DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2019/0678 **Valid 08/11/2019**	**OLDFIELD FARM BASFORD GREEN ROAD BASFORD LEEK**	**PROPOSED REPLACING OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDING GENERALLY WITH A LIKE FOR LIKE STRUCTURE** **(FULL - MINOR)**

MAIN ISSUES
Impact on the rural character and appearance of the area.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE
Oldfield Farm dates from before the mid 19th Century. It consists of a traditional farmstead arrangement of farm house and farm buildings that surround a central yard area. The farmstead is in an isolated countryside location surrounded by rolling farmland landscape. The 'Staffordshire Moorlands Landscape Character Assessment' identifies the landscape character type as 'Ancient slope and valley farmland'. Key Characteristics of this landscape type can be identified as forming part of the landscape local to the site, there are strongly undulating or sloping landscape cut by small scale steep sided stream valleys; Small scale mainly ancient irregular fields bounded by trees and hedgerows; Intimate wooded valleys; Stone buildings and drystone walls towards uplands; Isolated properties; and narrow winding lanes.

The northern edge of the farmstead is bounded and contained by an original farm building the rear elevation has one small window in an otherwise blank elevation. Traditionally this elevation would have flanked and immediately faced onto the grazing land beyond. However, in the latter part of the 20th Century a 'pole barn' type timber frame structure with profile sheet cladding has been built onto and is part supported by the rear of the building. The pole barn has a very shallow mono pitch roof arrangement, a blank sheet clad rear elevation that faces to the grazing paddock and is accessible at each end via existing yard area. One end has a personnel door access while the other has a wider 2.5m open access. It appeared to have a stone and dirt internal floor.

At the time of the visit the pole barn was being used to store a sports car, a lawn mower and a garden trailer.

PROPOSAL
To take down the pole barn that stands along the rear elevation of the original farm outbuilding and then build in its place a new portal frame mono pitch shed with three roller shutter garage/shed doors in a row along its rear elevation. These new roller shutter doors effectively orientate the building so that it principal and functioning elevation presents north to the open grazing land and this is confirmed with the proposal to provide a new roadway and hardstanding to provide access, parking and turning in this area.

The new shed would have a very similar footprint and height to that of the pole barn however, it would be self supported and free standing with a narrow 1.2metre gap between the two.

The application statement says that the new building is to be used in an "identical" way to that of the existing structure, "to store farm machinery and tools".

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 Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape Character
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

Emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan
National Policy Guidance
Paragraph 48 of the newly adopted NPPF states that:
"decision-takers may also give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:
- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced the preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).
Local Plan process

The Council agreed to publish the Local Plan Submission Version for representations in February 2018. At this point, the Council agreed that the Local Plan was "sound". Formal representations were then invited from residents, businesses and other stakeholders to provide them with the opportunity to support or challenge the soundness or legal compliance of the Local Plan. This stage in the process followed three previous public consultations since 2015 which had informed the preparation of the Local Plan alongside a comprehensive evidence base.
In June 2018, the Council subsequently agreed to submit the Local Plan Submission Version to the Secretary of State for examination. An examination in public is ongoing in order to determine whether the Local Plan is sound and legally compliant. Hearing sessions were conducted in October 2018 and the Inspector issued his initial post-hearing advice in January 2019 which set out some actions for the Council and a range of modifications that would be necessary to make the plan sound. The full schedule of modifications was the subject of public consultation between 18th September 2019 and 31st October 2019. The schedule consisted of modifications that the Inspector has so far deemed necessary to make the Local Plan sound. Following the consultation, the Inspector is expected to consider the responses before issuing his final report. Depending on the recommendations in the

report, the Council may then be in a position to adopt the Local Plan.
In this context, the Council's position on the weight to be given to the policies contained in the Local Plan Submission Version in terms of the three criteria set out in Paragraph 48 of the NPPF is as follows:
- The stage of preparation – the Local Plan is now at an advanced stage of preparation as the Council has submitted it to the SoS for examination
- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies – this varies depending on the policy in question. The Officer Comments section of this report identifies the level of outstanding objections to each policy and recommends the amount of weight to be given to them at this stage in the process

- The degree of consistency of policies with the NPPF – given that the Council has submitted a Local Plan that it considers to be sound, all policies are deemed to be consistent with the NPPF.
Emerging Policies
The following policies are considered to be relevant to this application:
SS1 Development Principles (Moderate)
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development (Significant)
SD1 Sustainable Use of Resources (Limited)
SS6c Other Rural Area Strategy (Limited)
DC1 Design Considerations (Moderate)
DC3 Landscape Character (Moderate)

National Planning Policy Framework
Section(s) 2 Achieving Sustainable Dev; 4 Decision Making; 12 Achieving Well Designed Places; 15 Protecting the natural environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS
None

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 3rd January 2020
Neighbour consultation period ends: 29th Nov 2019
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments
None

Town / Parish Comments
Cheddleton Parish Council: No Objection

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development
The site is in the countryside, beyond the settlements of Leek and Cheddleton, where policy SS6c applies. The strategy here is to provide only for development

which meets an essential local need, supports rural diversification or enhances the countryside. This can include the provision of a building to support farm enterprise provided it is not disproportionately harm the character and appearance of the rural area. There is no provision for a new building when the need is less than essential or it does not support rural diversification. The determination essentially arrives at a balancing exercise between the need or benefit to rural economy and the developments impact on the character and appearance of the area. The emerging policy in the submission version of the Local Plan does not introduce any fundamental or material change to that approach.

The application states that the use of the new building would be "identical to the use of the existing structure, to store farm machinery and tools". It is not obvious that this relates to any kind of agricultural enterprise, the holding is quite small and it is not obviously farmed. The existing structure appears to be doing an ample job of providing storage for the small collection of garden equipment.

On site the applicant said that the new building would provide more meaningful space for garaging.

As a large additional garage building for the owner of an already large dwelling house, the need for such a building appears less than 'essential' and there is no evidence or claim that the building is to support a business, tourism or diversification project that might contribute to rural economy. As such, there is no strategy provision for the building in this countryside location, and in respect of a strategy that 'only' provides for development that has these benefits, the development would be at odds with the strategy, and the needs of the applicant and economic benefit are not factors that would clearly weigh in favour of the development.

Impact on Character and Appearance
Weighing significantly against the development, the new building would introduce a considerably greater adverse impact on the character and appearance of the rural area. The development would change the whole orientation of the structure so that rather than forming a containing edge to the countryside beyond, it would open up to it with engineering works and vehicle parking uses that would encroach into the countryside having the effect of extending the farmstead beyond its confines and traditional arrangement. Within the grassed paddock to the north, the levels changes (cut and fill to level the driveway) the hardstanding itself, and the vehicles that park and use it would all be exposed and prominent, having an urbanising impact, when viewed from the nearby public footpath Cheddleton 29 that passes to the west.

Amenity
No issues raised, there are no neighbours in close proximity to the site which would be unduly harmed.

Highway Safety
No issues raised. The proposal does not include any alterations to the existing access arrangements. Therefore it is considered that highway safety would not be compromised.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The development would be at odds with the strategy for other rural areas in the development plan - the strategy makes no provision for this type of development. The development would cause encroachment with engineering works and new uses that would have a significantly detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the rural area.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst
Recommendation Date: 03/01/2020

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council