

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0208
Valid 06/04/2021

HILLCREST FOLE LANE
OVERTON
HOLLINGTON

ERECTION OF A MULTI
PURPOSE AGRICULTURAL
BUILDING

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Character and appearance
- Residential amenities of the area

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Hillcrest, Fole Lane is located at a crossroad between the junction of A522 and Fole Lane towards Hollington within the countryside.

The application site is currently pasture land in an area of attractive upland countryside and, apart from a farm on the opposite side of the road, it is well away from any settlement or built form. The site comprises of heavy machinery that have heavily eroded the ground together with two open steel framed structures that are currently used as storage. There is a detached bungalow which sits opposite the site and is owned by the applicant. To the west of the site, there is a large field that is also associated with the small holding of Hillcrest which equates to 2.7 acres.

The property and application site is accessed from Fole Lane, a country lane. The boundary to the road includes high hedges and trees.

To the east, parallel to the site, there is an established agricultural unit.

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for the erection of an agricultural building. The buildings will be located to the north of the domestic curtilage of Hillcrest.

The building will be of a rectangular shape and will incorporate a dual pitched roof, with gable ends. The building will be 9m in width by 13.7m in length with a ridge height of 5.2m and eaves height of 3.5m.

The buildings will incorporate concrete walling panels (at ground level), and will be constructed of Yorkshire boarding to three sides (one will remain open) and grey profile metal sheeting roof.

The building will be used for livestock, to store feed and bedding.

AMENDMENTS

Amended plans were submitted by the Agent, due to the concerns that the scale and bulk of the building in the original proposal was out of proportion with the land it will manage. The original scheme measured 12.2 metres in width, 18 metres in depth, 4.3 metres to the eaves and 6 metres in overall height. The amended scheme has been marginally reduced. The re-amended plan is the final plan which is to be assessed.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

During the case officer's site visit in May 2021, there were no livestock on the land. Whilst it is recognised that the owner has a holding number, the owner has confirmed the site has not been established for agricultural use nor were there sheep prior to the application being submitted. During the planning process, it was understood that the applicant has purchased 6 sheep on site with the intention of starting lambing in February/ March. No written evidence have been provided.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted Sept 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS10 Other Rural Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 6: Building a strong, competitive framework
Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

SITE HISTORY

None

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 27/04/21
Neighbour consultation period ends: 27/05/21
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

One neighbour objection	The site is untidy. Building to be used for fabrication rather than for livestock
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Technical consultees

Town / Parish Comments	None received
Environmental Health	No objection subject to conditions
Staffordshire County Council Highways	No objection on highway grounds
Severn Trent Waters	No objection subject to an informative requesting the applicant

to contact the technical consultee to discuss implications of their assets crossing the application site.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Policy SS2 sets a settlement hierarchy for locations within the Borough and seeks to locate development sustainably within this hierarchy based on a sequential approach. Despite the site being classed in Overton, the site is closer to a small rural area known as Fole. Both areas sit within 'Other Rural Areas,' the last category where development is normally unacceptable unless there is an essential need to be located in the countryside and supports small scale rural enterprises as noted in Policy SS10.

The proposed building will be used for the maintenance and housing of sheep with the intent to start a hobby farm. While the applicant has failed to consider the change of use of what was original for domestic garden space, it is considered that a building of this nature would be suitably located on this site as it relates to the surrounding rural area and land can be used for agricultural purposes without planning permission. It is also recognised by reason of its design and arrangement to be for agricultural purposes and therefore, there are no grounds to consider it would be used for any other purpose.

Policy SS10 states that new development will only be permitted provided that the development is of an appropriate scale and type in order to ensure that the character and role of the countryside is not undermined. The policy aims to sustain the rural economy by (inter alia) supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprises. The policy does not make provision for new farm enterprises or establishment of hobby farming.

The supporting statement states that the use of the building is for recreational use of Hillcrest. The small holding to the west of the application site currently offers 2.7 acres of potential grazing land to undertake the new enterprise for arable farming located to the west of the application site for at least 30 sheep. The building to the immediate west of the greenfield land will comprise bedding for the sheep together with dry storage for animal feeds and other equipment for the upkeep of the farming activities.

Taking the above into account, it is considered that the proposed building of its scale and bulk (13m in length by 9m in width) is not required to support the modest scale holding of 2.7 acres. The operation of this scale is not sustainable to allow a building in the countryside that will clearly be larger than the needs of the holding, stock and storage levels proposed especially when the agricultural operation has not been established. The statement also fails to account for the longevity of the operation following the introduction of ram and lambs that overtime the 2.7 acres will be unable self-sustain.

In term of its intended use of the building, there were concerns about the equipment the owner wants to store. It was considered wholly excessive for the need of 3

trackers and two tipper trailers to support a hobby farm of a land unit of 2.7 acres which emphasises its unnecessary scale of the building.

It is also necessary to have regard to other material considerations including scale and design, impact on residential amenity, environmental issues and highway safety.

Accordingly, there are concerns that it has not been adequately demonstrated that there is an essential need for this development or that it would support an existing farm enterprise and the proposal is found to be contrary to policy SS10 in this regard.

Protecting Amenity and Design and Appearance

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF (2019) requires the design of a development to add to the overall quality of an area, by being sympathetic to local character and by being visually attractive as a result of good architecture.

Policy DC1 refers to design and seeks to secure development of a high quality which is designed to add value to the area and to respect the site and its surroundings. New development should promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

Referring to the design of the building, the building will be finished in a profile metal sheeting and Yorkshire boarding with a pitch height of 5.2m. Despite the building being partially screened by the border hedging, it will be noticeable when travelling north from Fole Lane due to the height of 5.2m. It is recognised that although it is of an agricultural design commonly found in rural areas, its size and scale would appear striking and prominently intrusive as it appears out of proportionate with the owner's dwelling it sits opposite to, the farm on the other side of the road and the land it will serve. For these reasons, the proposal cannot be considered as well-designed and excessive by virtue of its scale in relation to the small holding it will serve. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to SS10, SDC1 and paragraph 83 of the Framework.

Impact to residential amenity

Paragraph 127(f) of the NPPF (2019) and policy DC1 seeks to secure development that protects amenity, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

The main neighbouring property that this proposal would impact upon is the neighbouring property: Folebank, Folecrest and Hillside. These properties do not adjoin the application site however, will border the land that the proposed building will be associated with.

It is considered the harm will be negligible as the proposed building will sit at least 100m from the nearest property i.e. Fole Bank Cottage. Notwithstanding the site siting from the nearby properties, it is considered that the livestock on pasture land is a notable feature within this open landscape.

Taking the above into account, this application is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC1 of the Local plan.

Environmental Health

Environmental Health have been consulted.

It was noted in their response that while the applicant has provided limited information to the queries relating to the operation of the building, hours and specific numbers of sheep it will be for, Environmental Health does not object to the principle or need for the building within this setting. However, they would request that its use is restricted solely to use in connection with the small holding and not for any additional commercial or industrial activity.

Highway Safety

County Council Highways have been consulted and have raised no objection. It is therefore considered that the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on highway safety.

The application is immediately located to the highway. County Highways have noted that while access point to the building is unclear, there is highly unlikely to be any significant increase in regular trip rate which could justify access or visibility improvements.

Proposal could not be considered to have a severe effect on the highway as access is existing and vehicle trips are unlikely to be intensified to the extent where improvements could be justified. As such, the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the adopted highway. This application is therefore considered to be in accordance with Section 9 of the NPPF and Policy T1 of the Local Plan.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. It is considered that the proposed building will be significantly larger than necessary for the holding, stock and storage levels proposed at its current size. While the applicant's legitimate intent is to develop a hobby farm, there were no livestock at the time of visit and insufficient evidence to support this building on this holding of this size. It has not been adequately demonstrated that there is an essential need for this development or that it would support an existing farm enterprise and the proposal is found to be contrary to policy SS10 in this regard. Therefore the agricultural justification does not outweigh the harm identified. The development is not supported by Local Plan, SS10 and SDC1 in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Recommend refusal

Case Officer: Lisa Li

Recommendation Date: 13/10/21

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council