

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

**PROVISION OF TEMPORARY ON-SITE RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION
FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKER AT
PARSLOE FARM, RODBOURNE, MALMESBURY, SN16 0EU**

PLANNING STATEMENT

Prepared by

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Our Reference: SWLC.LPC6346

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 LPC (Trull) Ltd have been instructed by Mr J Vincent to present a planning application for new on-site residential accommodation at Parsloe Farm, Rodbourne, Malmesbury, Wiltshire, SN16 0EU.
- 1.2 The application seeks to provide a 'temporary' structure on site, in the form of a log cabin, falling within the definition of a mobile home at Section 29 of the Caravan Sites Act 1968, that requires, inter alia, that the structure must be physically capable of being moved from one place to another by road, and that a potential 'twin' unit must be no more 20m long, 6.80m wide and no more than 3.096m high internally.
- 1.3 It is the purpose of this Planning Statement to review the site's planning context. It should be read alongside the Agricultural Justification report prepared by Mr A Wright MRICS FAAV of AJW Land and Development that explains the essential need for on-site accommodation within sight and sound of the adjacent livestock buildings. The relevant national and local planning policy context will be reviewed so as to demonstrate that the application is justified and will not cause policy harm that indicates permission should be resisted.

2.0 CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Parsloe Farm is located within the local environs of the village of Rodbourne, 3 miles to the south of Malmesbury town. It is an established dairy farm of approximately 300 acres of owned and rented land and currently there are approximately 412 head of cattle, of which 250 are milking cows, 80 replacement heifers, 80 calves and 2 bulls. The main farmhouse is located along the road through the village, south of the junction with Grange Lane. The farmhouse and cluster of farm buildings are shown in the aerial insert below. Separately, and also shown in the image below are a range of farm buildings, with a separate access off Grange Lane to the north east, used to house some of the milking herd, the replacements and calves that cannot be accommodated at the main farm site.



- 2.2 The purpose of the enclosed application is to provide essential on site accommodation to address the needs of the farming operation and attract a suitable long term farm worker, to assist with the high standards of animal welfare that are required and will result from a more direct on site presence, where the animals are kept away from the main farm site. The new accommodation will be provided just south of the access and south of the existing buildings, thus within sight and sound of the livestock in this yard.
- 2.3 The site lies outside the defined flood risk areas shown plotted below (flood zones 2 and 3), and on rising ground from the Lane.





- 2.4 The most recent application for buildings within the vicinity of the application site was made by application PL/2023/06137 extending the middle building. The extent of the built spread approved is shown by the approved plan extract inserted below. It was described in the officer's decision report as part of 'an established working cattle farm', and more specifically as follows.

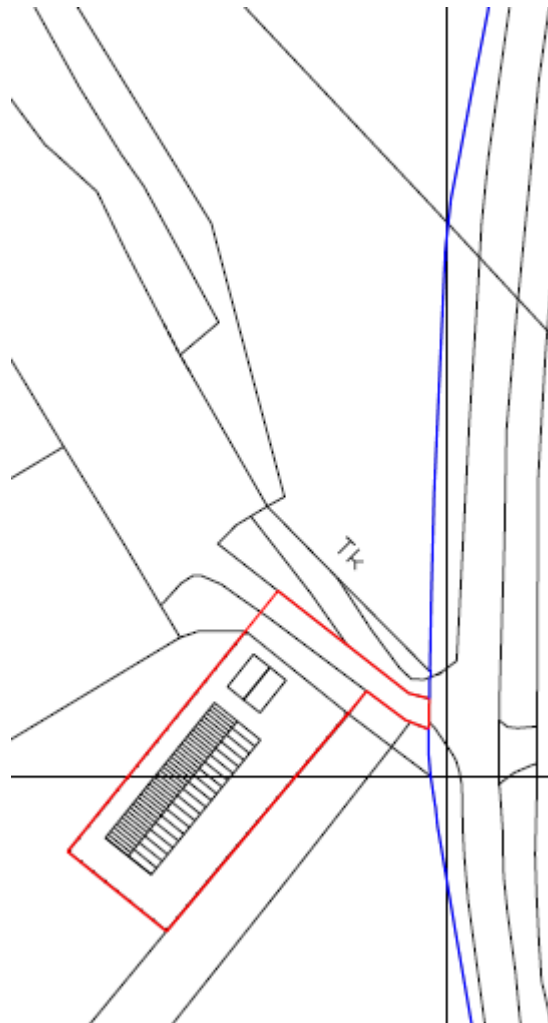
'The site comprises an area of existing farm buildings set within a large pastoral farm which is characterised by area of agricultural fields and mature landscaped boundaries. There is a complex of existing stock and fodder buildings on the site which are typical of agricultural buildings.

There is a farm track leading to the Grange Lane to the eastern side of the site and the wider area is characterised by rural countryside with limited structures or dwellings. The gently undulating fields are typical of rural agricultural land with soft field boundaries formed of native hedgerows and a variety of native trees'.



- 2.5 The area on which the farm worker's accommodation will be sited is currently laid to grass and will be scaped level with a shallow hardcore layer added and includes a small pull off in front of the unit for parking, clear of the farm track where there is ample space to turn to access and egress the site in a

forward gear. The application also provides a small sitting out area within the red lined and post and railed fenced site shown below.



3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides that, in dealing with proposals for planning permission, regard must be had to the provisions of the Development Plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that, if regard is to be had to the Development Plan for any determination, then that determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2 The Statutory Development Plan is comprised primarily of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted in January 2015), Saved policies of the North Wiltshire

Local Plan 2011 (adopted in June 2006). The following policies are believed to be most relevant to the assessment of the application development.

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)

Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy

Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy

Core Policy 13 Spatial Strategy for the Malmesbury Community Area

Core Policy 48 Supporting Rural Life

Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Core Policy 51 Landscape

Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport

Core Policy 61 Transport and Development

North Wiltshire Local plan – ‘saved’

Policy H4 Development in the Open Countryside

- 3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the Government’s planning policies for England and explains how they should be implemented. It is a material planning consideration. The following elements are believed to be particularly pertinent to the assessment of the enclosed application.

Paragraph 8, Dimensions of Sustainable Development

Paragraph 11, Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Section 4. Decision Making

Paragraphs 110 and 116, Highways Impacts

Paragraph 84, Dwellings in Isolated Locations

Paragraph 88, Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy

Paragraph 131, Achieving Well-designed Places

Paragraph 189, National Landscapes

- 3.4 The Wiltshire Design Guide was adopted at the end of February 2024. As a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) the Wiltshire Design Guide is afforded weight in the determination of planning applications. It provides new, locally-authored design guidance that applies across Wiltshire at a level of

detail that does not exist in the national equivalent. It is an SPD and expands upon Core Policy 57.

4.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

4.1 In light of the above planning policy framework identified, I believe the following key issues are relevant to the positive assessment of the enclosed application.

Principle of Development

Design and landscape impact

Ecology

Highways

4.2 Principle of Development

4.2.1 The NPPF at paragraph 84 states;

Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
- b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
- c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;
- d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building; or
- e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:
 - i. is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and

- ii. would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

4.2.2 Paragraph 84 a) therefore clearly supports the application on the basis there is an essential need for a rural worker to live on the site. The WCS indicates that development in the rural areas should be resisted but highlights a number of exceptional policies at paragraph 4.26, which includes Core Policy 48.

4.2.3 WCS paragraph 6.67 also states, 'additional dwellings may be justified in certain circumstances when they are required in the interests of supporting rural employment, for example in association with equestrian activities when worker accommodation is needed onsite.'

4.2.4 The policy text to CP48 more specifically states;

'Dwellings required to meet the employment needs of rural areas

Outside the defined limits of development of the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages, and outside the existing built areas of Small Villages, proposals for residential development will be supported where these meet the accommodation needs required to enable workers to live at or in the immediate vicinity of their place of work in the interests of agriculture or forestry or other employment essential to the countryside. Proposals for accommodation to meet the needs of employment essential to the countryside should be supported by functional and financial evidence.'

4.2.5 Similarly, Saved Policy H4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan also permits dwellings outside of the framework boundary, where they provide an agricultural worker's dwelling.

4.2.6 Despite the above policies not being in accord with the NPPF, which requires that the essential needs to live nearby or at a place of work in the countryside is a functional matter in terms of justification, and not a financial one, the justification provided demonstrates that the applicant has an established and viable agricultural business, that is able to cover the overheads of the operations proposed. The associated accounts can of course be provided

assuming they are needed by your Council's specialist agricultural consultant.

- 4.2.7 The essential functional need to live on the site is explained in the Agricultural Justification report and consequently, as there is no basis to indicate the farming venture is not sufficiently viable to support the grant of a temporary planning permission the essential functional and associated financial basis of the business are believed to be sufficiently sound to support the principle of the development proposed, in accord with both national and local planning policy.

4.3 Design and Landscape Impact

- 4.3.1 Detailed plans of the proposed accommodation do not form part of the application as it of course concerns the 'temporary' use of the land and not operational development. Provided the accommodation falls within the definition of a mobile home (which can of course be conditionally controlled) its visual appearance is not typically considered to be a material planning consideration.
- 4.3.2 In this instance it is acknowledged that siting is an inherent aspect of the proposal's acceptable visual impacts and assimilation though. As indicated, the intention is that the accommodation will be closely associated with the large group of farm buildings, against which it will be visually contained withing the established large scale built envelop, so that the precise finishes of the home are not relevant. The application development is a subsidiary addition to the established man-made grouping that forms part of the accepted wider rural scene and is part of the working countryside.
- 4.3.3 The siting chosen, as indicated earlier, utilises a modest saliant of land between a farm track and farm buildings and requires minimal physical change to accommodate the intended unit. It will be accessed sharing the concrete entrance track serving the large livestock buildings and will sit in close proximity, for best sight and sound of the livestock buildings generally. It is not only functionally well sited but also minimises the area's visual change and provides a clear first point of contact at the yard for security and proper site management.

4.3.4 Core Policy 51 of WCS states that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. Core Policy 57, amongst other requirements, expects development to integrate effectively into its setting.

4.3.5 In light of the low impact nature of the application proposal and its effective temporary/transitional provision it is strongly maintained that the area's scenic qualities will not be impacted. The siting is discrete and is set well away from public viewpoints and utilises the established built context as the built backdrop to assimilate the change.

4.4 Ecology

4.4.1 The site's minor change of use development is believed not to raise any concerns that warrant any ecological survey analysis. The Government's exemptions from the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) regime that are now in place at the time of submission, in line with the 6th August stated transitional arrangements exempt this small scale development from the BNG requirement.

4.4.2 Moreover though, the temporary use of the land proposed relies on the simple placing of the cabin on the land and use of the existing access, as an existing sealed surface. It is anticipated that a new klargester system is likely to be required and will be provided under ground in close proximity, and the trenching will be made good and the disturbance will be no greater than the ploughing of the wider field, for which planning permission is of course not required. Water has also already been provided to the farm site. The minor and temporary nature of the change of use of the land confirms it is therefore reasonably exempt from BNG, particularly in terms of the latest scope of exemptions recently introduced.

4.4.3 WCS Core Policy 50 predates the above system of ecological enhancement but still seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment. Accordingly, to provide a proportionate enhancement and thus comply with the policy wording, the application will include the provision of a new nesting box as

inserted below, and to be attached to the southern gable of the nearest barn, north of the application site and more than 2m above ground level. This can of course be conditionally controlled by reference to this paragraph. It is also anticipated that in the event the cabin is removed from the land the subsequent making good of the land can be conditionally controlled to mitigate the impacts in the long term, should the need change. The potential disturbance is anticipated to be very minor.



4.5 Highways

4.5.1 The rural business has been established for many years and it is a matter of fact therefore the movement of livestock and the associated comings and goings etc are acceptable in principle in this rural location. Indeed, by providing on-site accommodation, the applicant's multiple staff trips to site throughout the day will be removed and consequently the application will actually reduce the scale of vehicle movements generated daily. The proposal is consequentially a sustainable addition to the operation of the established business and does not cause harm in terms of highway safety or convenience.

4.5.2 The NPPF in any event recognises at paragraph 110 that the opportunities for sustainable transport principles differs between urban and rural areas so that expectations must be applied in a balanced manner.

4.5.3 The application site utilises the modest area identified and there this is sufficient space in association with the new cabin to accommodate 2No parking spaces off the track and allow turning on the track, to access and

egress the site in a forward gear. Staff already park in the main yard so this will reduce that general clutter and serves the site ensuring there are no serve impacts on highway safety or convenience locally.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 It is considered that the application meets the requirements for the essential need for a rural worker's dwelling in relation to the existing agricultural operations on site, relating to the necessary care and welfare of the animals on site. The proposed scale and design of the temporary on-site accommodation is appropriate in this respect. The siting of the development is not considered to have any significant adverse impact on the visual amenity of the area, as well as the highway network, and relevant ecological interests, so the proposal is considered to comply with the relevant policies and guidance, being paragraph 84 of the NPPF, Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 CP1, CP2, C13, CP48, CP51, CP57 and Saved Local Plan 2011 Policy H4.