DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2018/0031 **Valid 07/09/2018**	**LITTLE LYMFORD FARM** **TUNSTALL ROAD** **BOSLEY**	**PROPOSED EXTENSION OF EXISTING FARM BUILDING TO PROVIDE STRAW, FEED AND MACHINERY STORAGE.** **(AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY DETERMINATION)**

MAIN ISSUES

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

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is a field location and relatively remote, close to the north westerly corner of the District and in the northerly lee of The Cloud (343m AOD) which is National Trust land. The building to be extended is large at 30m x 30m and 5.5m to the eaves and 8m to the ridge. It is however set back some 270m from the public road. The intervening field rises slightly then dips to a level at the location of the building so that it is somewhat concealed. To the immediate west of the proposed building is a wooded stream clough and the land drops sharply away. The stream course is the District boundary.

There is little scope to view the site from the immediate south nor from the more distant slopes and summit of The Cloud because the wooded stream clough to the west wraps around to enclose the site on the south. There are more open distant views northwards to locations from which the building is likely to be seen at distance.

There is a community group private club house c.120m to the north at a lower level and the nearest residential neighbours are at Lymford Farm 270m to the ENE and at Five Oaks Cottage 250m to the SE.

PROPOSAL

As described, an extension of the existing farm building to provide straw, feed and machinery storage. The resulting extended building would overall be 54m x 30m and the extension would continue the same height profiles as the existing building. Submitted with the application is a location plan of the holding showing land of c.7.2ha within the applicant's ownership.

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 Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
R1 Rural Diversification
NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

Local Plan Submission Version (February 2018)
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
E1 Rural Diversification
NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework July 2018
Paragraph(s) 1 – 14;
Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 12 – Achieving well designed places; 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land; 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2005/0588 – agricultural building – approved
SMD/2001/0267 – agricultural stock building – refused
SMD/2008/0537 – cover to existing yard and cattle feed area – approved
SMD/2016/0227 – Provision of new field access and hard track – approved

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity
Site Notice expiry date: 4th October 2018
Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments
None

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.

Class A of Schedule 2 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 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.

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.

The location is in the open rural countryside of the North Staffordshire Green Belt in the Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands 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 145). The implications for the Green Belt are therefore not considered further here. It is relevant and necessary nonetheless to consider impacts on landscape and any other issues of its siting.

In accordance with policies SS1 and SS1a, the Council expects the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands.

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. This means that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Core Strategy shall be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether: (a) any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or (b) specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Policy SS6c for the rural areas supports only development which meets an essential local need and supports rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas (or supports sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside).

As an extension to a building for agriculture there is however no express or specific policy provision either in the current Core Strategy or the Local Plan (submission version) to support the proposal outright. The proposal therefore falls to be determined on its merits based on benefits versus harm. More specifically Policy R1 expects a balanced consideration of the extent to which a proposal protects and benefits rural qualities and supports rural economic and community needs stating that "appropriate development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area".

The purpose of this building is understood to be in support of the functional operation of an established (or establishing) farm enterprise. To this extent the development may be assumed likely to bring local economic benefits to the rural economy.

Potential adverse impacts of the proposal are its scale and potential visual prominence in a sparsely developed rural area. Policy SS6c(3) is to "enhance and conserve the quality of the countryside by: (inter alia) giving priority to the need to protect the quality and character of the area and requiring all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape. NPPF paragraph 170 is that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (inter alia) (b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Design and Siting
This is a sizeable building which would be problematic in many locations and it might be preferable to break up the mass. Unusually this is however both an expansive and to some extent a concealed location. The main risk of additional and potentially harmful landscape impact would be in views from the north. From the east and south the proposal would be largely screened by the existing building frame and/or by the wrapping woodland as described above under site location. It is considered that in this case there is little or nothing to be gained from detaching the proposed additional building. Any visual impacts for views from the north would be at such distance as to not be overly harmful.

External Appearance
Lower walls to be concrete panels to 2m high with steel box profile cladding to the eaves. Upper walls: dark green to match existing building. Roof materials: corrugated fibre cement sheets – grey.

It is often considered desirable to use darker and therefore more recessive colour finishes. However as this is an extension to an existing building it may be considered on balance acceptable to adopt a matching colour scheme – especially given the 'out-of-the-way' location.

Siting – amenity impacts
Due to the separation distances to neighbours no adverse neighbour impacts are identified. As the building is not proposed for use with livestock the 400m limit under Part 6 for separation from unrelated non agricultural residences does not apply. There is no reason to suggest or anticipate that the extension would lead to any new adverse impacts for the community club house and grounds 100m to the north; nor

similarly for the nearest residential neighbour – Lymford Farm (possibly no longer associated with farming) 300m ENE nor for Five Oaks Cottage 300m ESE.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

It is appropriate to support farm business expansion on grounds of benefit to the rural economy. In this location, despite the large size of building which will be created, the tucked away position is found to make its impacts tolerable. No adverse impacts for neighbours are identified. Although this proposal will result in a large building for a small land holding in the applicant's ownership it is understood that the applicant has options to rent nearby ground. From previous contacts with this applicant for the earlier track application and in response to PAD/2016/0027 an ambitious farming plan appears to be in development.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : approve

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank

Recommendation Date: 3rd October 2018 revised 1st November 2018

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council