DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2018/0382 **Valid 12/06/2018**	**ALDERLEE FARM** **GUN HILL ROAD** **MEERBROOK**	**PROPOSED ERECTION OF DETACHED AGRICULTURAL STORAGE BUILDING.** **(FULL - MINOR)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Design / Landscape
- Neighbour / Public Amenity
- Highway Safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site relates to a farmhouse and farm land together with 3 holiday cottages contained within converted barns located to the south of Gun Hill Road, Meerbrook. The site falls within the Open Countryside.

PROPOSAL

This application seeks full planning permission for a new agricultural storage building which would be located adjacent to an existing farm track to the north west of the existing farmhouse. The building would have a footprint of 13.8m by 6.5m, an eaves height of 3.3m and a ridge height of 5.8m. The applicant states that the building is needed to house equipment relative to the care of the land and the upkeep of their holiday cottage business.

The amended plans received during the course of the application detail a variation to the materials of the proposed building. These would be concrete blocks to the lower walls, vertical timber boarding above, roller shutter doors and a dark green corrugated sheet roof.

In addition the applicants have entered into a Unilateral Undertaking in which they undertake not to construct the general purpose agricultural building for which there is an extant consent, ref. 07/00267/FUL.

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

SS6 Rural Areas
SS6c Other Rural Areas
R1 Rural Diversification
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

Emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

Emerging Policies

The following policies are considered to be relevant to this application:

SS1 - Development Principles
SS1a - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
SS2 - Settlement Hierarchy
SS10 - Other Rural Areas Strategy
DC1 - Design Considerations
DC3 - Landscape and Settlement Setting
SD1 – Sustainable Use of Resources
SD3 – Sustainability measures in development
NE1 - Biodiversity and Geological Resources
T1 - Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 11 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
Section 4 – Decision making
Section 6 – Building a Strong Competitive Economy
Section 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
Section 12 – Achieving well designed places
Section 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change
Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2006/1214 – Conversion of agricultural building into three short stay holiday dwellings – Approved 20/11/2006.

SMD/2007/0612 (old ref. 07/00267/FUL) – Formation of farm access track and erection of general purpose agricultural building – Approved 22/06/2007.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 12/07/2018

Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None received.

Leek Frith Parish Council Comments

None received.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of the development

The site is an area of agricultural land outside of the development boundary and is therefore subject to policies SS6 and SS6c of the adopted core strategy.

Policy SS6c of the core strategy supports development in the countryside which meets an essential local need and supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural area. The policy aims to sustain the rural economy by supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprises in accordance with policy R1.

The erection of buildings for agricultural or equestrian purposes in the countryside is not unacceptable in principle providing the development does not harm the visual amenities of the area or the environment in general and complies with all other policies in the Core Strategy and NPPF.

The principle of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable, subject to there being an essential need for this type of agricultural building in this location, and that the proposal constitute will not result in adverse harm to landscape character; residential amenity; and highway safety.

Agricultural Need

Policy SS6a of the core strategy supports development in the countryside which meets an essential local need and supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural area. The policy aims to sustain the rural economy by supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprises in accordance with policy R1.

Policy R1 of the core strategy states that all development in the rural areas outside of the development boundaries of the towns and villages will be assessed according to the extent to which it enhances the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside, promotes the sustainable diversification of the rural economy, facilities economic activity, meets the rural community need and sustains the historic environment.

The land holding attached to the farm is small in agricultural terms but the applicant has sheep grazing on the land and the holding is considered large enough to require management and maintenance. The applicant desires a building to provide storage

for a number of machines used to manage the land and other items associated with the holiday let business. The proposal would therefore serve a dual function in providing storage for equipment used in the upkeep of the land and for use in the holiday cottage business.

It is noted that planning permission was granted in 2007 for a general purpose agricultural building on a different part of the site together with a new farm track. The track was completed by the previous owner, but the applicant does not wish to locate the barn where it was previously approved. Therefore the principle of such a building has been accepted previously. As part of the recently completed Unilateral Undertaking the applicant covenants not to construct the previously approved barn in its original position in the event that permission is granted for the current proposal. This will minimise the impact on the character and appearance of the landscape.

Overall it is considered that there is a reasonable agricultural need for this type of development on this site and therefore the application accords with policy SS6a and policy R1 of the adopted core strategy.

Design / Landscape

Policy DC3 of the adopted core strategy states that the Council will protect, and where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in Staffordshire Moorlands by supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement.

The site is within the Open Countryside and consideration should be given to the impact on the landscape. It is noted that planning permission was granted in 2007 for a general purpose agricultural barn and farm access track. The barn previously permitted but not constructed was of slightly larger dimensions than the current proposal. It was to be sited in the eastern part of the site.

The current proposal would be sited on an area of hardstanding adjacent to a farm track to the west of the farm house. The building would within relative close proximity of the existing farm house and holiday cottages. In views from Gun Hill Road the building would be seen largely against the backcloth of existing mature trees with the farm house and cottages beyond. Thus the proposal will not appear overly prominent or isolated in the landscape and therefore not unduly harmful to the rural landscape.

As originally submitted, the building was proposed to be constructed with a natural stone plinth with dark stained horizontal boarding above and plain tile roof. These were considered inappropriate given the intended use of the building as a storage barn and the amended plans detail a variation in the materials to concrete blocks with vertical timber boarding above and dark green corrugated sheeting to the roof. The revised palette of materials is considered acceptable.

The nearby mature trees should not be affected as there is sufficient clearance from the proposed building which would be sited on an existing hardstanding.

Subject to the unilateral undertaking, it is considered that the proposal accords with Policy DC3 of the Core Strategy.

Neighbour / Public Amenity

Policy DC1 of the adopted core strategy requires all development to protect various aspects of residential amenity which includes satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook and privacy.

The proposed development is located approx. 50 metres to the west / north-west of the existing farmhouse and the nearest holiday cottage on the site. The nearest residential property outside the site itself is at Broad Lea Farm which is located on the other side of Gun Hill Road to the north and approx. 120 metres distant. Given the existing agricultural activities on the site and the distance away from the residential properties, it is considered that there would be no significant impact on the neighbouring amenity. The building would be used for storage and not livestock and it should not therefore give rise to any significant odour nuisance. It is concluded that the impact on amenity would be acceptable.

Highway Safety

Policy T1 of the adopted core strategy aims to encourage sustainable modes of transport and ensure that all new development is located where the highway network can be satisfactorily accommodated in the existing highway network.

The site is accessed via an existing access track from Gun Hill Road. Given the extent of the existing farming operations on the site, it is considered that the proposal would not affect access or parking at the site and the overall impact on highway safety is considered acceptable.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The application seeks permission for a proposed agricultural building to serve the existing agricultural holding at Alderlee Farm. The site is within the countryside and therefore subject to policies SS6 and SS6a of the core strategy. The presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in policy SS1a of the core strategy and Section 2 of the NPPF is engaged.

The applicant's Unilateral Undertaking would ensure that the original building granted consent is not constructed thereby reducing the impact on the character of the landscape.

It is considered that the proposed agricultural building is appropriately located and there is sufficient agricultural need for the proposal without having a detrimental impact to the immediate and wider landscape character; residential amenity; or highway safety.

In conclusion, the application is considered to accord with all relevant local development plan policies and other material considerations including the NPPF. There are no adverse impacts which will significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits to this proposal, and therefore within the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within Section 2 of the NPPF, it is

recommended that this application be approved.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Mark Ollerenshaw
Recommendation Date: 30/04/2019

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council