DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2022/0029 **Valid 05/07/2022**	**WESTWOOD HALL FARM** **WESTWOOD PARK DRIVE** **LEEK**	**ERECTION OF AGRICULTURAL FODDER AND IMPLEMENT STORAGE BUILDINGS.** **(AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY DETERMINATION)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Eligibility under GPDO(2015) Schedule 2 Part 6
- Siting
- Design
- External Appearance

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Prominent position at the edge of steep sloping valley side to the River Churnet. Open views from the site into the valley and across to the Longsdon – Rudyard ridge. The site is Green Belt in the open rural countryside.

Within 40m to 50m of a Grade II listed stable block.

On land within a site recorded on the Staffordshire Historic Environment inventory as A school complex occupying a large part of the former Westwood Hall Park (PRN 40057) and incorporating a number of mid 19th century (listed) buildings including the former Westwood Hall, its stable block and summerhouse.

The site is closely adjacent to the boundary of the Westwood Hall Park, separately recorded on the Staffordshire Historic Environment inventory.

At least two un-associated private dwellings overlook the site from slightly elevated positions within 100m to the south east – nos 36 and 38 Westwood Park Drive.

Quantities of trees and hedges seen to surround the site on recent air photo imagery are no longer present and consequently the site is very open to its immediate surroundings.

Recent site clearance has evidently taken place and an extensive surface of ex road plainings or similar has been laid. A substantial amount of building rubble has been laid to form a level at the proposed site position of the development.

PROPOSAL

The building would have a plan area of c.24.4m x c.18.6m with eaves c.5.2m and ridge c.6.9m. The building has a twin gabled form with open / partially open fronts to the east into the newly created yard area and fully enclosed gables facing west over the valley.

Proposed materials are concrete panel base walls visible to 1.7m with profiled metal sheeting above in Juniper Green with same for the roofing.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)
SS1 Development Principles
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
NE2 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework February 2019
Paragraph(s) 1 – 14;
Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 6 – Building a strong and competitive economy; 7 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres; 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities; 11 – Making effective use of land; 12 – Achieving well designed places; 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land; 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/G):
- Space About Dwellings SPG
- Design Principles SPG
- Design Guide SPD adopted 21st February 2018

Local Plan Supporting Evidence Documents:
- Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008)

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None in recent records specific to the application site.

Adjacent to the immediate north is 87/00173/OLD approved in June 1987 for an ‘agricultural building’. This building appears to be in use as an indoor riding school.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

None due to being a prior notification under Part 6.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Notwithstanding the Green Belt location, as a Part 6 prior notification the development is subject to assessment only if the LPA deems this to be necessary and then on the specific matters of siting, design and external appearance.

The planning statement says the holding extends to 57 hectares (141 acres). The LPA has no evidence before it as to the full extent of any agriculture taking place and whether the land is being so used (for agriculture) for the purposes of a trade or business. A small herd of c.12 Dexter cows with calves was noted to be present by the LPA in an adjacent paddock.

Design

The building is fairly typical of its kind. The extensive use of profiled metal sheeting may be considered somewhat more urban and industrial in appearance than the commonly used alternative of timber 'Yorkshire' boarding and fibre sheet roof panelling.

Along with the type of materials the overall visual impact of a building of this scale and form needs to be considered.

Amenity

The implications of a building of this scale and form in the outlook of nearby adjacent dwellings needs to be considered. At the present time these occupiers will have no awareness via official notice of this proposal being under consideration.

Heritage

Impact on the setting of a Listed Building needs to be considered. Implications for the several non-designated heritage assets at the site also need to be considered.

Highway Safety

The status of the access track included in the application as being the dedicated site access is not fully known. This single track with blind bend owing to high close

board fencing to each side needs to be assessed as it is noted to be the access to at least two private dwellings.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

From the above brief assessment it can be noted that several important aspects of the proposed siting need to be considered as potential significant impacts. The appearance of the building is also a factor influential on the siting impacts.

It has also not been established at this stage that the building is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture in accordance with the terms of Part 6. A significant equine activity appears to be associated with the holding.

There are identifiable landscape, heritage and environmental sensitivities to the location and it is therefore appropriate that the development be subject to prior approval in order that all matters can be fully considered.

The LPA will also want to establish whether or not the proposal is eligible under part 6.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Prior approval required

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank
Recommendation Date: 2nd Aug 2022

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council