PMC Land & Planning

Planning Statement

The Gables Nursery, New Fen Drove, PE12 0PY

Prepared For: G Geerlings and Son

December 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement is prepared for G Geerlings and Son to support an application via Prior Approval Notice for the conversion of an agricultural barn to create a small dwellinghouse.

1.2 This conversion is proposed pursuant to the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015 ("the GPDO 2015") Schedule 2, Class Q, and section 6 of this document assesses the application against the 'tests' included in changes to this legislation instituted in May 2024.

1.3 There has been no previous development on the site under Class Q. However, as set out in section 3 below, a previous application under Class Q was refused by the Council in October 2024.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Geerlings family has farmed The Gables Nursery since 1963. The holding totals some 10.1 acres and comprises primarily arable land with some space used for the cultivation of plants and flowers.

2.2 The purpose of the proposed conversion is for succession, as Mr Geerlings senior prepares to hand over the management of the business to his son and daughter in law, who do not currently live on the farm.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 Planning Application No **H05-0410-22.** Erection of House and Garage.

3.2 This application was refused under cover of a Decision Notice dated 15th June 2022.

3.3 The purpose of the application was to facilitate the succession in management of the business as described above. Its' refusal prompted Application No **H05-0698-24** in August 2024, which sought to convert an existing agricultural barn on the site under 'Class Q', again for the purposes of facilitating a succession strategy in the management of the business.

3.4 Application No **H05-0698-24** was refused under cover of a Decision Notice dated 14th October 2024. This refusal was based on one Reason for Refusal, this being that:

'It is concluded that the proposed extension would not form a rear extension, being located on the side elevation of the building, given the principal elevation is considered to be the northern elevation'.

The western elevation faces the highway, however, this is a blank elevation with no key architectural features. The front door and windows are located on the northern elevation and therefore the Local Planning Authority are of the opinion that the northern elevation is the principal elevation, meaning the proposed extension on the southern elevation would comprise a side extension.

Consequently, the proposal fails to conform to point (i) od Schedule 2, part 3, Class Q and as such, the conversion of an existing agricultural barn building to form a new dwellinghouse is not permitted by Class Q of this part, under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended).'

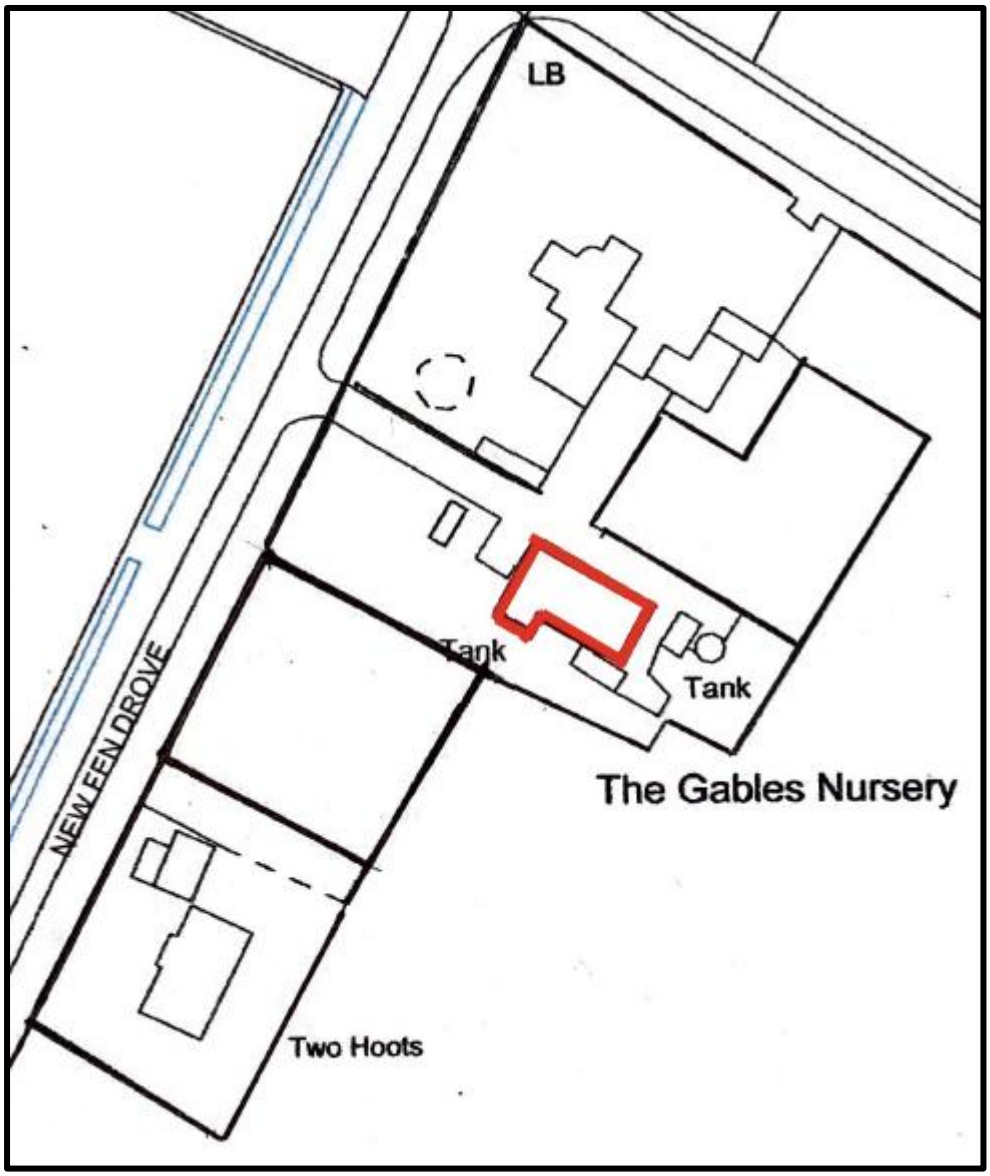
3.5 Whilst it is the applicant's belief that Local Planning Authority opinion is debateable here, they have chosen to submit a revised application rather than appeal the decision, as the need for the conversion is driven by the requirement for a succession strategy for the farm.

3.6 Therefore, this application is effectively a resubmission of Application No **H05-0698-24**, but with the proposed extension positioned on the rear elevation of the existing building, based upon the Local Planning Authority interpretation that the northern elevation is the principal elevation - as set out in the Decision Notice.

4. CURRENT USE

4.1 The barn proposed for conversion, is currently used for the storage of agricultural equipment and other machinery.

5. LOCATION PLAN



6. PRIOR APPROVAL APPLICATION (Class Q)

Permitted Development

Class Q (a) The building proposed for conversion is part of an established agricultural unit and the proposed use falls within Class C3 of Schedule 1 to the Use Classes Order.

Class Q (b) An extension is proposed to the building, but this will be:

- Sited to the rear of the building
- Single Storey
- Constructed without 'protrusions'
- At a lower eaves height than the building
- Lower than the building.
- Within the line of the principal boundaries

On a hard surface which existed before July 2023

Class Q (c) The proposed works will consist of nothing other than:

- Installation or replacement windows, walls, roof or exterior walls
- Water, drainage, electricity and other services
- Nothing which goes beyond those necessary for the building to function as a dwellinghouse

Development Not Permitted

Class Q1

(a) The building was part of an established agricultural unit on 24th July 2023
(b) N/A
(c) The proposed building will be within use class C3 and will not exceed 150sqm
(d) The development, along with any previous development will not exceed 10 units or 1000sqm
(e) The site is not occupied by an agricultural tenancy
(f) No agricultural tenancy has been terminated for the purposes of this proposal
(g) No development under Class A(a) or Class B(a) of part 6 have been carried out in the last 10 years
(h) Other than that allowed by Q.1(i) and Q.1(j)(i) the dimensions of the building will not change

(i) As confirmed in Class Q(b) above the proposal will be within all of the parameters prescribed in this section.
(j) As confirmed in Class Q(c) above all of the works proposed will be within the limitations prescribed in this section
(k) The site is not on aricle2(3) land
(l) The site is not part of an SSSI, is not in a safety hazard area and is not a military explosives storage area.
(m) The site does not contain a SAM
(n) The building is not listed
(o) The proposed building will comply with National Space Standards
(p) The building has an established access to the public highway.

Conditions

Class Q2

(1) The matters listed in sub paragraphs (a) to (f) are detailed in sections 7-11 below in this statement.
(2) The matters listed in sub paragraphs (a) to (e) and (g) are detailed in sections 7-13 below in this statement
(3) The proposed extension will not exceed the 4m prescribed and is located at the rear of the building.
(4) The applicant confirms that the proposed development would be completed within 3 years of the prior approval date.

7. HIGHWAYS AND ACCESS

7.1 As shown in the attached Design and Access Statement, access to the proposed dwelling is established through an existing link with New Fen Drove which has provided access the existing barn, the flower nurseries and the arable land since the family took over the farm in 1963.

7.2 There is no history of accidents at the intersection between this access point and New Fen Drove.

8. NOISE

8.1 Given the location of the barn and its proposed change of use from storage of agricultural equipment and other machinery to a domestic dwelling, there will be no adverse noise issues arising from this application.

9. CONTAMINATED LAND

9.1 There is no evidence or record of materials or chemicals being kept on the site which would have the potential to cause contamination. Equally, the surrounding land uses and landform are such that it is very unlikely that the site has been impacted by leachates of any kind.

10. FLOOD RISK

10.1 The site is in Flood Zone 1 and there is no history of flooding on the site.

11. LOCATION OF BUILDING

11.1 The existing building is located within the boundary of The Gables Nursery Farm, to the north east of an existing dwellinghouse occupied by the applicant.

11.2 The building looks out onto open arable land and has sufficient space for parking and servicing immediately adjacent to it.

11.3 There are no other domestic buildings within a proximity whereby nuisance or conflict is likely to arise. The surrounding agricultural area will be managed jointly by the applicant and his son and daughter in law who will occupy the proposed new dwelling, as they assume overall responsibility for the management and operation of the farm.

11.4 There are therefore no factors which make this proposal impractical.

12. DESIGN AND EXTERNAL APPEARANCE

12.1 Indicative layout plans and elevations are included with the application. However, given that the applicant is the owner of the farm, and that the conversion will become home to his son and daughter in law, the family will ensure that the design and materials are both reflective of and complementary to the local vernacular, and will blend well into the local landscape.

13. PROVISION OF LIGHT

13.1 Indicative layout plans and elevations are included with this application. The design includes a significant level of glazing which will ensure that there is adequate light to all habitable rooms.

14. STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY

14.1 Whilst it is the applicant's intention to undertake works to the windows, doors, roof and exterior walls of the barn, as is provided for in Class Q 1 (j) (i) (aa), the existing building is structurally sound and weatherproof.

15. PROPOSED CONVERSION

15.1 It is proposed that the existing barn will be converted into a small dwelling house within the 150sqm threshold provided for in Class Q 1 (c). As part of the conversion, and within the 150sqm threshold, an extension is proposed as provided for in Class Q 1 (i).

15.2 Indicative plans and elevations for the proposed conversion are included within this application.

16. CONCLUSION

16.1 It is the applicants view that the proposed conversion falls within the scope of Class Q Legislation, as detailed in Section 6 above and that Prior Approval should be granted by the Local Planning Authority.

16.2 Moreover, and in the context of the refusal of application **H05-0410-22** in June 2022 and application **H05-0698-24** in October 2024, this application has an important economic dimension in providing a key plank in the transition between generations to ensure the ongoing growth of a long-standing business, in a sector which is facing increasing pressure and is already struggling to compete.

APPENDICES

Location and Block Plan

Existing Plan and Elevation

Proposed Indicative Layout Plan and Elevations