

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2023/0011
Valid 17/04/2023

HILLTOP FARM HARES
LANE
HIGHSHUTT
CHEADLE

APPLICATION TO DETERMINE
IF PRIOR APPROVAL IS
REQUIRED FOR A PROPOSED
CATTLE SHED FOR NEW
BEEF REARING ENTERPRISE

(AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY
DETERMINATION)

MAIN ISSUES

Whether or not the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed building is acceptable.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is in the countryside a short distance to the east of Cheadle and lies 200m to the west of Hares Lane, a country lane which provides the access to the site via a farm track. The site is part of a long established beef-rearing and dairy farm (with 180 dairy cows) with several farm buildings and a farmhouse grouped fairly closely together. The site is currently open, forming part of a field but is also adjacent to farm buildings to the north-west and south-west with the rest of the field to the north-east and south-east. The farm complex is surrounded by open countryside. The site is not affected by any particular land designations. The farm property is 157 hectares in size.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks prior approval for a detached livestock farm building with a footprint of 27 x 24 metres and with a dual-pitch roof which gives the building an eaves height of 4.0 metres and a max ridge height of 7.5 metres. It would have a blockwork plinth of 2.0 metres in height and above this would be open on the north-west side (facing the track), would have timber boarding on the two side elevations (facing south-west and north-east) and on the south-east side, facing the road, the finish would be mostly green fabric "gale breakers" (to allow good ventilation for the animals) but with also some timber boarding. The roof would be grey corrugated fibre-cement sheeting with several rooflights.

The proposal would enable the applicant to accommodate additional dairy bull calves on site, which will be reared within a beef production system. A Planning Statement has been submitted with the application which gives more details in support of the proposal:

In line with the NFU & AHDB's GB Dairy Calf Strategy 2020-2023, Hilltop Farm is

addressing the aims and objectives of the strategy by introducing a dairy calf beef system on the holding. This will provide an additional source of income, thereby allowing the farm to remain competitive and viable in the local rural economy, whilst also contributing towards the overall sustainability of the dairy farming industry. Overall, the move towards rearing dairy bull calves is a step towards a more sustainable agricultural industry that considers animal welfare and environmental impact, whilst also aligning with the growing consumer demand for locally produced beef products. By working together, farmers and supermarkets can promote sustainable practices and meet consumer demands for more sustainable and locally produced food. Therefore, in order for Hilltop Farm to facilitate this additional enterprise, a suitable modern and fit-for-purpose agricultural cattle building is required to accommodate the increased number of calves on site which will be reared and sold for beef. The aim is to rear around 140 beef animals per year aged from 3 weeks to 14/15 months.

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, or whether or not on the basis of the information submitted, the application should be refused.

It was decided Prior Approval was required on 11th May 2023 as the Council decided that some further assessment was needed of the impact of the buildings siting, design and appearance.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

N/A

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

There have been a number of previous Prior Approvals under part 6 of the GPDO and also full planning permissions granted for various buildings and structures at the farm the most recent of which was in 2017.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 7.6.23.

Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None.

Town / Parish Comments

None.

OFFICER COMMENTS

It was determined on 17th May 2023 that Prior Approval was required for the building because the building would be visible from the nearest road, Hares Lane, to the east. Therefore it was felt further consideration should be given to the visual impacts of the area and whether there were any better places within the farm that the building could be sited.

On further assessment and a visit to the area to assess the visual impact on the landscape particularly from public footpaths, roads and the public realm, I consider the proposed siting is acceptable in terms of visual impact. The only place where the building would be visible would be a short section of Hares Lane. There is an absence of nearby public footpaths in area. The building would be adjacent to other farm buildings and will not encroach significantly into the countryside. From Hares Lane, part of the existing building immediately to the north-west of the proposed building is visible and this is of similar height, footprint, scale and design as the one proposed. The farmhouse to the north-east is also visible but no other building is easily visible. The proposed building would not be significantly more prominent in views from Hares Lane than the current building which would be in the “backdrop”. The materials are appropriate. The 2m high blockwork on the only elevation visible from the road (the south-east elevation) would be partly concealed and is not out of keeping with the other buildings in any case. The other proposed materials are also not out of keeping with the other buildings. An amended site plan was submitted to show the planting of a perimeter hedge along the south-east and north-east sides and the extension of timber boarding to the ground on the north-east elevation.

Overall, the building based on its design, appearance on siting would not lead it to be harmfully prominent from the nearest roads and footpaths and would not harm the landscape or the character and appearance of the immediate surroundings and therefore approval can be given.

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. It was decided that Prior Approval was required for the development. The proposal has been assessed as having an acceptable siting, design and appearance and therefore is recommended for approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston

Recommendation Date: 14/06/2023

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council