



PLANNING BY DESIGN

FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION

Agricultural Development and Diversification Statement:

Address Land off Brook Lane, Broadoak,
Botley, Eastleigh, Hampshire

New Build Property (3 bedrooms)

On Behalf of Mark Durrant

Introduction

This Agricultural Development and Diversification Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for a new three-bedroom dwelling at Land off Brook Lane, Broadoak, Botley, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO30 2ER (Grid Ref: X 450528, Y 112768). The proposal seeks to establish a permanent on-site presence to facilitate agricultural operations, enhance security, and ensure the long-term viability of the enterprise.

The statement provides justification for the need for the proposed dwelling in accordance with national and local planning policies, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 and the Eastleigh Borough Council Local Plan (2016-2036), specifically Policies DM17 (Agricultural Development) and DM27 (Rural Workers' Dwellings).

2. Site Context and Existing Agricultural Use

The site comprises approximately eight acres of agricultural land, which includes a barn approved in 2018 for hay and machinery storage. The land has been maintained for agricultural purposes and is undergoing diversification to include controlled crop production. The secluded nature of the site, while beneficial for agricultural activities, presents challenges in terms of security and land management, necessitating a permanent on-site presence.

The land is currently underutilized due to difficulties in remote management, which affects both productivity and maintenance. Without continuous oversight, hedge growth has encroached upon drainage ditches, leading to obstructions and waterlogging, which in turn negatively impacts soil health and agricultural viability.

3. Justification for the Proposed Dwelling

3.1. Essential Need for On-Site Presence

The agricultural enterprise at the site requires frequent attention due to the nature of crop cultivation and land management activities. The applicant proposes to expand the agricultural operations by introducing polytunnels for produce cultivation in areas of infertile soil. This type of farming requires precise and continuous environmental management, which is impractical without an on-site presence.

Additionally, seasonal factors necessitate flexible working hours, particularly for crop monitoring, hedge maintenance, and drainage management. A permanent on-site dwelling will enable effective management of these tasks, ensuring the land remains productive year-round.

The need for on-site accommodation is consistent with Policy DM27, which permits rural worker dwellings where they are essential to agricultural operations that cannot be effectively carried out remotely.

3.2. Security Considerations

The isolated location of the site has made it a frequent target for criminal activity, including theft, vandalism, and illegal hunting. Despite implementing security measures such as locks and periodic monitoring, the absence of a permanent presence has resulted in repeated incidents, including:

- Damage to machinery and equipment stored within the approved barn.
- Instances of trespassing and poaching, including reports of individuals using firearms and hunting dogs.
- Regular fly-tipping, leading to environmental degradation and additional clean-up costs.

The presence of a full-time occupant is the most effective means of mitigating these issues. The proposal aligns with Paragraph 189 of the NPPF, which promotes safe and secure environments that prevent crime and disorder from undermining quality of life.

3.3. Lack of Alternative Accommodation

A key requirement of Policy DM27 is demonstrating that no alternative accommodation is available within close proximity to meet the needs of the agricultural enterprise. A review of local housing options confirms that no suitable dwellings exist within a practical distance to provide the necessary level of site oversight. The costs and logistical challenges of commuting for frequent and unpredictable agricultural tasks further justify the need for an on-site dwelling.

4. Policy Compliance

4.1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

- Paragraph 85 supports the growth of rural enterprises through the development of new buildings where necessary.
- Paragraph 88 highlights the importance of supporting agricultural diversification, which this proposal aligns with by enabling land enhancement and expanded cultivation efforts.
- Paragraph 189 advocates for security measures that prevent crime and disorder, reinforcing the justification for on-site accommodation.

4.2. Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036)

- Policy DM17 allows for new agricultural buildings that contribute to the viability of farming operations. This proposal supports the efficient working of the land through improved oversight and management.
- Policy DM27 permits rural workers' dwellings where an essential need is demonstrated. The application meets this criterion by establishing the necessity of continuous on-site presence for land maintenance, crop cultivation, and security.

5. Design and Layout

The proposed dwelling has been designed to integrate seamlessly into the rural landscape while maintaining a functional layout that optimizes agricultural efficiency. The single-storey structure features:

- A rectangular footprint with a pitched roof, gable features, and a south-facing glazed section for natural light.
- Stone-clad exterior and slate tile roofing, ensuring durability and alignment with local architectural character.
- Energy-efficient materials, including powder-coated aluminium frames and timber elements for a sustainable and aesthetically coherent finish.
- A practical floor plan featuring three bedrooms, an open-plan living area, a utility room, and ample storage space to support agricultural needs.

The dwelling's location has been carefully chosen to provide clear access to the main road while maintaining an appropriate relationship with existing structures. A designated parking area and strategic landscaping will further enhance the site's usability and visual appeal.

6. Conclusion

This statement has demonstrated the necessity of the proposed dwelling in enabling the efficient management of the agricultural enterprise, securing the site from persistent criminal activity, and ensuring long-term land productivity. The proposal is consistent with both national and local planning policies, satisfying the criteria of essential need, sustainability, and security.

The dwelling will contribute positively to the diversification and viability of the agricultural business, aligning with the strategic objectives of the NPPF and the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan. In light of these considerations, the application should be viewed favourably and approved accordingly.