

**Planning, Access and Design Statement in support of Full Application for Demolition
of Agricultural Buildings with Class Q Approval and Erection of New-Build Dwelling
and Change of Use of Agricultural Land to Ancillary Residential Use**

At:

Launcherley Farm
Launcherley Cross
Launcherley
Wells
BA5 1QJ

Supporting submission on behalf of the Applicant:

Mr and Mrs A Webb

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 In March 2015 under Class Q, an appeal was allowed for the change of use of agricultural buildings to create three dwellings. The buildings granted consent were labelled Building 1, 2 and 3. The approval was subject of a planning condition requiring details of car parking to be submitted and approved. In October 2015 under reference 2015/2026/APP, such details were approved.
- 1.2 Commencement of development for Building 1, yielding an independent two-bedroom dwelling occurred during February 2016 and was completed in December 2017.
- 1.3 Building 3 has been converted into a two-bedroom, self-contained guest accommodation ancillary to the farmhouse. This was completed in May 2025.
- 1.4 Building 2, being the largest of the three buildings, has not been converted. This is the building subject of the current application and extended to 200 sqm, originally planned to yield a four-bedroom dwelling under Class Q.
- 1.5 The implementation of the Prior Approval for Building 1 and 3 before the expiry of the approval on 9 July 2018 means that the consent for Building 2 to be converted into a four-bedroom dwelling remains extant and implementable.



2.0 The Proposed Development

- 2.1 This application for planning permission relates to the demolition of Barn 2 and attached stone barn to create a three-bedroom dwelling on two floors, carport and bat loft.
- 2.2 The development will share the vehicular access onto Launcherley Road, currently enjoyed by Barn 1. The application also includes enlarging the residential curtilage land for Barns 1 and 3 beyond that originally allowed under Class Q. The whole site, defined by the application red line, is just under 0.2 ha (0.19 ha).
- 2.3 The application is a self- build. The proposed new dwelling and it's curtilage land is exempt from Bio-Diversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment (as of 6 August 2026) because the red line of the application site does not exceed 0.2 ha.
- 2.4 The application buildings provide habitats for protected species. A Bat (and Bird) Ecological Survey was carried out by Crossman Associates. Their report dated 11 July 2026 is copied as part of this submission.
- 2.5 The site lies beyond the catchment area of the River Brue. Therefore the issue of phosphate neutrality is not a relevant consideration to this application.



3.0 Access Statement

- 3.1 Adjacent to Building 1 is an established vehicular access serving the farmyards' buildings onto Launcherley Road. The access was deemed suitable under the Class Q approval for the conversion of the barns into three dwellings.

- 3.2 In the event, currently only Building 1 uses the access. Building 3 is occupied as ancillary accommodation to the farmhouse and separate vehicular access or on-site parking is not required to serve its use.

- 3.3 The proposed new dwelling will use the consented access onto Launcherley Road. Here, access visibility of 2.4 m x 110 m is achievable to the southeast and 2.0 m x 68 m to the northwest.

- 3.4 The proposed three-bedroom dwelling is provided with two covered and one outdoor parking space. This is one more parking space than the approval for a four-bedroom dwelling granted under reference 2015/2026/APP. The parking is contained within a courtyard area also used for parking for Building 1.

- 3.5 The site benefits from a secondary vehicular access onto an unnamed lane to the north-west of the site. This has a restrictive width of 3.5 m and virtually nil visibility in either direction. This access is consequently used as the pedestrian access to the conversion of Building 3 and occasional vehicular use to access the buildings on the land labelled as a 'garage' used for housing the Applicant's classic car collection.



4.0 Design Statement

(i) Context

- 4.1 Launcherley Farm is a prominent site, lying to the south of Launcherley crossroads. It comprises a large, early 19th century farmhouse and on the opposite side of the lane, a defunct farmyard comprising 19th and 20th century farm buildings -subject of this application.



- 4.2 The building to be demolished was originally an early 19th century, two-storey barn of a similar scale to Building 1. During the 1950/60's the building was substantially widened and a first-floor removed to create the building that currently exists. The adjoining barn, abutting the lane, is of a similar age of construction as the original Building 1.



4.3 A photograph of the original barns and farmhouse are shown below.



(ii) Scale and Layout

- 4.4 The existing building footprint of Building 2 dimensions 20.6 m x 10.3 m. The footprint of the replacement building dimensions 18 m x 19 m on two floors. The side building appendage, abutting the lane, will be rebuilt. The footprint of this building is increased from 39 sqm to 53 sqm on two floors.
- 4.5 The difference in the existing and proposed building footpaths and profiles are shown on submitted drawing PL5618/013B, 20A and 21A.
- 4.6 The overarching design concept is to enhance the historic pattern of development on the site. This is achieved by remodelling the form and profile of the buildings to be more in keeping with the traditional rural vernacular, and retaining the tall stone walls that enclose the site.



(iii) External Appearance

- 4.7 The roadside barn will be rebuilt to retain an unfenestrated, tall, natural stone wall using salvaged stone. The existing fibre cement corrugated roofs of the application building will be replaced with natural slate – this being the roof covering used in the farmhouse and Building 1.
- 4.8 Green Oak framework will be visually expressed in the southern gable end of the new dwelling. The Chimney stack will be constructed in natural stone with red brick corbelling. Windows and door frames will be constructed of black, powder-coated aluminium frames and Oak plank or glazed doors.

(iv) Landscaping

- 4.9 Part of the site is already domesticated with lawned areas associated with the residential use of Building 1. Much of the remainder of the site comprises concrete yards, gravel and ruderal margin along the field boundary to the east. This area will similarly grass seeded. There are no proposals for tree planting within the site because this would be uncharacteristic to this former agricultural steading.



5.0 Planning Policy Considerations

(i) Development Plan Policy

- 5.1 The following policies of the Mendip District Council Local Plan Part 1 (2014) are relevant to this application.
- 5.2 Policy CP1 (Mendip Spatial Strategy) which states that new development will be expected to contribute positively towards components of the Vision for the district and the associated strategic objectives.
- 5.3 Policy DP1 (Local Identity and Distinctiveness) which aims to ensure all development proposal contribute positively to the identity and distinctiveness of the district, as well as being formulated with an appreciation of the built and natural context.
- 5.4 Policy DP6 (Bat Protection) which aims to test that all applications are in compliance with the Habitat Regulations.
- 5.5 Policy DP7 (Design and Amenity of New Development) aims to support proposals for high quality design which results in usable, durable, adaptable, sustainable and attractive places.
- 5.6 Policy DP9 (Transport Impact of New Development) which aims for developments to make safe and satisfactory provisions for access by all means of transport, as well as avoiding harm to the wider transport networks.
- 5.7 Policy DP10 (Parking Standards) which supports development where the parking is appropriate to the operation needs of the development.

(ii) National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides relevant Government Policy.



- 5.9 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that where Development Plan policies which are the most relevant for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would *significantly and demonstrably* outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole (otherwise known as the 'titled balance').
- 5.10 NPPF Footnote 7 makes clear that out-of-date Development Plan policies include, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites (5YHLS).



6.0 **Case for Granting Planning Permission**

(i) Principle

- 6.1 The site benefits from extant approval to convert the agricultural buildings into three separate dwellings. Two of the dwellings have been residentially converted. The consent for the third dwelling is implementable, without time limits. This represents a significant material consideration having regard to the judgement of **Mansell v Tonbridge and Malling BC [2017] EWCA Civ 1314** ('the Mansell judgement').
- 6.2 In short, the significance of the Mansell judgement is that it clarifies the principle that, in considering proposals for new development, decision makers should have regard to the fallback position of lawful development which has a prospect of taking place in the alternative. The basic principle is that for a prospect to be a "real prospect", it does not have to be probable or likely: a possibility will suffice.
- 6.4 As such, whilst the application site lies in a countryside location where the Local Plan seeks to impose appropriate controls on development, the 'one for one' replacement of the extant permission for the conversion of one dwelling is acceptable and sufficient to outweigh any conflict with Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Local Plan.
- 6.5 It is also a significant material consideration that there is not an adequate five-year housing land supply in the former Mendip area. The latest statement of Five-Year Housing Land Supply for Somerset East Area (former Mendip District Council) confirmed there was only a 2.84 year equivalent.
- 6.6 In-light of the under-supply of housing paragraph 11 (d) of the NPPF is triggered, as directed by Footnote 8, which provides that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole.

(ii) Character and Appearance

- 6.7 The design concept of the new building is underpinned by the desire to create an attractive looking building that has the form and character befitting to its location on a former farm steading. This objective would not have been achieved by implementing the Class Q approval for this building, which would have necessarily retained the ill-proportioned quasi-industrial looking building.



- 6.8 The narrowing of this building's footprint and increased roof pitch on a taller building, together with the rebuilding of the adjacent building, would result in a positive enhancement of the character of this prominent corner site. This accords with Local Plan Policy DP1 and DP2.
- 6.9 The proposed enlargement of domestic curtilage gravel to include the whole of the former steading would not result in any encroachment visually or physically onto the countryside which abuts the site along its eastern site boundary. All of the curtilage land is screened from the two road frontages by high stone walling.

(iii) Access and Parking

- 6.10 The proposal uses the existing access arrangements onto Launcherley Road as approved in the 2015 Class Q decision. Although acknowledging the access visibility splays are below the desirable standard for a road subject of the national speed limit, the standard of visibility and safety of this access was not in contention when the Class Q approval was granted. As this is a legitimate fallback position, a highway safety ground of refusal could not be substantiated.
- 6.11 The existing remotely operated electrically powered pair of entrance gates are set back 3.3 m from the carriageway edge. This is below the set back distance normally required, but there is sufficient space for a delivery vehicle to park on the tarmac verge without impeding traffic flow. The fact that the Class Q approval did not require any setting back of gates must also be taken into account in considering the desirability of the status quo.
- 6.12 The three parking spaces for the new dwelling accord with the County Vehicle Parking Strategy and Policy DP10.

(iv) Amenity

- 6.13 The application site is in an isolated location with the nearest property being the farmhouse, owned and occupied by the Applicants. The nearest other property is a single-storey dwelling known as 'Moorview'. This is located 50 m distance away and not therefore materially affected by the proposed development. This development therefore accords with Local Plan Policy DP7.



(v) Ecology

- 6.14 A survey carried out following the granting of Prior Approval in 2014 confirmed bat roosts in the buildings to be converted. A Bat Licence was subsequently granted by Natural England involving the provision of a bat loft.
- 6.15 An up-to-date bat survey has been carried out this year by Crossman Ecology including two emergence surveys. The survey identified Lesser Horseshoe night roost and a Common Pippestrelle day roost and an active barn Swallow nest.
- 6.16 The proposed mitigation comprises a dedicated bat loft (above the proposed car port), Bat entry/exit in gable end of building, bat tubes in two of the external elevations and Swallow nesting cups in the new car port.
- 6.17 The proposal will need to proceed under a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence issued by Natural England. This accords with Local Plan Policy DP6.



7.0 **Overall Summary and Conclusion**

- 7.1 Prior Approval has been granted for the conversion of buildings to create three dwellings in 2015. Two of these conversions have been completed under the Class Q Prior Approval procedure. The third barn, the subject of this application, has not been converted, but nonetheless the Prior Approval remains extant and implementable. The proposal is to demolish the third building to create a high-quality, new-build dwelling.
- 7.2 The Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. This means that the 'tilted balance' in paragraph 11 (d) is engaged and in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) planning permission should therefore be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would **significantly and demonstrably** outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework, taken as a whole.
- 7.3 The proposal results in a building of a lesser building footprint with a taller, narrower building more in keeping with the scale of the surrounding buildings and of a character and form that is superior to the alternative of converting the existing buildings. The increase in height has no adverse impact on neighbouring amenity.
- 7.4 The proposed access visibility is below optimal. However, the fall-back of implementing the building conversion into a four-bedroom dwelling would have used the same sub-optimum site access that was previously deemed acceptable.
- 7.5 In accordance with paragraph 11 of the Framework, there are no material adverse impacts arising from the proposals, which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits the development will deliver.
- 7.6 There are no specific policies of the NPPF which would either preclude or restrict the development and in the circumstances the NPPF directs that planning permission should be granted.
- 7.7 It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.

