

**PROPOSED ANIMAL SHELTER
ON LAND NEAR TO 1 RAILWAY COTTAGES
CONSALL FORGE, WETLEY ROCKS, ST9 0AJ**

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

PLANNING APPLICATION BY Ms ANGELA STAPLEHURST

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**Version 001
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H S S A

UNIT 2.19
GRAND UNION STUDIOS
332 LADBROKE GROVE
LONDON W10 5AD
T +44 (0)20 8065 5216
F +44 (0)20 8065 5217
E: rs.hssa@btinternet.com

1. Introduction

This application is for the erection of a bespoke animal shelter on land near to the applicant's house at 1 Railway Cottages, Consall Forge, ST9 0AJ.

The applicant, Ms Angela Staplehurst, keeps two Dexter cattle on her land, which is rough pasture. Dexters are a physically small breed.

Although the animals are allowed to spend much of their time grazing in the open a suitable, adequate shelter is essential both for their welfare and for environmental management.



An existing, old shelter has been maintained by the applicant for the animals. However, being placed topographically low, close to the River Churnet, this has become liable to flooding in recent years. At one stage an emergency 'bivouac' had to be erected as a temporary measure because the existing shelter had become inaccessible and unusable.

The existing shelter's liability to flooding necessitates that winter fodder for the animals be kept at the applicant's house and transported to the land as needed. This is an unsustainable arrangement if more than a temporary

measure.

Furthermore, the necessity to ensure the welfare of the animals, in flood conditions but without adequate facilities, has introduced significant health and safety issues for the applicant and her husband.

Most of the applicant's land has been flooded and this proposal is for a new shelter to be erected on the highest part, which is outside the flood zones and has to date escaped flooding.

2. Explanation

The applicant has provided the following explanation as to why the new shelter is needed:

"The current shed, which is adjacent to the River Churnet, provides an animal shelter, fodder storage and a crush. The building was originally part of the old Dale Sprinks Farm.



History

My land is a natural flood meadow which regulates the rise of the River Churnet and so its health is increasingly important to the area. In January 2000, we experienced the

worst flooding ever in the Consall Forge valley. The valley meadows were inundated and the cowshed was under water. The livestock kept in the field had to be moved to higher ground for safety.

Following this flood, although the River Churnet rose regularly in times of heavy rain or snow melt, flooding was not as bad again until October 2019.

The 2019 flood resulted in the river's highest recorded level and the ingress of water into the animal shelter/cowshed meant we lost all our supply of straw and hay. We did not receive a flood alert from the Environment Agency and our two cattle had to be coaxed to swim out to safety, exposing them and us to considerable risk.



We then experienced further flooding of the cowshed three times in January and February 2021. This is evidence that climate change has rendered a supposed once-in-a-century event as far more frequent, with weather patterns becoming more severe.



Purpose of the proposed shelter

The current cowshed can no longer provide our animals with the safe and dry shelter they need, or provide storage for their fodder.

Flood alerts are now more reliable and we can plan for them, but we do not have a suitable dry shelter to move the cattle to in winter.

The cattle cannot be allowed to graze in winter because they cause severe poaching, which conflicts with expectations on me for the management of this crucial site.

Indeed, we had to construct an ad-hoc bivouac so they could have some shelter from the sustained and severe damp weather in February 2021. The only suitable space for it was on the public footpath through my land, a potentially hazardous compromise. I need a permanent safe solution for the public, cattle and us.

The regular flooding has meant that I have had to use my garage to store the winter feed and straw bedding. We take bales down on a just-in-time basis. This has resulted in a vermin problem in the garage which is adjacent to my home and we have had subsequent incursions of mice into the house as well.

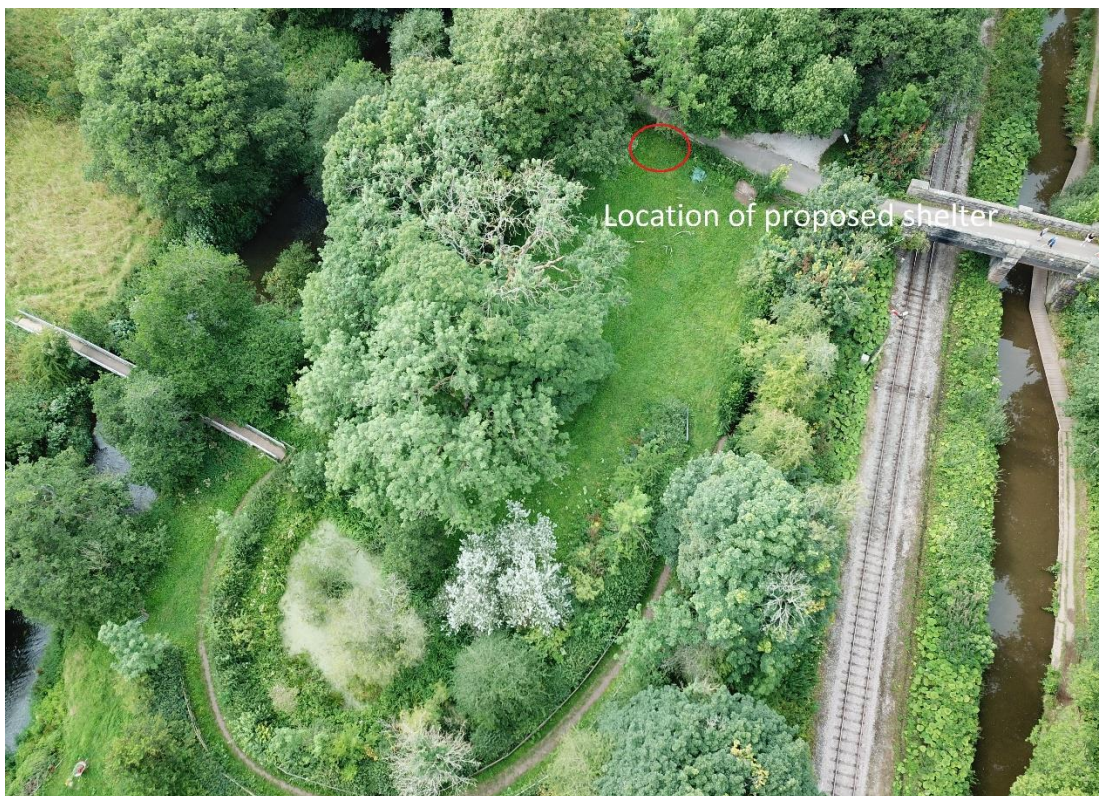


I am a member of the Churnet Valley Farmers' Forum and am managing the six acre (approx. 2.42 Ha) site as part of a programme agreed with Natural England. We are currently in year six of a ten-year plan to improve the flood meadow section which has held its designation as a site of special scientific interest (SSSI) for the past 35 years. My cattle are part of that management plan and are, therefore, integral to the improvements which are being made.

Building a new, dry shelter on higher ground outside the SSSI area, will provide: a reliably dry animal shelter for our cattle away from the public footpath; a storage area for fodder; a small, fixed crush to allow for regular TB testing and including any injections/care needing to be administered safely."

3. Position

It is proposed that the new shelter be placed at the northern edge of the applicant's land, where it is at its highest. The new shelter will be approximately at the level of Podmore Bridge, significantly higher than the existing shelter at river level. It will be near the boundary to the driveway leading to Railway Cottages and Consall Mill, and the few houses proximate to the mill.



This area has not been flooded. The position is outside Flood Zones 2 and 3 (ref: SMDC Interactive Planning Map); in fact only a very small part of the applicant's land is outside the flood plain and this is the only area where the new shelter could be placed

and not be susceptible to potential flooding.

The proposed new shelter will not be in the SSSI, which does include the southern part of the site. It will not be in the Caldon Canal conservation area. There are no protected trees nearby, and areas of ancient woodland and nature conservation sites are well clear. The nearest listed building is a canal mile maker, which is some distance away and cannot be seen from the site. The site is in the green belt.

4. Design and construction

The shelter is planned in two parts – the main part being a shelter for two animals which can, when required, be adapted to provide a ‘crush’, with a second smaller section forming the fodder store. The overall footprint is small: 5500mm x 2850mm.

It is intended that the new shelter be built ‘in situ’ by a local craftsman, using timber from a sustainable source as the main material. Walls will comprise vertical timber slats to the shelter part and horizontal boarding to the fodder part. The doors to the latter will be specially made, ledged and braced timber. All the timber will be treated and stained. The low pitch roof will be in dark green corrugated metal.

There are two galvanised steel ‘field gates’ – a large one for the shelter which will be double-swing so it can be used as an internal side wall for the crush, and a small one to provide an exit from the crush when it is in use.

The building is intended to be ‘agricultural’ in appearance and appropriate for its rural setting.

The structure will be erected at current ground level, with ‘no dig’ required. Only the eight structural timber posts will penetrate the ground. The flooring of the shelter part will be straw onto a thin layer of MOT fill onto the existing ground, and that of the fodder store ‘loose laid’ timber pallets onto the MOT fill. This is to ensure good ventilation of the stored fodder and to avoid its contact with the ground.

Rainwater from the roof will be collected and used as drinking water for the cattle.

The shelter will not be subject to the Building Regulations (ref: Regulation 9, Schedule 2, Class 3).

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