

Operational need statement.

Proposed extension to existing dwelling associated with dog kennel business.

1. Introduction.

This statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for the proposed extension to the existing dwelling at Utopia House, Lowca, Whitehaven.

The property is occupied in association with an established dog kennel business operating from the site. The proposed extension relates solely to the existing dwelling and is intended to provide additional accommodation required as a consequence of the operational requirements of the established business.

The proposal is therefore not intended to extend or increase the kennel facilities themselves. Rather, the additional accommodation is required to provide appropriate living and working arrangements for those responsible for the day-to-day operation and management of the business.

2. Existing property and business.

The property comprises an existing dwelling together with an established dog kennel business operating from the site.

The kennel business requires regular and often continuous supervision and management. Responsibilities include the care and supervision of dogs, feeding, cleaning, responding to customer requirements, monitoring the animals and dealing with any issues that may arise outside conventional business hours.

The location of the dwelling in close proximity to the kennels is therefore important to the practical operation of the business.

The existing dwelling provides the residential accommodation for the persons associated with the running of the business. However, the existing accommodation is now considered insufficient for the needs of the household and the operational requirements associated with the business.

3. Operational relationship between the dwelling and the kennel business.

Although the proposed extension is to the dwelling rather than the kennel buildings, there is a direct operational relationship between the two uses.

The nature of a dog boarding/kennel business means that the site cannot simply be closed outside normal working hours. Dogs require appropriate care and supervision throughout their stay, including during evenings, weekends and potentially overnight.

Having the persons responsible for the business living on or immediately adjacent to the site allows the business to be properly supervised and enables any issues affecting the dogs to be dealt with promptly.

The continued residential occupation of the dwelling is therefore an important component of the established operation of the kennel business.

4. Need for additional accommodation.

The existing dwelling does not provide sufficient accommodation to meet the current needs of the household associated with the business.

The proposed extension would provide additional residential accommodation in the form of Living Room/Kitchen/Ground Floor WC/Bedrooms.

The additional space is required to provide suitable and functional accommodation for the occupants while allowing them to continue living at the site and undertaking the responsibilities associated with the kennel business.

The proposal is therefore driven by a combination of residential and operational requirements rather than simply an enlargement of the dwelling for general residential purposes.

5. Requirement to remain close to the business.

The operational nature of the kennel business means that the persons responsible for its management need to remain readily available at the premises.

Relocating the occupants away from the site would make the day-to-day management of the business less practical and could result in a reduced ability to respond quickly to matters requiring attention.

The existing arrangement, whereby the dwelling is located alongside the kennel business, provides an efficient and practical means of managing the established use.

The proposed extension would enable this arrangement to continue while providing appropriate residential accommodation for those responsible for the business.

6. Working from home and administrative requirements.

Where applicable, the proposed extension would also provide space for administrative duties associated with the kennel business.

The operation of the business involves tasks such as responding to enquiries, making bookings, maintaining records, dealing with customers and undertaking general administration.

Where these activities are undertaken from the dwelling, appropriate dedicated space is beneficial in separating business-related administration from the main residential areas.

The provision of the additional bedrooms may allow in time an existing room within the property to become a home office/study and would allow these activities to be undertaken more effectively without requiring additional commercial premises.

7. Family and residential requirements.

The proposed extension is also required to provide suitable accommodation for the occupants of the dwelling.

The existing house has become inadequate for the current household requirements, particularly in terms of number of bedrooms/living space/bathroom facilities.

The extension would allow the existing dwelling to be adapted to meet these requirements while retaining the established relationship between the dwelling and the kennel business.

The proposal would therefore allow the occupants to remain living at the property and continue their involvement in the established business.

8. Scale of the proposed extension.

The scale of the proposed extension reflects the combined residential and operational requirements of the occupants.

The additional floorspace is required to provide additional living space and bedrooms, together with the necessary circulation and ancillary space.

While the extension represents a substantial addition to the existing dwelling, its size should be considered in the context of the accommodation requirements of the household and the established business operation.

The proposed extension has been designed to provide the necessary accommodation while making use of the existing property and maintaining the established relationship with the kennel business.

9. Alternatives considered.

The possibility of accommodating the requirements within the existing dwelling have been considered.

However, the existing layout and available floorspace do not provide a practical means of accommodating the additional residential and operational requirements without significantly compromising the functionality of the dwelling.

Similarly, relocating the occupants away from the site would be undesirable given the operational requirements of the established kennel business and the need for those responsible for its operation to remain readily available.

The proposed extension therefore represents a practical means of addressing the identified accommodation requirements while allowing the existing business to continue operating from the site.

10. Conclusion

The proposed development comprises an extension to the existing dwelling, rather than an extension to the kennel business.

The extension is required to provide additional residential accommodation for the occupants associated with the established dog kennel business and, where applicable, space for the associated administrative and management functions.

The operational nature of the kennel business means that those responsible for its operation need to remain readily available on site. The existing relationship between the dwelling and the kennel business is therefore important to the continued efficient operation of the established use.

The proposed extension would provide appropriate additional accommodation while allowing the occupants to remain living at the property and continue managing the existing business.

The proposal is consequently considered to represent a reasonable and proportionate response to the residential and operational requirements associated with the established use of the property.