

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0443
Valid 26/09/2024

**BARN CONVERSION SANDON
ROAD
CRESSWELL**

**PROPOSED GENERAL PURPOSE
AGRICULTURAL BUILDING, FOR
THE HOUSING OF LIVESTOCK,
STORAGE OF FODDER AND
IMPLEMENTS**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development and policy context
- Design and visual impact
- Neighbour amenity
- Highways
- Ecology
- Public Right of Way

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site is a plot of land situated to the north-west of the applicant's dwelling. The ground is generally flat and is laid with hardcore/hardsurfacing. Fields and hedgerows surround the site and there are a few sporadically located dwellings within the vicinity.

For the purposes of planning policy consideration, the application site is located within the open countryside, however it is not within the Green Belt. The site does not form part of any Conservation Area and there are no listed buildings/structures or protected trees which need to be considered. Public Right of Way 'Draycott in the Moors 17' crosses the site.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for a general purpose agricultural building to house livestock and for the storage of fodder and implements. The building would consist of four bays, have an overall width of 24.384m and depth of 12.192m with an additional 1.525m roof overhang. Proposed materials include a fibre cement sheet roof (including rooflights), and pre-stressed concrete panels with Yorkshire Boarding above.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

- SS1 Development Principles
- SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
- NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
- NE2 Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
- T1 Development and sustainable Transport

Supplementary Planning Guidance

1. Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands

Supplementary Planning Document

1. Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide

National Planning Policy Framework

Including sections:

- 2 Achieving sustainable development
- 6 Building a strong, competitive economy
- 12 Achieving well-designed places
- 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice. Expired.

Neighbour consultation period. Expired.

Public Comments

One letter of representation received stating that the neighbour's of 'The Shippons' have no objection to the proposed barn. Occupants of 'The Shippons' confirm that they have been consulted prior to the application being submitted, that they have sufficient landscaping cover at the boundary of their property and that their main view is not impacted by the barn.

Draycott Parish Council: Draycott Parish Council resolved to have no objection to this application. It needs to be noted that the Public Right of Way needs to be kept accessible and identified with signage.

Environmental Health

Initial consultation response was that Environmental Health recommended refusal of the application due to *'insufficient information being provided to assess the adverse environmental impacts this development would cause to the nearest residential properties.'*

Subsequent consultation response removed the recommended objection and provided the following comments

'There appears to be some confusion between our comments below and a response from the applicant, our approximate distance predictions do not appear incorrect. Hedgerows do not mitigate noise or odour. But the neighbour has submitted a positive no objection to the application in an email. In light of this comment, we would withdraw our objection but advise the conditions below are imposed on any permission granted to ensure amenity is protected.'

Staffordshire County Council Public Rights of Way

No objections.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

Recommendation Summary: Acceptance

Site Visit Conducted on: 16-Oct-2024

Red line does not connect to the public highway. Access track from Sandon Road is a private road. Highways have previously recommended refusal of development off this private road due to potential intensification. However, application is for a barn and this site is a registered agricultural holding. An agricultural building in an agricultural setting for housing of livestock and storage of fodder and implements which are already on the site is unlikely to intensify use of the access and will improve facilities for the agricultural holding. Current records show that there were no Personal Injury Collisions on Sandon Road within 50m either side of the property access in the previous five years.

Peak and Northern Footpaths: Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Application. We note that the Public Right of Way Draycott in the Moors 17 is close to the proposed site. The use of any PROWs, and the safety of users must not be affected by the development, nor during the work taking place. This comment is made on behalf of Peak and Northern Footpaths Society, a registered charity which exists to protect and improve public rights of way for use by walkers. Nothing in this response should be taken to imply the Society's support for the development.

Rambler's Association:

Footpath Draycott in the Moors 17 runs very close to where the proposed development will take place. This path must remain open to the public at all times.

Arboricultural Officer (SMDC)

No objections, comments as follows;

'The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a new agricultural building. The applicant's Design and Access Statement indicates a willingness to plant new trees, and I agree that this would be appropriate in order to reduce visual impact on the surrounding landscape in the event of approval. To assist, I have attached a sketch plan indicating suggested new planting, as described below:

There is an existing well established/mature hedgerow along the field boundary with the adjacent track along the south-west side of the site, which carries the route of Public Footpath No. 17. Given the proximity to this hedge of observers using the footpath, it already would provide some reasonable screening of the proposed development, although it would benefit from the addition of a few extra standard hedgerow trees to provide some filtering/visual breaking up of the building roofline.

The north-eastern boundary is open and visually exposed to the landscape beyond. I would suggest a new mixed native species hedgerow along this side, tied into the existing field boundary hedge at the north-western side of the site, and again incorporating a few standard hedgerow trees to punctuate and break up the formal linear roofline. The exact position of the hedge is not critical, and obviously the applicant would need unobstructed vehicle access along the north-east side of the building to service the indicated feed fence. Similarly, exact positioning of the new trees is not critical but would be generally along the lines I have indicated, and should avoid regimental regular spacing.

Typical hedgerow species mix: 75% Hawthorn, 5% Holly, 5% Hazel, 5% Blackthorn, 5% Dog Rose. Plant in a double staggered row, plants c.400mm apart along the rows and the two rows also c.400mm apart, using whips/transplants with plastic spiral rabbit guards or tree shelters with support canes as required.

Suggested hedgerow trees: Common Oak, native Rowan, Field Maple, native Crab Apple. Plant as 8 – 10cm girth standard trees, with suitable low stakes (c.600mm above ground level) to keep the roots firm until well established.

Hedgerow trees should be prominently indicated eg by a fluttering hazard tape flag or similar whilst still small/young in order to avoid topping them when adjacent hedgerows are trimmed.

Ideally, prior to application determination the applicant can submit a simple additional/amended plan and schedule confirming landscaping proposals as per above or broadly similar, so that it can be approved with the application itself (if this is to be approved) and would then need the imposition of a simple implementation/maintenance condition. Otherwise, a more expansive condition would be required to secure subsequent submission, approval, implementation and maintenance of a landscaping scheme (although this could be worded to be required within X months of the date of the

main planning permission rather than require pre-commencement discharge of condition application. Please advise further in due course and I can provide a suitably worded condition to suit if required.'

Officer Comment: Following on from receipt of the Arboricultural officer's comments, the applicant has submitted a proposed landscaping scheme which is closely in-line with comments supplied. The landscaping scheme is considered acceptable and a condition is recommended.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development and policy context

The application site is located within the open countryside, it does not however sit within Green Belt land. There are no 'in principle' objections to agricultural development within the open countryside. Local Plan policy SS10 supports a range of developments within the rural area, including those which have an essential need to be located within the countryside and support the diversification/sustainability of the rural areas and enhance the countryside.

Local Plan policy DC1 requires that all developments are well-designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to, and complementing the character and heritage of, an area. Development should be of a high quality, adding to the value of a local area, incorporating creativity, be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity. Relevant to note is the council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) entitled 'Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands' and the adopted Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) entitled the 'Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide' (Supplementary Planning Document). Both the SPG and the SPD make reference to agricultural buildings. Local Plan policy DC3 outlines considerations relating to landscape and settlement setting, protecting the countryside from intrusion, resisting adverse harm upon countryside and settlement character and conserving/enhancing biodiversity qualities. Local Plan policies NE1 and NE2 concern themselves with enhancing biodiversity and geological resources as well as protecting trees, woodlands and hedgerows. Policy T1 considers matters of any impacts of development upon the highway network.

The Planning Statement provides details of the agricultural need for the building, which can be summarised as follows:-

- Holding is 150 acres in size;
- Short-term use of some Paynsley Hall Farm buildings is coming to an end and a long-term building is required for the housing of livestock and fodder;
- Will provide dry storage for fodder and implements
- Ventilated building with a well-drained, dry lying area with clean/hygienic conditions.
- No other buildings available
- Needed to comply with Defra regulations and the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) regulations
- Implements to be stored include tractor, toppler, chain and harrows, crop drilling equipment and other general equipment
- Safe storage for equipment
- Heston hay and straw bales will be stored. Holding produces approximately 4500 small bales per year. Covered storage will reduce the use of plastic to cover the bales and will help the holding to be environmentally friendly.
- Will be positioned in an area that is already used for the storage of bales and implements
- Rainwater will be harvested and used for animal drinking water and washing the agricultural machinery
- Building is exempt under the Biodiversity Net Gain requirements
- Site is well-landscaped and applicant is happy to plant further trees if required.

The Planning agent has confirmed the applicant has 175 beef cows (age range 18 months to finishing - 30 months), and 60 ewe's plus followers, these were stock levels as of 17th April. A map and Google image have been provided showing the land area controlled by the applicant (owned and rented land), which is in the vicinity of Paynsley Hall Farm.

Design and visual impact

There are no objections to the design of the proposed building. This is a functional, four bay agricultural building, constructed using Yorkshire Boarding, low-level concrete panels and fibre-cement roof sheeting. The building is typical of others found within the Staffordshire Moorlands area and will not look out of place here. The site has some hedgerow boundaries for screening purposes and there is a building of similar appearance to the south-east.

The applicant has offered to improve the landscaping situation by planting additional trees (Planning Statement, page 3, 'Landscaping'). The additional planting is welcomed, not only will additional trees assist with landscaping/visual impact matters but there is also an ecological benefit. The Council's Arboricultural officer provided advice, including suggested tree/hedgerow species and locations. Detailed arboricultural comments are provided within the 'Consultations' section of this report. The amended landscaping plan is acceptable and should be the subject of a condition in the event of planning permission being approved.

Neighbour amenity

Initially objections were received from Environmental Health concerning the lack of information to assess potential impact(s) upon residents close to the application site. The comments were seen by the agent and a letter has been submitted by the occupants of 'The Shippons' to state they support the application. The neighbours have confirmed that they were consulted prior to the application being submitted, that there is sufficient landscaping at their boundary, and that the barn would not have any impact upon their view. Environmental Health officers have re-assessed the application, taken into account the positive neighbour comments and have decided to formally withdrawn their objection subject to the imposition of conditions. Due to its proposed location, there are no neighbour amenity concerns in respect of the building being overbearing/having adverse impact upon any neighbouring principal windows.

Highways

The application proposes no alterations to the existing vehicular access. The comments received from the County Highways officer can be read in full within the 'Consultations' section of this report above, however it is noted that there are no objections and no recommended conditions. Essentially the Highways officer's comments confirm that this is an existing agricultural holding which proposes an agricultural building. The Highways officer opines that it 'is unlikely to intensify the use of the access and will improve facilities for the agricultural holding.'

Ecology

The Planning Statement informs that the building is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain due to it being 'de minimis,' as set out in The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024, Regulation 4, first and second condition as below. The de minimis exemption only applies to development if the following two conditions are met:

- the development must not impact on any onsite priority habitat; and
- if there is an impact on other onsite habitat, that impact must be on less than 25 square metres (e.g. less than a 5m by 5m square) of onsite habitat with a biodiversity value greater than zero and on less than 5 metres of onsite linear habitat (such as a hedgerow).

The area the building will cover is already a hardstanding area that is used for the storage of plastic wrapped bales and agricultural implements and machinery used on the holding. It appears that the proposal would be exempt from the Biodiversity Net Gain regulations. However, it is noted that the Planning Statement confirms that the applicant is willing to plant additional trees. This matter has been addressed within the 'Design and Visual Impact' paragraph above. Not only would the planting of trees be beneficial in terms of visual impact, it would also assist in enhancing biodiversity at the site. The landscaping proposal can be secured via an appropriately worded condition.

Public Right of Way

Records show that a Public Right of Way (PRoW) Draycott in the Moors No.17, passes close to the site of the proposed building. A consultation response from Staffordshire County Council (SCC) confirms the presence of the footpath. SCC state that from the information submitted, it does not appear that it will be directly impacted by the proposed development.

In the event of the planning application being approved, informative notes can be added to the decision to inform the applicant/developer that the footpath must not be obstructed and that the path remains safe at all times.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the reasons outlined within this report, it is recommended that the application is approved subject to conditions and informative notes.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Conditional approval.

Case Officer: Lisa Jackson

Recommendation Date: 28.04.2025

X 

Signed by: Jane Curley

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council