DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT:

Extension to General Purpose Agricultural Building, College Farm, Wendlebury

1.0 Proposal

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

Aerial view of the site showing the location of the proposed barn extension (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 beef cattle, sheep and associated storage. The livestock 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 building on the site consists of a 18.3x27.7m portal frame building for housing livestock over winter, with an attached 9.5x9m 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 beef and sheep operations. In 2021 permission was granted for a 30x48m building some 18m to the south of the existing barn, 20/02859/F (this building is now under construction, the foundation pads for the columns in the first two bays have been concreted and the tree planting is also now underway).

3.0 Use and Layout

The existing cattle and straw barns can accommodate approximately 30cows with newborn calves. Those calves are typically sold at market at 8-9months of age before the annual cycle for the cows restarts. Previously, the weaned calves have had to be sold in the absence of suitable overwintering barnspace on the farm. There will be very significant financial advantage to the operation if the progeny could be retained and reared on the farm, and also if the cattle numbers generally could be increased, this is partially facilitated by the 20/02859/F barn.

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). With the extension of the existing barn, the additional covered space will enable the cattle numbers to be further increased by buying in an additional 30calves and store cattle, helping to provide the flexible accommodation to rear and finish stock at 18-24months old, using some bought in grain based feed but predominantly fed on home grown forage, utilising the land more efficiently. Increasing the numbers of cattle generally improves the financial and practical viability of the operation. The proposed extension to the existing barn would provide very useful winter accommodation for these bought-in groups of youngstock.

4.0 Design

The proposed barn extension will have a steel portal frame, as the existing, 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 extension will be 12.2m in length and 27.75m wide. It will be 6.5m to the ridge and 4.1m to the eaves.

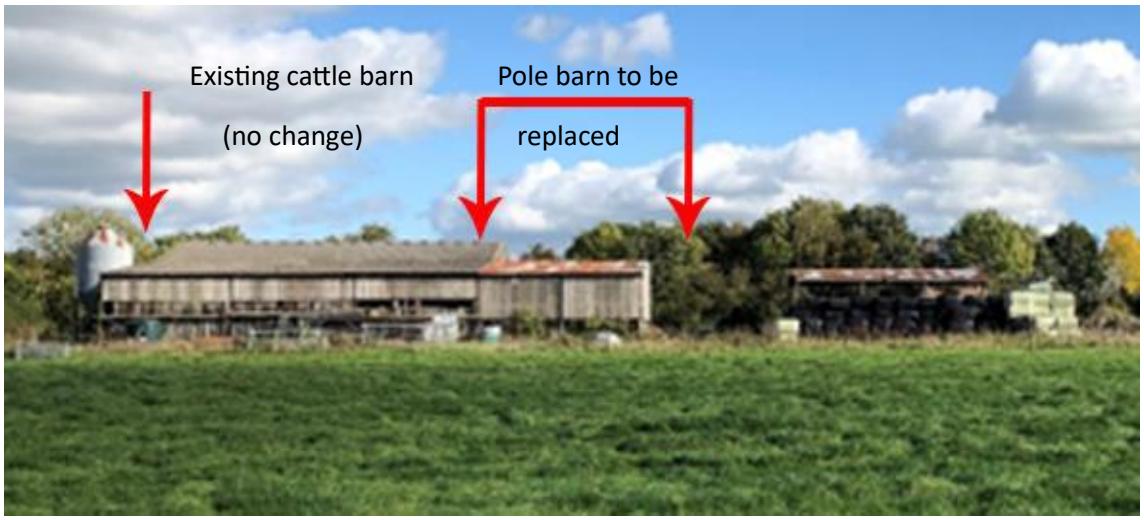
5.0 Landscaping and Appearance

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


View from the West


View from the South

A belt of planting along the western flank of the existing and proposed barns was approved as part of 20/02859/F, as indicated on the drawings (this planting is underway). The proposed barn extension sits between the existing barn and 20/02859/F barn, partially filling the gap, and as such, the tree planting as approved for 20/02859/F will shield and shelter the entire cluster of buildings from the west, so no additional planting is proposed for the extension. Note on drawing 23.202.01, a 20m length of heras fencing is proposed to the east of the proposed extension to protect the existing hedgerow.



West elevation, illustrating the existing barn and the pole barn addition to be replaced by the Proposed Extension

The existing barns are entirely compatible with the local landscape and character. The proposed barn extension 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.

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 barn extension is already concreted so the site is considered to have no significant ecological value. It is proposed to set four nest boxes beneath the eaves overhang to the barn extension, two boxes for 'small birds' and two 'triple nest boxes' for swifts, as annotated on the elevations drawing. Both types of nest boxes will be positioned at high level to minimise the risk from predators.

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 extension to an existing 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.

27th December 2023