

Appeal reference: 6008970

LPA reference: PL/2025/08409

Site: Outmarsh Farm, Outmarsh, Semington, BA14 6JX

Final comments

These comments are in response to Wiltshire Council's statement and the interested party comments. I am not trying to introduce new evidence, but I would like to clarify a few points.

The main point I would like to make is that this appeal is not for a permanent dwelling in the countryside. It is for temporary permission for a static caravan for three years, to help establish the agricultural enterprise at Outmarsh Farm and to show whether there is an ongoing need for accommodation on site.

The intention is not to create a permanent or uncontrolled residential use. At the end of the three-year period, the caravan would be removed and the land restored unless a further permission had first been granted following a fresh assessment at that time. This means the council would still have control at the end of the temporary period.

The council has said that the enterprise is at an early stage and that there are limited historic trading records. I understand that point, but this is part of the difficulty with a new agricultural enterprise. The business needs time to establish itself before it can produce the sort of trading records the council is asking for. The temporary permission is being requested so that the enterprise can be properly tested over a limited period.

Without temporary permission, there is a circular problem. The council wants evidence of an established and viable enterprise, but the enterprise cannot reasonably get to that stage without the temporary on-site accommodation needed to help manage livestock welfare, security, lambing/kidding, and day-to-day operations.

I also do not think it is reasonable to expect a large amount of further investment before the planning position is known. The proposal is meant to be a controlled and temporary way to test the enterprise, rather than a permanent development.

The council has also referred to the existing farmhouse. However, the council's own agricultural assessment says that the farmhouse is occupied by the applicant, who works full time in a separate business outside agriculture and does not plan to be involved in the proposed agricultural business. The agricultural enterprise is to be run by the proposed occupier as a separate business. The farmhouse therefore cannot realistically provide the functional on-site presence that the agricultural enterprise

requires.

The agricultural consultant also accepts that lambing and neonatal care can require close supervision. My case is that temporary accommodation on site is a proportionate way to support the enterprise while its need and viability are tested. This is very different from granting a permanent dwelling.

In my view, the limited and reversible nature of the proposal significantly reduces any planning harm. The Inspector is being asked to weigh that limited harm against the benefits of allowing a developing agricultural enterprise a fair opportunity to establish itself over a temporary period.

There are no objections from neighbouring residents. Melksham Without Parish Council does not object. Archaeology raises no objection. Highways does not object in principle, but asked for access and parking details if the proposal was otherwise acceptable. The council has also accepted that there would be no harmful impact on the setting or significance of Outmarsh Farmhouse as a listed building. No technical consultee has objected to the proposal on heritage, archaeological or highway grounds in principle.

Response to Melksham Without Parish Council

Melksham Without Parish Council does not object to the proposal, but asked for clarification about the three-year period, control of residential creep, and access/parking.

The three-year period would run from the date of the Inspector's decision granting permission. At the end of that period, the caravan would be removed unless a further permission had first been granted following a fresh assessment. I would accept a condition requiring removal and restoration at the end of the temporary period.

I would also accept conditions to make sure there is no residential creep. No wider domestic curtilage across the field is being sought. The residential use should be limited to the caravan and its immediate associated area only. The appeal details identify the appeal site area as 41 square metres.

I would also accept a condition requiring details of vehicular access and parking to be agreed, if the Inspector considers that necessary.

Suggested conditions

If the Inspector is minded to allow the appeal, I would accept conditions requiring:

- the permission to be limited to three years only;
- occupation to be limited to a person working in connection with the agricultural enterprise at Outmarsh Farm;
- the caravan to be removed and the land restored at the end of the temporary period unless further permission is granted;
- the residential use and curtilage to be limited to the caravan and its immediate associated area only;
- no wider domestic use of the field;
- details of access and parking to be agreed if required;
- external lighting and domestic paraphernalia to be controlled where necessary.

I believe these conditions would address the concerns raised by the council and the parish council. They would prevent the proposal becoming uncontrolled residential development while allowing the agricultural enterprise the opportunity to establish itself and demonstrate whether a continuing functional need exists before any future application is considered on its own merits.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the Inspector to allow the appeal and grant temporary planning permission for three years, subject to appropriate conditions.