DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2020/0641 **Valid 23/11/2020**	**OLD BRIDGE FARM** **BIDDULPH PARK ROAD** **BIDDULPH**	**AGRICULTURAL STORAGE BUILDING** **(FULL - MINOR)**

MAIN ISSUES
Impact on the Green Belt

DESCRIPTION OF SITE
Old Bridge Farm is a detached dwelling situated in 9.2 acres of land to the north west of Biddulph Park Road. The property is well screened and set back from the public highway. Land levels fall away from Biddulph Park Road and the site is accessed by a long narrow driveway. The site is within the Green Belt and the Applicants landholding is shown on the submitted location plan.

PROPOSAL
With the application permission is sought to retain and complete the building for agricultural use.

The building is reaching a final stage of completion. It is a concrete block built structure on an L shaped footprint and is essentially single storey building with a low internal ceiling height, but it has a 5.3m ridge height that makes for a large insulated loft space.

It has insulated cavity walls, insulated roof space, and electrical points throughout.



On the date of the application the building was partially complete – the proposal is to finish the roof with slates, clad the external concrete block wall with vertical timber boards, and to install roof lights and timber board garage doors.

The applicant says that he has 30 sheep and wants to increase the herd to 50+, he says the building would be used to store equipment and machinery.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS10 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Character of the Landscape

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS
None

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 17th December 2020
Neighbour consultation period ends: 17th December 2020
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments
None

Town / Parish Comments
No Objection.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Impact on the Green Belt
The site is in the Green Belt where development is inappropriate and, by definition, harmful unless it is provided for by one of the exceptions that appear on the closed lists of exceptions at paragraphs 145 or 146 of the NPPF.

One of those exceptions includes the provision of a building for agriculture. It is now said with this application, which follows some notable pre application exchanges, that the partially completed building is for agriculture to provide a safe and secure environment for the storage of essential agricultural equipment and machinery with the intention of increasing the sheep flock from 30 to 50+ over the next few months.

However, while the applicant expresses an intent or ability to now complete the building and use the building for storage that could support agriculture, there is evidence here to suggest that the building, which nears a stage of completion, was not

under original intentions, provided for agriculture; is, in its partially completed condition, used for purposes other than agriculture; has been so far constructed, and would be completed, with the design, physical features and function that are not, or more than, what is required, for agriculture; and ultimately, there is a strong likelihood that the building would be used for purposes other than agriculture when it is complete.

On the date of the site visit just three days after the date of the application the building was being used to store push bikes, garden equipment, what appeared to be children's quad bikes, and loft insulation from the building works.




The building has insulated cavity wall, a low ceiling height akin to habitable space rather than agricultural storage, insulated loft space, velux roof lights, stud work partitioning, and multiple electric points being installed throughout. All of this is indicative of a building that is for purposes other than agriculture.




I am also mindful of the preapplication exchanges that the applicant had with officers, where the purposes and uses of the building were discussed and identified as being for purposes other than agriculture.

Another of the exceptions worth mention, is the replacement of a building providing the new building is not materially larger than the one it replaces. The aerial photographs, taken before work began to build the existing building, appear to show the footprint of a small shed. However, the new building has a considerably and notably larger footprint and, with a ridge height of 5.3m, is quite likely to have greater mass and volume. The new building would not be provided for by this exception.

The building is inappropriate development in the green belt. It is harmful by definition, but also it does not preserve openness, has resulted in countryside encroachment beyond the dwelling's curtilage and adds to the development that appears between defined settlements. There are no considerations that would clearly outweigh that harm.

Impact on Character and appearance
There is no particular concern about how the building would impact on the character and appearance of the area or that of the landscape. It would not be particularly prominent or intrusive in the landscape, would be screened to some degree by existing hedgerow and, although it is outside of its curtilage it would, as a timber clad building, have a reasonable visual association with the existing dwelling.



CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE
Inappropriate and harmful development in the Green Belt. The building has not been provided for those agricultural purposes described in the application.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst
Recommendation Date: 18/01/2021

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council