Planning Statement

Proposal:	Use of agricultural land for stationing of Airstream caravan for tourist accommodation
Site:	Lanes End Farm, Gastard, Corsham, Wiltshire, SN13 9QS.
Our Reference:	PS_2424_v1

Land Development and Planning Consultants Ltd. is a Rural Planning Practice based in Corsham, Wiltshire. The Practice was established in 1989 to provide advice and representation on the range of town and country planning issues relating primarily to the countryside, villages and the market towns of Wessex. Clients include individuals, developers, legal and land agencies, commercial and residential developers, local authorities and amenity groups.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Land Development and Planning Consultants Ltd. have been instructed by Mr Terry & Mrs Emma Salmon to prepare and present an application for use of agricultural land for stationing of an Airstream caravan and use as tourist accommodation.

1.2 Terry is a partner in Lanes End Farm, together with his Mother and Father, trading as J M Salmon and Son.

2.0 Context

2.1 Lanes End Farm comprises 36.0 hectares (89 acres) of grass operated as a beef unit, currently with 44no. cattle with followers, and 9no. are without calf. Bulls are hired in as required. Calves are sold at 6 – 7 months at Frome Livestock Market. Two cuts of hay are taken a year for use on the farm. It is understood that Terry will inherit the farm holding, in due course.

2.2 Terry and Emma moved back to Lanes End Farm in 2019 with their two sons to take a greater role in the management of the farm business.

2.3 Terry's parents live in the main farmhouse, while the Applicants live in the eastern end of Lanes End Farmhouse known as Old Dairy Cottage; a single bedroom annex to the farmhouse. At ground floor the accommodation comprises kitchen, dining/lounge space and a bathroom. Their youngest son occupies the bedroom in the annex, while Terry and Emma occupy a bedroom in the farmhouse, accessed through a connecting first floor door to the main house. Their eldest son sleeps in a caravan in the yard to the north of the farmhouse, sharing cooking facilities with Old Dairy Cottage.

2.4 Under separate cover, planning permission is sought for the conversion of the Skillen to provide a family home for Terry, Emma and their sons. It is Terry and Emma's intention to seek change of use of Old Dairy Cottage to provide a second unit of tourist accommodation to let as part of a diversified farm business.

2.5 Currently, a significant proportion of the income to the farm business is generated by contract farm work undertaken by Terry. However, as Mr Salmon Snr. advances in age he, and his wife, are less able to undertake the day-to-day operation of the beef business at Lanes End Farm, and consequently more input is required from Terry and Emma.

2.6 Terry and Emma will need to maintain an income from the farm business that covers the needs of both Mr & Mr Salmon Snr. and their own family. The diversification into tourist letting will enable Terry and Emma to manage the additional income stream while investing more time in the management of Lanes End Farm. The business plan over the next three years anticipates income from the Airstream initially, and then added to during the second year through letting of Old Dairy Cottage following completion of the conversion of the Skillen for Terry, Emma and their family.

2.7 At the same time the beef business will be expanded, by retaining more calves over the next 3 – 4 years. Through the addition of a new general purpose additional barn (to be subject of a Prior Notification application) the extra space will enable the

business to keep calves for longer and thereby increase the value of the livestock. Currently, due to lack of space calves are being sold for £600 to £700, whereas, calves that can be overwintered on the farm will sell in March for around £1200.

2.8 Development and diversification of the farm business over the next 3 years will enable Terry to reduce his contract farming and create a sustainable business at Lanes End Farm into the future.

3.0 Proposed development

3.1 The application, subject of this statement, requests planning consent for the stationing of an Airstream touring caravan as guest accommodation, on agricultural land to the north of the farmyard.

3.2 The proposal includes dedicated parking for guests staying in the Airstream and additional planting around the location of the unit to create a discrete location for guests to enjoy the quiet rural location.

4.0 Policy Context

4.1 The starting point for the determination of this application is the provisions of the Development Plan. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise. The relevant Development Plan for this form and scale of proposal comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS).

4.2 Of particular relevance is Core Policy 39; 'tourism' of the WCS. The policy recognises the importance that visitors to the county play in the economy of Wiltshire. While CP39 envisages that the majority of tourist development will be directed to the principal settlements and market towns of Wiltshire, the policy also supports tourist facilities at large and small villages, such as Gastard, which is defined as a small village under CP11; 'Spatial strategy; Corsham community area' of the WCS.

4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration to the decision-making process; attention is drawn to paragraph 84 which, under the heading of 'supporting a prosperous rural economy', confirms that both planning policies and decisions should enable the development and diversification of agricultural businesses and sustainable rural tourism, together with the growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas.

5.0 Business plan

5.1 The proposed tourist business relates to the letting of a renovated Airstream caravan purchased by the Applicants in 2021. The financial plan of the business is contained within **Appendix 1** to this statement submitted under separate cover as a confidential document, not for public release.

5.2 Broadly, the plan anticipates set up costs of £80,000 including the investment made by Terry and Emma in the Airstream to date. Based on a modest estimate of 65% occupancy charged at a basic nightly rate, the business will generate in the order £32,000 per annum, with costs of around £4000 per annum. On this basis a return upon investment will be realised by year three of commencement of the business.

5.3 It is the intention of the Applicants to develop a sustainable diversified farm business at Lanes End Farm, reducing reliance on farm contracting income through introduction of tourist income streams, and expansion of the beef business, within the means of the holding. The forward business plan sets out abbreviated accounts over a three-year period from the grant of the initial consent for the Airstream caravan, with the creation of a dwelling through the conversion of the Byre and increasing beef sales.

6.0 Planning Assessment

6.1 Given the directions of the NPPF and CP39, the principle of tourist development is considered acceptable at Lanes End Farm due to its proximity to the village of Gastard; the accommodation will be within walking distance of village facilities including the

Harp & Crown, a 100% vegan pub. Just 2.5km to the north is the historic centre of Corsham with its range of independent shops, community sports campus and rural arts centre.

6.2 The Airstream represents a substantial investment by Terry and Emma, using personal funds to provide income to the farm into the future. The Airstream has been professionally renovated to original condition, and sensitively upgraded to meet modern guest expectations. The caravan will provide a unique experience for guests at the farm.

6.3 The Airstream has been sensitively located to limit visual impact on surrounding occupiers, but also to provide a sense of isolation and tranquillity for guests looking to unwind in the countryside. The setting of the caravan will be further enclosed through naturalistic planting and letting existing hedges grow to provide a secluded private space.

6.4 The unit will be located on a working farm. Access from the Airstream to public footpaths will be provided by permissive routes across the holding for the benefit of guests only. Visitors' cars will be parked within the farmyard and guests escorted to the Airstream on foot or by farm vehicle to reduce the potential for visual impact arising from insensitively parked vehicles.

6.5 While the unit will remain capable of movement, the expectation is that the accommodation will be available year-round, given the insulation upgrades that have been made to the body of the caravan.

6.6 Limited external lighting will be provided for guest safety only, using warm white LED lights only, installed with motion sensors. Any lighting will be directed toward the ground and cowled to prevent light spill compromising the dark ambience of the area, or the impact on the protected species that could forage in the area. Similarly, the playing of amplified music outside of the Airstream will be strictly prohibited and managed by Terry and Emma from the farmstead.

6.7 A dedicated fire pit will be provided for guest use. Only well-seasoned fuel available for purchase from the farm will be permitted to be burnt in the fire pit; full instructions on the safe use of the pit will be given to each guest, and a bucket of sand will be positioned in close proximity to the caravan for use in emergencies.

6.8 Material considerations

6.9 The unit will accommodate two adult guests at a time, and therefore the resulting traffic movements will be minimal. As such, the proposed development will not have a material impact on the local highway network either in terms of highway safety or capacity.

7.0 The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment by Smart Ecology; it concluded that no significant impacts on protected or notable species are considered likely if the mitigation measures provided in the report are implemented.

7.1 the recommendations of the report are welcomed by the Applicants and commended to the LPA. The mitigation measures proposed within the PEA can be secured through the use of a suitably worded condition, attached to a planning consent.

7.2 The caravan will be linked to a package treatment plant that will discharge to a drainage field on land under the Applicant's control. Should the LPA consider it necessary, detailed design could be secured by a suitably worded condition attached to a planning consent.

8.0 Concluding notes and planning balance

8.1 The proposed diversification of the agricultural business at Lanes End Farm into tourist letting will help strengthen the established business and off-set the reduction in subsidies over the next few years. The development will assist in meeting the economic objectives of the local development plan to the benefit of the wider community.

8.2 The proposals meet the economic objective of the NPPF through the contribution to guest accommodation in the area attracting visitors into North Wiltshire and improving the viability of the farm business into the future.

8.3 The social objective of the NPPF will be met by helping the Applicant continue to live in the rural community and contribute to the viability and vitality of the village.

8.4 The environmental objective will be met through the ongoing farming and sensitive management of the wider holding to the benefit of the local landscape and the native biodiversity of the land.

8.5 It is trusted that the local planning authority will be able to support the application in its submitted form. The Applicant would welcome the opportunity to discuss in detail the proposals and to provide further information as required to enable a comprehensive assessment to be undertaken. Please contact the Agent at the earliest opportunity should such details be necessary.

Appendix 1

Business Plan

See separate confidential document