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For and on behalf of
Mr A Bonner

Planning Statement

Manor Farm, Main Street, Wendlebury, Bicester, OX25 2PS

**Prepared by
DLP Planning Ltd
Rugby**

January 2021



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by DLP Planning Ltd (DLP) on behalf of Mr A Bonner, to support a full planning application for the like for like replacement of three disused agricultural buildings at Manor Farm, Wendlebury. These buildings benefit from prior approval under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, for conversion to a flexible commercial use. This application for full planning permission proposes the same approved use (now Use Class E(g)).
- 1.2 This application seeks to replace the 3 agricultural buildings with units of identical scale and mass. Also, the cumulative floor space of the development equates to the same as what was approved under Prior Approval reference 20/00009/R56.
- 1.3 The replacement units have been designed to retain the agricultural character of the existing buildings to be demolished but provide accommodation fit for modern commercial requirements. The design is of a modern agricultural style that reflects the character of the area, which in turn makes them more attractive to prospective tenants.
- 1.4 The application is supported by the following plans and documents;
- Application Form;
 - Site Location Plan;
 - Existing Floor Plans and Elevations;
 - Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations;
 - Existing site survey; and
 - Proposed Block Plan.
- 1.5 This Statement describes the site and its setting, summarises the planning history and the relevant planning policy context for the purposes of decision making.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

2.1 The site (Figure 1) sits within Manor Farm, on the southern edge of Wendlebury and is located approximately 2.4km from Weston on the Green, 2km south of Chesterton and 2km north-west of Merton. The site comprises a number of agricultural buildings, three of which have been granted prior approval under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (LPA ref: 20/00009/R56).

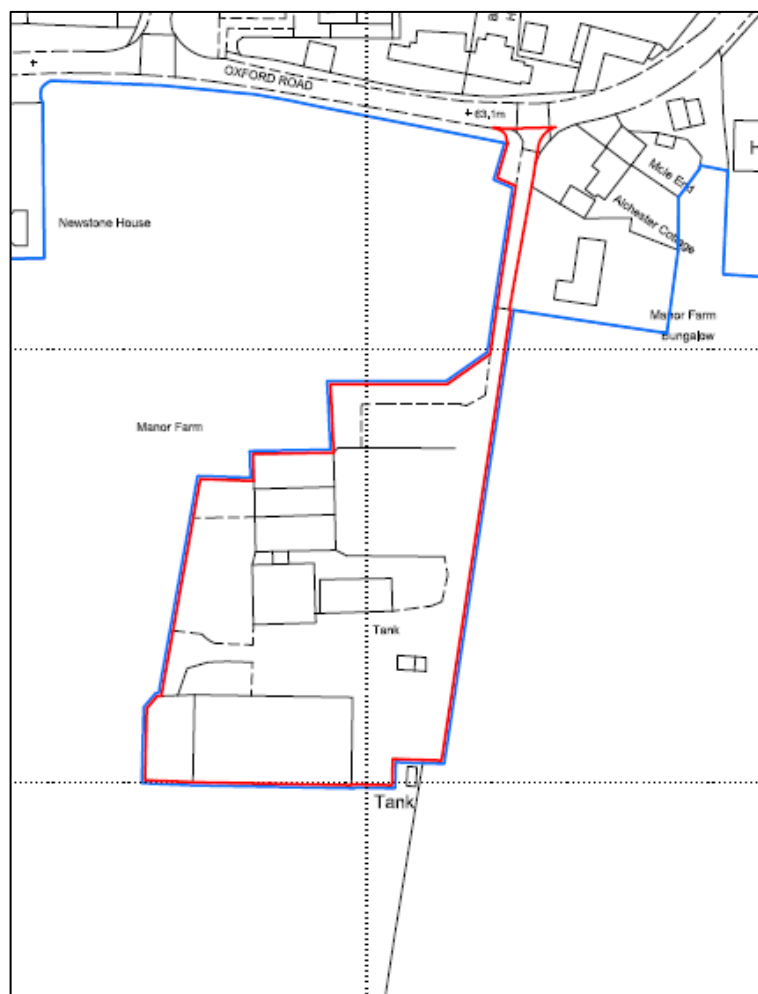


Figure 1- Site Location Plan

2.2 Wendlebury comprises a number of services and facilities, including a village hall, two bed and breakfast, public house, baby clothing shop, church and a driving school.

2.3 The application site comprises a roughly rectangular shaped parcel of land and extends to approximately 0.59 hectares (ha) in size. To the north, lies Oxford Road and the village of

Wendlebury. To the east, south and west the site abuts agricultural land.

- 2.4 Access to the site is currently achieved via private access track that leads to Oxford Road.
- 2.5 The site has excellent access to the strategic road network, both the M40 and A41 are located approximately 500m west. The A41 leads north-east to Bicester and south-west to Oxford.
- 2.6 The site is located in Flood Zone 1, as defined by the Environment Agency Flood Map, and therefore presents a low risk of flooding.
- 2.7 The site is not covered by any local constraints such as conservation area status, a Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and there are no known Tree Preservation Orders within the site or wider area.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 Application relating to the immediate site, and which are of relevance are detailed below.

Application Reference	Proposal	Decision Date	Decision
18/01563/Q56	Change of use of buildings to two dwellings under Class Q(a)	30/11/2018	Refused
19/00372/R56	Change of use of agricultural buildings to a flexible use, in this case Class B1	29/04/2019	Refused
19/01490/R56	Change of use of agricultural buildings to flexible use (B1).	26/09/2019	Refused
19/02426/R56	Change of use of agricultural buildings to flexible use (B1 & B2)	20/12/2019	Withdrawn
20/00009/R56	Change of Use of three agricultural buildings to a flexible use (B1)	12/03/2020	Approved

4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 This application relates to the replacement of three agricultural units, which benefit from prior approval under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, to accommodate a flexible commercial use. The application also proposes associated works, including access improvements in the form of passing bays, formalised parking and landscaping, all of which would not have been provided to the proposed standard under the Prior Approval works.
- 4.2 It is proposed to replace the buildings on a like for like basis (footprint, external dimensions and form), with no increase in commercial floorspace from that already consented. Unit 1 and Unit 2 will be 144m² and Unit 3 169m². The cumulative floor space of the development equates to 457m² which is same as what was approved under planning reference 20/00009/R56.
- 4.3 The replacement units have been designed to appear as modern agricultural buildings to reflect the immediate rural character. The modern construction and improved design, together with the proposed ancillary works will make for a well-designed rural employment facility and will be more attractive to prospective tenants. As they stand, the existing buildings, given their age and use of materials, are not attractive to the market. The units would be constructed of dark green profiled metal roofing and profiled metal sheeted cladding, fairfaced concrete block walls, aluminium windows and roller shutter doors. Additionally, the frame of the existing Dutch barn will be retained and will provide shelter for Unit 3's parking area.
- 4.4 With regards to access, widening is proposed to ensure all vehicles have adequate access to and from the site to enable the businesses to operate effectively and efficiently. This accords with the conditional (3) requirements of 20/00009/R56.
- 4.5 Each unit will be served by four car parking spaces, one disabled / electric charging point space and cycling and recycling storage.
- 4.6 It is proposed to clear the overgrown area to the north of the units and remove high brambles, block walls and fencing. The proposed landscaping consists of additional tree planting which will be scattered throughout the site and be within mixed ground cover.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act ('The Act'), requires that the determination of a planning application or appeal is undertaken in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This well-established test is further reiterated within the Framework and provides the basis for the assessment of the planning merits of the proposed scheme.

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

5.2 In February 2019, the Government published the revised Framework which sets out its requirements for the planning system in seeking to ensure sustainable development. The Framework, whilst not prescriptive, is however material to the consideration of all planning proposals and seeks positively to encourage new development. At its heart it provides a '*presumption in favour of sustainable development*'.

5.3 Paragraph 11 of the Framework states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

5.4 Paragraph 80 of the Framework states policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

5.5 In relation to supporting a prosperous rural economy paragraph 83 of the Framework states that planning policies and decision should enable;

a) *the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*

b) *the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*

c) *sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*

d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

- 5.6 Additionally, paragraph 84 of the Framework states that planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. It also states that the use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.
- 5.7 Paragraph 117 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- 5.8 Additionally, paragraph 118 part c) states substantial weight should be given to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land.

Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1)

- 5.9 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) was adopted 19th December 2016 and contains strategic planning policies for development and the use of land. Policies considered pertinent to the site are summarised below.
- 5.10 **Policy PSD1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development:** When considering proposals for development the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The Council will work proactively and collaboratively with applicants to find joint solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental condition of the District.
- 5.11 **Policy SLE1 Employment Development:** This policy states that new employment in rural areas on non-allocated sites will be supported if they meet the following criteria;

- *They will be outside of the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.*
- *Sufficient justification is provided to demonstrate why the development should be located in the rural area on a non-allocated site.*
- *They will be designed to very high standards using sustainable construction, and be of an appropriate scale and respect the character of villages and the surroundings.*
- *They will be small scale unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the character of a village or surrounding environment.*
- *The proposal and any associated employment activities can be carried out without undue detriment to residential amenity, the highway network, village character and its setting, the appearance and character of the landscape and the environment generally including on any designated buildings or features (or on any non-designated buildings or features of local importance).*
- *The proposal will not give rise to excessive or inappropriate traffic and will wherever possible contribute to the general aim of reducing the need to travel by private car.*
- *There are no suitable available plots or premises within existing nearby employment sites in the rural areas.*

5.12 The application site comprises previously developed land and is located in the open countryside on the southern side of Wendlebury. The village is defined as a Category C settlement, which allows for infilling and conversions. The existing prior approval is a material consideration in the determination of this application and should reasonably be considered as a 'fall back' position. This current full application would, if granted, result in a superior development to that which has consent and as such, it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable.

5.13 The proposed design of the replacement units reflect a modern agricultural building that has the same footprint, scale and massing of the existing units. The replacement units would be constructed to meet modern standards to ensure they are fit for purpose and more attractive to prospective tenants. No technical constraints were identified during 20/00009/R56, as

such, it is considered that employment activities can be carried out without prejudicing neighbouring uses.

- 5.14 In the above context, it is considered that the proposal will not have adverse impacts on the character of the village and surrounding environment and therefore complies with Policy SLE1.

‘Saved’ Policies of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996

- 5.15 ‘Saved’ policies of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 remain part of the statutory Development Plan to which regard must be given in the determination of planning applications.
- 5.16 **Policy C28 Layout, Design and External Appearance of new Development:** This policy seeks exercise control over the choice of external-finish materials and that they are sympathetic to the character of the rural area. It is considered that the design and materials proposed preserve and reflect that of the local vernacular and character of the area.

Local Plan Review 2040 - Planning for Cherwell to 2040

- 5.17 The Council have begun preparations for a Local Plan Review and at this early stage no policy or proposal options have been drafted. A Consultation was undertaken to inform a review of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031. The Council has produced a Community Involvement Paper which is subject to a six-week period of public consultation as well as ‘Call for Sites’ exercise.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This application relates to the replacement of three buildings, which have been granted prior approval under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, to accommodate a flexible commercial use.
- 6.2 The cumulative floor space of the proposed development equates to the same as what was approved under planning reference 20/00009/R56 and the proposed units are identical in scale, form and massing.
- 6.3 The replacement buildings would enable the sustainable growth of local businesses through well-designed new buildings in an attractive setting. They would not only be more attractive to prospective tenants but would improve the immediate setting and relationship with the village. Despite its open countryside location, the Framework supports employment development that is sensitive to its surroundings and that it does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads. Significant weight should be attributed to the fact that the site benefits from prior approval under Class R of the GDPO
- 6.4 Overall, it has been shown that this proposal complies with development plan as a whole as well as Government guidance set out in the Framework. Therefore, the absence of any substantial harm weighs in favour of the proposal which can be safely granted planning permission.

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