

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0020
Valid 17/01/2024

EASING FARM EASING
LANE
THORNCLIFFE
LEEK

SLURRY TOWER WITH
DOMED ROOF

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- The principle of development
- The impact on the character and appearance of the rural area

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is within the open countryside (but not within the Green Belt) over a mile to the east of Leek and half a mile to the south of Thorncliffe village and comprises part of a field next to a farm and farm buildings immediately to the east. The farm is on the south side of Easing Lane, a country lane leading up to Morridge Edge and which provides the access to the farm which is on land which slopes upwards towards the Morridge Edge to the east. The grouping of farm buildings (which include a farmhouse and mostly modern farm buildings) is surrounded by open land and fields. A Public Right of Way runs immediately to the east of the site.

PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application for a conical roof cover for a large circular green metal slurry storage tank, approved in June 2023 and which would replace a smaller existing slurry tank a short distance to the north-east and which would store slurry from two large recently extended modern farm buildings on the south and west edges of the farm and which are adjacent to the site. This has a diameter of 28.2 metres and a height of 5.56 metres. The conical roof would be placed on top and has the same diameter and a height of 5.28m to the tip. With the cover attached the slurry store structure would have a max height of 10.84m. The cover would have matching green metal materials.

A supporting statement was submitted which states the domed cover is required to prevent harmful gases from escaping into the atmosphere and has been designed as such to minimise the visual impact on the landscape.

The application also includes a proposed tree screening zone to the west of the approved slurry tower and proposed domed cover with 60 trees including silver birch, aspen and beech. This is in response to a condition attached to the permission for the slurry tower requiring a planting scheme in the interests of the appearance of the area.

The applicants have 140 dairy cows and 90 young stock replacements. The applicants also have a flock of 100 ewes lambing at 180%. The applicants farm 350

acres or thereabouts of grassland. The slurry store will be used to contain the slurry from adjacent cattle housing building. DEFRA require farms to have adequate slurry storage to mitigate the risk of pollution. The current slurry store is at the end of its lifespan.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)

Sections 12 (Design).

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (adopted Sep 2020).

DC1 Design Considerations.

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

The most recent application relating to the site is as follows:

SMD/2023/0216: Slurry tower. Approved June 2023.

SMD/2019/0551: Extension to farm building. Approved and built.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 5.3.24

Neighbour consultation period ends: 5.3.24

Press Advert: 23.1.24 (due to the presence of a PROW).

Public Comments

None.

Parish Council

No objection.

SCC Public Rights of Way Section

Public Footpath No. 6 Tittesworth Parish runs close to the application site but will not be directly affected by the proposal. The granting of planning permission does not constitute authority for any interference with the public right of way and associated items - or its obstruction (temporary or permanent).

The Ramblers Association.

P.R.O.W Tittsworth 6 runs very close to where the development will take place. This must not affect the rights of the public in using the path.

COMMENTS

The principle of the development which helps assist with the operation of a large farming business in this rural location is acceptable.

With regard to the impact on the character and appearance of the area, although this would double the height of the structure, its conical form, reducing bulk with the height, it would not increase the prominence of the structure to a harmful extent. The max height of the resultant structure would not be excessively higher than the highest buildings either existing or approved at the farm and would not result in it being any larger. It would remain to be well screened by wider and longer buildings further up the slope to the north and would be visible against the backdrop of buildings when viewed further down the slope to the west when viewed from the road. It would also be largely screened by the proposed planting of a tree belt of 60 trees, some of which will grow up to 8m within ten years of planting. This planting was required by a condition attached to the permission for the slurry tower and is appropriate and acceptable.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposal is acceptable and would not harm the visual amenities of the area especially with the safeguard of the tree planting required under the previous permission for the slurry tower. The proposal would therefore comply with the Council's Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston
Recommendation Date: 13.3.24

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council