

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0298
Valid 27/04/2021

FOREST FARM
ASHBOURNE ROAD
CALTON MOOR
ASHBOURNE

ERECTION OF LEAN TOO
AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO
HOUSE LIVESTOCK

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

Impact on the character and appearance of the area and the amenity of neighbours.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Existing established farm surrounded by open undulating farm land with small scale irregular field parcels. The farm grouping consists of a dwelling with a linear run of adjacent sheds. The farm is to the south of Ashbourne Road and a straight 200m access track is at right angles to the road.

The farm occupies a dip or shallow valley in the landscape. The open farmland is broken up by clusters of mature trees and traditional hedgerow boundary.

PROPOSAL

To erect an additional building section, as phase II development, that would ultimately form and appear as a 'lean-to' addition to the side of a larger building that forms the subject of separate planning app SMD/2021/0273 and would be built adjacent on the site of an existing silage clamp. Both buildings would provide animal housing for the large established dairy farm, adjacent to other sheds on site that already provide livestock housing. The land slopes down steadily from north to south, while the plans detail the housing to be built on a flat ground level. It is necessary therefore to excavate and cut a slope into the ground level and a cross section plan details the extent of these alterations and a 'soil disposal statement' details how the excavated material would be spread evenly on adjacent farm land, filling some natural undulation and depression.

The applicant's agent submits the following statement, describing existing enterprise and ability to expand:

Across three holdings, Birchwood Park Farms farmed a total land holding of 675 acres (273.258 hectares) with over 530 head of cattle. The farm partnership has grown over a number of years, initially started in 1991 on a 90 acres dairy farm near Burton on Trent with a herd of approximately 60 cows. In 2000, the family moved to Birchwood Park Farm, allowing the herd size to increase to 140 head. In 2011, the land at Moor Lane, Stockwell Heath was purchased and more recently Forest Farm in 2016. Over this period, the applicants have restructured their business to facilitate growth. By using Moor Lane Farm to house beef and finishing cattle and by housing all dairy youngstock at Forest Farm, this has allowed the dairy herd at Birchwood Park Farm to increase from 140 to 270, almost double the initial herd size. Birchwood Park Farm

can accommodate a dairy herd of 300 and therefore it is their intension to increase to that level over the next 12 months.

Commencing on the 1st June 2019, Birchwood Park Farms has achieved organic status and has been in organic conversion for two years. Milk is sold to ARLA who supply McDonalds restaurants. The organic milk market is more stable than commercial milk prices. Organic dairy farms operate a lower stocking density than conventional units and therefore the applicants have built up a substantial landholding to meet the certification requirements. Furthermore, the environmental objectives achieved with the organic certification complement the applicant's business.

All dairy youngstock are homebred, breeding their own herd replacements. Dairy youngstock and dry cows are kept at Forest Farm at Swinscoe. The applicants have insufficient livestock housing at Forest Farm and intend to erect purpose built livestock housing to increase capacity and allow the existing agricultural buildings to be reconfigured for fodder and straw storage, machinery and younger calves.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS10 Other Rural Area
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape Character
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2021/0311 Proposed Silage Clamp. Pending.
SMD/2021/0273 Proposed livestock housing building. Pending.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 8th June 2021
Neighbour consultation period ends: 8th June 2021
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Blore with Swinscoe Parish Council: No Objection

Severn Trent

No objection. Minimal impact on public sewerage system.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Policy SS10 of the Local Plan confirms that the rural areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. This will be achieved by, amongst other measures, enabling the limited expansion or development of business for employment uses where a rural location can be justified.

In this particular case the applicant has a long established agricultural enterprise, across three sites, with a sizeable land holding and large head of cattle. The proposed building will provide essential animal housing for the 'organic' dairy farm. The proposed building is therefore in accordance with policy SS10 of the Local Plan.

Design and impact on character of the area

The proposed building is to be located within proximity of existing farmyard in the narrow gap between a silage clamp and the field boundary. With a 'lean-to' form and connection to the larger Phase I development, and a context and proximity to the adjacent sheds to the east, the building would have a typical agrarian appearance, common to existing onsite and nearby development. The building would not stand any taller than the existing building to which it would be attached.

In any views from Ashbourne Road to the north, the building would appear as part of a line of low profile farm sheds set down in a natural dip in the landscape and cut below the rising land level, where it would have limited interference with the views of the landscape beyond. From the south there are no roads or footpaths that would provide views of the development from public vantage.



In these regards the local landscape would be protected, and the development would not lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character of the landscape. The proposed development will consequently not derive any conflict with policies DC1 and DC3 of the Local Plan.

Amenity

The introduction or expansion of animal housing could produce noise or odours that affects the amenity of nearby residential neighbours. Local Plan Policies DC1 and SD4, seek to protect amenity from poor design or polluting developments. The development would occur on the site of an existing established dairy farm adjacent to a substantial range of existing sheds that provide animal housing. The additional housing would be provided adjacent to the existing farm, it would be relatively isolated surrounded by open farm land in all directions, on existing farmland, where there are other farms nearby, odour or noise levels should not be raised significantly above existing or background level. There is one dwelling that would be within 400m of the development, it is Calton Moor Farm, 260m to the north west, on the other side of Ashbourne Road. It is far enough away, the other side of the busy main road, not to be affected by the development and in any event has historically operated as a neighbouring farm. The risks and potential for amenity harm or complaint is very low, the development would not conflict with policies DC1 or SD4 in these regards.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Acceptable development to support the diversification and expansion of an existing farm enterprise in the other rural areas. The development would be well designed and located with minimal impact on the character and appearance of the area or the amenity of neighbour's within the vicinity. The development would comply with the Local Plan policies listed above.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 22/06/2021

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council