

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2025/0016
Valid 31/03/2025

SPRINGFIELD FARM
BRADLEY LANE
ALTON

**APPLICATION TO DETERMINE
IF PRIOR APPROVAL IS
REQUIRED FOR AN
AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO
STORE STRAW AND
IMPLEMENTS**

**(AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY
DETERMINATION)**

MAIN ISSUES

Whether or not the proposed agricultural building can be built under a Notification of Prior Approval application under Part 6 of the GPDO rather than a full planning application.

If so, whether or not Prior Approval is required for the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed building.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is part of Springfield Farm, a 44 hectare arable farm on the west side of Bradley Lane, a narrow lane connected to the B5032 to the north, between Cheadle and Alton. There are a number of buildings grouped together next to the road, comprising a farmhouse and a number of large modern metal sheeted portal framed storage buildings. The site itself is at the far south end of the farm, separated from the area where the current farm buildings are located by two large fields. It is on the boundary of another farm, Ash Lea Farm, which lies immediately to the south of the site but also adjacent to the farm buildings of Ash Lea Farm, which appears to have formed part of the same agricultural unit as Springfield Farm (and with an apparent family connection) before falling under separate ownership. The site is also next to a field access into Ash Lea Farm. The farm has been in operation for between 75 years and 100 years.

PROPOSAL

The application is a "Notification of Prior Approval" application for a typical portal-framed green metal sheeted storage building for straw and implements. It would have a floor dimension of 30.5 x 18.3 metres, an eaves height of 4.6 metres and a ridge height of 7.0m. It would be partly open on one side. A Design and Access Statement gives further details:

This building will provide a secure storage area for some of the smaller machinery that is currently stored in the fields due to lack of storage on the holding. This will include tractors, balers, toppers, chain and harrow and general

agricultural equipment for managing the holding. This building will enable the equipment to be kept out of view and restricts the chances of the implements being stolen with the increase in agricultural machinery thefts in rural locations. This building will also be used to store the straw produced on the holding as a by product of the crops harvested.

This proposed building will be sited as shown on drawing No. 1224-001. This is for ease of the farming process and also to remove unsightly temporary storage facilities including storage container and trailer bodies currently use. The building has been placed adjacent to buildings on the neighbouring holding, so as not to appear isolated.

Under Part 6 Class A of the GPDO, a full planning application is not required for new agricultural or horticultural buildings on farms of over 5.0 hectares, subject to the proposal meeting all the other criteria set out in Class A.1 of that part. However, the same part of the GPDO requires the submission of a "Notification of Prior Approval" application and the Council must determine whether or not Prior Approval is required for the siting, design and external appearance of the building and if necessary request further information in which to determine the proposal, or whether or not on the basis of the information submitted, the application should be refused.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

N/A

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

DET/2024/0014: Proposed steel framed portal building, for the storage of crops and implements. Prior Approval Required and Details Approved.

DET/2025/0015: Agricultural storage building. Concurrent Part 6 application. Pending.

DET/2025/0017: Agricultural storage building at adjacent Ash Lea Farm. Concurrent Part 6 application. Pending.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: N/A

Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None.

Town / Parish Comments

None.

OFFICER COMMENTS

For agricultural-related development to be provided under the Prior Approval process without needing a full planning application, the proposal would need to meet the criteria/tests listed under Part 6 Class A.1 of the GPDO. From the information provided, it would appear the proposal would accord with all the criteria in that part. For example, the building would be under 1500 sq.m and would not be within 25m of a classified road (Bradley Lane is an unclassified narrow country lane and not a "main road"). Furthermore, the land is clearly part of a long-established agricultural business and therefore new agricultural buildings can be added under permitted development under Part 6 of the GPDO which relates to agricultural development. The proposal meets all the tests in Part 6 Class A.1 and can therefore be deemed to be determined via the Notification of Prior Approval process.

In this case, the storage building would be permitted development not requiring a full planning application but the Council must decide if Prior Approval is required for the siting, design and external appearance of the building and this is the purpose of this Determination of Prior Approval application, i.e. the tests in Class A.2.

The proposed building would be placed next to Bradley Lane and would be easily visible from the road, especially through the adjacent field access into the neighbouring Ash Lea Farm to the south. There are also a number of public footpaths nearby including across the open fields to the west. I consider that due to the proposed overall volume of the building, it would have a significant potential impact on the landscape.

The purpose of the building in storing items of smaller machinery and implements is understandable. During the site visit to assess the siting, design and appearance of the previous application around 12 months ago, there was a large number of vehicles, machinery and other items kept outdoors and storage containers are evident on recent online aerial photo's in the main part of the farm, further to the north. Despite this, I consider that more justification would need to be provided of the size of the building given that approval was only recently granted last year for a much larger crops and machinery storage building a short distance to the north of the current site.

The proposed building would also be very detached from the existing group of farm buildings clustered together at a considerable distance to the north of the site although it is noted it would be also adjacent to another group of farm buildings, including one larger building at a neighbouring farm to the south.

For the above reasons, the building, by virtue of its siting, design and appearance would have a potential visual impact on this area of open countryside and I therefore consider that Prior Approval for the proposed building should be required as I consider that the siting, design and appearance of the development would need to be further assessed.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development meets the tests in Part 6 Class A.1 and can be provided under permitted development not requiring a full planning application, via the Notification of Prior Approval process. However, on the basis of the information submitted, it is considered that Prior Approval is required to establish if it passes the tests in Part 6 Class A.2 i.e. to determine if the siting, design and appearance is acceptable. Prior Approval is therefore required for the proposed development.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIRED

Case Officer: Chris Johnston

Recommendation Date: 28.4.25

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council