

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2017/0032
Valid 19/10/2017

BASFORD BRIDGE FARM
BASFORD BRIDGE LANE
CHEDDLETON

PROPOSED PORTAL FRAMED
AGRICULTURAL BUILDING

**(AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY
DETERMINATION)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Compliance with conditions under GPDO(2015) Part 6 Class A
- Siting
- Design
- External Appearance

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is prominent at the easterly end of a bluff of land which overlooks the Churnet Valley. The site is within the Green Belt and is surrounded by farm land to all sides. The land rolls away steeply into the Churnet Valley to the immediate east and drops steeply down to the south east. The valley bottom is some 50m below. There is a more shallow dip away from the site to the north forming a slight valley bordered on its opposite side by the housing of Basford Bridge Lane some 200m to 300m away. The site is approached via a single track farm lane which also serves as a public footpath right of way from Basford Bridge Lane some 400m to the north west. The public footpath passes across the broad opening into the farm yard at its westerly end and continues down to the south east. There is a fringe of tall mature broad-leaved trees to the immediate west.

The existing site comprises a large steel framed shed 15m x 30m and 8m to the roof ridge (building 1). The building is aligned east-west along the contour of the ridge edge. On its lower SE side, where land falls steeply away, there is an attached building (building 2) of the same length but narrower at 12m with a mono-pitch lean-to roof butting up to under the eaves of the larger building.

On the north side of these existing buildings an informal, more-or-less level, yard area has been formed which continues eastwards along the flat of the bluff with walled manure and silage clamps.

The existing buildings are visible from Basford Bridge Lane but due to being slightly set down off the highest line of the ridge and due to a well grown hedge along the near (northerly) site edge the buildings are partially obscured.

PROPOSAL

As first submitted the proposal was to double the size of the main building (building 1) by extending it eastwards – towards the end of the ridge – by 30m with the same 15m width and 8m ridge height.

The application is accompanied by a farm 'agricultural need appraisal' by The Brown Rural Partnership dated October 2017. This describes the farm as extending to 60.7 ha (150 acres) and having a 70 cow suckler herd and 150 breeding ewes all with followers (calves and lambs). These animals will be outside for most of the year only having some needs for accommodation during calving / lambing or particularly hard winter weather. A farm estate plan was further submitted on request to show the entire holding which is understood to be tenanted.

The report identifies the existing livestock housing needs as amounting to between 525m² and 670m² whereas the existing buildings provide only 444m² (building 1) and 360m² (building 2). Although in total this comes to 804m² the assessment is complicated by the fact that building 2 is entirely given over to farm machinery storage and maintenance, apparently associated with the running of a farm contracting business.

There is no residential accommodation within the holding and it is understood the proprietor, Mr Day, lives locally. There is a farm house called Basford Bridge Farm (Grade II Listed) in the valley bottom some 200m to the SE but this is understood not to be connected.

The farm business report says that Mr Day employs four full time employees to undertake the agricultural operations "and the services provided by the contract farming business".

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
- SS7 Churnet Valley Area Strategy
- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC3 Landscape
- R1 Rural Diversification
- T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s): 1 to 17

Section(s): 3 – Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy; 7 – Requiring Good Design; 9 – Protecting Green Belt Land

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

DET/2016/0069 extension of an existing agricultural building – withdrawn

At 31st March 2017 a lengthy equipment list was supplied in connection with the above 2016 application:

• 6 tractors	• 2 flat trailers	• Ifor Williams flat bed
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 muck spreaders • 1 slurry tank • 3 silage trailers • Mower • Buck rake • LoadAll • Grass rake • 2 flat trailers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 tractor front loaders • 2 ploughs • Power harrow • 2 cultivators • Pig tail • Sumo (sub soiler) • Corn drill • Cattle trailer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass tine harrow • Cattle crush • Flat 8 grab and sledge • Sprayer • 2 sets front weights • Small and large baler • Self-propelled combine
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Additionally it was stated, “Mr Day has confirmed that there are 2 full time employees and 1 part time operating the farm with an additional 5 (maximum) at harvest and other busy times.”

There are several earlier references to agricultural buildings the most recent being from 2002.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 12th December 2017

Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Cheddleton Parish Council – no objections

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The application is made under the Permitted Development procedure for agricultural buildings contained at GPDO (2015) Schedule 2, Part 6 Class A.

Part 6 Class A 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 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 notice (as is required).

To qualify for the Permitted Development route the proposed works must be “reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit”. The

agricultural use of the land must be “for the purposes of a trade or business” and the unit must be “occupied as a unit for the purposes of agriculture”, all as set out in the Interpretation Section (D.1) for Part 6 Classes A to C.

As noted under ‘Proposal’ above the assessment here is complicated by the operation of an agricultural contracting business from within the farm site. This appears not to have any previous planning consent nor has it been established for how long it has been operating. Building 2 (360m²) would seem to be taken up with this aspect of the business.

The Part 6 prior notification procedure is not considered a correct basis to obtain approval for building development to support a farm machinery contracting business. Furthermore such an application would here be subject to Green Belt considerations. In response to this the applicant has pressed a case based on livestock requirements and The Brown Partnership report’s justification for between 525m² and 670m² in total in support of the livestock farming element. Setting aside Building 2, given over to machinery and equipment, the existing provision is 440m². Based on the Brown report there is then a shortfall of between 85m² and 230m². As first submitted the application was for a c.440m² addition.

An amended scheme has been put forward for a reduced extension yielding 270m². Clearly this is still more than the maximum identified shortfall in respect of livestock. It is though a significant reduction on that first proposed. The Brown report does not explicitly itemise the requirement for fodder storage and machinery directly associated with the farm – at least some allowance for which is appropriate. The existing building 2 may largely meet this need but the amended proposal if now approved would add further to meeting the requirement.

Given that this is a 60ha holding with a 70 cow suckler herd and 150 breeding ewes all plus followers the overall set up, plus the proposed extension as amended, does not seem unreasonable.

Design

The design is standard for modern farm buildings: precast concrete panels at the base and profiled powder coated steel sheeting above with matching trims. Profiled powder coated steel sheeting colour-coat HPS Moorland Green SC ref. BS12B21, matching trims to include 15% profiled translucent sheet roof lights.

Prior to the final revision it was proposed as an entirely closed building with just a single full height roller shutter or similar central door which is not consistent with livestock housing. It would also have given an industrial rather than agrarian appearance. Given that the main requirement is understood to be for additional covered floor area for livestock accommodation the amendments now result in a proposal which can be considered commensurate with need and appropriate in appearance.

A further agreed amendment has been to reduce its ridge height slightly in order to be subordinate to building 1 which it would extend.

Amenity

The application as first submitted was described as being 'required to store machinery and implements'. However the agricultural justification is based on livestock housing needs and following negotiation in the course of determining the application a building designed for a mix of farm uses including livestock housing is now being considered. For the majority of the year the livestock at this farm will not need to be housed.

Condition A.2(1) of Part 6 Class A Permitted Development prevents livestock usage of the building if it is within 400m of a "protected building", which includes dwellings un-connected with farming, except in the circumstances set out at paragraph D.1(3). This provides for livestock usage in the case of animals normally kept out of doors but which need temporarily to be accommodated because they are sick or giving birth or newly born or to provide shelter against extreme weather conditions – and there is no other available building at or beyond 400m. The livestock needs at this farm are considered to fit well with this arrangement.

It is noted that there is already a livestock building and a manure store at the site. The nearest houses are 200m to the north.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

In terms of siting, design and appearance this proposal has been considered especially sensitive and problematic due to its high prominent position overlooking the Churnet Valley and the large scale of the building – certainly as first submitted.

A significant stretch of the valley with its tourist railway, canal and canal-side path would have views up towards this site. There would also be strong views of the building from sections of the public footpath which passes alongside the farm yard both close up and in approaches from both south and north. Policies SS6c, SS7, DC1, DC3 and R1 all support a careful weighing of the impacts and any adverse effects alongside the intended economic or other benefits of the proposal.

It is only as a result of reducing the building to a size and form which can clearly be justified in terms of agricultural business need that a fair and proper balance of need – with reduced harm to landscape and public amenity – is arrived at. The reduced and altered building as proposed in revised drawing 2016-2202-03 D received 2nd February 2018 can be justified in terms of agricultural need. The modifications to overall scale and to visual appearance of the front elevation are considered to result in a building acceptable in terms of siting, design and appearance.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : **Prior approval required and granted**

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank

Recommendation Date: 1st February 2018

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council