DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2016/0064 **Valid 15/12/2016**	**UPPER DALES** **DUNWOOD LANE** **LONGSDON**	**PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL BUILDING** **(AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY DETERMINATION)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Qualification criteria under GPDO Schedule 2 Part 6 Class A
- Siting
- Design
- External appearance

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is somewhat central but towards the western side of a large c. 2.2 hectare (5.4 acre) pasture / meadow bordered by Dunwood Lane on its eastern and northern sides. Opposite the site to the west of Dunwood Lane is the significantly developed detached residence and surrounding site of Upper Dales. A field entrance to the application site has been constructed following grant of consent under reference SMD/2008/0922. An area of hardstanding has been developed in the approximate position of the proposal extending the permitted access and a light-weight timber stable stands just to the south. The lie of the field dips away gently to the south and west giving the application location a degree of prominence and a sense of being slightly elevated although the site area itself occupies a very slight dip or level within the overall gently domed and rising ground of the field as a whole. Land beyond the site to the north continues to gently rise and is overlooked from a distance of some 250m by a neighbouring detached residence at Coachman Cottage. There are tall mature broadleaved trees along parts of the field edges particularly alongside Dunwood Lane on the eastern side of the field.

PROPOSAL

The proposed building is described as an agricultural feed and implement store and would be 15m x 20m standing 4.5m at the eaves and 5.8m at the ridge. Following discussion with the case officer a further plan has been submitted defining an area of tree planting to be sited to the north side of the development by way of landscaping.

The lower c.2.0m of the walls would be constructed of re-constituted stone blocks. Elevations above the walls would be faced with vertical Yorkshire board cladding. The roof would be finished with profiled powder coated steel sheeting in Moorland Green with 15% translucent roof light sheets. Two roller shutter doors would be provided in the front (west) elevation facing the field entrance off Dunwood Lane opposite the entrance to Upper Dales.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)
S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS6c Other Rural Areas
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
R1 Rural Diversification
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework
Paragraph(s) 1 to 17
Section(s) 7 – Requiring Good Design; 9 – Protecting Green Belt Land.

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2008/0922 – construction of field access – approved
DET/2016/0059 – agricultural building with small extension to existing yard – Part 6 determination – refused

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity
Site Notice expiry date: 11th April 2017
Neighbour consultation period ends: 27th March 2017
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments
One objection from the residents of Coachman's Cottage. "The proposed building will be in full view of our property and of the adjacent public footpath. We feel this proposed building is too large for the area in which it will be sited. It is not in keeping with local buildings and will be an eyesore and intrusive to views of surrounding countryside for all residents in this area. We understand that this application is currently being considered and apologise for the lateness of this objection but we have only received this notification this week as we have been away from home recently. As neighbours of the property in question for the past 17 years we have yet to see any sheep grazing in this particular area."

Town / Parish Comments
Longsdon Parish Council: councillors agreed, by a majority decision, to forward no objections, in principle, subject to normal planning guidelines. Some concern was expressed, however, about the size of the proposed building on the prominent site.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Class A of part 6 to the GPDO provides for an agricultural building to be erected as Permitted Development subject to a prior notification to the LPA, with subsequent assessment, and subject to the land being within an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more. The applicant has indicated some 3.2 hectares at Upper Dales after deducting land identifiably occupied by the house, garden and horse facilities along with some c.2.7ha at Longsdon identified on drawing 2007-1441B-52 'Land Ownership at Longsdon' submitted with DET/2016/0059 making in total 5.9 hectares.

The applicant has also been asked to provide evidence of the agricultural need and has submitted a copy of a letter from the Rural Payments Agency which shows the allocation of a County Parish Holding Number to the applicant with the Business / Place of business being given as Upper Dales, Dunwood Lane, Endon. Also submitted is a copy of a Staffordshire County Council Trading Standards Animal Health Visit record from 25th May 2016 which records the type of premises as being a livestock farm and records that 40 sheep were found present. A flock number has also been stated. No additional evidence has been produced to show that the land is in use "for the purposes of a trade or business" which is part of the relevant definitions in Part 6 Class A.

The prior notification requirement is an opportunity for the LPA to determine whether prior approval should be required as to the siting design and external appearance. Due to the identified sensitivities of this location it was determined that the proposal should be subject to prior approval and accordingly the applicant was notified of this and the proposal was advertised by way of site and neighbour notifications.

Siting

The location is in the open rural countryside of the North Staffordshire Green Belt in the Dissected Sandstone Uplands Landscape Character Type (LCT). However, buildings for agriculture are listed exceptions to the rule that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate (NPPF paragraph 89). The implications for the Green Belt are therefore not considered further here.

The landscape character in this location is assessed as being of the highest landscape quality in the Staffordshire county-wide context. The listed Key Characteristics of this LCT tend in the main to correlate closely with the characteristics of the application location including: low intensity pastoral farming; views restricted by vegetation and limited in extent; winding sunken lanes and banked hedgerows. At this site views to and from both east and west are curtailed by intervening woodland edges or tree fringes. The site is open to the south but due to the fall in the slope the visible land is medium distant horizon with no near views into the site.

The more significant visibility is from the north where the immediate neighbouring land looks down towards the site and is crossed by a public footpath. Although Dunwood Lane wraps around the east and north sides of the field, due to the lane being deeply sunken between high banks and/or the field being embanked above the

road, views from the road are curtailed in parts. The proposed copse of tree planting to the north of the building would help assimilate it into this setting and be consistent with the relevant landscape planning guidelines for this LCT which include that "Planting may also be used to reduce visual scale".

Policy R1 is that "all development in the rural areas" outside development boundaries will be assessed by balancing the extent to which it enhances the countryside and promotes rural diversification and facilitates economic activity. The policy goes on to state that "appropriate development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area".

Design

In design the proposal is a plain form functional farm building. The relevant landscape planning guidelines for this LCT state:

> "The colour of pre-fabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development. The scale of these buildings should be minimised where possible to reflect the scale of the landscape."

The current proposal is amended from that refused under DET/2016/0059 reducing the ground plan area by 23% from 392m2 to 300m2 and marginally reducing the central ridge height from 6.2m to 5.8m. Nevertheless this remains a large and it might reasonably be said unattractive functional building which will be prominent where it is viewed from the road, in particular from opposite the entrance to Upper Dales where the roller shutter doors will dominate. This however is a relatively fleeting view for the passing public.

Amenity

No near neighbour amenity is considered likely to be unduly affected, the nearest being Oakcroft at some 60m to the WSW with mature trees in between on the field boundary. The building is not stated as being intended to be used for livestock housing. Coachman's Cottage whose residents have objected is some 250m distant. The proposal will be noticeable from the property and will appear intrusive in the landscape. However at the separation distance involved the impacts on the residents' amenity cannot be considered so harmful as to warrant refusal.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

This will be a prominent and unattractive building. However its impacts are found on balance to be localised to the immediate area and with the benefits of proposed landscape tree planting can be partially mitigated in the more exposed views from the north. Evidence has been submitted which appears to confirm that a small scale agricultural enterprise is being run from Upper Dales notwithstanding the absence for example within the submission of such items as business accounts to verify this status. Although some harm to the rural character of the area is identified there will be some small scale economic activity arising from the management of the 40 strong flock of sheep. Having considered the matter very carefully, including the landscape impact, neighbour objection, and potential benefits arising from the development, the

conclusion in this case is, on balance, in support. The Green Belt status of the location is not a consideration due to agricultural buildings being listed as not inappropriate.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Approve

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank
Recommendation Date: 20th April 2017

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council