

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0646
Valid 07/10/2021

**LAND WEST OF
BOUNDARY ROAD
BOUNDARY**

**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION
OF A LAMBING SHED AND
HAY STORE**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development within the Green Belt
- Design and visual impact
- Agricultural justification
- Neighbouring amenity

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is in a rural field location to the west of Boundary road on the south fridges of Boundary within designated Green Belt land. The site itself is overgrown by vegetation and opens onto rolling open countryside to rear. There is no established arable farming.

In terms of the immediate setting, the site abuts a bungalow known as Daisy bank which has number of outbuildings that run along the north perimeter of the site. It is also sits at the edge of the built up area of Boundary and is screened by established hedging along the roadside and a belt of tree lines to the west.

Access is taken from a narrow country lane known as Boundary road. There is a metal gate to restrict access.

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for a lambing shed and hay store. The new building will be 12m in length by 4.5m with a height of 5.3m.

The building will be part hit and miss and metal cladding following amendments suggested by the case officer to be more appropriate to the use of the building.

According to supplementary information, the building will accommodate 16 breeding Ewes with One tup. The intention is to eventually produce a flock of 16 Ewes and 24 lambs (average 1.5 lambs per ewe).

RELEVANT INFORMATION

During the case officer's site visit both in Oct 2021 and in July 2022, there were no livestock on the land.

The site has not been established for agricultural use nor were there sheep prior to the application being submitted. The proposed plan state 'existing hardstanding'

however, at the time of visit, the ground is overgrown and not as per what is stated on the plan as shown by this photo below:



RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted Sept 2020)

SS10 - Other Rural Areas Strategy

DC1 - Design Considerations

T1- Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

GB Section 13 – Protecting Greenbelt Land

SITE HISTORY

None

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 18/11/21

Neighbour consultation period ends: 28/11/21

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

Neighbour comments	No representatives received
Forsbrook Parish Council Comments	No objection
Severn Trent waters	No objection subject to informatives

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development- appropriateness in the Green belt

The application site is located in the Green Belt whereby policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020) is applicable. Policy SS10 states that these rural areas will provide only for development that 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.

The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) says that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate and, by definition, harmful. Paragraph 145 then goes on to give some exceptions to this, one of which, criterion (a), is the erection of buildings for agriculture and forestry.

It is accepted that the proposed building can be defined as an agricultural building by reason of its design and arrangement. It is recognised that agricultural need is not given in the Framework as a factor to be used in assessing whether or not the building falls under this exception in paragraph 145. Accordingly, I conclude that the building is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt by reason of paragraph 145(a) of the Framework.

Agricultural justification

While the Framework under Green Belt Policy does not require justification for agricultural needs, the Council does contend that the building is too large to sustainably operate a commercial business for the holding of 16 ewes on a site of 315sqm together with a grazing area of 1.5ha, particularly as this has not been established. 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 ewes that over time the 1.5 acres will be unable self-sustain. While the agent stipulates that over time, the land will accommodate a flock of 16 Ewes and 24 lambs (average 1.5 lambs per ewe), based on the Defra space allowance and would provide additional grazing land, there is no decisive information about the likely success of the growth of the business, or the chances of acquiring the other land needed. Therefore, the Council cannot be confident that it has a reasonable prospect of being achieved.

The necessary care on-site care required for this type of farming has not been provided. The Council believes that the necessary care cannot be met from the associated farm at Mount Pleasant Farm, a cattle farm located approx. 1.7km on Cheadle Road as noted in the supporting statement.

In addition, the Council does not consider there to be justification for the building to be separated from the cattle farming that serve the associated farm at Mount Pleasant Farm, associated with beef farming. The agent states that it is necessary to isolate different types of livestock to prevent the passage of health issues and disease. Nevertheless, the justification to diversify on non-established land to accord with SS10 has limited weight in this regard.

As per above, it is agreed that the building is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt by reason of paragraph 145(a) of the Framework. However, 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 of different farming practices at Mount Pleasant farm. The agricultural justification does not outweigh the harm identified and the proposal is found to be contrary to policy SS10 in this regard.

In principle therefore, as a building for agriculture the building can be considered 'not inappropriate' in the Green Belt.

Character and Design

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.

In the original scheme, there were concerns with the design of the building that will shelter lambs. Typically, animal shelter of this sort requires ventilation of a hit and miss boarded construction rather than metal sheeting with roller shutters. The agent has amended the scheme with hit and miss board to establish the use of the building. Accordingly, the building, in terms of its design, would not appear at odds with the rural character of the area.

However, the yard area and curtilage would require a substantial amount of hardstanding that would extend beyond the built form of development. This would introduce a stark, urbanising feature to the local landscape and appear highly incongruous set against the prevailing rural character of the site and local area. Although the existing trees and hedges along the roadside does partially screen the proposal from views along Boundary Road, it would be visible within the immediate setting. As such, the harm caused by the hardstanding would be evident in the area as it would disrupt the natural end-point of the small hamlet of Boundary.

Based on the foregoing, the proposal would detract unacceptably from the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with Policies SS1, SS10, DC1 in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (adopted September 2020), which, among other things, seeks development that respects and retains the distinctive character and quality of the landscape and natural environment in the district.

Impact to neighbouring 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 are the neighbouring properties at Daisy Bank, a bungalow that has a number of outbuildings that run along the northern part of the site and, Whitegates, a bungalow opposite the site.

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 the relevant part of Policy DC1 of the Local plan on neighbouring amenity.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would not be essential development in the open countryside contrary to policy ss10 and would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with the development plan, and in the absence of any material considerations to indicate otherwise, the proposal should therefore be refused.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Refusal

Case Officer: Lisa Li

Recommendation Date: 29/07/22

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council