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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed agricultural building at

Little Blackwood House, Little Blackwood House Lane,

Horton. Staffordshire, ST13 8QA

Site Location and Setting

Little Blackwood House Cottage is situated in a rural area called Horton, which is in close proximity to Biddulph Moor and Biddulph Park. There are few nearby dwellings.

The applicant at the site in a renovated dwelling and owns the adjacent land, He also has other parcels of land all within the surrounding area. In total his land holding extends to 7.52 hectares, with the majority being grassland. This is a registered Farm Holding and receives a Single Farm Payment.

The application proposes a modern farm building which would be installed in a corner of a field approximately 35m from the dwelling. It would lie close to the highway but screened from it by a substantial hedge.

The site does not contain protected trees and does not lie within a Conservation Area. There are no biodiversity assets on the site.

The site lies within the Green Belt.

Proposed Development

The plans propose a modern farm building essential for agricultural practices on the site and the other nearby land parcels. There are no other substantial or secure farm buildings on the site or the other parcels of land. This has restricted the agricultural potential of the site as a whole.

The building would have dimensions 24.4m x 10.7m and be used for machinery and vehicles, lambing and fodder storage. The applicant wishes to establish a flock of sheep and lambs which is not possible at present as there is no suitable building on the site for overwintering and lambing. The application would provide such a facility, and therefore improve animal husbandry. It would also be used to store and maintain farm vehicles and machinery which presently have to be stored in the open which is not satisfactory in terms of their security or longevity. Neither is there storage for any crops or fodder.

The submitted plans show the different seasonal usage of the proposed building, including lambing pens and agricultural storage varying with the farming calendar.

Siting

The client has carried out an assessment of the farmstead and has concluded that the proposed site is the most suitable for the new development without causing significant damage and disturbance to the surrounding environment and landscape.
The location of the proposed building has been carefully sited adjacent to the existing roadside boundary hedge which will provide visual screening from the public highway and mitigate against the bulk of the building. This hedge-side siting also means that the client wishes the clad the building in a dark colour. The use of a paler colour would be more visually intrusive against the landscaped backdrop.

The farm building would also lie within sight and sound of the applicant's house providing security and supervision.

Agricultural Requirement

The applicant owns or has control of 7.52 hectares of agricultural land clustered on a variety of land parcels around the site. The largest piece of land surrounds the house and on which this building is planned. The farm holding number is 11875962 and the DEFRA number is 2000444077.

The previous attempts to establish a permanent sheep enterprise have failed because of the lack of winter shelter. In addition the building would accommodate the following vehicles and implements which are already owned by the applicant and presently have to be stored in the open or away from the site.

- Case International B414Tractor
- Kramer Loader
- International 454
- Class Hay Bailer
- Hay Trailer
- Teddering Machine
- Grass Mower
- Grass Topper
- Ivor Williams Trailer
- Farm Quad
- 2 ton Mini Digger

Livestock will consist of lambing Ewes and the building would have shown the holding pens measuring 7.5 x 5m which will remain permanent, plus lambing pens constructed from standard 8ft x 5ft sheep hurdles to be erected during the lambing season. Lowland ewes require 1.2 - 1.4 square metres of floor space each during pregnancy and 2 - 2.2 sq. m of floor space per ewe after lambing

When the space is not in use it will be used to accommodate haymaking implements.

During severe winter weather, winter housing can be provided by extending the holding pen using the sheep hurdles.

The land holding extends to 7.52 hectares. Nationally quoted stocking levels for sheep are 6 to 10 per acre, so e even at the lower density, upwards of c.40 breeding ewes are feasible.

Planning history

A planning application to replace the existing dwelling on the site was withdrawn prior to decision under 2011/0710.

Planning permission was granted under 2012/0180 to alter and extend the existing dwelling. This has been implemented and is the applicant's home.

Planning Policy Appraisal

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraph 111 addresses use of agricultural land;

"Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality."

The relevant Green Belt references of the NPPF are as follows:

"Green Belt serves five
purposes:
● to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
● to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
● to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
● to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
● to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and
other urban land."

The NPPF goes on to state that

"A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:
● buildings for agriculture and forestry..."

The proposed building meets those criteria as it will provide for the needs of agriculture/land maintenance of the site on which it stands.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

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
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

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.

Policy R1 of the Core Strategy adds that 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.

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 New Employment Development
NE Biodiversity and Geological Resources
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

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". 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 considered below:

• The stage of preparation – the Local Plan is now at an advanced stage of preparation as the main modifications have been subject to consultation
• The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies this varies depending on the policy in question – the Inspector wishes to explore outstanding objections on a limited number of issues at the February hearing sessions further before drawing conclusions.
• The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework – policies have been modified to address soundness issues identified by the Inspector to date. It is the Council's view that the policies (as modified) are consistent with national policy. The Inspector has yet to draw final conclusions, particularly on the matters subject to further hearing sessions.
Given the above, the majority of policies (as modified) can be given substantial weight.

Other Material Documents:
SPG – Design principles for development– agricultural buildings

<u>Biodiversity</u>

The site does not contain ponds or any badger setts with the result that no significant harm to protected species is likely to occur, including Great Crested Newts. The application site comprises a field with isolated trees and self set vegetation. It is not considered to be of any significant ecological value and therefore no ecological study has been undertaken.

Appropriate timing and methods of site clearance and construction site management and appropriate lighting will prevent adverse impacts on the site's potentially limited fauna.

There should be no adverse impacts on potential Wildlife Sites in the wider area. Similar protection measures will be utilised to protect the trees on the site likely to be affected during construction.

Heritage Assets

The site does not lie within or near to a Conservation Area or Listed Building. No heritage issues are relevant.

Access Proposals

The site has an existing access which is an agricultural access also serving the applicant's house. This is to be used to access the new building

The existing access has adequate forward visibility for the traffic associated with the development. There will be space provided within the site to turn a vehicle so vehicles can enter and leave the site on a forward direction.

Landscaping

The development will not entail the removal of important or prominent trees or hedges.

Water, Drainage and Hydrology

The new building will not require foul sewage disposal. Storm water will be accommodated within the site, via soakaway(s). Electric lighting will be provided by an additional installation from the house

Planning justification

With regard to the principle of development, agricultural buildings are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt, under paras 144 and 145 of the NPPF

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 a new building for agriculture there is 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”.

Notably also however, Core Strategy Policy SS6c (3) is to “Enhance and conserve the quality of the countryside by: 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.

Potential adverse impacts in this case may stem from the physical built presence in the landscape noting the network of public footpaths passing close by; also, any possible impacts of traffic, odour or noise on the amenities of neighbours.

Design
In design the proposal is typical of its type commonly found appropriate as modern farm development

The colour finish of the building would be dark and therefore recessive in the wider landscape.

Amenity
This would not be an intensive or large animal facility and would not be likely to result in any disturbance to residential neighbours in the village in terms either of odours or noise.

The development will be noticeable to users of the public highway passing near alongside. A working farm is however an expected element of the rural countryside and the building proposed along with the overall development should not seem exceptional.

There is justification for the development in that the land owner / applicant is establishing a farm business and without a farm building this is not possible. The

building would be used for sheep, fodder, hay, equipment, farm vehicles and machinery.

In terms of a public benefit there can reasonably be judged an economic contribution and for this there is policy support at SS6c to sustain the rural economy by supporting the expansion of existing farm businesses in accordance with R1.

The building does proposed is not untypical of a farm storage building on farms of this size, including those which can be erected under permitted development without planning permission on farms of over 5 hectares. There are farm buildings of similar size, height and appearance within the general area.

The significant boundary trees would help to screen the proposed building in views from public space.

The farmhouse lies a short distance away.

Accordingly it is considered that the building has been placed in the most appropriate position within the farm closely related to the house in a discreet and well screened location.

There are no close residential properties so no significant effect on residential amenity is likely to arise.

Conclusion

The proposal is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and there is a demonstrable justification for its need for the agricultural operation of the farm. The building would benefit from a good level of screening and would not harm the visual amenities of the rural area. With the safeguard of conditions, it would also not lead to any other environmental harms including harm to residential amenity. The proposal would therefore comply with the Core Strategy, the forthcoming Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the NPPF.

The proposal would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would not harm the visual or residential amenities of the area. The proposal would therefore comply with the Core Strategy, the forthcoming Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the NPPF.

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Land summary Bob Simcock

This is how the land parcels for this business are distributed. Click on the Parcel ID to view it or tell us about any changes.

Choose a date you want to see the information and map for:

Date: 29/06/2020

Search

Summary	
Number of parcels	10
Total area (ha)	7.52
Permanent Grassland (ha)	7.49

Land parcels

Parcel ID	Total area (ha)	Eligible covers	BPS eligible area (ha)
SJ9052 7395	0.25	Permanent Grassland	0.25
SJ9156 4685	2.54	Permanent Grassland	2.53
SJ9156 5876	0.21	Permanent Grassland	0.21
SJ9156 6280	0.39	Permanent Grassland	0.39
SJ9156 6389	0.10	Permanent Grassland	0.10
SJ9156 6585	0.17	Permanent Grassland	0.17
SJ9257 2619	0.49	Permanent Grassland	0.49
SJ9257 3719	1.01	Permanent Grassland	1.01
SJ9356 4044	0.14	Permanent Grassland	0.14
SK0056 9428	2.21	Permanent Grassland	2.21