

Comment for planning application 24/00817/F

Application Number	24/00817/F
Location	The Stables College Farm Main Street Wendlebury Bicester OX25 2PR
Proposal	The change of use and conversion of equestrian stables and storage barn to a create a single residential dwelling.
Case Officer	Rebekah Morgan
Organisation Name	Philip & Ghislaine Isherwood
Address	The Old Granary,4 Willow Court,Main Street,Wendlebury,Bicester,OX25 2JY
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>We have strong objections to this proposed development:</p> <p>Wendlebury is category C for planning, permitting only infill development and specifically prohibiting residential development beyond the existing building line. The proposed development is beyond the existing residential building line.</p> <p>The proposed development sits immediately behind our property on higher ground, 1.5M to 2M above the ground height of our property. For the 8 months of the year when there are few or no leaves on the trees, the existing stables development, with high single storey walls and a hip roof, already presents a looming presence over our house and garden. With the addition of a rear door, facing directly onto and overlooking our property, and year-round habitation of the premises, this will add light and noise nuisance that will further limit the amenity of our garden.</p> <p>In the Planning, Design and Access Statement provided by Mr & Mrs Lewis in support of their application, there are some egregious errors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Figure 8, page 24 presents a diagram showing what they claim is the "Settlement Boundary" of the village. They have erroneously placed the proposed development site inside the "Settlement Boundary". Figure 8 is wholly incorrect in this respect and should be disregarded. The objections of the Wendlebury Parish Council to this development in 2021 and again in 2022 were on the grounds that it sits beyond the building line of the village. If the development was beyond the building line in 2021 and 2022 then it is still beyond the building line in 2024. The claimed "Settlement Boundary" in figure 8 is a fiction.2. Figure 9, page 24 presents an historic aerial photograph of College Farm. A lightweight hay storage structure is circled in red and labelled as the approximate location of the proposed development. This is incorrect. The hay storage structure lay mostly over what is now the rear garden of our property, The Old Granary, 4 Willow Court with only a small section overlapping with the proposed development site. The location of proposed development is further to the east mostly on land that was entirely undeveloped before the construction of the current stables in 2016. The hay storage structure was demolished in the 1980s, before the development of College Farm into residential properties. There was a gap of around 30 years between the demolition of the hay storage structure and the new stables development in 2016. To suggest that the prior existence of a lightweight structure on a part of the current development site has any relation to the development of the stables into a dwelling is baseless.3. Paragraph 6.6, page 22 incorrectly states that Wendlebury has a food delivery service, a retail shop and a vehicle repair shop. These facilities do not exist. There are some business owners whose registered home offices are in Wendlebury, but the services and facilities stated are not present in the village. This undermines the sustainability argument propounded by Mr & Mrs Lewis. <p>The current structure, as approved in 2014 and constructed in 2016, was substantially over specified for the single horse and dog that the Lewis family then owned. The footprint of the building was far larger than required for any conceivable domestic, equine purpose. As part of the planning submission, they were required to give undertakings that the building would not be used for any residential or business purpose - i.e. that the purpose of the development was for solely domestic, equine and storage purposes. With this new application for change of use and conversion into a family dwelling that neatly fits the footprint of the current structure, the purpose of the suspiciously oversized building is made</p>

clear. The current structure was likely specifically designed to lead to a future change of use to a residential property.

The original application to build the oversized 'agricultural building' in 2014 would never have been approved with an envisaged change of use so soon after construction.

Approval of this application would sweep aside the undertakings given by Mr Lewis in 2014 as to the non-residential purpose of the development. This will necessarily cast doubt on all undertakings that may be given by Mr Lewis in the course of the present application or any future planning applications he might make.

If this application is approved, it will set a problematic precedent for development of residential properties beyond the building line in Wendlebury and other category C villages across Cherwell District: that one can skirt around the existing planning laws by first applying to build an oversized 'agricultural building' then applying to convert it to a residential property a short time later. This could have significant implications for local planning. In our view, this is a cynical and transparent bid to abuse the planning system.

Once the proposed development is begun, the Lewis family will have no stabling facilities for their current horse - which they claim is now stabled elsewhere in the village, though we see little evidence of this. But stabling was only one of the purposes of the original building, the supposed other uses were as workshop, storage, washroom and plant equipment. It is conceivable that they may further apply to develop a subsequent 'agricultural building' for the purposes of stabling, storage, workshop and plant storage in the future. This could also prove to be oversized and later be developed into a residential property. They live on an extensive site of one to two acres, which has ample potential to be developed, one 'agricultural building' at a time, into an estate of family homes, despite the entire site being beyond the existing building line. Acceptance of the current application may provide all of the precedents they would require to support such future applications.

The proposed development is not in a sustainable location given the very limited public transport and absence of cycle paths in Wendlebury. Any addition to the housing stock in Wendlebury will necessarily add to the vehicular traffic into and out of the village.

Local infrastructure, such as water and sewage services, are already under significant pressure in Wendlebury. Adding to the housing stock in the village will be problematic in these terms.

Since the construction of the current building in 2016, the upper half of my garden has suffered from significant water logging each winter and spring, rendering it marshy and unusable for months each year - a problem that is steadily worsening year on year. Any expansion of hard standing areas in the new development risks exacerbating this problem and raises the further risk of damage due to water run-off.

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Attachments