conversion of an existing agricultural building and complies with the limitations of Class Q (pre-21 May 2024). The second reason for refusal is therefore not justified.

4. Response to Refusal Reason 3 – Reasonably Necessary Building Operations

The Council's third reason for refusal states that the proposed partial demolition works are not reasonably necessary building operations for the building to function as a dwellinghouse and therefore do not comply with paragraph Q.1(i)(i) of Class Q (pre-21 May 2024).

This conclusion is not supported by the evidence submitted with the application. Paragraph Q.1(i) of the GPDO (pre-21 May 2024) expressly allows building operations that are reasonably necessary to facilitate the change of use of an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse, including works for the installation of windows, doors, roofs, walls, and other minor structural adjustments.

The drawings submitted with the application indicate the removal of a small outbuilding measuring approximately 2m x 1m, which is not part of the original barn and does not affect the structural integrity or identity of the main building. This limited removal is directly associated with facilitating the residential conversion. All other works relate to the main barn and are strictly confined to the retention of the primary steel frame and concrete panels, with localised internal improvements as confirmed in the structural report by Arcelle Consulting.

Accordingly, the works proposed are proportionate and reasonably necessary to allow the building to function as a dwellinghouse. The Local Planning Authority has not identified any specific element of the works that is unnecessary, nor provided evidence to suggest that the removal of the small outbuilding falls outside the scope of paragraph Q.1(i). The third reason for refusal is therefore not justified.

5. Response to Refusal Reason 4 – Design and External Appearance

The Council's fourth reason for refusal states that the proposed design of the north-west elevation does not respect the rural vernacular and simplistic design of the original building and that it would harm the character of the surrounding countryside, allegedly contrary to paragraph Q.2(f) of Class Q (pre-21 May 2024).

This reason is misapplied. Paragraph Q.2(f) of the GPDO (pre-21 May 2024) limits consideration to the external dimensions of the building, specifically its height, width, and length, and any enlargement or extension, rather than matters of style, materials, or

aesthetic appearance. Concerns regarding vernacular style or rural character fall outside the scope of Class Q and cannot form a valid reason for refusal.

In practice, the proposed conversion employs materials and design features that are typical of Class Q barn conversions. The lower walls are finished with timber cladding, and the roof and upper walls are finished with standing seam metal cladding, replacing the existing asbestos panels. Doors and windows are inserted in line with Class Q allowances, and the overall design is functional and proportionate. The works do not increase the building's height, width, or footprint, and retain the form and identity of the original structure.

Accordingly, the proposal fully complies with the limitations of paragraph Q.2(f), and the fourth reason for refusal is not justified.

6. Response to Refusal Reason 5 – Adequate Natural Light

The Council's fifth reason for refusal states that the proposed dwellinghouse would not provide adequate natural light to all habitable rooms, and that the proposal therefore does not comply with paragraph Q.2(g) of Class Q (pre-21 May 2024).

This reason is not justified. Paragraph Q.2(g) requires consideration of whether the building is capable of functioning as a dwellinghouse with adequate natural light in all habitable rooms, but it does not prescribe specific daylight standards or prevent the use of design features to optimise light.

The conversion has been specifically designed around the provision of natural light. The three first-floor bedrooms each feature a roof terrace constructed within the existing envelope, enabling full-height glazing that floods the rooms with natural light. The roof height is unchanged, in full compliance with Class Q (pre-21 May 2024). Stairs, ensuites, and first-floor bathrooms are provided with large rooflights to ensure light reaches non-habitable spaces. On the ground floor, the open-plan kitchen, dining, snug, and lounge benefit from large bifolding glass doors, and the kitchen additionally has a feature rooflight above the activity area. The hall, utility, and ground-floor bedroom all have appropriately sized windows. Only the pantry, cinema room, and downstairs ensuite do not have natural light; none of these are habitable rooms, so paragraph Q.2(g) does not apply to them.

On this basis, all habitable rooms receive adequate natural light, and the building is fully capable of functioning as a dwellinghouse. The fifth reason for refusal is therefore not justified.

7. Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, the appeal proposal complies fully with the limitations and requirements of Class Q (pre-21 May 2024) of the GPDO. The photographic and structural evidence confirms that the building has been in agricultural use and is part of an established agricultural unit. The structural report demonstrates that the building is suitable for conversion, and all works are reasonably necessary and proportionate. The design, materials, and fenestration are typical of Class Q conversions, and all habitable rooms receive adequate natural light.

Accordingly, all five reasons for refusal are without justification. The appeal proposal represents a lawful Class Q conversion, and it is respectfully submitted that the appeal should be allowed.

Appendix A:

1999 Aerial Photo (Google Earth)



2006 Aerial Photo (Google Earth)



2015 Aerial Photo (Google Earth)



2018 Aerial Photo (Google Earth)



2020 Aerial Photo (Google Earth)

