

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2023/0605
Valid 01/12/2023

HOMELAND FARM SARVER
LANE
DILHORNE

PROPOSED OFFICE BUILDING
WITH WELFARE FACILITIES
ANCILLARY TO THE EXISTING
MANUFACTURING BUSINESS

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of Development
- Impact on Neighbour Amenity
- Impact on Visual Amenity
- Highways

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application relates to the manufacturing business JM Milner Steel Farmed Building. The business provides services from manufacturing agricultural buildings and industrial buildings to renovations of building and steelwork for domestic extensions.

The application site is located in Dilhorne and is located on Green Belt land.

PROPOSAL

Consent is sought for the rection of an office and welfare building for use ancillary to the existing manufacturing business. Internally the building will provide a meeting/training room, an office and a locker room with WC's

The building will be located to the east of the site opposite the site workshop.

The building will measure 6m by 9m with a sloping roof with a maximum height of 3m and eaves height of 2.5m. The building will have an insulated composite box profile roof, coloured Juniper Green (12B29) to match the existing building and the elevations will be Vertical cladding, coloured Juniper Green.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan

SS1 Development Principles
DC1 Design Considerations

T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 13

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None relevant to the application

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 29.12.2023

Neighbour consultation period ends: 28.12.2023

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None received within consultation period

Town / Parish Comments

None received within consultation period

Environmental Health

No objections subject to conditions

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No objections subject to condition

Severn Trent Water

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Paragraph 152 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Para 154 states:

154. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and

The application proposes the erection of a new building to provide an office/welfare area for the existing manufacturing business at the site. The proposed development would therefore not meet any of the exceptions listed at paragraph 154 of the NPPF.

The proposed building would be sited to the east of the site adjacent to the existing agricultural building and would measure 6m by 9m with a maximum height of 3m. Due to its proximity to the existing building within the site and its minimal height the development would cause limited harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Nevertheless this building would have an impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

As the harm to the Green Belt is by definition inappropriate the development must demonstrate very special circumstances that outweigh this harm.

The application states that due to the current growth of the business two full time employees may join the business in the next 12 months. The applicants agent has not demonstrated that the proposed development would help to facilitate these positions and therefore the fact that the business could increase its employees is not reliant on the proposed building. The economic benefits associated with the proposal would apply to expansion of any business in the Green belt. Having regard to these economic benefits had the Government considered that business or employment related development been appropriate in the Green belt they would have been included in the list of appropriate development. On this basis the circumstances surrounding the development are not considered to be "very special"

The applicant's agent has also demonstrated that the proposed building would provide alternative office space to the existing facilities on the mezzanine floor above the workshop area. The existing business has outgrown these facilities, and this space is no longer suitable for use. Whilst this would weight in favour of the development the applicant's agent has not demonstrated that alternative sites could be provided within the business so that a new building is not required. Similarly, the fact that the office space is above the workshop area and the potential health and safety concerns to colleagues would not outweigh the harm to the green belt.

Considering the above the application has failed to demonstrate very special circumstances that would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. As such the development is considered to be inappropriate in the Green Belt.

Impact on Visual Amenity

Policy DC1 states that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD.

The proposed development is located to the east of the site set back from the main road, the High Street. Homeland Farm is accessed via Sarver Lane and this is a vehicular access as well as a PROW (Dilhorne 23, Dilhorne 40 which connects to Dilhorne 3 that travels past the rear of the site. The site is visible from Both Sarver Road and these footpaths.

The proposed development would erect a modest sized office building that when viewed from outside of the site would appear in context with the existing building and would not result in an intrusive form of development. The buildings design ensures that it is subservient to the existing buildings in size and proposed materials and therefore the development would have an acceptable impact on the visual amenity of the area.

Notwithstanding the above the development is considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and therefore despite its limited size would cause harm to the green belt that has not been outweighed by very special circumstances.

Amenity

Policy DC 1 states that all development should protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution.

The proposed development is sited adjacent to a number of residential dwellings along Sarver Lane. Given the site is located within an existing manufacturing business these neighbours would experience some level noise association with this use. The proposed building would however be used as an office/welfare area which would not increase noise levels at the site. Disturbance during construction would be managed by the conditions recommended by the EH team. As such the development would have minimal impact on residential amenity.

Highway Safety

The site benefits from an existing access off Sarver Lane and the development proposes to retain employee parking areas and propose new parking areas. As such the highway authority have no objection subject to a condition requiring the parking be in place before the building is in use.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and therefore the is harmful by definition. There would be a reduction in the Green Belt's openness which would give rise to additional harm.

As per paragraph 153 of the Framework, substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. Against this, I have not been provided with any other considerations advanced to weigh in favour of the development, There are therefore no matters capable of amounting to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposed development.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION :

That planning permission be refused

Case Officer: Rebecca Bowers

Recommendation Date: 05.03.2023

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council