

Planning Statement – Proposed Agricultural Barn

Location: Field opposite South Wraxall House, South Wraxall, Wiltshire, BA15 2RY (E 383035 , N 164267)

Proposal: Erection of Agricultural Barn for Rare Breed Sheep

1. Introduction

This planning statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the erection of an agricultural barn on land opposite South Wraxall House, South Wraxall, Wiltshire. The proposal seeks consent for a purpose-built livestock barn to support the applicant's rare breed sheep enterprise.

2. Site and Agricultural Context

The application site comprises a portion of a 1.65-hectare pasture field positioned opposite South Wraxall House which forms part of a wider 4.09-hectare agricultural unit under the applicant's ownership and management, together with a 2.44-hectare parcel across the road. Both fields are in active agricultural use for grazing, livestock care and seasonal management. The red line boundary consists of a 0.25 Ha portion in the North East corner.

The land is open pasture with a gently varying topography and a mature hedgerow and tree boundary to three sides, as well as an hedge / rubble wall fronting the highway. The existing gated access onto the road is long established and provides suitable access for agricultural vehicles.

3. Proposed Development

The proposal is for the construction of a 233 square metre agricultural barn to support the day-to-day management of a flock of approximately 30 rare breed sheep. The barn will provide:

- Housing for ewes and lambs, particularly during lambing periods.
- Lambing pens and veterinary handling areas.
- Shelter for vulnerable or quarantined animals.
- Storage for hay, straw, feed and small agricultural equipment.

The building will be a steel portal frame structure with horizontal timber cladding in a natural, pressure-treated timber cladding finished in either a dark brown or black barn stain (for example, a dark oak or heritage black finish) to reflect traditional rural agricultural buildings and reduce visual prominence. The roof will be dark, matt-finish fibre cement roof sheets or polyester-coated steel profile sheets in a recessive colour such as heritage black or dark grey, selected to avoid glare and to blend into the surrounding landscape.

The barn is sited approximately 25 metres from the highway, positioned in the north-east corner where existing hedgerows and landform provide natural screening. This also follows the positioning of neighbouring agri buildings. This location ensures operational efficiency while reducing visual impact when viewed from public vantage points.

4. Access and Vehicle Track

The existing field access will be retained for all vehicle movements. To ensure all-weather usability, a new agricultural track will be introduced between the gate and the barn. A permeable crushed stone or locally sourced compacted scalping surface is proposed. This reduces run-off and maintains easy maintenance. If required, geotextile reinforcement and a sub-base layer can be included to support periodic heavy vehicle use.

No changes to the highway are required. The existing access width and sight lines are suitable for the scale of the ongoing vehicular use associated with the holding.

5. Drainage and Services

The barn will require basic services to support animal welfare. Water, lighting and power can be extended from existing sources available to the land.

Surface water will be managed through permeable surfacing and natural drainage patterns within the field. Roof water can discharge to adjacent soft ground via gravel-filled soakaways, avoiding run-off towards the road.

6. Landscape and Visual Considerations

The proposed barn has been positioned to utilise natural screening from hedgerows and topography. The choice of dark timber cladding and a low, simple agricultural form ensures it sits comfortably within the rural setting.

The structure reflects the scale and appearance typical of the area's agricultural buildings. Its siting avoids skyline intrusion and maintains the open character of the wider landscape.

7. Agricultural Justification

The rare breed sheep enterprise requires a dedicated building for lambing, overwinter shelter, feed storage and animal care. Outdoor rearing alone cannot meet welfare standards during adverse weather or lambing season. The barn provides essential animal husbandry functions aligned with good agricultural practice.

The size and layout of the building are proportionate to the agricultural unit and the scale of the flock.

8. Environmental and Amenity Considerations

The proposed barn will not generate unacceptable impacts in terms of noise, odour or traffic. Vehicular movements will be low in frequency and typical of a small-scale agricultural use associated with livestock husbandry.

The building is sited well away from neighbouring residential properties, with generous separation distances and existing boundary features ensuring there is no adverse impact on residential amenity. No external lighting is proposed beyond functional low-level internal lighting, which will be designed to avoid light spill and minimise effects on the rural night-time environment.

In ecological terms, a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been undertaken for the site, which confirms that the development will deliver measurable environmental benefits. The proposals achieve an on-site net gain of 11.55% in habitat units and 10.89% in hedgerow units, exceeding the statutory 10% requirement. This will be secured through enhancement of the retained grassland and hedgerow from moderate to good condition, together with the planting of five new scattered native field trees (eg oak, field maple etc). These measures will result in an overall improvement to biodiversity value and habitat connectivity, ensuring that the development has a positive environmental outcome alongside its limited amenity impacts.

9. Planning Policy Considerations

The proposal accords with the principles of supporting agricultural operations in rural areas, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and the relevant local plan policies for rural development, landscape protection and sustainable land use. The design is functional, modest and appropriate to its countryside setting.

The development is directly related to an agricultural enterprise and provides the infrastructure required to ensure animal welfare and operational viability.

10. Conclusion

The proposed barn is a necessary and well-designed agricultural building that supports the management of the applicant's rare breed sheep enterprise. Its siting, design and materials ensure a minimal landscape impact while delivering clear functional benefits. The access, drainage and environmental requirements can be fully accommodated, and have been addressed.

The application is therefore considered to comply with local and national planning policy and would request that permission is therefore granted.