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Planning Statement

Glasspool Farm, Part Lane, Riseley, Wokingham RG7 1RU

Prior approval for the change of use of two agricultural buildings to flexible commercial use under Class R of the General Permitted Development Order

Produced By:

Planning & Design Practice Ltd
3 Woburn House, Vernon Gate, Derby, DE1 1UL

www.planningdesign.co.uk

RIBA 
Chartered Practice



Architects
Registration
Board



Derby Head Office

Second Floor, Suite 3 Woburn House
Vernon Gate, Derby, DE1 1UL
01332 347371

Matlock Office

Cromford Creative, Cromford Mills
Mill Lane, Cromford, Matlock,
Derbyshire, DE4 3RQ

Macclesfield Office

Waters Green House, Walters Green,
Macclesfield, SK11 6LF
07969 871264

Sheffield Office

First Floor, Unit 4,
Westbrook Court,
Sharrowvale Road, Sheffield,
S11 8YZ

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Planning & Design Practice is a multidisciplinary practice consisting of chartered town planners, architects and heritage specialists. The practice operates across England and Wales and has an exemplary track record of submitting successful planning applications and in facilitating sustainable development.
- 1.2 This application is submitted in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 No. 596 for the change of use of 2 agricultural buildings to B8 storage and distribution and Class Ec office use at Glasspool Farm, Part Lane, Riseley, Wokingham RG7 1RU.
- 1.3 This statement identifies the context and need for the proposed development and includes an assessment of how the proposed development accords with relevant national and local planning policies, as well as assess This application is submitted in tandem with a full planning application for external works to the building. Consistent with the structure of Class R, the permitted development right extends only to the material change of use of the existing building. It does not authorise operational development to the exterior. The Planning Practice Guidance and relevant case law, most notably RSBS Developments Ltd v SSHCLG, reinforce that external alterations fall outside the scope of the GPDO and must be considered under a full planning application.
- 1.4 In recognition of this, the submission adopts the established “twin-track” approach. The Class R prior approval addresses the principle of the change of use from agriculture to office, while the accompanying full planning application is confined to the limited external works necessary to enable the lawful and functional occupation of the building. This ensures that each component of the scheme is considered under the correct statutory mechanism: the GPDO for the conversion, and the development plan/NPPF for the operational elements.
- 1.5 The proposed works are modest in nature and do not alter the building’s scale or massing. The intention is to retain the agricultural form and character, introducing only those interventions required to meet contemporary standards of accessibility, environmental performance and operational efficiency. The combined approach therefore delivers a compliant pathway for re-using the building, supporting a viable long-term employment use while maintaining the established rural character of the site.

2 Site Description and Planning History

Site Location

- 2.1 The site is located at Glasspool Farm, Part Lane, Riseley. Glasspool Farm is located approximately 700 metres to the east of Riseley and is outside of the village's defined settlement boundary.
- 2.2 The application site hosts four narrow barns, as well as a single residential dwelling and a detached garage. The two agricultural buildings which are the subject of this statement are the site's two southernmost barns, running parallel with Part Lane.



Figure 2: The site, edged in red



Figure 1: The two agricultural buildings to be converted

- 2.3 The primary structure is a precast concrete framed. The walls of the barn are blockwork to approximately 2.0m height or full height to eaves in some cases. Both buildings also benefit from a concrete floor. Both buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.
- 2.4 The roadside trees which form the boundary to the dwelling are covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). These are unaffected by the proposals.
- 2.5 The site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore not considered to be at risk of flooding.
- 2.6 Glasspool House, a Grade II listed building is adjacent to the site, to the west. The site and buildings are entirely separate from Glasspool House and as such are located outside of the curtilage.
- 2.7 The site is within 5 km of The Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area.
- 2.8 The site has a detailed planning history, including a number of extant consents. The following section provides an overview of the relevant planning history listed on Wokingham Borough Council's online planning site:

Relevant Planning History

Application	Proposal	Decision
251003	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 242193 dated 22.10.2024. Condition 3 relates to preliminary contamination risk assessment; 5 to asbestos survey and removal plan; 6 to boundary treatment.	Approved – 06/06/25
243242	Application to vary condition 4, 5, and 6 of planning consent 232273 for the change of use of land to residential for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling and garage following demolition of the existing garage and agricultural outbuilding. (Part retrospective). Condition 4, 5, and 6 refers to landscaping, bat mitigation, and ecological mitigation measures and the variation is to remove the 8-week period submission requirement following granting of planning permission by the local planning authority.	Unavailable

242193	Prior approval submission for proposed conversion of 2 no. agricultural buildings (Buildings A and B) to form 10 no. dwellings with associated works including partial demolition.	Approved – 22/10/24
242180	Prior approval submission for proposed partial demolition and change of use of 1 no. agricultural building (Building C) to a hotel (Use Class C1).	Refused – 17/10/24
241044	APPLICATION FOR WORKS TO PROTECTED TREE(S) TPO 1836/2021, T1 and T2 T1 Oak, to reduce crown by 3m. T2 Ash, fell tree ash dieback.	Split Decision – 21/06/24
232273	Change of use of land to residential for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling and garage following demolition of the existing garage and agricultural outbuilding. (Part retrospective)	Approved – 17/05/24
230850	Householder application for the proposed raising of the roof with the insertion of 1no. front dormer window and 2no. rear roof lights to create habitable accommodation. Proposed single storey side/rear extension with roof lights and single-storey front extension to create a porch following demolition of existing roof, ground floor utility and bathroom and demolition of chimney on eastern elevation and chimney on northern elevation and changes to fenestration.	Withdrawn – 04/08/23
230260	Prior approval submission for proposed part conversion of 3 no. agricultural barns to form 5 no. dwellings with associated works including partial demolition.	Refused – 23/03/23
223623	Application for the prior approval of the erection of a single storey rear extension, which would extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 8.00m, for which the maximum height would be 4.00m and the height of the eaves 2.40m.	Approved – 23/01/23
214052	Full application for the proposed erection of one 4no. bedroom dwelling with associated driveway, garage and landscaping.	Refused – 07/02/22
213273	Full application for the proposed erection of one 5 no. bedroom detached dwellinghouse and detached garage following demolition of existing farmhouse and associated outbuildings.	Refused – 03/02/22

200371	Prior approval (Class R) submission for the proposed change of use of 1no. agricultural building to an office use building with ancillary parking.	Approved – 15/05/20
200243	Prior approval submission for the conversion of 2 no agricultural buildings to provide 5 no. dwelling houses.	Approved – 26/02/20
193385	Prior approval submission for proposed part conversion of 2 no. barns to form 5 no. dwellings.	Refused – 28/01/20
193386	Prior approval submission for proposed part conversion of barn to flexible use.	Refused – 28/01/20
181989	Application for prior approval for the proposed change of use of an existing agricultural building and the land within its curtilage to 5 no. dwelling houses.	Approved – 07/09/18
180706	Outline application for the proposed erection of 3 no. new dwellings (all matters reserved).	Refused – 01/05/18
160121	Outline application for the erection of 4no dwellings (all matters reserved).	Refused – 26/04/16
152333	Application for prior approval for proposed change of use of three agricultural buildings to dwellinghouses (Use Class C3).	Approved – 14/10/15
062166	Proposed change of use of agricultural land to use for storage / distribution of wood chips. Retrospective.	Approved – 14/03/06

3 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The proposed development seeks to change the use of Barn C to B8 storage and distribution and Barn D to Class Ec office use. These units will each have a gross internal floorspace of 500m².
- 3.2 It is proposed to demolish two bays from each building's west elevation, in order to provide suitable room for access and vehicle manoeuvring. The area of roofing connecting the two barns will also be removed, in order to facilitate vehicular access between the two units.
- 3.3 The northern unit (Barn C) will be used to provide storage for up to 20 no. 20-foot shipping containers. This will be enclosed on the north elevation, which will be constructed from concrete panels and vertical cladding to match the existing. The existing roof will be retained, and new UPVC rainwater goods will be fitted.
- 3.4 The southernmost unit (Barn D) will be converted into a commercial office, with open plan working space for 48 desks. The building will feature a kitchen and staff room, single office rooms, board room, reception and breakout space. Male, female and accessible WCs will also be provided.
- 3.5 The main entrance to the building will be located on the west elevation, with several further doors located on the north and east elevations.

4 Relevant Legislation – Class R

4.1 The principle of development is for the change of use of a pair of existing agricultural buildings to provide two commercial units. Class R allows for the flexible use of;

- Class B2 (general industrial)
- Class B8 (storage or distribution)
- Class C1 (hotels)
- Class E (commercial, business or service)
- Class F.2(c) (outdoor sport or recreation)

4.2 This section cites the legislation and provides an assessment of the proposed development against Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

Permitted development

R. Development consisting of a change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use as an agricultural building to a flexible use—

- (a) falling within one of the following provisions of the Use Classes Order—
 - i. Class B2 (general industrial) of Schedule 1;
 - ii. Class B8 (storage or distribution) of Schedule 1;
 - iii. Class C1 (hotels) of Schedule 1;
 - iv. Class E (commercial, business or service) of Schedule 2; or
 - v. Class F.2(c) (outdoor sport or recreation) of Schedule 2; or
- (b) for the provision of agricultural training.

Development not permitted

R.1 Development is not permitted by Class R if —

- (a) the building was not used solely for an agricultural use as part of an established agricultural unit—
 - (i) on 3rd July 2012;
 - (ii) in the case of a building which was in use before that date but was not in use on that date, when it was last in use, or
 - (iii) in the case of a building which was brought into use after 3rd July 2012, for a period of at least 10 years before the date development under Class R begins;
- (b) the cumulative floor space of buildings which have changed use under Class R within an established agricultural unit exceeds [1,000 square metres];

- (c) the site is, or forms part of, a military explosives storage area;
- (d) the site is, or forms part of, a safety hazard area; or
- (e) the building is a listed building or a scheduled monument.

Conditions

R.2 Development is permitted by Class R subject to the following conditions—

- (a) a site which has changed use under Class R may, subject to paragraph R.3, subsequently change use to another use falling within one of the use classes comprising the flexible use;
- (b) for the purposes of the Use Classes Order and this Order, after a site has changed use under Class R the site is to be treated as having a sui generis use;
- (c) after a site has changed use under Class R, the planning permissions granted by [F3Class E] of Part 7 of this Schedule apply to the building, subject to the following modifications—
 - (i) “curtilage” has the meaning given in paragraph X (interpretation) of this Part;
 - (ii) any reference to “office building” is to be read as a reference to the building which has changed use under Class R.
- (d) where the site is to be used for general industrial purposes within Class B2, it must only be used for the processing of—
 - (i) raw goods, excluding livestock, which are produced on the site and are to be sold on the site, or
 - (ii) raw goods mentioned in paragraph (i) together with goods ancillary to the processing of those raw goods

R.3 – (1) Before changing the use of the site under Class R, and before any subsequent change of use to another use falling within one of the use classes comprising the flexible use, the developer must—

- (a) where the cumulative floor space of the building or buildings which have changed use under Class R within an established agricultural unit does not exceed 150 square metres, provide the following information to the local planning authority—
 - (i) the date the site will begin to be used for any of the flexible uses;
 - (ii) the nature of the use or uses; and
 - (iii) a plan indicating the site and which buildings have changed use;
- (b) where the cumulative floor space of the building or buildings which have changed use under Class R within an established agricultural unit exceeds 150 square metres, apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to—
 - (i) transport and highways impacts of the development;
 - (ii) noise impacts of the development;
 - (iii) contamination risks on the site; and
 - (iv) flooding risks on the site,

and the provisions of paragraph W (prior approval) apply in relation to that application.

(2) Subject to sub-paragraph (3), development under Class R of the type described in paragraph R.3(1)(b) must begin within a period of 3 years starting with the prior approval date.

(3) Where, in relation to a particular development under Class R of the type described in paragraph R.3(1)(b), planning permission is granted on an application in respect of associated operational development before the end of the period referred to in sub-paragraph (2), then development under Class R must begin within the period of 3 years starting with the date that planning permission is granted.

(4) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (3), “associated operational development” means building or other operations in relation to the same building or land which are reasonably necessary to use the building or land for the use proposed under Class R.

Interpretation of Class R

R.4 For the purposes of Class R, “flexible use” means use of any building or land for a use falling within the list of uses set out in Class R and change of use (in accordance with Class R) between any use in that list.

5 Planning Assessment

- 5.1 The agricultural holding to which Glasspool Farm relates formerly extended to approximately 182 hectares. The historic Google Street View imagery (below) from August 2011 clearly shows the site in agricultural use, with livestock gating and a cattle crush present. There is also evidence of hay being stored in the buildings, having spilled out onto the area of hardstanding. It is therefore evident that the site was used for agricultural purposes on, or before the 3rd July 2012. A previous application from 2015 (REF: 152333) showed that the site was accepted as being in agricultural use as part of an established agricultural unit on or before the 20th March 2013, and that the owners farmed the property for agriculture.



Figure 4: Google Street View imagery, August 2011



Figure 3: Google Street View imagery, August 2011

- 5.2 The total cumulative floor space proposed for conversion does not exceed 1000m². The buildings and site are not listed (nor within the curtilage of a listed building) and are not a scheduled monument. The site does not form part of a safety hazard area and does not form part of an explosives storage area.
- 5.3 The development therefore satisfies the requirements of Class R, and is eligible for conversion through the exercise of permitted development rights subject to consideration against the following criteria;
- Transport and highways impact of the development;
 - Noise impacts of the development;
 - Contamination risks on the site; and
 - Flooding risks on the site,

Transport and Highways Impact of the Development

- 5.4 The site benefits from existing access onto Part Lane. The demolition of two bays on the western ends of both Barns C and D will improve the existing access to the site. This will also ensure that HGVs and larger vehicles have space to manoeuvre safely and efficiently through the site.
- 5.5 18 parking spaces have been provided to the south of Barn D. This is located on an area of existing hardstanding. There is sufficient space to manoeuvre and turn into these spaces on this area of existing hardstanding.
- 5.6 No significant concerns in relation to highways or transport impacts are therefore raised.

Noise Impacts of the Development

- 5.7 The proposed development of both barns, for Class B8 storage, and Class Ec offices, are both low noise generating uses. The layout of the site has been designed to mitigate the noise impact associated with vehicular movements, with the parking provision being located adjacent to the highway. It is considered that the proposed uses will not result in any noise impact to surrounding dwellings (existing and proposed).

Contamination Risks on the Site

- 5.8 The site is adjacent to the Kerba, Riseley Filled Ground former landfill site, and within the gas consultation zone. As part of a previous application on site to comply with the condition of planning consent 242193 (REF: 251003), a Gas Monitoring Summary by Eastwood Consulting Engineers found that *“there is no*

significant risk of ground gas migration into the proposed property. [...] As such no ground gas precautions are considered to be required”.

5.9 The barns on site also contain several form of asbestos. An Asbestos Demolition and Refurbishment Survey was carried out in January 2025 as part of by DL Surveying, which was found to be sufficient to comply with the conditions of planning consent 242193 (REF: 251003).

5.10 As such, no outstanding contamination risks are identified. The proposed development therefore conforms to the criteria of Class R.

Flood Risk

5.11 The site is located within Flood Zone 1, meaning that it is not considered to be at risk of flooding. The site benefits from large areas of existing hardstanding. The proposed development will also not increase the risk of surface water flooding.

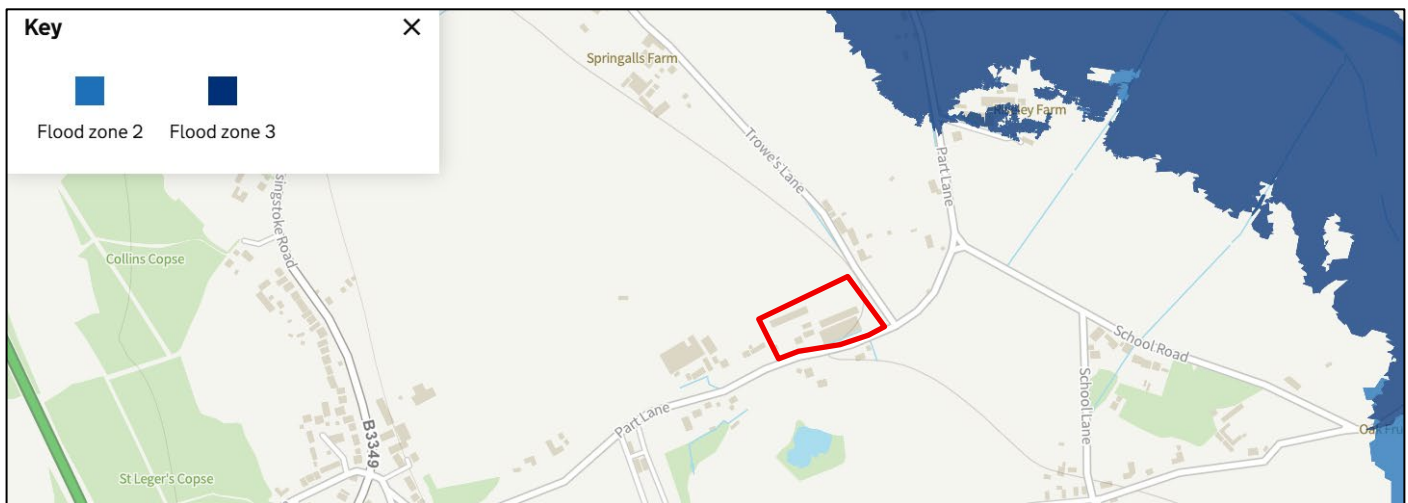


Figure 5: Flood map, with the site edged in red

6 Conclusions

- 6.1** Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 allows for the change of use from an agricultural building to flexible commercial use which includes;
- Class B2 (general industrial)
 - Class B8 (storage or distribution)
 - Class C1 (hotels)
 - Class E (commercial, business or service)
 - Class F.2(c) (outdoor sport or recreation)
- 6.2** This report is written to support the change of use of two former agricultural buildings to commercial use. The conversion will result in a total of two commercial units; a Class B8 (storage or distribution) unit and a Class Ec (commercial, business or service) unit to function as an office.
- 6.3** The proposed development accords with the size thresholds, limitations and conditions as established by Class R of parts 3 of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. The proposal is therefore considered to constitute permitted development.



Planning & Design Practice Ltd

www.planningdesign.co.uk
info@planningdesign.co.uk
Tel: 01332 347371

Derby

3 Woburn House
Vernon Gate
Derby
Derbyshire
DE1 1UL

Matlock

Cromford Creative
Cromford Mills
Mill Lane, Cromford
Matlock
DE4 3RQ

Macclesfield

Waters Green House
Waters Green
Macclesfield
Cheshire
SK11 6LF

Sheffield

First floor, Unit 4
Westbrook Court,
Sharrow Vale Road,
Sheffield,
S11 8YZ