
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 November 2025

by **C Coles MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/W/25/3371356

Feather Farm, Southfields Road, Woldingham, Surrey CR3 7BG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant approval required under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by Mr Alexander Mallinson against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref is TA/2025/74/NC.
 - The development proposed is conversion of an existing steel framed agricultural building into 4 no. residential dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and prior approval is granted under the provisions of Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for conversion of an existing steel framed agricultural building into 4 no. residential dwellings at Feather Farm, Southfields Road, Woldingham, Surrey CR3 7BG in accordance with the application TA/2025/74/NC and subject to the following condition:
 - 1) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match in material, colour and texture those used in the existing building.

Background and Preliminary Matters

2. I have used the description of the proposal as set out in the Council's Decision Notice which is more accurate and concise than that used in the application form. The appellant has used this revised description in the appeal form and so I am satisfied that no party would be prejudiced as a result.
3. Alternative plans for parking within the site have been provided to me. The Council has made clear that its determination was based on drawing number 224224 010 P1, and I have also made my determination on the same basis.
4. The application was made under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended (the GPDO). This permits development the change of use of a former agricultural building that was (but is no longer) part of an established agricultural unit, and any land within that building's curtilage, to a dwellinghouse, together with building operations reasonably necessary for this use.
5. The deemed permission under Class Q is conditional upon the developer first applying to the Council for a determination as to whether Prior Approval would be

required as to the subject matters set out in Paragraph Q.2(1). However, before assessing these elements, it must first be established whether or not the proposed development falls within the provisions of Class Q of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO having regard to whether the site complies with Class Q3.1(b) and the requirement for the curtilage to be within certain size limits, and with Class Q.1(o) and whether the proposal would comply with the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS).

6. Reason for refusal 4 relates to Class Q.2 (d) which are flooding risks on the site. However, the evidence presented by both parties relates to Class Q.2 (a) and the transport and highways impact of the development, rather than in respect of flood risks. I have therefore dealt with these matters as relating to Class Q.2 (a) rather than Class Q.2(d).
7. The Council has confirmed that it is satisfied in relation to Class Q.1 (j) that the building is suitable for conversion. It has also confirmed that adequate visibility sight lines would be available at the Slines Oak Road junction with Southfields Road, and with regard to cladding. I see no reason to take a different view and so will not consider these matters further. However, the Council maintains its other concerns referred to in the relevant refusal reason, in respect of Class Q.1(o) NDSS, and so I shall consider these.

Main Issues

8. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - whether the proposal complies with the description of permitted development under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the GPDO, with regards to the site area and the NDSS;
 - the transport and highways impact of the development;
 - the design and external appearance of the building, and
 - the provision of adequate natural light into all habitable rooms.

Reasons

Compliance with GPDO

9. The parties dispute whether the proposal complies with the definition of curtilage under Class Q3.1(b). The curtilage boundary is shown within the Curtilage Site Plan as being no larger than the land occupied by the building. As such, based on this plan and notwithstanding the larger area shown on the Location Plan, the proposal complies with the definition of curtilage falling within Class Q3.1(b).
10. The NDSS requires that the minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3 metres for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area (GIA). The standards define the GIA of a dwelling as the total floor space measured between the internal faces of perimeter walls that enclose the dwelling. This requirement applies per unit and not per room. On the basis of the information available to me, the plans demonstrate that taking each unit as a whole, over 75% of the GIA would have a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.3 metres. The submitted plans do not show access to the loft storage area and therefore this is not included within my GIA assessment.

11. Based on the evidence before me, the proposal meets the site area and NDSS requirements and complies with Class Q.1 (o). For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would comply with the description of permitted development under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the GPDO.

Transport and Highways

12. Class Q.2 (a) requires the prior approval of the Council on matters relating to transport and highways. The access to the site from Southfields Road was granted under a previous planning permission¹ and has been implemented in part and therefore remains extant. The County Highway Authority considered the access arrangements for application 2021/901 and raised no objection.
13. The previously approved access has been partially implemented at the site entrance, and the appellant has provided evidence to show that there would be sufficient room for two vehicles to access the site, and the Council has not substantively disputed this evidence. The permitted access was considered suitable for agricultural vehicles to access the site and whilst it is likely there would be increased vehicular movements associated with the proposed development when compared to the existing, the vehicles accessing the site on a regular basis are likely to be smaller than agricultural vehicles.
14. Details have been provided to show where the refuse bins would be stored including for kerbside collection. The refuse bins would be positioned off the road, as occurs elsewhere on the same narrow road from established dwellings. As such, the bins would not be an unexpected feature to road users. There is also sufficient verge to avoid any impeding of traffic. As a result, I see little reason why the proposed location of the bins would impede parking or turning for the occupiers of the site or cause an inconvenience to other road users.
15. Based on the evidence before me, the transport and highways impact of the development would be acceptable, and the proposal therefore complies with Class Q.2 (a).

Design and External Appearance

16. Class Q.2 (f) requires the prior approval of the Council for matters relating to design and external appearance. The Council has raised objection on the grounds of light pollution from the glazing. However, the amount of glazing proposed in the rooflights would be less than on the existing building, although I note the building would be more intensively used. My attention has also been drawn to the location of the built-up area which is already lit up at night. There is also a floodlit equestrian arena adjacent to the site. I have also been directed towards glazing on nearby properties which appears comparable with the amount of glazing proposed. A degree of light pollution is also inherent to the allowance for the conversion of buildings to dwellings provided by the GPDO.
17. In this context, the effect of light pollution caused by the proposed glazing and the proposed use would not be particularly harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It follows that the design and external appearance of the building would be acceptable, and so the proposal would comply with Class Q.2(f).

¹ 2021/901

Natural Light

18. Class Q.2 (g) requires the prior approval of the Council for matters relating to the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses. There is a steep bank and natural landscaping adjacent to the building which could affect the light available to the occupiers. However, the Daylight and Sunlight Study confirms that the provision of internal natural light to all of the habitable rooms is highly satisfactory and meets the Daylight illuminance recommendation, and that the development would ensure satisfactory daylight and sunlight amenities for future residents. The study refers to the incorrect Local Authority area. Even so, the Council does not dispute the findings of the study, and I see little reason to disagree.
19. The adequacy of the outlook available to future occupiers has also been raised by the Council. However, this is a separate matter from the amount of natural light in habitable rooms and so is not a relevant consideration in this context. Accordingly, I therefore conclude the proposal would provide adequate natural light into all habitable rooms and so meets the requirements of Class Q.2 (g).

Other Matters

20. The concern relating to the type of development being out of character with the area, covenants on the site and whether the site is within an unsustainable location cannot be considered as part of a Prior Approval application. I have seen no substantive evidence to demonstrate that the scheme would give rise to unacceptable impacts on the highway through damage.

Conditions

21. In accordance with the GPDO, development must be completed within three years of the date of this decision and in compliance with the approved plans.
22. The Council has suggested various conditions. A condition to secure matching materials is necessary and reasonable in the interests of securing an acceptable design and external appearance for the building. The other conditions suggested by the Council relate to landscaping, tree protection and external lighting. However, they cannot be imposed as paragraph W (13) of Schedule 2, Part 3 of the GPDO only allows the imposition of conditions only where they are reasonably related to the subject matter of the prior approval.

Conclusion

23. For the reasons given above, I conclude the appeal should be allowed.

C Coles

INSPECTOR