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Change of Use Planning Application for Pant Howell Ddu Farm, Briton Ferry.

Planning Statement

Prepared by:
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Dated: March 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 Herbert R Thomas Ltd is instructed by applicant Mrs L M Crook, to prepare and submit a change of use planning application for a property located at Pant Howell Ddu Farm, Pant Howell Ddu Road, Briton Ferry, SA11 2TY.
- 1.2 The figure below shows the site (marked with a red ring) in context of the wider surroundings of the Pant Howell Ddu farm yard complex.



Figure 1 – Satellite image of Pant Howell Ddu Farm with red pin denoting proposed COU dwelling.



Figure 2 – Pant Howell Ddu farm buildings marked with red ring in the context of the surrounding settlements

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

- 2.1 This application seeks permission from NPTCBC for a change of use from a delapidated residential dwelling to agricultural storage in association with the working farm of Pant Howell Ddu. The external elevations of the building will remain as existing, as do the internal division of the rooms, access doors and fenestration.
- 2.2 This statement provides justification for the proposal in line with the requirements of National and Local planning policies.
- 2.3 In preparing the application HRT and the Architects have discussed the use of the building and farm operational business requirements with the applicants in order to provide a proposal that is suitable to the farm business well in to the future.

3. BACKGROUND CONTEXT:

Context:

- 3.1 The site is located in open countryside, approximately 1.5 miles east of Briton Ferry and 1.6 miles to Neath to the north west. Pontryhydvan sits approximately 2 miles to the west. To the south west and south east lie Baglan and Cwmafan respectively, both approximately 1 mile distant as the crow flies.
- 3.2 Briton Ferry is a settlement comprising just under 6,000 people and is the nearest sizeable settlement providing the full range of everyday facilities and services.
- 3.3 Pant Howell Ddu Farm is a traditional working livestock farm comprising approximately 150 cattle over an extensive land holding of around 280 acres (see ownership plan for full extent of the land holding in plan form). The farm complex sits broadly to the centre / east of the land holding.
- 3.4 The farm traditionally kept sheep (in addition to cattle) and comprised circa 500 ewes, however since the death of Mr Crook senior in 2023 and the loss of some rented land that was used for the flock, the family made the decision to initially decrease the flock to around 300. At the time of writing the ewes had all been sold in order to focus solely on cattle and focus on building up this herd.

Site Description:

- 3.5 The site (number 1 on the plan on the following page) is a former domestic dwelling 4 bed dwelling that stands within a dedicated garden area. The property was built in the mid 1800s. The property is accessed via the lane that runs right through the busy livestock farm yard (represented by the blue line on Figure 3).



Figure 3 – Pant Howell Ddu Farm building complex

Site surrounds:

- 3.6 The site (circled red) sits within the farm yard complex and therefore the immediate surroundings are those of the working livestock farm including a number of agricultural sheds and open yard with feeding troughs for livestock.
- 3.7 The dwelling in question (no. 1) sits to the eastern side of the complex of farm buildings and sheds shown by numbers 3-11. The open farmyard is situated at No. 12 where livestock come for feeding in good weather.
- 3.8 A modern bungalow property, known as Leytlin View is situated to the southern edge of the farm yard shown on figure 3 at No 2 and provides accommodation for the owner and principle farm worker (the applicant). This dwelling was secured under permission Ref: 2005/0063 (see section 4 for further details).
- 3.9 A barn conversion (ref: 2011/0962) has been implemented to provide living accommodation for a farm worker/family associated with the Pant Howell Ddu Farm – this is occupied by one of the applicants son's. A further dwelling (the former dwelling of the applicant prior to them building Leytlin View) is

utilised as accommodation for the applicants other son/family who also work the farm. Both of these farm worker dwellings are located west (see Figure 4) along the lane to the farm yet not within the main complex of farm buildings shown on Figure 3.



Figure 4 – Pant Howell Ddu farm with farmworker dwellings to the west.

Existing Site / building uses:

- 3.10 The site that is subject of this application comprises a private residential property, built around 1850, that is now significantly dilapidated and not fit for habitation. Photos in Appendix 2 demonstrate the poor state of repair the property.
- 3.11 The property has remained unoccupied for some years. The applicants mother-in-law used to reside in the house for many years however from 2020 she was elderly and suffered from ill health and she only resided here for around 2 days per week as stayed with other family members in Carmarthen. The applicants mother in law died in August 2022. For a period of time therefore prior to her death the property began to suffer from lack of maintenance as nobody was living there fulltime to keep up with the demanding requirements of maintaining the old house.
- 3.12 The applicant confirms there is no running water to the property and the property has gradually become more run down as the months have passed. This has been exacerbated by recent storms. There is water ingress to all 4

corners of the house. This said it remains suitable for agricultural storage purposes.

3.13 Due to storm damage of 2024 to the roof of a stone barn within the farmyard and critical damage to another agricultural barn (both being uninsured and requiring costly, prohibitive repairs), the number of useable farm buildings have been depleted and those that remain usable are full to capacity.

3.14 Owing to the above and the close proximity to the livestock farm yard, (within 70m to the west) the property began to be used, (following the death of Mrs Crook Senior) for agricultural storage. This use commenced in Autumn 2023 when the weather worsened and secure storage was sought for animal feed and a range of tools safely locked away.

3.15 The property is also used for changing from dirty, wet clothing when weather is inclement and therefore a dedicated area and boot room is shown on the proposed plans that accompany the submission defining the area to be used for this purpose within the house. This has the aim of keeping the applicants property of Leytlin view (and those of her 2 sons who reside elsewhere) clean and free from agricultural detritus.

Access:

3.16 The blue line on Figure 3 shows the only vehicular access to the property is via the working farm yard. Pedestrian access is gained via either the porch to the front or the porch to the rear of the building, both accessed via the garden areas. Vehicular parking is available to the front (west) of the property along the driveway.

3.17 The access lane, marked as a blue line of Figure 3, to the property is right through the centre of the farm yard and therefore the property has only been used, in the past, for family associated with the farm.

3.18 Access to the highway network is through the farmyard, along the lane to the west and on to Pant Ddu Road that joins Ynysmaerdy Road and then the main road of the A474.

3.19 There is access to public transport with a bus stop located on the A474 at Lodge Cross (approximately 2 miles away) with a range of services to include

X5 and 87 with destinations of Neath and also a rail station just beyond with direct services to Cardiff to the east and Carmarthen (via Neath and Swansea) to the west.

Demolition:

- 3.20 Demolition has been considered as an option by the applicant due to the severe state of disrepair of the application dwelling and also the unfavourable location to anyone other than those working the farm. The cost of significant repairs to ensure the dwelling would be habitable are prohibitive to the applicant and her family.
- 3.21 Therefore it is considered that the reuse of the property for an alternative and much needed agricultural store is preferable to demolition in order that some beneficial use is continued for the property.
- 3.22 As stated above, the location of the property within the working farm also lends itself to a storage use as it is convenient to the feeding locations for the livestock and the other farm buildings.
- 3.23 This reuse, rather than demolition, means that no further agricultural sheds for the storage of equipment / feed need to be erected at the farmyard for this purpose.

4. SITE AND PLANNING HISTORY:

4.1 A search of the NPTCBC online planning register was accessed on 20th February 2024. No results were returned for the specific property that is the subject of this application.

4.2 The following entries were available however for Pant Howell Ddu Farm, as a whole and are included below as the proposed CoU will have a direct relationship with that farm and the operations and livestock it rears.

Installation of 2 wind turbines with a maximum tip height of 65.28m together with ancillary development

Pant Howell Ddu Farm Neath SA12 9YA

Ref. No: P2015/0561 | Received: Tue 23 Jun 2015 | Validated: Fri 07 Aug 2015 | Status: Withdrawn

PROPOSED FARM WORKERS DWELLING (SPLIT LEVEL BUNGALOW)

PANT HOWELL DDU FARM BRITON FERRY NEATH SA11 2TP

Ref. No: P2005/0063 | Received: Mon 24 Jan 2005 | Validated: Mon 24 Jan 2005 | Status: Decided

CONSTRUCTION OF A FARM WORKERS DWELLING

PANTHOWELL DDU FARM BRITON FERRY NEATH SA11 2TU

Ref. No: P2003/1256 | Received: Fri 26 Sep 2003 | Validated: Fri 26 Sep 2003 | Status: Decided

Conversion, partial demolition and alterations to existing redundant farm building to a single agricultural workers...

Show more description

**BARNs AT PANTHOWEL DDU FARM PANT HOWELL DDU ROAD
BRITON FERRY NEATH SA11 2TY**

Ref. No: P2011/0962 | Received: Mon 24 Oct 2011 | Validated: Thu 27 Oct 2011 | Status: Decided

P2011/0962

Conversion, partial demolition and alterations to existing redundant farm building to a single agricultural workers dwelling.

BARNES AT PANTHOWEL DDU FARM PANT HOWELL DDU ROAD BRITON FERRY NEATH SA11 2TY

[← Back to search results](#)

Details	Comments (0)	Related Documents	Map
Summary	Further Information	Contacts	Important Dates
Reference	P2011/0962		
Alternative Reference	Not Available		
Application Received	Mon 24 Oct 2011		
Application Validated	Thu 27 Oct 2011		
Address	BARNES AT PANTHOWEL DDU FARM PANT HOWELL DDU ROAD BRITON FERRY NEATH SA11 2TY		
Proposal	Conversion, partial demolition and alterations to existing redundant farm building to a single agricultural workers dwelling.		
Status	Decided		
Decision	Approved		
Decision Issued Date	Fri 30 Mar 2012		
Appeal Status	Not Available		
Appeal Decision	Not Available		

P2013/0619

Prior Notification for the erection of a detached agricultural building for livestock.

LEYTLIN VIEW PANTHOWEL DDU FARM PANT HOWELL DDU ROAD BRITON FERRY NEATH SA11 2TY

[← Back to search results](#)

Details	Comments (0)	Related Documents	Map
Summary	Further Information	Contacts	Important Dates
Reference	P2013/0619		
Alternative Reference	Not Available		
Application Received	Tue 02 Jul 2013		
Application Validated	Mon 15 Jul 2013		
Address	LEYTLIN VIEW PANTHOWEL DDU FARM PANT HOWELL DDU ROAD BRITON FERRY		
Proposal	Prior Notification for the erection of a detached agricultural building for livestock.		
Status	Decided		
Decision	Prior Notification Approval Not Required		
Decision Issued Date	Wed 17 Jul 2013		
Appeal Status	Not Available		
Appeal Decision	Not Available		

Table 1: Planning history (Pant Howell Ddu Farm, Briton Ferry)

4.3 The above entries to the planning register shows the recent planning history of the working farm.

- 4.4 The farm worker dwelling was approved in April 2004 (no details available online) and again in March 2005 (plans available only online). This dwelling, a split level bungalow, was built out shortly after 2005 and is known as Leytlin View. The dwelling provides modern living accommodation for the applicant, the owner of the farm and sits to the south west of the former farmhouse that is the subject of this application. As mentioned in section 3, a further 2 x farmworker dwellings are available to the holding along the lane to the west. One of these dwellings is detailed in the planning history above and comprises of the conversion of stone barns under ref 2011/0962.
- 4.5 The wind turbine application on the land of the Pant Howell Ddu Farm of 2015 is noted as withdrawn (unfortunately the investors pulled out) with no further applications made for this use.
- 4.6 Finally a livestock shed proposal was submitted by the applicant, under prior notification, in 2013 (ref: P2013/0619) and deemed that approval was not required. This shed was erected on the farm yard shortly afterward.

5. **PROPOSAL FOR CoU FROM DILAPIDATED RESIDENTIAL TO AGRICULTURAL STORAGE:**

5.1 The Applicant is seeking full COU planning permission from residential to agricultural storage.

5.2 The reasons for the change are stated at paragraphs 3.10 – 3.23 and demonstrate the need of the farm operations for this storage use at this location. The change of use proposal is detailed below and please also refer to the full suite of plans submitted as part of the application.

5.3 **Ground Floor:**

This is proposed as the main secure storage area to include 2 rooms to accommodate animal feed, a secure area for storage of small scale tools for use on the farm, plus a general storage area and boot room in order to change from 'working' clothes prior to going to the workers respective domestic dwellings.

5.4 The extract of the proposed plan below shows the ground floor. Note all of the structure of the property remains as existing, including fenestration and internal arrangement of rooms.

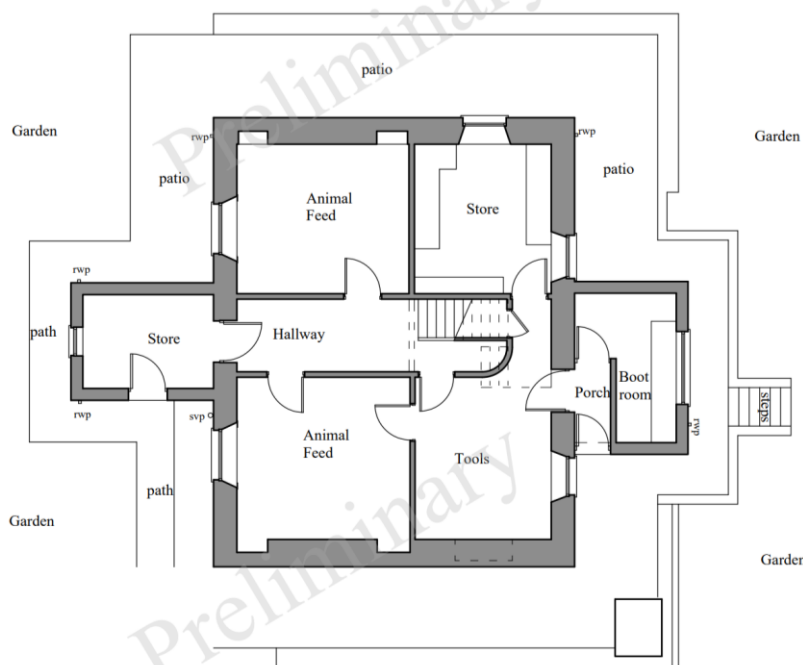


Figure 4: Ground floor proposed plan

5.5 **First Floor:**

The first floor arrangement consists of 5 storage areas for small scale agricultural equipment and supplies.

5.6 Note none of the building is to be used for livestock and the purpose is solely to provide required secure storage, away from the elements, within an existing well positioned building on the existing farm complex.

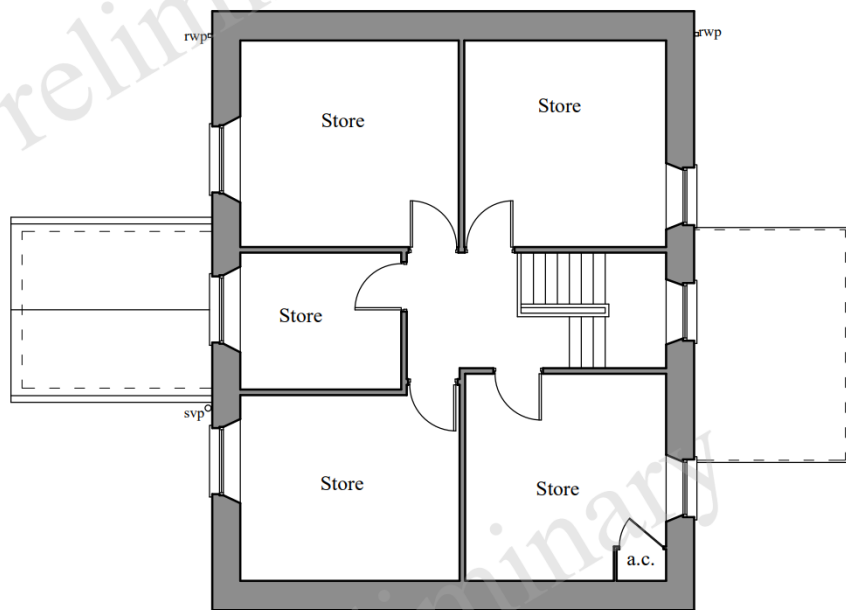


Figure 5: First Floor proposed plan

5.7 The elevations of the building are proposed to remain as existing (see attached existing and proposed plans for confirmation) .

5.8 Pedestrian and vehicle access and egress to the building remain as existing and through the working farm yard (note there is no alternative access available, or proposed).

5.9 The provision of a bird nest box to the rear (eastern elevation) of the property is proposed to attract wildlife to the area and increase biodiversity within the area (see separate BNG / GI technical note).

6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT:

National Policy:

- 6.1 National policy is contained within Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12 February 2024.
- 6.2 The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation and resultant duties such as the Socio-economic Duty. A well-functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development and achieving sustainable places.
- 6.3 The above PPW is also supported by a range of Technical Advice notes (TAN) on a range of topics. Of particular note is Technical Advice Note 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities, (TAN 6) para 3.2.1 states:
‘When assessing planning applications for the re-use or adaptation of a rural building, the primary consideration should be whether the nature and extent of the new use proposed for the building is acceptable in planning terms. It should not normally be necessary to consider whether a building is no longer needed for its present agricultural or other purposes (although in the case of a tenanted agricultural building, the value in planning terms of the existing use should be taken into consideration).’
- 6.4 Paragraph 3.76 of PPW refers to the re-use of buildings within the green belt/wedge. Whilst this proposal is not covered by a designation of green belt / wedge, the text of PPW could still apply in the sense that it ensures practical reuse of buildings without impacts on the open countryside surroundings:
The re-use of buildings in a Green Belt or green wedge is not inappropriate development provided that:
- *the original building is substantial, permanent and capable of conversion without major reconstruction;*
 - *the new use will not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt or green wedge and the purposes of including land within it. Strict control will need to be exercised over the extension, alteration or any associated use of land for re-used buildings; and*

- the building is in keeping with its surroundings.

- 6.5 Within paragraph 5.6.8 of PPW it is stated the local authorities should adopt a positive approach to conversion of rural buildings for business reuse:
Planning authorities should adopt a constructive approach towards agricultural development proposals, especially those which are designed to meet the needs of changing farming practices or are necessary to achieve compliance with new environmental, hygiene or welfare legislation. They should also adopt a positive approach to the conversion of rural buildings for business re-use.
- 6.6 Whilst this property was built as a dwelling in the 1850s, the dwelling it is now not fit for purpose and the farm has an acute need for secure storage space that the building can easily lend itself to.
- 6.7 In addition to the above it is important to consider the latest policy guidance in Chapter 6 of PPW on creating Green Infrastructure via the step wise approach, together with the requirements for proposals to make positive contributions to Biodiversity net gain.

Local Policy:

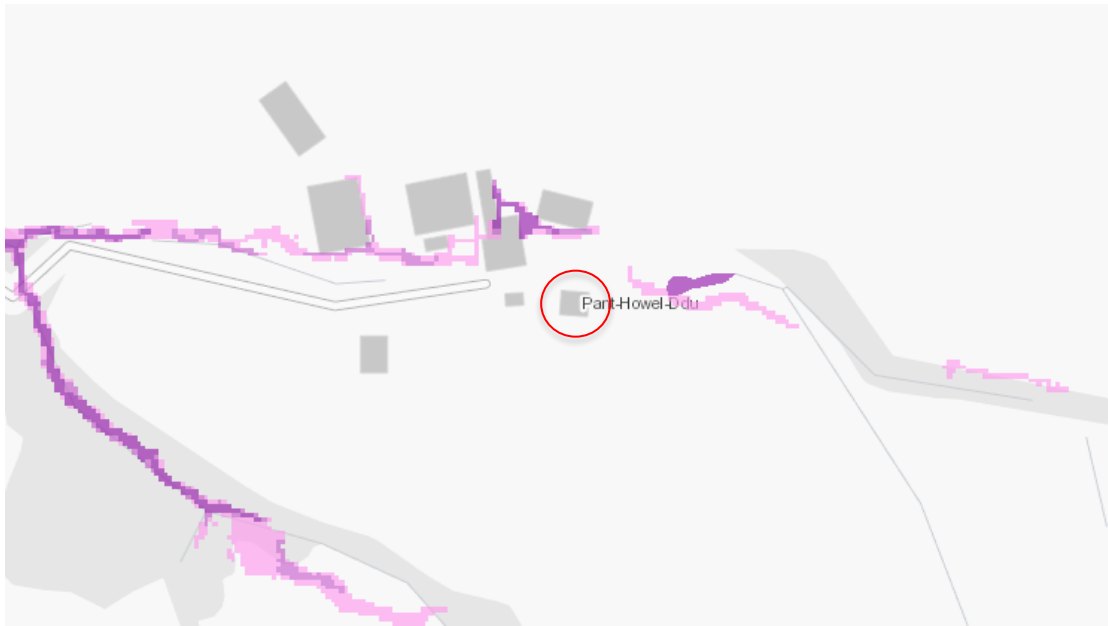
- 6.8 Local Development plan policy is contained in the Local Development Plan (LDP) for the Neath Port Talbot County Borough. The Neath Port Talbot LDP (2011-2026) was adopted on 27th January 2016. The LDP came into force upon its adoption. The paragraphs below outline the allocations and designations of the LDP on the application site and refer to any supporting text of the LDP that may be used to also guide development here.

LDP Allocations / designations:

- 6.9 The proposed site is not allocated for any specific land use in the adopted LDP and is therefore treated as open countryside.
- 6.10 There is a single designations applying to the site of '*Safeguarded category 1 sandstone*'
- 6.11 No Special Landscape Area (SLA) or green belt or wedge (GW) designations apply to the land. No cultural or heritage asset designations apply in the immediate vicinity of the proposal (note a scheduled ancient monument sits

approximately 650 m to the north and another approx. 600m to the south east however these are too far away to be impacted by the minor COU application for agricultural store).

- 6.12 The proposed site is not a listed building nor within a conservation area. The plan below shows flooding and its evident the property does not sit within an area affected by flooding.



- 6.13 Considering the above there are no issues within the NPTCBC LDP constraints plan that would affect this minor proposal for change of use.

- 6.14 With regard to the policy context of the adopted LDP there is very little guidance for the type of CoU proposed however reference is made to CoU within the supporting text of EN5 and is provided below in italic:

- 6.15 ***Policy EN5 Conversion and Extension of Existing Buildings in the Countryside*** The alteration, extension or conversion of existing suitable buildings outside the defined settlement limits for residential, employment, or tourism uses will only be permitted where:

1. The existing building is structurally sound and is capable of conversion without substantial major external alteration or reconstruction.
2. In the case of changes of use to residential purposes alone:
 - (a) It can be demonstrated that there are no viable alternative uses to secure the retention of the building; and

(b) That the building is of architectural and/or historic merit.

3. In the case of residential extensions, the extension does not result in a disproportionate increase in the size, scale and massing of the building.

5.3.23 Buildings in the countryside that are to be converted to alternative uses will need to be suitable for the proposed purpose and in terms of their appearance in relation to their surroundings, the wider landscape and countryside and should be sound and capable of conversion to the proposed use without major reconstruction. Proposals that involve major significant changes to the original building will be dealt with in accordance with policy relating to new development outside settlement limits.

6.13

Further LDP policies for consideration are:

Policy M 1 Development in Mineral Safeguarding Areas

Development proposals within mineral safeguarding areas will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that: 1. The mineral concerned is no longer of any value or potential value; or 2. The mineral can be extracted satisfactorily prior to the development taking place; or 3. In the case of temporary development, it can be implemented and the site restored within the timescale that the mineral is likely to be needed; or 4. There is an overriding need for the development; or 5. The scale and location of the development would have no significant impact on the possible working of the resource.

7. PLANNING ASSESSMENT/ APPRAISAL:

National policy:

- 7.1 The principle of development is supported within the provisions of PPW in terms of TAN 6 and the drive for sustainable rural communities in so far as this development provides a simple change to an existing disused building on the site in order to facilitate the farm.
- 7.2 The proposal creates no significant impacts on the surroundings or landscape. Note the building is not fit for purpose in its established use and therefore cannot remain as a dwelling without significant and cost prohibitive refurbishment and structural works.
- 7.3 The provision of Biodiversity Net Gain are met through the provision of the bird nesting box proposal – see attached BNG/GI Statement.

Local policy:

- 7.4 Local policy assessment is supportive in terms of the building continuing in some form of beneficial use. It is considered this is a more sustainable option than demolition.
- 7.5 Whilst this proposal is for a change of use and no physical development to the external building fabric, consideration has been made to a number of policies in the LDP as referenced in the preceding section and these are deemed to be met.
- 7.6 The scale and nature of the development has no significant impact on the possible working of the sandstone resource (Policy EN5).

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION:

- 8.1 This statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for a change of use from a residential dwelling to a building for agricultural storage. It is noted the dwelling is no longer habitable, including no running water, and that this has been the case for 2 years.
- 8.2 The change of use would allow the permanent provision of dry and secure storage for a range of items including animal feed and small equipment storage. The use of this building will provide the secure storage in a convenient location and negate the requirement of a further building to be built.
- 8.3 To reiterate, no physical internal or external changes are proposed to the building, solely the change of use of the building is sought.
- 8.4 The fact that the provision of this critical storage is taking the place of a 'dwelling' does not stand as this is no longer a habitable dwelling due to no running water, significant structural works required in order to make the whole property wind and water tight for habitation. Further more the location of the former dwelling in the farmyard area with no alternative access means it cannot feasibly be rented or sold even if it was in a habitable state.
- 8.5 The sustainability of the proposal is considered to be sound given it sustains a local livestock farming business, utilises the current building fabric with no requirements for extension or rebuilding. The property is immediately located approximately 70m from the livestock farm yard and therefore provides immediate central storage for the animal feeds and other small scale equipment. The property can be easily accessed and reached on foot for the farm.
- 8.6 Finally the BNG is met through the erection of a nesting box on the rear elevation of the property.
- 8.7 In summary we feel there is no material planning reason to resist the approval of the change of use from residential to agricultural storage in facilitating a working farm with their processes, storage and security.

APPENDIX 1

Location plan



Extract only– please refer to suite of plans submitted as part of the application for full scale location plan.

APPENDIX 2

Photographs

INTERNAL



Photo 1 – Internal damage to ground floor room – damp and visible cracking



Photo 2 – Internal hallway. Cracking to ceiling. Damp

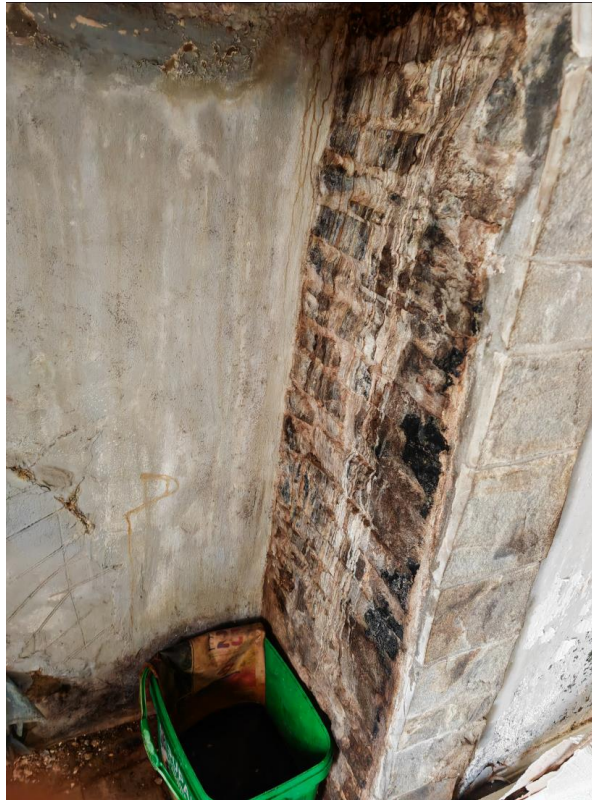


Photo 3 – mould and damp ground floor



Photo 4 – Damage to lath and plaster ceiling



Photo 5 – Internal damage



Photo 6 – internal damage to walls and ceiling



Photo 7 – Internal damage (walls)



Photo 8 – Internal damage to lath and plaster ceiling and plaster to walls



Photo 9 – damage to wall beneath window

EXTERNAL



Photo 10 – vertical crack to external brickwork and blown render



Photo 11 – damage to stone lintels and render



Photo 12 – cracking to external render



Photo 13 – cracking to GF stone lintel and render



Photo 14 – Damage to external render

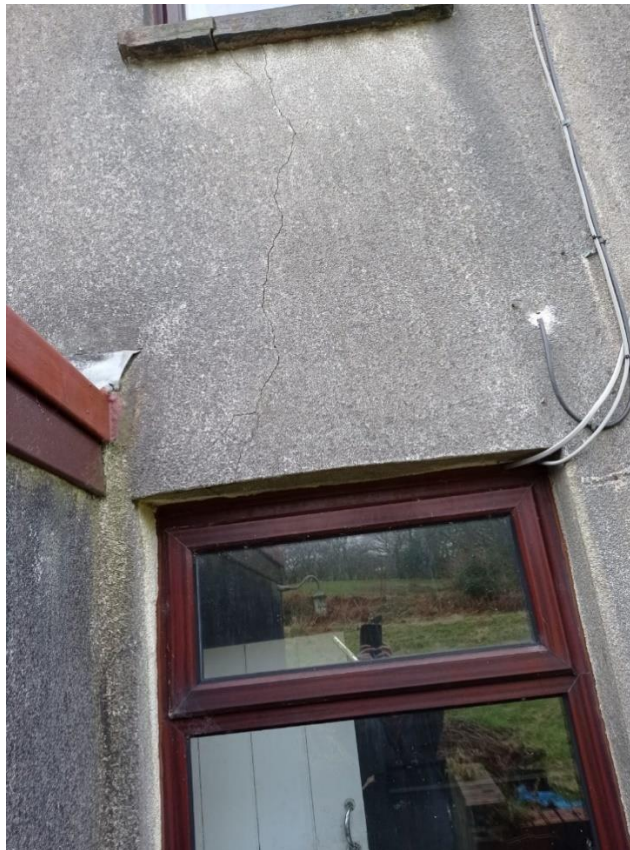


Photo 15 – cracking and damage to render



Photo 16 – cracking to brickwork and render



Photo 17 – external elevations



Photo 18 – gable end elevation (south)

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