

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0439
Valid 26/09/2024

MALTHOUSE FARM LEEK
ROAD
MOORVILLE
CELLARHEAD

ERECTION OF CATTLE SHED
(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

Impact on the Green Belt and the character and appearance of the area, highway safety and ecology.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The Green Belt farm site consists of a complex of recently constructed farm sheds that replaced partially demolished and dilapidated buildings to the rear of the traditional 19th Century farm house that fronts Cellarhead Road. The existing buildings are portal frame built profile sheet cladding. The application site consists of a paddock parcel between the east facing elevation of one of the sheds that provides fodder storage and the roadside. The paddock is to the far north eastern end of the farm site and has a boundary with the recreational land to the north east.

There is open farmland countryside to the north, west and east – irregular field parcels enclosed by traditional hedgerow and mature trees. The land to the north provides football fields on open recreational land and immediately to the south the neighbouring Thornfield Farm is adjacent and also owned by the applicant.

PROPOSAL

Erection of a portal framed agricultural livestock/cattle housing building on the area of paddock, adjacent to and the east of an existing fodder store.

The housing would be 24m by 30m. The paddock would be excavated to set the housing down at a level consistent with the yard and the other farm development, while sitting its profile down and surrounding it with the higher ground level of the paddock to the north and west of the building.

The building will have a simple portal framed construction, with concrete panels at its base and vertical hit and miss Yorkshire boarding above. The roof would be fibre cement profiled roof sheets and the front, or south facing gable, of the building would be largely open to the farm yard.

The building would be 4.5m high to eaves, and 7.9m to the ridge of a full pitch roof. With existing and surrounding ground levels shown on plan, from the east and north approximately 5m of the building's height would show above surrounding ground level.

The building will be open-ended on its southwest elevation in order to facilitate ease of access from the farmyard. Considerations and submissions relative to the recent planning history discuss the applicant as an established farmer with a land holding of 170 acres (100 acres at Malt House Farm, 40 acres at Park Hall and Hulme and a

further 30 rented acres at Rownall). The applicant is involved in beef rearing having 120 cattle.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS10 Other Rural Area
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape Character
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport
NE1 Biodiversity

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2019/0309 2 agricultural buildings for beef rearing and implement storage.

Approved.

SMD/2021/0606 agricultural building for storage of fodder. Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 21/11/2024

Neighbour consultation period ends: 21/11/2024

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Werrington PC: Awaited

Staffordshire County Council Highways

Acceptance/No objection

Site Visit 16 Oct 2024

Access is existing access from A520 into Shukers farm and farm shop area. Visibility at the access is good.

There is no supporting information with the application but a cattle shed on a working farm and farm shop is appropriate in this setting. Deliveries will take place to/from the farm under its existing active use. Access is directly off A520 Leek Road through single access/exit point. Site is in a rural area.

Current records show that there was 1 personal injury collision (PIC) on A520 Leek Road within 215 metres either side of the site access in the previous five years. Although all PICs are regrettable, the overall volume of collisions does not suggest there are any existing safety problems that would be exacerbated by the proposed development.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

No objection. Reviewed applicant's submission on BNG and confirmed that they would address appropriately the deemed conditions.

OFFICER COMMENTS**Principle of Development/Impact on Green Belt**

The development would be carried out in the Green Belt. If one of the exceptions listed at pthe NPPF provide for the development, it shall not be inappropriate and harm to the Green Belt would not occur. One of those exceptions is a building for agriculture. The applicant asserts that the building is for housing cattle and the proposed building is designed accordingly and as expected to provide housing for livestock with the necessary access and ventilation. The building to be provided in relation to his cattle rearing business. The development would not be inappropriate and there would be no harm to the Green Belt.

At the heart of the NPPF and the Local Plan there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has overarching objectives to both help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy; and protect and enhance the natural environment. In the rural areas this means that sustainable growth, expansion and development of rural business (specifically agricultural enterprise) should be enabled with the provision of well-designed new buildings. This is reflected in the 'Other Rural Area' strategy set out in the Local Plan Strategy at Policy SS10 which provides only for development that sustains the rural economy by enabling the limited expansion of an existing business and supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprise; and enhances and conserves the quality and character of the countryside.

Cellarhead is traditionally a farming community and economy and support for this particular enterprise will contribute to the local economy. The main issue for consideration is whether the development's impact on the character and appearance of the area, in this case a farmland landscape with strong hedgerow field boundaries, result in a degree of harm that outweighs the economic benefit from development that supports agricultural business in the rural areas. The assessment therefore, essentially arrives at a balancing exercise between the needs of the enterprise and benefit to rural economy against the impact or harm that would occur to the character and appearance of the countryside.

The Impact on the Character and Appearance of the area

Inevitably many of the structures and buildings that farming enterprises rely upon are of functional or utilitarian appearance and size. While there are certain ways of siting, grouping and designing this type of development to minimise its impact, sometimes the needs of an enterprise will mean that development must be absorbed by their surroundings. Consequently, it is common within a rural farming area, for sheds to be apparent and have some presence within the landscape.

The proposed building would not appear within a 'valued landscape' as referred to and protected by paragraph 170(a) of the NPPF because it has no statutory status and has not been identified in the development plan as having specific quality. Nevertheless, policy DC3 of the Core Strategy says that more generally development should be

resisted if it would harm the character of the local and wider landscape and paragraph 170(b) of the NPPF does still require decisions to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

In this case the building would sit very much within the context of the existing grouping of sheds, buildings at Malthouse Farm, and Thornfields Farm adjacent, with the obvious appearance of purpose designed development for modern farming enterprise. The buildings by reason of their design and location would also have an obvious visual relationship and association with the existing portal sheds at Thornfield Farm adjacent. The development therefore, can only have a neutral impact on the character and appearance of the countryside area. It will not appear strident or incongruous within its surroundings, and is of a scale, massing and design that is in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The development would not appear intrusive or prominent within the landscape or conceal or obscure any views of landscape quality or significance. The submitted proposal is therefore in accordance with the requirements of policies SS1, DC1 and DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan in this regard.

Amenity

The nearest dwellings that are not associated with agriculture are identified as Milbank, 250m to the south west, and Moorville Cottages, 350m to the north east. Neither resident has objected to the application. Both of these properties are either side of two established livestock farms, Thornfields and Malthouse. Milbank to the south west is the other side of a range of farm sheds that stand between the resident and the development site. Moorville Cottages, the dwellings furthest away and just shy of the 400m 'cordon' used to control livestock buildings otherwise permitted by the GPDO, lie the other side of the local football fields. The development would result only in a modest increase to cattle stock which is already established as being considerable without complaint, and the development would not represent an increase to activity or the farms potential to increase odour or noise. With all of this in mind the development would not have impact on these residents or introduce additional harm over and above living in a farm land setting within the vicinity of working farms.

Highway Safety

The access to Malthouse Farm is pre-existing and has served an established agricultural enterprise for many years. It is noted that the Highway Authority raise no objection to the development proposals.

BNG Requirements

BNG metrics were submitted to calculate pre and post development habitat values. The results of the assessment and metric indicate that the development of the site, based on the current landscaping plans and proposed enhancement of the modified grassland to be retained on site, will result in a net gain in biodiversity of 11.19% and therefore satisfy current trading rules. No off site mitigation is required.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust have reviewed the submission and have no objection.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The development would not be inappropriate and not harm the Green Belt. There would be no significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the

countryside and some benefit to the enterprise and economy supporting the expansion and diversification of a farm. Moreover, it is considered that there would be no additional harm to residential amenity or the safe operation of the highway network. Therefore, it is considered that the development complies with the above relevant policies of the adopted Core Strategy and therefore should be supported.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 12th December 2024

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council