

Your ref:
Our ref: TJF/LJN/JB76491
DD: 07825 894062
E: tom.fussey@bidwells.co.uk
Date: 27 April 2026

North Hertfordshire District Council
Town Hall
Melbourn Street
Bendish
Royston
SG8 7DA

Dear Sirs

CHANGE OF USE OF AN AGRICULTURAL BARN TO 1 NO DWELLING HOUSE UNDER PART 3 CLASS Q OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015 (AS AMENDED) AT DEADMAN'S HILL FARM, DEADMAN'S HILL, BUNTINGFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG9 0RJ.

We enclose a Prior Notification under Part 3 Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the change of use of a building and land within its curtilage from use as an agricultural building to 1 no dwelling house.

1 The Established Agricultural Unit

The agricultural building subject of this proposal is located at Deadman's Hill Farm, to the southwestern side of Deadman's Hill, and forms part of an Established Agricultural Unit. The Established Agricultural Unit (known as Deadman's Hill Farm) extends to 30.223 hectares (74.68 acres).

A plan showing the full extent of the farm holding accompanies this Class Q prior notification.

The primary farming operation at Deadman's Hill farm is arable farming. This is based on a three-year crop rotation system. The first crop is winter wheat, which is then followed by either second wheat, barley or break crop. The wheat is either used for milling and the barley is sold for malting or feed purposes. In the third-year of the rotation, oilseed rape or similar break crops, such as field beans are also incorporated. This is to help to diversify the farm's crops with either brassica or legume plants and encourage soil resilience by returning a number of essential nutrients to the soil. This is a standard, well-followed rotation system and one that helps to produce significant volumes of crop for sale.

The subject building at Deadman's Hill Farm formed part of an Established Agricultural Unit on 24th July 2023 and for the 10 years preceding the submission of this Prior Notification. It remains an Established Agricultural Unit to present day. The land and building have only ever been used for agricultural purposes.

2 The Building

The proposed dwelling will be formed by converting an existing agricultural building which is no longer required for agricultural purposes. The building is single storey in construction, with a concrete floor, and eleven courses of masonry brickwork to a height of 0.5 meters. This brickwork plinth supports the timber-framed superstructure. The external walls above the brickwork are clad with shiplap boarding. The structure is covered with a corrugated metal roof with double barn doors at the front elevation serving as the main form of access into the building.

Any conversion works will be delivered within the parameters of Class Q Permitted Development and are reasonably necessary to allow the building to function as a residential dwelling, amounting to conversion works only (as demonstrated on the accompanying architectural proposal drawings and structural report).

The building is of appropriate size to form a desirable family home and provide adequate internal space to function as a dwelling. The proposal drawings submitted with this prior notification confirm that minimum floor space requirements for residential amenity are met and that the building is capable of accommodating a well-designed dwelling, with ample natural light in all habitable rooms.

The Applicant is aware of the determination made in *Hibbitt v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2016] which clarified the position of 'conversion' under Class Q. We have reviewed the extent of works as part of this proposal, and it is clear that these works constitute conversion only. All existing materials will be retained where possible and existing openings will be utilised.

The building is well positioned, appropriate for conversion and will make a suitable dwelling. As such, the proposal fulfils all necessary requirements of substantial construction and ability to be converted under Class Q.

The subject building is located in an isolated area of the farmstead and is lone standing in structure on the holding. The building is located southwest of Deadman's Hill which is a B-road leading to Sandon, with two residential dwellings located on the other side of the road. The building is set back from the road connected via existing hardstanding allowing for ample space for turning, along with good visibility in both directions when entering and leaving the site.

3 Class Q Criteria

We confirm that the proposal accords with the requirements of Class Q, as demonstrated in the table below:

DEVELOPMENT NOT PERMITTED.	
Q.1 DEVELOPMENT IS NOT PERMITTED BY CLASS Q WHERE—	
(a) in the case of a site that is part of an established agricultural unit, the site was not part of the established agricultural unit— (i) on 24th July 2023; (ii) where the site became part of the established agricultural unit after 24th July 2023, for a period of at least 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins,	The site has been used solely for agricultural use as part of an established agricultural unit for many years and was in agricultural use on the 24th July 2023. The site has been in agricultural use for more than 10 years as part of an established agricultural unit.
(b) in the case of a site that was (but is no longer) part of an established agricultural unit—	This application does not propose the creation of larger dwellinghouses.

DEVELOPMENT NOT PERMITTED.	
Q.1 DEVELOPMENT IS NOT PERMITTED BY CLASS Q WHERE—	
(i) the site was part of an established agricultural unit on 24th July 2023, (ii) where the site ceased to be part of an established agricultural unit after 24th July 2023, the site has not been part of the established agricultural unit for a period of at least 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins, or (iii) since ceasing to be part of an established agricultural unit, the site has been used for any non-agricultural purpose,	
(c) the floor space of any dwellinghouse developed under Class Q having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of Schedule 1 to the Use Classes Order exceeds 150 square metres,	This application does not propose the creation of any dwellinghouses exceeding 150sqm.
(d) the development under Class Q, together with any previous development under Class Q, within the original limits of an established agricultural unit (see paragraph Q.3(2) of this Part) would result in— (i) the cumulative number of separate dwellinghouses having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of Schedule 1 to the Use Classes Order exceeding 10, or (ii) the cumulative floor space of dwellinghouses having a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of Schedule 1 to the Use Classes Order exceeding 1,000 square metres,	There has been no previous development under Class Q within the established agricultural unit. This proposal will comprise a single dwellinghouse with a cumulative floor space of 76.3 sqm (GIA). The cumulative number of separate dwellinghouses will be one. The footprint of the building is, and will remain, 86.7 sqm.
(e) the site is occupied under an agricultural tenancy, unless the express consent of both the landlord and the tenant has been obtained;	The site is not subject to an agricultural tenancy.
(f) less than 1 year before the date development begins— (i) an agricultural tenancy over the site has been terminated, and (ii) the termination was for the purpose of carrying out development under Class Q, unless both the landlord and the tenant have agreed in writing that the site is no longer required for agricultural use;	The site is not currently subject to an agricultural tenancy, nor has it been within the previous year.
g) development under Class A(a) or Class B(a) of Part 6 of this Schedule (agricultural buildings and operations) has been carried out on the established agricultural unit during the period which is 10 years before the date development under Class Q begins	Development under Class A(a) or Class B(a) of Part 6 has not been carried out on the established agricultural unit. A plan of the established agricultural unit accompanies this application for clarity. An online search of the established agricultural unit shows that no applications have been made whatsoever at the site since 2010.

DEVELOPMENT NOT PERMITTED. Q.1 DEVELOPMENT IS NOT PERMITTED BY CLASS Q WHERE—	
(h) the development would result in the external dimensions of the building extending beyond the external dimensions of the existing building at any given point, other than— (i) extension of the building allowed by paragraph Q.1(i); (ii) protrusions of up to 0.2 metres to accommodate building operations allowed by paragraph Q.1(j)(i),	The proposed dwelling will not result in external dimensions of the building extending beyond the existing dimensions of the building. This is shown clearly in the accompanying plans.
(i) the development under Class Q(b) would result in an extension that— (i) has more than one storey, (ii) is sited anywhere other than to the rear of the existing building, (iii) extends beyond the rear wall of the existing building by more than 4 metres, (iv) has eaves the height of which exceed the height of the eaves of the existing building, (v) is higher than whichever is the lower of— (aa) the highest part of the roof of the existing building, or (bb) a height of 4 metres above the ground, (vi) extends beyond a wall that forms a side or principal elevation of the existing building, or (vii) would be sited on land that, before the development under Class Q(b), is not covered by a hard surface that was provided on the land by virtue of any development, and— (aa) the hard surface was not provided on the land on or before 24th July 2023, or (bb) where the hard surface was provided on the land after 24th July 2023, the hard surface has not been situated on the land for a period of at least 10 years before the date development under Class Q(b) begins,	The proposed development will not result in the extension of the existing building.
(j) the development under Class Q(c) would consist of building operations other than— (i) the installation or replacement of— (aa) windows, doors, roofs, or exterior walls, or (bb) water, drainage, electricity, gas or other services, to the extent reasonably necessary for the building to function as a dwellinghouse, and (ii) partial demolition to the extent reasonably necessary to carry out building operations allowed by paragraph Q.1(j)(i),	The development will not comprise building operations other than those allowed by Class Q. The existing building is structurally strong enough to take the loading of conversion works required to provide for the proposed residential use. A structural report has been undertaken, which accompanies this Prior Notification. The building has been assessed with regard to the proposed plans for conversion, as detailed within the report. The structural statement identifies that the proposed conversion schemes can be undertaken in line with the provisions under Class Q, and that the building is structurally

DEVELOPMENT NOT PERMITTED. Q.1 DEVELOPMENT IS NOT PERMITTED BY CLASS Q WHERE—	
	capable of sustaining the loading of the conversions without the requirement for rebuilding. It is clear that the proposed works are reasonably necessary to facilitate the conversion, and fall within the criteria set out under Class Q.
(k) the site is on article 2(3) land;	The site is not on article 2(3) land.
(l) the site is or forms part of— (i) a site of special scientific interest; (ii) a safety hazard area; (iii) a military explosives storage area;	The site is not and does not form part of a site of special scientific interest, a safety hazard or a military explosives storage area.
(m) the site is, or contains, a scheduled monument;	The site is not and does not contain a scheduled monument.
(n) the building is a listed building.	The building is not listed.
(o) the existing building, excluding any proposed extension under Class Q(b) but including any proposed building operations under Class Q(c), would not be capable of complying with the nationally described space standard issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government on 27th March 2015 as read with the notes dated 19th May 2016 which apply to it, or	The development will not comprise building operations other than those allowed by Class Q. The proposed development will comply with the nationally described space standards.
(p) the building does not have suitable existing access to a public highway.	The proposed development has suitable existing access to a public highway.

4 Prior Notification

Prior Notification is sought to enact the provisions of Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

Q.2 – (1) Where the development proposed is development under Class Q(a) together with development under Class Q(c), development is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to—

CONDITIONS	
(a) transport and highways impacts of the development,	Highways – The site benefits from one main point of access that connects onto Deadman's Hill Road, of which is in regular use. The site has been regularly used and accessed for agricultural purposes for many years. This includes for storage of farm equipment and access to fields. As such, the building has been frequently accessed by agricultural vehicles and machinery, transportation vehicles. The farm staff access the site on a daily basis.

CONDITIONS	
	A speed survey and visibility splays were conducted as part of access appraisal of the site. The speed survey identified that the average speeds northbound average 50.9mph and southbound averaged 51mph, placing the road in the 85 percentile. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) indicate the desired visibility for roads in the 85 percentiles have a visibility of 154m at a 2.4m setback off the main road. Visibility splays have been produced in accordance with the 2.4m site set back from the main road. The access point to the site achieves visibility of 187m to the north and 215m to the South, therefore fulfilling the 154m requirement. This is evidenced in the letter annexed to this statement.
(b) noise impacts of the development,	There will be no significant noise impacts on the local area as a result of the change of use of the building during the development or after completion. There will be no impact on the amenity of future residential occupants as a result of the established agricultural unit. This due to the main farming operation takes place on a farmstead. This proposal should therefore comply with this Class Q condition.
(c) contamination risks on the site,	The applicant is not aware of any contamination risks on the site. The applicant is willing to accept a condition in relation to contamination if required.
(d) flooding risks on the site,	The Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Seas) does not indicate that the site is at any risk of flooding. The site of the subject building of this prior notification is located in flood zone 1 and has a low probability of flooding from rivers. The nearest body of water that may be susceptible to flooding is located approximately 0.81km to the east of the site. According to the Ordinance Survey, this body of water is situated 15m lower in elevation than the subject site. It is not proposed to increase the level of hard standing on the site, and it is not considered that there will be any impact on potential flooding risks from the proposal.
(e) whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change from agricultural use to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order, and the provisions of paragraph N of this Part shall apply in relation to any such application, and	We consider that the location of the building is desirable for a dwelling, due to the proximity of the village of Sandon and the surrounding hamlets, with close public access transport and accessible countryside. The village of Sandon is well served by a range of amenities, including Sandon JMI school, two churches, village hall, local shop and a local cricket club.

CONDITIONS	
	The site is currently underused. The conversion of the building for residential use will result in the area being well maintained and ultimately deliver a more attractive site. The Planning Practice Guidance, specifically states that <i>"The permitted development right does not apply a test in relation to sustainability of location. This is deliberate as the right recognises that many agricultural buildings will not be in village settlements and may not be able to rely on public transport for their daily needs. Instead, the local planning authority can consider whether the location and siting of the building would make it impractical or undesirable to change use to a house."</i> The sustainability of the location is therefore not applicable. This is confirmed by the decision in <i>East Herts v Secretary of State [2017]</i> that a location outside of a village or community, does not give sufficient grounds for refusal.
(f) the design or external appearance of the building.	The proposed plans and elevations of the building are enclosed with this prior notification. The design is in keeping with the character of the building and its surroundings. It is considered that the proposed conversion will enhance the site and the surrounding countryside. The agricultural heritage of the building is respected in the design, with existing materials and openings utilised wherever possible.
(g) the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses, and the provisions of paragraph W (prior approval) of this Part apply in relation to that application.	The proposed plans and elevations of the building are enclosed with prior notification. The design ensures the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses.
(2) Where the development proposed is development under Class Q(a) only, development is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the items referred to in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) to (e) and (g), and the provisions of paragraph W (prior approval) of this Part apply in relation to that application.	The Applicant hereby applies to the local authority for a determination as to whether prior approval of the authority will be required.
(4) Development under Class Q is permitted subject to the condition that development under Class Q(a), and under Class Q(b) or (c), if any, must be completed within a period of 3 years starting with the prior approval date.	The development will be completed within 3 years of prior approval being granted.

5 Ecology

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and Emergence & Activity Bat Survey (EBS) were conducted by Cherryfield Ecology in May 2024, with the full report enclosed as part of this prior notification (which remains valid and 'in date', according to the report).

The bat activity survey revealed minimal to no activity during dawn and dusk emergence periods associated with the agricultural building subject to this application. However, residual evidence of barn owl roosting was observed in the subject building.

As part of the redevelopment, it is further recommended that a barn owl nesting box on a pole should be installed on-site to enhance biodiversity and mitigate the presence of barn owls in and around the subject building. The details of this are confirmed within the enclosed Owl and Bird Mitigation Plan submitted with this prior notification.

To mitigate the potential impact on nesting birds during construction, the following measures will be implemented, as recommended within the report:

- Any existing nests will be removed outside of the active breeding season (March to August). If removal during the non-breeding season is not feasible, a suitably qualified ecologist will conduct a survey to confirm the nest is inactive before removal. Should an active nest be discovered, a minimum 3-meter radius buffer zone will be established and maintained around the nest until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use. Construction activities will be prohibited within this buffer zone.
- To compensate for any lost nesting opportunities, bird boxes will be installed. Specifically, Swallow cup boxes will be fitted at eave height on the exterior of the building. These boxes will be positioned under an overhang to provide protection from the weather.

A subsequent material change check was completed by Cherryfield Ecology on Wednesday 4th February in order to confirm the recommendations and mitigation proposed within the PRA and EBS remain valid. This is confirmed within the Letter Report dated 11th March 2026 submitted with this prior notification.

The Applicant is willing to accept a condition ensuring full adherence to the recommendations outlined in all ecology reports submitted with this prior notification. All submitted reports are valid and up to date.

6 Summary

The proposal relates to agricultural building forming part of the established agricultural unit known as Deadman's Hill Farm. The building and proposed conversion works have been assessed regarding all relevant criteria set out under Class Q. Additional independent assessments relating to highways, structure, and ecology have also been conducted.

It is clear from the information contained within this letter, as well as the accompanying supporting documents, that the proposal fully complies with the requirements of Class Q.

7 Prior Notification Documents

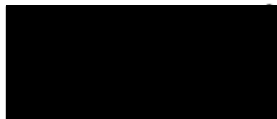
The prior notification comprises the following documents:

- Application Form;
- Covering Letter and Statement;
- Site Location Plan;
- Existing Site Block Plan;
- Proposed Site Block Plan;
- Holding Plan;
- Existing Floor Plan and Elevations;
- Proposed Floor Plan and Elevations;
- Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning;
- Structural Survey;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment;
- Barn Owl and Bird Mitigation Plan;
- Material Change Check Letter;
- Badger Survey Report; and
- Highways Appraisal.

We enclose all of the above documents along with the requisite planning fee, submitted via the Planning Portal.

If you require any further information or if you would like to arrange a site visit, please do not hesitate to contact me by either telephone or email.

Yours faithfully



Tom Fussey MRICS FAAV
Senior Rural Surveyor

Enclosures