

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2022/0107
Valid 23/02/2022

MEADOW CLOUGH FARM
THORNCLIFFE LANE
THORNCLIFFE
LEEK

ERECTION OF
AGRICULTURAL BUILDING

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Siting
- Need

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is in open countryside 1.6km north east of Leek. The landscape is agricultural with open views and field boundaries of stone and hedgerow. Around 3km to the north west of the site is The Roaches, a prominent landscape feature.

The site itself is located on an area of existing hardstanding immediately to the east of Meadow Clough Farm. The land rises to the north.

The site is accessed from the public highway, Thorncliffe Lane by an access track, the site is 350m along the access track.

There are no public footpaths close to the site.

Meadow Clough Farm was permitted in 2019 under the GPDO provisions for the conversion of agricultural buildings into residential use. The primary holding is at Upper Hulme and the application identifies that there are 68 acres located immediately surrounding Meadow Clough Farm.

PROPOSAL

It is proposed to erect an agricultural building to store machinery and equipment, hay and straw and a stock isolation pen, associated with land management of 68 acres (27.5 ha) within the applicant's control.

The building is proposed to be 13.7m by 9.1m, and 3.2m to the ridge and 2m to the eaves. It is proposed to have double sliding doors in a 3.6m wide opening on the east elevation, sliding doors across the whole width of the west elevation and a separate personnel door of 1.2 on the south elevation.

Vertical fibre cement profile sheets in slate blue is proposed to clad all elevations, with prestressed concrete panels up to a height of 0.5m. The roof is proposed to be

fibre cement profile sheets also in slate blue with 12 roof lights, 6 either side of the dual pitch.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
DC1 Design Considerations
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14; Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 6 – Building a strong and competitive economy; 11 – Making effective use of land; 12 – Achieving well designed places; 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None relevant

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 20 April 2022
Neighbour consultation period ends: 06/04/2022
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Tittesworth Parish Council - No objection

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 its aims are to be achieved. The potentially 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.

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 a new building for agriculture there is no express or specific policy provision in the Local Plan to support the proposal outright. The proposal therefore falls to be determined on its merits based on benefits versus harm.

The purpose of the building is to allow management of the land. The primary farm is in Upper Hulme which is over 2.5km from Meadow Clough Farm. The application states that the holding around Meadow Clough amounts to amounts to 68 acres and includes grazing land and 30 head of youngstock in summer and 70 breeding ewes throughout the year.

On the site it was apparent that farm machinery and equipment are sited on this area of the land. The application says that this is causing problems with maintenance, because of exposure to weather. It was also apparent that a shipping container was stored on the land and this should be removed if the building is approved. This could be secured by condition.

Potential adverse impacts of the proposal could stem from the visual presence of the building in the landscape. NPPF paragraph 174 is that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (inter alia) (b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. This building is a relatively modest farm store set near the farm house and located a location on sloping ground so that it would be reasonably well contained in the landscape.

Design

The building is relatively modest in size and at 3.2m at the ridge, not unduly tall. The scale and design of the building is judged unproblematic for this location. The presence of a modest agricultural building within the landscape will not be incongruous.

Amenity

There is significant separation from neighbours. The closest neighbour is to the south and is 300m from the proposed building, and is geographically separated by a tree belt. It is unlikely that any adverse impacts on neighbours will arise.

Highway Safety

No new highway implications would be anticipated as the building is associated with supporting an existing use and the proposal would not lead to any intensification of that use.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Although the agricultural unit is primarily managed from the main farm in Upper Hulme, there is a land management need arising from the land immediately surrounding the site which is sufficient to justify a building of this scale. The building will not have a significant landscape impact and the land management that it would assist in delivering outweighs the low level of impact and justifies the development of a building in this location.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Approve

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank c/o Jane Newman

Recommendation Date: 22nd April 2022

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council