

PLANNING, & DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**PROPOSAL : DEMOLITION OF EXISTING AGRICULTURAL
BUILDING AND ERECTION AND EXTENSION OF
AGRICULTURAL BUILDING AND COVERED
MUCK STORE (PARTIALLY RETROSPECTIVE)**

**ADDRESS : SOMERDALE FARM, LODGE BARN ROAD,
KNYPERSLEY, STOKE ON TRENT, ST8 7NS**

APPLICANT : MR E GIBSON

DATE : SEPTEMBER 2024 JOB No.: 2024-2931

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INTRODUCTION

This statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for the demolition of an existing agricultural building and the retention and extension of an agricultural building with separate covered muck area at Somerdale Farm, Lodge Barn Road, Knypersley. The application has been submitted by Sammons Architectural Ltd on behalf of Mr E Gibson and is accompanied by drawing numbers 2024-2931-01A, 2024-2931-02A and 2024-2931-03 which should be read in conjunction with this statement.

This planning statement analyses the site and the context in which the application is made demonstrating that the proposed agricultural building is required to meet a genuine agricultural need and that its size and scale is commensurate with the land holding which it serves. Furthermore, it provides an assessment of the impact of the proposed building on the character and appearance of the application site and the wider surrounding area and considers the impact on residential amenity and highway safety.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Somerdale Farm comprises of an agricultural holding which lies on the eastern side and at the end of Lodge Barn Road, an unmade track which has an access with Park Lane 380m to the north. The holding which extends to some 36 acres (14.56 hectares) of farm land lies on the edge of and to the north of Greenway Bank Country Park. It lies within a sporadic loose grouping of dwellings with higher density non agricultural development to the north along Park Lane. The land falls away generally in a west to east direction.

A brick and tile bungalow lies to the south of the site with a detached garage and traditional outbuilding to the north on the separate side of the access track. Immediately north of the traditional barn lies a portal framed tin sheet pitched roof agricultural building with a 4 bay pitched roof agricultural beyond and a two bay monopitch covered muck store to the north west.

For the purposes of the development plan the application site lies outside any designated settlement boundary within the North Staffordshire Green Belt.

PROPOSAL

This is a full application which seeks consent for the demolition of the existing portal frame agricultural building which lies adjacent to the traditional outbuilding and retrospective consent for

the erection of the 4 bay agricultural building and the monopitched covered muck store both of which have been recently constructed. The application also proposes to extend the currently unauthorised agricultural building by adding a further 4 bays to the south facing gable. The extension to the existing unauthorised agricultural building will be constructed from materials to match those of the existing building. The unauthorised monopitch implement store has been constructed from concrete retaining walls clad with Yorkshire boarding and a profiled steel roof. The agricultural building will be enclosed on three sides with the eastern elevation open and fitted with a series of feed barriers and gates. A concrete apron in front of this will provide a feed passage for the animals. The implement store will also be open sided on the eastern elevation to provide access with the remaining three sides enclosed with concrete panels and built into the rising ground.

PLANNING POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.

The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Development Framework (LDF) is a District wide development plan which replaces the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan to provide a framework for delivering development. The adopted Local Plan which was adopted in September 2020 is the key LDF document and has superseded the previously adopted Core Strategy. It is a strategic District wide plan which influences how and where the Staffordshire Moorlands will develop in the future. It sets out what the Council would like to achieve in each of the main towns and the rural areas outside of the Peak District National Park.

The most relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan are considered to be policies

- SS1 - Development Principles - Development Principles: expects development to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering quality local services and development which maintains the distinctive character of the towns and villages of Staffordshire Moorlands and their settings and in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment;
- SS10- Other Rural Areas Strategy
- DC1 - Design Considerations
- DC3 - Landscape and Settlement Setting
- E1 - New Employment Development

- NE1- Biodiversity and Geological Resources
- T1 - Development and Sustainable Transport

For the sake of brevity these policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to where appropriate in the following section. The Authority's Supplementary Planning Guidance document, titled Agricultural Buildings is also considered to be of particular relevance to this application.

National Planning Policy Framework

There is considerable planning policy and guidance relevant to the planning application proposal at both local and national levels. The NPPF is significant as it sets out the Government's commitment for a positive response to planning proposals that would deliver sustainable development in order to assist growth to the economy. It has been made clear that the planning system has a key role in facilitating growth and development should be supported with a presumption in favour of granting planning permission. This change of emphasis provides an important background to the application proposal.

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) places a strong emphasis on promoting economic growth and sets out policies for the control of development. The Development Plan represents the starting point for the determination of this application, which in this instance is the Local Plan. The guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework is also relevant, in particular the following Chapters:

- 6. Building a strong, competitive economy
- 11. Making effective use of land
- 12. Achieving well-designed places
- 13. Green Belt
- 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this planning statement and is discussed in more detail within the planning assessment below.

ASSESSMENT

The key issues for consideration during the processing of this application are considered to be the principle of development and whether it constitutes inappropriate development, agricultural need,

the visual impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the site and the wider surrounding area, impact on residential amenity and highway safety.

Principle of development and whether it constitutes inappropriate development

The adopted Local plan contains no specific Green Belt policies. It is therefore reliant upon the policies contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in this regard. Section 13 of the NPPF concerns protecting Green Belt land and paragraph 142 sets out that the government attaches great importance to them with the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy being to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It goes on to reiterate that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.

Paragraph 152 indicates that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 154 sets out that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate unless one of the stated exceptions apply. The construction of new buildings for agriculture and forestry is one of the permitted exceptions. The NPPF also provides support in principle for development that supports or facilitates economic development. The principle of development is therefore acceptable subject to other considerations of need and impact on the character and appearance of the landscape.

Farming Enterprise & Agricultural Need

Somerdale Farm is an existing and established holding which extends to just over 14 hectares (36 acres) of land, all of which is given over to pasture land. The holding is farmed in association with the applicants other agricultural holding, Sprinks Farm which also lies within the Moorlands and extends to some 51 hectares (127 acres) giving a combined land holding of 65 hectares (163 acres). The holding is registered with DEFRA under the holding number 37/079/0350.

Somerdale Farm is run as an organic holding and currently houses 36 calves, 28 cows, 70 sheep and 20 pigs. Organic farming has several benefits over conventional agricultural practices however it is widely acknowledged that these benefits are counterbalanced by higher food costs for consumers and generally lower and slower yields. In addition to the agricultural business the applicant runs a butchery and all of the animals raised on the holding are slaughtered and sold in the shop. Sheep generally lamb in January/ February and are grown on for approximately 18 months before slaughter. Cows are calved after lambing has ended so normally April through to June. Once calved the animals are kept for upwards of 2 years before being slaughtered. Pigs farrow all year round although the winter months of November through to January are generally

avoided. Pigs are turned around much quicker and killed around 9-12 months of age. All breeds kept on the farm are native and are therefore slower to grow and rear than more commercial intensive farming breeds.

It is proposed that the cattle and calves will utilise the existing 4 bay portal framed building. Two bays of the proposed extension will be given over to the sheep and the remaining two utilised for the rearing of pigs. Whilst the sheep will utilise the building during periods of lambing and isolation the remainder of the time this area will be used for the storage of general agricultural feed stuffs such as corn, hay and straw, all of which needs to be kept undercover and bought in bulk to benefit from economies of scale. It would also provide under cover storage for implements such as tractors, trailers, quad bikes etc when not in use. The existing portal framed agricultural building which is to be demolished as part of this proposal currently provides this function and it is therefore necessary to provide for its displacement. The remaining traditional brick and tile outbuilding is not, due to its modest size, scale low eaves and small openings, conducive to modern farming day practices.

The provision of a suitably sized multi purpose agricultural building would assist the holdings profitability as it would allow them to purchase feed stuff in advance when it is cheaper rather than being beholden to seasonal fluctuations and supply issues, provide them with a secure and suitable building to store farm machinery at the holding thereby increasing sustainability through the reduction of vehicle trips from the holding to where the machinery is currently stored by allowing them to store it on site and allow them to reduce their dependency upon a contractor as additional equipment can be purchased with the cost savings and provide a warm and safe environment for the breeding ewes during lambing thereby reducing preventative deaths which will obviously increase productivity and thereby profit and providing suitable isolation facilities should these be required which is a basic requirement. The proposed livestock building will provide the necessary space for animals to be housed and for the applicants to continue to develop and grow the existing agricultural enterprise.

Size, Scale, Form and Design and Impact on the character and appearance of the application site and wider surrounding countryside

As set out above the proposed building is relatively modest in terms of its size and has been sited close to the existing agricultural buildings. It will be read as part of the building group along with the farmhouse and associated buildings and will not therefore appear as a sporadic or isolated structure. Furthermore, the building works with the falling ground levels and has been partially built into the bank side thereby reducing its overall bulk and massing. The building comprises of a standard portal framed construction and its design, appearance and materials are comparable and in keeping to many found on similar buildings within the area.

In conclusion the proposed building is commensurate in size and scale with the needs of the agricultural unit . The existing enterprise is capable of supporting a genuine agricultural holding which is registered with DEFRA and that the proposed building is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture to ensure that the applicant can farm the land in an appropriate and sensitive manner whilst conserving and respecting the environment.

Highways

Paragraph 114 of the NPPF states that “In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that amongst other things (a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location and safe and (b) suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.

Paragraph 115 states that “Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe’ as is reflected within LP Policy T1 ‘Development and Sustainable Transport’

The proposed development would be served by the existing access point which currently serves the site. It is not considered that the proposal would result in any intensification in use of the site and there would therefore be no conflict with CS policy T1 or with the guidance of the NPPF.

Amenity

National planning policy dictates that at the heart of its core principles, planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. This is further re-iterated in LP Policy DC1, which seeks to protect residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping as informed by the Council’s ‘Space about Dwellings’ SPG.

Due to the relatively isolated location of the application site it is not considered that the proposed development would be prejudicial to the reasonable enjoyment of any of the neighbouring properties or surrounding land uses. In these circumstances, the proposal accords with such requirements in relation to LP Policy DC1 and the NPPF.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed development is considered to be required to meet a genuine agricultural need and will allow the continued growth of this agricultural enterprise in accordance with policies contained within the NPPF. Furthermore, the proposed building would be of a size and scale which is commensurate with the holding and of an appropriate form and design which reflects other buildings in the locality. The proposed development would be sited close to the existing built form of development at Somerdale Farm and would not be seen as an isolated or sporadic form of development. The proposed development would not be prejudicial to the reasonable enjoyment of any of the neighbouring dwellings nor adversely affect neighbouring land uses or harm highway safety. The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with policies SS10, DC1 and D3 of the adopted Core Strategy Document and national advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Authority is therefore respectfully requested to approve the application.