

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT:

General Purpose Agricultural Building, College Farm, Wendlebury

1.0 Proposal

The construction of a new general purpose agricultural building, and associated works, at College Farm, Wendlebury.



Aerial view of the site showing the location of the proposed new barn (Google maps)

2.0 General Description and Background of the Site:

The existing farm buildings at College Farm are located outside the village of Wendlebury, approximately 300m to the south east. These buildings accommodate a herd of suckler cattle and associated storage. The cattle are grazed in the adjacent fields during the spring, summer and autumn, and housed over winter.

The site is accessed from a hard surfaced drive from the village. The existing buildings immediately adjacent to the site consist of a 28x27m portal frame building for housing cattle over winter, including the calving period, and a 14x8m pole barn for storage of bedding straw. The hardstanding area to the immediate southwest was approved in 2017, 17/00072/F, as part of a planned improvement and expansion of the suckler herd.

3.0 Use and Layout

The existing cattle and straw barns can accommodate approximately 30 cows with newborn calves. Those calves are typically sold at market at 8-9 months of age before the annual cycle for the cows restarts. The weaned calves have to be sold in the absence of suitable overwintering barnspace on the farm. There would be very significant financial advantage to the operation if the progeny could be retained and reared on the farm, and also if the cow numbers could be increased.

The NPPF seeks to support and encourage economic development in rural areas, including development of agriculture. The farm is a long established agricultural business (c.1960). The business plan involves increasing the number of cows to 50, and to retain the progeny of the cows on the farm until they are sold as finished animals at 24-30months old, using some bought in grain based feed but predominantly fed on home grown forage, utilising the land more efficiently. Increasing the number of cows and having the facility to keep and rear their progeny increases the financial and practical viability of the operation.

The existing adjacent barn would continue to house the suckler cows, where they would calve and nurse their calves. The proposed new barn would provide sufficient winter accommodation for the two subsequent age groups of youngstock, one from the previous year (the yearlings) and one from the year before that (the larger finishing cattle). The additional area within the proposed barn will provide space for storing straw, hay and silage, as well as the associated farm machinery.

4.0 Design

The proposed barn will have a steel portal frame, and will be roofed with a grey fibre cement sheeting and will have side and gable cladding of timber boarding (Yorkshire boarding ie 100x25mm treated timber boards aligned vertically with a 40mm ventilation gap between, left to self colour). The lower 2m to the sides will be formed using 100mm thick precast concrete panels. The external gates on the gable ends will have galvanised sheeting to their lower portion.

The proposed barn will be 48m in length and 30m wide. It will be 8.05m to the ridge and 4.8m to the eaves.

5.0 Landscaping and Appearance

The site is set tightly against substantial arrays of mature trees to the east and to the north.



It is also proposed to plant an additional area along the western flank of the existing and proposed barns, as indicated on the drawings.

The existing barns are entirely compatible with the local landscape and character. The proposed barn follows the same form, orientation and alignment, respecting this local landscape. The barn would be seen within the context of the existing agricultural buildings and would not appear as an alien feature in the landscape.

The additional planting will provide enhancement to the landscape, as well as a practical shelter belt to the site.

The proposed barn will be even further from the village than the existing barn.

6.0 Access

The farm has an established access to the public highway as indicated on the drawing. The additional numbers of cattle on the farm will have minimal impact on vehicle movements and any very modest increase would be dramatically lower than when the farm operated as a dairy farm.

7.0 Ecology

The area under the proposed new barn is already substantially stoned or concrete so the site is considered to have no significant ecological value. The additional trees proposed can only enhance the biodiversity of the area.

8.0 Flood Risk

The area is within zone 1 of the Environment Agency's flood risk assessment categorisation, and does not flood.

9.0 Conclusion

The proposal is for an agricultural building that will complement and improve the existing farming operation, underpinning its financial sustainability, so supporting a prosperous rural economy (NPPF para 83).

The proposal respects and enhances the local landscape character, compliance with policies ESD13 and 15 of the CLP 2031 has been demonstrated.

9th October 2020