DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2022/0020 **Valid 06/04/2022**	**SHIRLEY COTTAGE** **SHIRLEY COMMON ROAD** **WHISTON**	**PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL BUILDING FOR THE STORAGE OF HAY AND STRAW** **(AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY DETERMINATION)**

MAIN ISSUES

Whether or not the proposed agricultural building can be built under a Notification of Prior Approval application under Part 6 of the GPDO rather than a full planning application.

If so, whether or not Prior Approval is required for the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed building.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is in the countryside about a mile east of Foxt village and to the north-east of Whiston. It comprises part of a field on a farm on the east side of Shirley Common Road, a narrow country lane, which also provides the access to the farm which has a size of 24 hectares and which has been running for 50 years. About half of the land is owned by the applicant and the other half rented. There are 30 cattle at the farm plus followers. The field where the site is located is immediately to the north of the farm buildings restricted to a small farm dwelling and a modern metal-sheeted farm storage building both of which are close to the lane. Other than the buildings to the south, the site is completely surrounded by open land which slopes downwards towards the north.

PROPOSAL

The application is a “Notification of Prior Approval” application for an agricultural storage building for the purposes of storing hay and straw. It would be a typical modern Juniper Green open-sided (on two sides) metal-sheeted portal frame building with floor dimensions of 18 x 12 metres and a max floor to ridge height of nearly 6.0 metres. It would be placed approx. 10 metres from the existing farm buildings. The application forms state, in order to justify the building, that *“there is currently not enough room in the existing buildings in which to store all the fodder and bedding produced off the land owned. The applicant currently wraps the hay and haylage in plastic wrap and is stored on the fields from which it was produced. It then has to be transported to where it is needed, either the main farm stead or the neighbouring farm to the rented building for the mature livestock. The applicant would like to become a more environmentally friendly holding and by storing the fodder onsite it would reduce the use of plastic wrap and also the carbon foot print of*

the holding as it would significantly reduce the amount of travelling to collect and circulate the fodder." Despite what is stated on the forms, the building would be over 25 metres from a highway. A Design and Access Statement has been submitted which states further facts about the farm and details of the proposal:

The applicant currently rents an additional building on the neighbouring farm for finishing the cattle (approximately 250m away).

The existing agricultural buildings on the holding are used to house young stock so they are close to the farmstead for close monitoring and welfare and to store some of the fodder and implements required to manage the holding.

As a result of the applicants expanding business they require this building to store hay and straw. There is not sufficient enough room in the existing buildings to house the stock levels and to store the fodder and implements required to manage the holding. The applicant is fully aware of the inadequate storage facilities available. This building will be used to store Heston bales of hay and straw. By enabling these bales to be stored in the building it will reduce the use of plastics therefore creating a more environmentally friendly holding.

The interface between dry hay and wet hay is an ideal spot for spontaneous combustion. As a wet or green spot of hay in a mow or a large bale heats, moisture is driven into the surrounding dry hay. The area where the wet and dry hay touch, has the heat, dampness and insulation necessary to start a fire. If there is enough hay mass around the hot spot to prevent the escape of heat and there is a slow infiltration of damp air, conditions for fire exist. If the hay cools as fast as heat is generated, the hay turns brown and may be moldy, but fire is avoided. It is the recommendation of the Fire Brigade to allow sufficient room between livestock and implement buildings and hay/straw storage buildings to reduce the loss of life of the livestock and other closely associated buildings should fire break out and also to give the Fire Brigade sufficient room to work to put the fire out without hinderance.

This proposed building will be sited a short distance away from the main buildings to reduce any fire spreading should the hay/straw spontaneously combust, as shown on drawing No. 1016-001. This is for ease of the farming process and Health and Safety. The site has a slight slope across the width and length, however this will be a simple exercise of cut and fill to bring the level of the buildings finished floor to a level. No material will be taken from site and all materials excavated will be re-used on site.

The applicant is happy to carry out any landscaping scheme specified by yourselves in order to protect the amenities of the site and the area.

Under Part 6 Class A of the GPDO, a full planning application is not required for new agricultural buildings on farms of over 5.0 hectares, subject to the proposal meeting all the other criteria set out in Class A.1 of that part. However, the same part of the GPDO requires the submission of a "Notification of Prior Approval" application and the Council must determine whether or not Prior Approval is required for the siting, design and external appearance of the building and if necessary request further information in which to determine the proposal,.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

N/A

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None relevant.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: N/A
Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None.

Town / Parish Comments

None.

OFFICER COMMENTS

The land has historically been in agricultural use and is a working farm and the Agricultural Holding Number has been given. For agricultural-related development to be provided under the Prior Approval process without needing a full planning application, the proposal would need to meet the criteria/tests listed under Part 6 Class A.1 of the GPDO. From the information provided, it would appear the proposal would accord with all the criteria in that part. The proposal meets the tests in Part 6 Class A.1 and can therefore be deemed to be determined via the Notification of Prior Approval process.

In this case, the building would be permitted development not requiring a full planning application if the Council but must decide if Prior Approval is required for the siting, design and external appearance of the building and this is the purpose of this Determination of Prior Approval application.

There is sufficient justification for the need building and the building does not appear excessive for its purpose in providing safe hay and straw storage for 30 cattle and followers. However, the building of the height and dimensions given and in the siting shown would be very visible from the road as there is no screening along it and would not be screened by existing buildings or trees and hedges. Although it would not significantly encroach into the open landscape or appear as a very isolated building or very detached from the farm, there are only two buildings at the farm currently and there would be a notable gap between the building and the other buildings, although it is explained that the building cannot adjoin the other buildings

which are a farmhouse and livestock building, for fire safety reasons (hay and straw are combustible).

However, regardless of this, there appears to be potential scope to site the building in a better screened location and overall, due to its size and siting, I consider that Prior Approval should be required for the building as I consider that the siting, design and appearance of the development should be further assessed.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development meets the tests in Part 6 Class A.1 and can be provided under permitted development not requiring a full planning application, via the Notification of Prior Approval process. However, on the basis of the drawings and information submitted, showing its scale, design and siting, it is considered that Prior Approval is required to establish if it passes the tests in Part 6 Class A.2 i.e. to determine if the siting, design and appearance is acceptable.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIRED

Case Officer: Chris Johnston
Recommendation Date: 4.5.22

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council