

Change of Use of agricultural paddock and associated works

Wendlebury Secure Dog Walking Area

Land at
College Farm, Wendlebury
Bicester, OX25 2PR



For

Mrs Millicent Lee

23/202

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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29th August 2023

DESIGN and ACCESS STATEMENT for

Change of Use

and associated work

Land at

College Farm
Wendlebury
Bicester
OX25 2PR

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

Proposal: **The change of use of agricultural paddock to secure dog walking area and associated work.**

Site: Land at College Farm, Wendlebury, Bicester, OX25 2PR

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Project Drawings:

23.201.02 Location and Site Plan As Existing & As Proposed

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location

The site is located 250m to the west of Wendlebury. It is currently a grassed paddock, part of College Farm, Wendlebury. The Grid Reference for the existing access is SP563193 (E: 456328, N: 219341). The site is out of sight from the village, visually shielded from the road by mature trees.

1.2 Background and Existing Use

The site is currently an agricultural paddock with grass, cropped for haymaking, and the remainder of the paddock to the south of the site will remain in agricultural use. The site is accessed via an existing entrance to its north east.

We have identified a need to provide a secure dog walking area. We propose using a part of this field, which will be fenced to provide peace of mind for the dog owners where they are able to let their dogs run freely without being on a lead in the knowledge that they are in a safe enclosed environment. There are a number of footpaths locally but dogs on public footpaths are required to be on a lead, so this proposal provides a really useful local resource, enabling off the lead enjoyment and the potential for relaxed exercise, play, low stress training and behavioural improvement.

Many dogs, and their owners, will benefit from this off the lead experience, reducing stress and improving mental health, for both dog and owner.

The exclusive nature of the booking will ensure that those dogs won't encounter challenging and unfamiliar dogs, or inflict challenges on others, which is often the case on a public footpath or public park.

Dogs with recall issues can be safely exercised, with the owners safe in the knowledge that their dog is in an enclosed space, and can be retrieved.

Livestock and local wildlife are safer too if more challenging dogs are exercised in a secure environment.

1.3 The Proposal

The proposal is to obtain a change of use for the site from 'agricultural' to this *sui generis* use, allowing it to be used as a secure dog walking area. In addition to the change of use, some further work will be undertaken, the fencing will need to be improved and the hardstanding by the entrance gate will need to be extended a little. A movable field shelter is also proposed. These items could be carried out under agricultural permitted development, but we have included them in this statement for clarity and openness.

The change of use and associated work will not adversely affect the openness and character of the site.

The whole site will be 2.5 acres (10100sqm) with the fenced grass area covering 2.0 acres (8150sqm). The fencing will be agricultural in character, effectively deer fencing in appearance, with very low visual impact, consisting of 2.0m high stock netting (50x75mm mesh) on round timber posts, 150mm diameter timber corner posts, and 100mm diameter intermediate straining posts. See image 1.3.1.



1.3.1 Typical fence detail (50mmx100mm mesh x2m high)

There will be a 1.2m wide pedestrian gate, and a 3.65m wide vehicular access gate for maintenance purposes. These gates will be galvanised metal box section for durability. See image 1.3.2.



1.3.2 Vehicular gate detail (3.65m wide galvanised 40mm box frame and mesh), and pedestrian gate (1.2m wide)

The existing hardstanding at the field entrance will be extended to the repositioned agricultural gate with parking spaces provided to the side. The existing hardstanding is surfaced in stone chippings, see image 1.3.3, the extended area will match this.



1.3.3 Hardstanding finish material



1.3.4 Field shelter

The field shelter will be of traditional timber construction and it will be movable. It will have a footprint of 5.5m x 3.6m, with a ridge height of 2.5m, clad in horizontal softwood timber boarding. The roof will be Onduline in anthracite/graphite grey.

1.4 Vehicle movements and Booking

The exercise area would be hired to dog owners on an individual basis, one dog at a time, unless two friends wanted their dogs to walk together. As a maximum we would propose no more than six dogs at any one time, although this will generally be one or two. The area would be available for hire by local residents who might walk to the site and also to those who live further afield who would drive to the site, but perhaps the logical assumption for planning purposes is that the majority would probably drive and park on site. Clearly it is anticipated that vehicle movements would be staggered through the day and would be predominantly as individual, or pairs, of vehicles.

There is ample provision for at least two cars to safely pull off the road to open the first gate, to enter and park in the waiting area and then close the roadside gate behind them. We propose accommodating parking for a maximum of three cars for each booking, although this would typically be just one. The site will be booked for a 45minute period, allowing for a subsequent 15minute turn around. Although overlaps will be minimised by booking and timing instructions, we will need to be able to accommodate the car of the subsequent booking if they arrive early, as well as the car for the current booking. The car for the current booking will park in the bay within the secure area, so dismounting from the car can be safe, without the need for a lead. The waiting car will park in a separate bay until the current booking owner has loaded their dog into the car, and then left the secure area. The waiting car will then move into the secure bay, close the gate and allow their dog to dismount in the secure parking bay before taking access to the main area through the code-locked pedestrian gate.

Opening hours will be 7am to 8pm. There will be no provision for floodlighting, so the natural hours of daylight will reduce the hours of use during the winter months.

1.5 Landscaping and visual impact

The field already has a dense hedgerow all around, the roadside hedge is high and has many mature trees within it. It is not proposed to plant further trees. The deer fencing is agricultural in character, and the operation generally will have negligible visual impact.

1.6 Planning Policies

1.6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Supporting a prosperous rural economy

Para 84. Planning policies and decisions should enable:

b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
Although it won't generate additional employment, the secure dog walking area will provide a useful opportunity for agricultural diversification.

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

The operation is low profile and discrete, with no visual intrusion.

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.

The site is within easy walking distance of the village.

Para 85. 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. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport).

This is clearly a use that has to be located in a rural environment by its very nature, a significant proportion of the hirers will travel by car, and the existing access will easily accommodate the low density use proposed.

1.6.2 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031

Although the proposal will not generate additional or new employment, it is likely to be assessed against CDC CLP Policy SLE 1:

Policy SLE 1 Employment Development

New employment proposals within rural areas on non-allocated sites will be supported if they meet the following criteria:

i) They will be outside of the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

The site is outside the Green Belt.

ii) Sufficient justification is provided to demonstrate why the development should be located in the rural area on a non-allocated site.

The proposed use is appropriate for a rural location.

iv) 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 is for individual hire and is therefore small scale by its nature.

v) 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 is discretely positioned within the rural area to the west of the village, the maintenance activities will be minimal and of no more impact than other agricultural operations.

Policy ESD 13 Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement

Opportunities will be sought to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe locations, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.

Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided.

Proposals will not be permitted if they would:

i) Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside

The fencing is of minimal visual impact, of agricultural character, and of no intrusion into the open countryside.

ii) Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography

No topographical or landscape features are affected by the proposal.

iii) Be inconsistent with local character Impact on areas judged to have a high level of tranquillity

Any effect on the tranquillity of the area would remain neutral when compared to occupation by agricultural livestock.

iv) Harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features, or

The setting of the village would remain unaffected.

v) Harm the historic value of the landscape.

There is no impact to the landscape, no listed buildings or scheduled monuments are nearby.

1.7 Neighbouring Amenity

The site is a significant distance from the village, so we don't anticipate any nuisance to arise. If the barking of isolated individual dogs was to be an issue, the booking system will enable us to identify that dog and to exclude its owner from being able to make future bookings for that dog. It is worth mentioning that dogs using the area will be on their own or with familiar dogs, so less likely to bark than dogs on a public footpath meeting others on leads.

1.8 Environmental Issues

The site area is covered in grassland for hay and silage making, so there would be negligible impact on biodiversity by the change of use.

1.9 Flood Risk

The site is in Zone 1, so there is no flood risk to the area, nor is there any likelihood that it would impact adversely on the surrounding area.

2.0 Conclusions

2.1 The proposal is for the small scale use of part of an agricultural paddock to provide a securely fenced area for people to hire to walk their dogs safely off the lead.

2.2 Any traffic generation will be very small scale and discrete.

2.3 The Applicant will be able to exert complete control over the management of the operation, both in terms of the quality of the facility provided to the customers, but also in terms of identifying and excluding any challenging repeat bookings.

2.4 Although the proposal doesn't provide new employment as such, it will provide an opportunity for farm diversification and provide a valuable local amenity.

2.5 The scheme has been assessed against the relevant local and national planning policies, and it has been shown to be compliant and positive.

2.6 It is respectfully requested that the District Council look favourably upon the Proposal and grant planning permission.

Mrs Millicent Lee August 2023