

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2025/0010
Valid 17/03/2025

GREENHEAD FARM
LEEK ROAD
KINGSLEY MOOR

**APPLICATION TO DETERMINE
IF PRIOR APPROVAL IS
REQUIRED FOR A GENERAL
FARM STORAGE BUILDING
FOR FARM VEHICLES, HAY /
STRAW, IMPLEMENTS, ETC.**

**(AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY
DETERMINATION)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Compliance with GPDO(2015) Schedule 2 Part 6
- Siting, Design and external appearance
- Coal Authority High Risk development area
- Green Belt

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Expansive level farm meadow land adjacent to the existing range of farm buildings. The existing buildings are seen prominently from Leek Road when approaching from the south east.

The field has a low native-species hedge along the border with the roadside verge and there are some four or so mature broadleaved trees spaced along the hedge line towards the farm. The field and views towards the site are more open and exposed from between 80m and 230m away where there are no boundary trees.

There is also a hedge to the far boundary of the field from the road (the south western boundary) beyond which the land falls away. There would be some visibility of the development from the west but mainly at distance due to the near-to land falling away. It is to be noted that a public footpath right of way from Leek Road through the farm yard turns to run generally south east past the proposal site, principally in the adjacent field to the west, but from where there would be views of the development.

From the planning statement: "The farm is registered as an agricultural unit with the Rural Payments Agency. The Single Business Identifier number (SBI) for Mr Carnwell's agricultural land is [...] and extends to approximately 111 acres (45 ha) of grassland. Another 30 acres are also rented, bringing the total farmed area to 141 acres (57 ha). The principal farming enterprises are beef and sheep with over 50 beef animals and a growing flock of sheep (currently 40 ewes plus lambs)".

Leek Road at this location is the classified A52. From the submitted site plan the development red edge scales as being just over 30m from the property boundary with the roadside verge of Leek Road and some 35m from the metalled part.

PROPOSAL

The proposal building would be aligned parallel to the south east elevation of the existing building range. At 30.5m in length it would be of similar length to the immediately adjacent existing shed. It would be 9.14m deep with an eaves height of 4.27m and a 5.56m ridge height. Dimensions of the existing adjacent buildings are not given in the application but it can be seen the proposal building heights would be slightly less.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

- SS1 Development Principles
- SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
- SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
- NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
- NE2 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2023)

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14;

Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 6 – Building a strong and competitive economy; 7 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres; 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities; 11 – Making effective use of land; 12 – Achieving well designed places and beautiful places; 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land; 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/G):

- Space About Dwellings SPG
- Design Principles SPG
- Design Guide SPD adopted 21st February 2018

Local Plan Supporting Evidence Documents:

- Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008)

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None. This is a long established farm at one time operated as a full-scale dairy enterprise.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity and consultation

None due to being a prior notification under Part 6.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Fundamentally, in order to qualify, the proposal must be “reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within [the] unit” and it must be taking place on agricultural land that forms part of an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more.

At field compartment level the parcel of land in question is identified in the planning statement as field parcel SJ9846 4655 registered with the Rural Payments Agency as being 1.96 hectares in area. Under the definitions at D.1 ‘agricultural land’ is defined as “land in use for agriculture and which is so used for the purposes of a trade or business” and ‘agricultural unit’ is defined as “land which is occupied as a unit for the purposes of agriculture”. The LPA need be in no doubt that this site is part of a current farm business and qualifies in terms of land area size.

As the farm evidently comprises a number of pre-existing buildings it is important for the LPA to consider carefully the ‘reasonably necessary’ test. The application submissions have unfortunately provided no schedule to analyse the current building uses at the farm. The LPA visited the premises on the 11th April 2025 and examined each building in turn. They were found variously in use (working clockwise from that closest to the proposal site) for livestock housing (cattle); covered silage clamp (two grab handlers in foreground); round bale storage (bedding straw or hay); small-scale tools and equipment storage / workshop; calf rearing; and indoor lambing. At least one tractor and a number of agricultural trailers and implements / attachments could be seen outdoors in the yard areas. Photo sequence on file illustrates the above.

In addition, the applicant has submitted a series of 8 photos with an e-mail dated 11th April 2025 (on file) which he says shows the main reason for his needing the proposal building. The equipment is recognisable as that required for grass harvesting, either for hay or for silage (different machine combinations are required). The building is at present loaned from a relative at a neighbouring premises but the applicant is preparing to have to vacate the building in due course. The LPA can be satisfied that this is relevant agricultural equipment for the farm and that there is not the space for it undercover at Greenhead Farm. From this it can be concluded that the proposal building is ‘reasonably necessary’.

There is one further consideration. The LPA noted at the visit that some amounts of the external yard area were in use for un-related non-agricultural storage in connection with a concurrent business, C D and J Tanks which it is understood is run alongside the farm enterprise as an adjunct to it. It is understood that this involves the supply and installation of fuel tanks eg for heating oil. Whilst the stored stock was taking up various parts of the farm yard areas (see eg air photo), along with

removed items awaiting their onward re-cycling, it can be judged that these areas do not equate to alternative potential locations for the proposal building. The main use of the premises appeared predominantly agricultural with the adjunct business subordinate to it with at most only minimal utilisation of any interior space.

The building development proposed must comply with the definitions and limitations set out under GPDO(2015) Schedule 2 Part 6. These include:

A.1 (h) any part of the development would be within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk road or classified road. In this case the red edge places it some 30m to 35m away.

The building is specifically proposed chiefly for storage of farm equipment but potentially also fodder. Although within 100m of New House (which is presumed unrelated) and others within 400m, as the building is not to be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge there is no conflict with A.1 (i) and condition A.2 (1) (a) would apply [livestock allowed only in the circumstances of D.1(3)]. As the permission would be for agricultural use only there would be no question of it being used as a result of this consent (if granted) for other non-agricultural purposes.

Siting

The proposed siting would extend the existing farm buildings cluster into adjacent and previously undeveloped green field land. It would take place in an aspect of the farm that is prominent in views from the adjacent main road when approaching from the south east. As the road passes the farm views would be loosely filtered by a small number of existing mature broadleaved trees. There would be no impact for approaches from the north west.

The existing farm is somewhat stark in view from the SE. The proposal building would in some ways benefit the appearance as it would be subordinate to the existing buildings taking out their abruptness in terms of height and providing a refreshed appearance as a result of the new materials.

The building is likely to be visible to the nearest neighbour at New House but at the building size and distance involved (c.90m) could not be considered over-bearing. No significant additional noise or odours are likely.

Road access would be by the existing long established farm entrance and the use is unlikely to represent an intensification.

Although sited in the Green Belt, this new building is not an inappropriate development as buildings for agriculture are exempted by NPPF 154 (a).

Design and appearance

The design is conventional modern agricultural. Concrete panel base walls to 1m high and the proposed dark green finish above including, importantly, to the roof is ideal. The use of box profile metal is acceptable as a result as are the proposed rooflights at one per bay on each roof slope. Open bays are faced in towards the farm keeping the publicly visible elevations 'tidy'. Very valuably the proposal includes the establishment of a new native-species hedge along the south east aspect – the most visible elevation – of the development.

Other Matters

The site is located within an area designated by the Coal Authority as being at high risk from past mining activity. For most planning applications an accompanying Coal Mining Risk Assessment (CMRA) has to be submitted to the LPA. However certain applications are exempt from this requirement and this includes 'prior notification' applications. See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-applications-coal-mining-risk-assessments>.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Thorough examination of the details submitted and the nature of the farm and scale of the enterprise with particular attention to reasonable need as well as the matters of siting, design and appearance as discussed above has led to a conclusion that the development should be allowed.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : **Prior approval required and granted**

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank

Recommendation Date: 13.04.2025

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council