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C/O Planning Portal

27 May 2026

Dear Planning,

Application for Prior Approval Under Part 3, Class R of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) for the Change of Use of an Agricultural Building to C1 at Abbey Farm Barn, Church Street, Higham, Kent, ME3 7LS

I am writing to submit an application for prior approval under Part 3, Class R of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) ('The Order') for the proposed change of use of an existing agricultural building at Abbey Farm Barn, Church Street, Higham to C1 hotel use.

The proposal seeks to utilise the existing building for holiday accommodation making efficient use of an underutilised agricultural structure while remaining compatible with the surrounding rural setting. In support of this application, please find enclosed the following documents:

- Completed application form;
- Location plan;
- Proposed floor plans and Elevations;
- Topographical Plan;
- Flood Risk Assessment;
- Structural Assessment;
- Photos;

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- This supporting statement outlining compliance with Class R criteria; and
- The application fee.

We confirm that the proposal complies with the relevant criteria of Class R, as outlined below.

Supporting Statement – Compliance with Class R Criteria

This statement demonstrates how the proposed change of use complies with the relevant conditions set out under **Part 3, Class R** of the **GPDO**.

1. Permitted Development Criteria (R.1)

To qualify as permitted development under Class R, the proposal must meet the following conditions:

- **(a) The building was in agricultural use on or before 3rd July 2012, or last used for agriculture before that date if it was not in use at that time.**
 - The subject building has been used for agricultural purposes as part of Abbey Farm. The Barn was approved on 31 December 1979 (ref: 19791034), which has an established agricultural use.
- **(b) The cumulative floorspace of buildings changed under Class R on the established agricultural unit does not exceed 1000 square metres.**
 - The total area of the building subject to this application is **450 square metres**, therefore the total floorspace is below the 1,000sqm threshold.
- **(c) The site is not part of a military explosives storage area, safety hazard area, or within a site of special scientific interest (SSSI).**
 - The site is not located within any of these restricted areas.
- **(d) The building is not a listed building or a scheduled monument.**
 - The building is not listed, nor is it a scheduled monument.

2. Transport and Highways Impacts

The proposed use of C1 accommodation comprises 5 units. As per the previous planning application, there are no highway objections to the proposed use as it will not result in significant effects. Planning conditions can be imposed to control the level of parking provision.

3. Noise Impacts



The proposed use is not expected to generate significant noise levels. As per the previous planning application, the proposal is not considered to give rise to impacts on residential amenities.

4. Contamination Risks

The building has been used for agricultural purposes, and there are no known contamination risks. Planning conditions as recommended on the previous application are acceptable to the applicant should the council recommend approval.

5. Flood Risk

A flood risk assessment is provided as part of the application which demonstrates the proposed development and use is acceptable. Planning conditions securing finished floor levels are acceptable.

Other Matters

It is noted that the previous application was refused planning permission and subsequent appeal dismissed. This related to the proposed impacts on the green belt and nearby heritage assets. This application seeks only the change of use of the barn to C1 use as permitted under Class R.1 of The Order. R.3 (3) and (4) refer explicit to applications "associated operational development." Once determined, an application for "Associated operational development" will be submitted where the design and specifically matters relating to the green belt and heritage will be relevant considerations. However, for the purpose of this Class R application, these are not relevant considerations with only those matters outlined above being relevant for the prior approval determination.

Conclusion

This supporting statement demonstrates that the proposal complies with the relevant criteria of Class R, ensuring that the change of use is lawful under permitted development rights. As such, we respectfully request the Local Planning Authority to confirm that prior approval is either not required or required and granted for the proposed development.

We trust that the enclosed details provide sufficient information to facilitate the determination of this prior approval application. However, should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.



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I look forward to your confirmation of validation and a positive determination of this application in due course.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Higginbottom MRTPI
Managing Director
Planning Insight