

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0562
Valid 18/12/2024

**OVERTON FARM FOLE
LANE
OVERTON
HOLLINGTON**

**ERECTION OF GENERAL
PURPOSE AGRICULTURAL
BUILDING

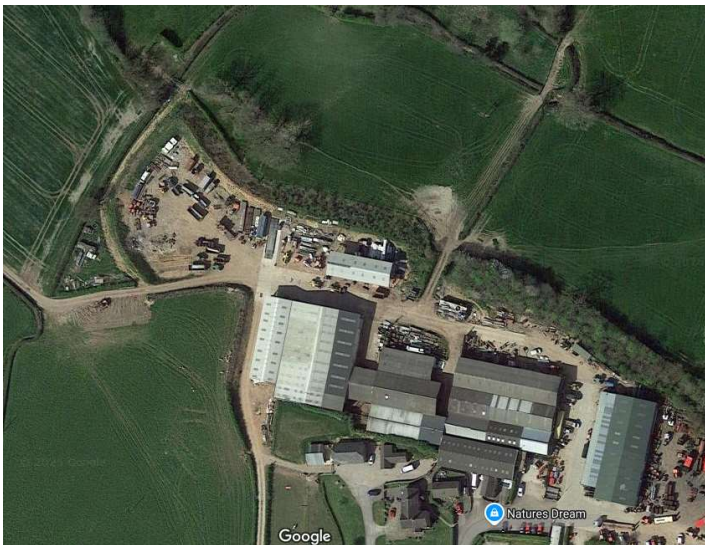
(FULL - MINOR)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on the character and appearance of the landscape

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Premises are surrounded by open farmland countryside. They are in an 'other rural area' beyond the smaller village of Hollington. A 130m track runs from Fole Lane to the farm house and behind the farm house to the north is a range of farm sheds that span a width of 200m with west/east orientation. The northern edge of the farm sheds is landscaped with an earth bund that reduces their impacts from the valley to the north. To the west of the sheds a small enclosure has been given over to loose gravel hard surface and the storage of farm machinery and sileage bales. An earth bund already encloses and surrounds this area.



To the west of the main farmhouse access, a second separate track joins the highway to the western end of the farm sheds and the open storage. From the sheds it continues to the west toward open fields.

PROPOSAL

The proposed agricultural building will occupy a floor area of 922 square metres and stand to a ridge height of 8.5 metres. The building is to be used principally for the storage of hay and straw, but on occasion may also be used for the storage of agricultural implements. The applicant's holding (registered under Agricultural Holding

Number 370180012) extends to some 600 acres (owned) plus an additional 600 acres rented. The business rears in the order of 450 beef cattle. The building will be used to provide additional storage for hay and straw grown on the holding to provide feed for the cattle.

The applicant's agent submits that:

In this particular case the applicant has a long established agricultural enterprise, with a large head of cattle (circa 450 animals) which along with the 1200 acre holding generates an attendant need to provide storage space for hay and straw grown on the holiday, as well as for storage of implements. The proposed general purpose agricultural building will meet these ongoing needs of the business and thereby support and facilitate its continued growth.

The proposed building would be constructed from a portal frame with a fibre cement roof. The revised, corrected plans, confirm that the building would be largely enclosed with two large roller shutter door openings to the front south facing elevation. There would be a block work base with Yorkshire board cladding above.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Checkley Neighbourhood Plan - Formally 'made' on 15th May 2024.

EMP2: Rural Business Diversity and Growth
DES1: Design
DES3: Landscape and Rural Character

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

DET/2020/0024 Fodder Storage Building. Prior Approval required and not permitted. Withdrawn.

SMD/2021/0198 Extension at rear of existing fodder store building. Approved.

SMD/2021/0199 Erection of Forage Building. Approved.

SMD/2022/0355 Erection of general purpose agricultural building. Approved.

SMD/2023/0586 Variation of a Condition in relation to application SMD/2022/0355 Condition 4. Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 11/01/2025

Neighbour consultation period ends: 11/01/2025

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Checkley PC: are concerned that the building is used only for storage as identified in the Application and is not used for housing livestock or storage of slurry as such use would require additional reports as requested by Natural England to include ammonia assessments and would seek conformation of same as a condition.

CPC are also aware that any new agricultural building must be for agricultural purposes only and must be reasonably necessary for agriculture and can't be used for any dwelling and would also seek conformation of same as a condition.

CPC are therefore of the opinion that the proposal appears to be sound provided the above conditions are satisfied and it is in keeping with neighbouring property and there are no local objections and it conforms with planning policies as defined in the Checkley Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan and the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Policy SS10 of the Local Plan confirms that the rural areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. This will be achieved by, amongst other measures, enabling the limited expansion or development of business for employment uses where a rural location can be justified. Generally modern agricultural buildings will have some notable impact on landscape, in varying degrees dependent on the circumstances in each case, but it is acknowledged that such buildings are essential to the countryside and to the nation's food supply with economic or employment benefit weighing against any harm. In this particular case the applicant has a long established agricultural enterprise, with a sizeable land holding and large head of cattle. The proposed building would provide storage for hay and farm implements on an area of hardstanding that is already used for outside storage that has rather untidy appearance. This is a recognised agricultural practice and one which will enhance the sustainability of the existing agricultural business. The proposed building can, therefore, be considered, in principle, to be in accordance with policy SS10 of the Local Plan and EMP2 of the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan.

Design and Impact on Character and Appearance

In terms of visual impact considerations, the proposed building will be located to the west of the existing cluster of buildings that make up the farmyard, on an existing area of hardstanding that is enclosed by a bund. A recently constructed agricultural building (permitted under application SMD/2022/0355) is located to the southeast, with other agricultural buildings located to the east and southeast. The building will have a typical agrarian appearance, comprising of portal framed building with blockwork / timber boarding to its elevations and a fibre cement roof. It will stand to a not dissimilar height to the other agricultural buildings on the holding and have a close physical association with them.

The principal views of the Overton Farm farmyard are from the south along Fole Lane and bridleway Checkley 24, and from public footpath Checkley 34 to the north. In views from Fole Lane and the bridleway, the building will be set behind a range of taller, more visually dominant agricultural buildings and landscaping. The building's visual impact would be softened by the existing bund that surrounds the southwestern / western flank of the farmyard.

The proposed building will not have a material adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area in such views. Likewise, in views from public footpath Checkley 34, the building will be read in the context of the existing buildings on the site, to which it will have a close physical association. Consequently, the proposed building will not appear strident or incongruous within its surroundings.

In these regards the local landscape would be protected, and the development would not lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character of the landscape. The proposed development will consequently not derive any conflict with policies DC1 and DC3 of the Local Plan or policies DES1 and DES3 of the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan. There are no neighbouring dwellings which would be harmed as a result of the proposals and vehicular access would be taken via the existing road. Neither residential amenity or highway safety is a constraint to the development.

Biodiversity

The applicant claims exemption from BNG regulations as the development would be carried out on existing hardstanding with no biodiversity habitat value. On site it is evident that a recently compacted stone surface has become muddied. Most recent aerial photographs support the applicant's assertion that the development would be carried out on existing hard surface without biodiversity value. The red edged location and site plans have been amended to reduce the area of the application site and development to the footprint of the building. In these regards the development is limited to an area of muddied stone surface that is used to park and store vehicles that has no obvious biodiversity value.



Comments on the consultation response of Checkley PC

The proposed building is designed to be enclosed with roller shutter doors, the required purpose is stated to be for storage. The building is not designed to house livestock or storage of slurry, which would require a different functionality and a more open fronted building to provide ventilation. There are cattle housing buildings adjacent to the proposal, alteration or adaption of the proposed building, deviation from approved plans, would require further planning permission. There are other regulations that apply, in any event, to slurry storage and disposal. A further condition specifying a particular type of agricultural use would be excessive and unnecessary.

The development is described as the erection of a general purpose agricultural building. A change of use to a different purpose would require planning permission. It has been concluded that the building would not have an adverse or intrusive impact on landscape character. Any of the provisions at Part 3 of the GPDO that permit a change of use of an agricultural building to either dwellings or different commercial purposes, are subject to their own conditions. Particularly a new building provided for agriculture would need to become established as such over a specified period of time before it would become eligible for permitted change of use. A condition requiring the building only to be used for agriculture or for it to be removed if agricultural use ceases, is considered unnecessary, and Inspectors have concluded as such in appeal examples. The provisions of the GPDO should only be removed by condition in exceptional circumstances that are not present in this case. A condition imposed on the 2022 permission for adjacent development, requiring the development to be removed when agricultural use ceases, was later removed under application SMD/2023/0586 when it was acknowledged that the development had, in original application, found to be appropriate to the countryside without adverse impact on landscape character. On review the condition could not be considered necessary, particularly in view of referenced appeal decision made at Fould Farm, where the Inspector had used the same logic to lift a similar condition.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Having regard to the considerations set out above it is concluded that the proposal is in accordance with, and the development would not conflict with policies SS10, DC1 and DC3 of the Local Plan.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 7th April 2025

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council