

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0239
Valid 04/05/2021

LITLEY FARM
NEW HADEN ROAD
CHEADLE

PROPOSED ERECTION OF
GRAIN AND MACHINERY
STORE

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Green Belt
- Design
- Character and appearance

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

There is a large original farm house and a mix of older brick farm buildings and more modern buildings in a court yard arrangement with further newer steel framed buildings adjacent to both the south west and north west.

Access is via a private lane of c.100m curving in from the single track New Haden Road to the north west. A farm worker dwelling approved in 2018 has been built close to where the lane meets with New Haden Road.

A public footpath right of way leaves the public road at the lane entrance and heads north east across a field to the north of the farm. That field is an allocated site (EM1 CH127) in the adopted local plan for employment use.

The site is immediately adjacent an existing newer steel frame and metal sheet clad building on the farm periphery.

PROPOSAL

Steel frame metal sheet clad c.11.5m x 18m building to 6m eaves and 7m ridge height. It would stand alongside an existing building 3.7m to the eaves and 5m to the ridge. The rear (third) bay of the proposal building would connect through with the adjacent building.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting

E1 New Employment Development
H1 New Housing Development
NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
NE2 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework February 2019

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14;

Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 6 – Building a strong and competitive economy; 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities; 11 – Making effective use of land; 12 – Achieving well designed places; 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land; 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/G):

- Space About Dwellings SPG
- Design Principles SPG
- Design Guide SPD adopted 21st February 2018

Local Plan Supporting Evidence Documents:

- Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008)

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

11/00895/PNOT_1 prior approval notice for a livestock building at the farm buildings cluster – allowed – built

11/01092/FUL Erection of agricultural building for the housing of livestock – approved – built

SMD/2018/0129 Proposed agricultural workers dwelling – approved – built

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 25th June 2021

Neighbour consultation period ends: 3rd June 2021

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Cheadle Town Council – No objection

Severn Trent Water

Minimal impact on the public sewer system therefore no objections and no requirement for a drainage condition.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Policy SS10 for the rural areas is that:

These areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside.

This proposal would be supported in principle by SS10 as a building essential in the countryside as it would support a land use dependent upon a countryside location and in turn part and parcel of sustainability of the rural areas. However, it may be noted that the development does not strictly fall in any of the subsections by which the policy says it is to be achieved. The potential relevant section is SS10(2) but this proposal is not an employment use within the meaning of that section nor is it about farm diversification as normally understood by the term although the Local Plan glossary definition of 'Rural Diversification' could be read as giving some wider scope that may cover the proposal if it is regarded as an enterprise extension of existing farm activity. However, from the planning history associated with this site it is clear that the building would relate to an existing agricultural enterprise. In 2018 an application was approved for a new agricultural workers dwelling, with evidence provided on the need for an new dwelling and the size and type of farming present on the land. Accordingly it is considered that the development would can be justified in this countryside location and that it is an essential building.

In the Green Belt policy SS10 (6) is that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government Policy.

Government policy is that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt (NPPF 149). However, NPPF paragraphs 149 and 150 set out specific exceptions by which certain forms of development can be considered as being not inappropriate in the Green Belt. One of these exceptions is at NPPF 149 (a) "buildings for agriculture and forestry".

SS10 (3) is to Enhance and conserve the quality of the countryside by [first point]:

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;

As an agricultural building this proposal is therefore in principle not inappropriate in the Green Belt. The remaining considerations are impact on landscape character and appearance, neighbour amenity and the overall design.

Design

The LPA has discussed the design in some detail in order to understand the reason for the height and the height of the door. This has been explained as necessitated by the tipper height of the farm grain trailer. The farm is a beef rearing enterprise and grows corn – this year it was barley – as a fodder crop which then has to be stored and is milled on the farm as part of the winter feed ration.

Although there could be some reservation about the building design and external appearance it would be seen in the context of a series of working farm buildings. It would have some prominence from the farm entrance and junction with new Haden Lane but would have little wider visibility. There are mature trees to the side and backdrop.

In response to questioning the use of sheet metal to ground level giving a somewhat industrial appearance it is explained that as a grain store it is important to construct the building with as tight a seal as possible to minimise grain loss and potential vermin access.

On balance given the functional requirements explained and given the limited overall prominence in the wider location the design and appearance can be accepted.

Amenity

The building would be visible from some neighbouring dwellings to the west but at distance of over 100m it would not be an overbearing or otherwise unduly intrusive structure.

Highway Safety

Highways not consulted but as a building associated with an existing farm and largely or entirely associated with the internal on-farm activity there be no new or additional highway movement to be anticipated.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

At the site visit the LPA saw this year's grain harvest being held in makeshift temporary storage and on balance of the need and relatively contained design and landscape impacts as discussed in the report the scheme is recommended for approval.

It will be noted that there is some reservation about the building appearance and it will be visible from the nearby public footpath. The recommendation is made on balance with the need. A condition should be attached to require the building to be removed if the agricultural use were to cease as it is only because of the farming need that it is found on balance acceptable and capable of being supported in principle.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : approve

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank

Recommendation Date: 5th August 2021

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council