DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2020/0008 **Valid 24/02/2020**	**BIRCH TREES FARM** **BIDDULPH ROAD** **HORTON**	**PROPOSED NEW BUILDING FOR STORAGE/MACHINERY/GENERAL PURPOSE** **(AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY DETERMINATION)**

MAIN ISSUES
Is prior approval required for the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed building?

DESCRIPTION OF SITE
Birch Trees is recorded as a C19th historic farmstead. It is isolated in open Green Belt and countryside landscape, accessed via a 1km long farm track. The edge of the Rudyard Lake Conservaiton Area is to the north east. There are landscape features within the vicinity that appear on County historic record – Rudyard Lake golf course and medieval ridge and furrow. The siting block plan provided with the app appears to place a corner of the building on top of Public right of way Horton 26(b).

PROPOSAL
The application seeks a determination as to whether the prior approval of the siting, design and external appearance of a proposed new building, will be required.

The proposed building is described as a new general purpose shed (for machinery and general storage) with a footprint of 622 sq metres and a height of 7metres. Application only includes a rudimentary not to scale block plan (appears to be some kind of screen shot) and the form.

Concrete panel and dark greenbox profile sheets
Grey concrete dark green box profile sheet
Fibre cement roof sheets

The form states that the farm business has grown and needs more indoor storage space.

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS
03/01117/NOT_AG Agricultural building. Prior Approval Required.
04/00221/FUL Agricultural building (livestock and general purpose). Approved.
08/00857/NOT_AG Agricultural building. Prior Approval Not Required.
11/00329/FUL Agricultural Livestock Building. Approved.

OFFICER COMMENTS
An application for prior approval would provide opportunity to consider how the building would appear within the landscape and impact on quality and sensitive natural environments. Particular attention should be given to the appearance of elevations relative to land levels and middle and long distant views. In respect of the building's siting, full analysis would allow us to establish how the building would impact on the public right of way and whether there are better alternative locations available in terms of exposure, prominence and impacts on landscape.

Moreover, whilst it is not a matter for determination under the context of this application, it is perhaps prudent to question whether the proposed track is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the unit. If the development does not objectively pass that test it is not permitted at all. This is raised as a concern particularly because the nature of the existing farm business has not been described and so it is not clear how this relates to a building of this size for the purposes of storing machinery and other general purposes, and there do appear to be other sizeable sheds already on the site. It is also apparent that the applicant does not live at the property and therefore there is some question around the extent of his ownership or other interest in the land. A review of aerial photographs appears to reveal that surrounding land is used to store numerous vehicles that are not obviously agricultural in purpose. More explanation and clarification around the nature of the existing business; the extent of ownership and interest in the land; and the size, type, and purpose of the machinery might assist in these regards.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE
Provision of the building could involve development that has considerable impact and appear prominent and harmful within a sensitive landscape where the Rudyard Conservation Area and features of historic record are nearby. The development could be very exposed to or potentially obstruct a public right of way.

The prior approval of the siting, design and external appearance of the building is required.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : PNREQ

Case Officer: Ben Hurst
Recommendation Date: 20/03/2020

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council