

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC)

Planning Department

<By Email>

27th July 2023

Dear Mr Chris Johnson,

23-06: Storage Buildings for Agricultural / Forestry purpose for produce and equipment at Wood Farm Red Road Alton (SMD/2023/0201)

Thank you for your letter (12-07-2023) following a preliminary assessment of planning application SMD/2023/0201. Your letter requests additional information regarding the method of operation, sales and vehicle movements generated by the proposals. It also makes suggestion for how the design and siting of the two proposed buildings can be revised / varied to mitigate impact on the visual amenities of the area.

All information will be provided in the below sections of this 'Response Letter' and amended drawings have been prepared to reflect the design and siting revisions you have advocated.

1.0 Additional Requested Information

- 1.1 Details were requested to determine whether some or all produce from the land is sold from the site or whether this would be collected from an alternative location or delivered directly to the consumer.
- 1.2 Subsequently details for the predicted vehicle movements as result of the proposed use of the land were also requested. Both considerations relate predominantly to Highways / Access.

2.0 Description of Operation by Applicant

- 2.1 Wood Farm is a Micro Farm and the revenue generated by product creates funds which are reinvested into the betterment of the landscape and ecology / habitats. The annual production from Wood Farm is circa 400 'small bales' of Hay and a similar figure for logs and brash 'faggots' is also typical. The fruits harvested at Wood Farm are for personal consumption. The purpose of the 'small bales' is to allow residents of Staffordshire Moorlands the ability to feed livestock / pets using a manageable sized bale which can be transported in an ordinary car as opposed to a trailer or larger vehicle. All products are hand delivered to the local area by Wood Farm in batches.
- 2.2 During a typical year 400 bales are delivered, because of the difficult access track to Wood Farm these bales are delivered by a 4x4 vehicle towing a trailer. The trailer capacity is 50 bales, as result around 8 round trips are necessary for Hay sales per annum. Likewise Log sales also result in a similar level of vehicle movements (8). All vehicle movements are by Wood Farm and the public (consumer) is never required to access the site.

3.0 Requested Building Design / Siting Revisions

- 3.1 Case Officer, Mr Chris Johnson has made the following comments regarding the proposed Produce Store (Building 01) and the Equipment Store (Building 02):
- 3.2 The proposed buildings would be best amended to minimise the impact on visual amenity. Buildings would be best located along the western boundary of the site, to the north of the row of approx. 5 trees close to the north-west corner of the site but not within the root zones of the trees within the woodland.
- 3.3 The height of the Produce Store (Building 01) could instead be reduced to 4.0 metres. To offset any loss in storage capacity the building footprint area can be increased in size.
- 3.4 It was suggested that the Equipment Store (Building 02) could potentially be incorporated into the Produce Store (Building 01) forming one larger building rather than two separate buildings, in the interests of minimising landscape impact.

4.0 Response to Feedback on Building Design / Siting

- 4.1 The Equipment Store (Building 02) will be relocated to the position described above. This will be shielded by a row of 5 No. Silver Birch trees separating area 158 and 159 on the Northwestern site boundary.
- 4.2 The Produce Store (Building 01) will be reduced in height from 5m to 4m as suggested. In doing so the external dimensions will vary from 12 x 7m to 15 x 7m to give adequate storage volume for Hay and Logs. The location of this building has remained as it is thought that this is well located to avoid impact on visual amenity.
- 4.3 The option to combine Building 01 and Building 02 has been considered however the buildings have differing construction methods by virtue of their occupation. Building 01 stores Hay and Logs, it is a ventilated, open-fronted structure. It can be set on ground level without risk from vermin etc. Building 02 will provide secure storage for Tools and Equipment. It will also provide 'Storage for Edibles', being crops such as fruit and potatoes. This building is elevated circa 300mm above ground level and comprises an enclosed structure of full timber construction. It will be warmer and more airtight than Building 01. As result, the applicant has not connected the two buildings and has instead relocated Building 02 and reduced Building 01 in height.
- 4.4 Please see the following revised drawings:
 - 23-06-b3-XX-XX-DR-A-0102_RevA_Proposed_Block_Plan_(01and02)
 - 23-06-b3-XX-XX-DR-A-0201_RevA_Proposed_Plans_(01)
 - 23-06-b3-XX-XX-DR-A-0401_RevA_Proposed_Elevations_(01)

5.0 Other Consultation Responses

- 5.1 Julie Hall of Staffordshire County Council stated, *"we are unable to comment on this application as, although the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way for Staffordshire indicates there are rights of way crossing the application site/ adjacent to the application site, they are not shown on any of the plans."*
- 5.2 Brian Hamilton of Peak and Northern Footpaths Society stated: *"We note that the PROWs Alton 8,11,12,62 are close to the proposed site. Use of the PROWs, and the safety of users must not be affected by the development, nor during the work taking place. We have concerns that construction traffic might pose a danger to PROW users. We could not find anything in the application, which addressed these concerns."*
- 5.3 Alton Parish Council were consulted on the planning application on 14-06-23. In summary, the Councillors decided that the Parish Council could not comment on this application and therefore object to it as there is insufficient information regarding access to the site on which to base any comments.

6.0 Applicant / Agents Response to Consultees

- 6.1 The location of Public Rights of Way (PROW) has now been provided on the Proposed Block Plan. Drawing Reference: 23-06-b3-XX-XX-DR-A-0102_RevA_Proposed_Block_Plan_(01and02). This shows that there is no PROW near to either of the proposed buildings.
- 6.2 PROW / Alton 8 partially comprises the access track to Wood Farm. Within the Land Conveyance, a right of way was granted to Wood Farm to use the PROW with vehicles by DEFRA, the legal landowner of Alton 8. This is confirmed by Land Registry Title / Plan SF496209 from HM Land Registry. This was transferred when the house (and access rights) was purchased in 2021 by the Applicant, Mr M Halsey.
- 6.3 The proposals rely entirely on Alton 8 only; with no requirement to use Alton 60 or 62. No aspect of the proposals or the small number of vehicle movements operationally will damage, block or cause harm to the PROW. Deliveries to the site are scheduled to minimise the effect to Alton 8 PROW, and this is the current procedure of the farmstead. All vehicle manoeuvres can be completed within the farmstead away from the PROW. The specialist materials required to construct the proposed buildings will be delivered to site in two batches via Alton 8 (via the Legal Access granted by DEFRA).
- 6.4 Sufficient information relating to vehicle movements and the legal entitlement to do so is provided in Paragraph 2.1, 2.2, 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 of this formal response. This will allow an informed decision to be made by the Case Officer. The Objection from Alton Parish Council is respectfully suggested to be no longer relevant.

Yours Faithfully,

Bruce Johnson BSc (1st Hons), PGDip, MSc
on behalf of applicant: Mr M. Halsey



b3architectural