

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2025/0004
Valid 19/02/2025

SHIRLEY COTTAGE
GARSTON ASHBOURNE
ROAD
WHISTON

AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO
STORE FODDER 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 lies in the countryside about a mile to the north-east of the small village of Whiston and is on the south side of A52 and to the west of Cotton Lane. It comprises part of a 7.3 hectare sheep farm. The exact site is immediately to the south-east of the farm buildings and farm cottage and 100m to the south of the main road. There are also some equestrian uses at the property including stabling and there is a manege immediately to the north of the application site, forms part of a field.

PROPOSAL

The application is a "Notification of Prior Approval" application for a typical portal framed modern agricultural storage building with floor dimensions of 18.3 x 12.2m and a max height of 3.7m. It would have metal corrugated cladding above a concrete base wall and fibre cement sheeting for the roof. The roof will have solar panels on the south-facing roof slope and also rooflights. The application forms state the wall sheet colour will be slate blue but a Planning Statement submitted with the application states Juniper Green. The Planning Statement also gives more information about the proposal as follows:

The building will provide a dry storage area for the fodder and reduce the need for plastic wrapping and for the storage of implements and machinery required to manage the holding.

The farmland is currently used to produce fodder and for rearing sheep.

The applicant currently has 50 ewes plus followers with lambing generally at the end of January.

There is currently only one other building on site, which is used for livestock and stables alongside the menage area. This building is unable to accept modern machinery as the height of the building is too low and there is no room inside for storage.

The applicant requires this building in which to store the fodder produced on the holding without the need for plastic wrapping and loss of produce from weather ingress.

This building will also be used to store some of the implements used on the holding such as a tractor, topper, chain and harrows, roller and other general agricultural equipment required to run the holding. This building will enable the equipment to be kept out of view and restricts the chances of the implements being stolen.

This building will be used to store Heston bales of hay and straw. By enabling these bales to be stored in the building it will reduce the use of plastics therefore helping the holding to become more environmentally friendly.

The drawings also show that end quarter of the existing livestock building will be demolished to allow access around the building from the main access track to lead to the chosen site for the new building.

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.

On 19th March 2025, the Council decided that Prior Approval was required (as to the siting, design and external appearance) and issued the Decision Notice. The Decision Notice also advised that the building be moved from its current position to the south of the horse arena, further west, to the south of the existing farm building so that it would be better obscured from views from the road instead of the more open position shown.

The applicant put up a Site Notice (as required under the GPDO) on 26th March 2025 and submitted a photo of the notice on 11.4.25 and also an amended site plan which moves the building between 5 to 10 metres to the west. With the amended plan, the applicant also submitted further information in support of the proposed siting of the building as follows, in response to the advice to move it further to the west:

"The proposed site was chosen by the applicant as the entrance/exit out of the existing building into the field is approximately halfway down the southern side elevation and they did not want to impede on the use of that building. However, there is room to bring the proposed building closer to that point, so that they overlap reducing the impact on the openness of the countryside in that area.

Also to be taken into consideration is the room required for manoeuvring within the site for larger agricultural machinery.

The applicant has already planted a significant amount of hedgerow to the north of the site as shown on drawing No. 1210-002, whilst this is still relatively young and will take several years to mature and provide screening, it will eventually block the view of a large proportion of the development and site when approaching from the east and the existing buildings and mature planting will already provide natural screening from the approach from the west, only when you are directly in front of the entrance to the property looking south will it be seen. The applicant has also suggested a few trees to be planted along the roadside boundary, but not to impair any visibility splays when exiting the site. The site also has a fall across it, with the fall from the roadside being approximately 2.0m before the land levels at the menage and development site, before falling again at the southern boundary.

In respect to the existing building shielding the proposed if placed directly to the south of the existing building, the proposed building will always be seen as the existing building only has an eaves height of approximately 2.2m and an apex of 3.4m, although this will provide some screening it will not totally shield the proposed building from view.”

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

N/A

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None relevant.

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.

Natural England

No objection.

OFFICER COMMENTS

With regard to the siting, design and appearance of the proposed building, the current farm buildings are easily visible from the main road due to the lack of screening along it. I consider its design, form and materials are acceptable as it has a typical modern storage building design not out of keeping with the countryside and which also harmonises with the other buildings. The proposed building would relate well to the cluster of existing building in terms of its location and distance away. Amended plans move the building even closer to the other buildings and partly obscured by the existing building to the west of the horse arena. However, its siting remains to the east of the buildings and it would still largely be to the south of the horse arena and easily open to views from the road. It would still appear as an encroachment into the open landscape to the east and there is no current screening of it between the site and the road.

Further justification has been provided for the siting of the building. It is explained that it cannot be placed immediately to the south of the existing farm building as the building entrance/exit into (and from) the fields to the south is half way along the south elevation of the building and this would of course be impeded if the building was placed there. It could be placed further to the south of the existing building allowing a yard or turning area outside of the entrance but then this would be seen as a greater separation from the group of farm building than the chosen siting. Furthermore, a siting further south would in fact make it more visible from the main road which lies to the north of the buildings but heads in a south-west direction. The applicant also mentions that some screen tree planting has been provided to the north of the buildings recently but has not yet matured. The applicant also raises the point that due to the proposed building being larger and higher than the current building, it would not in any case completely screen the building if placed immediately to the south of it, which is correct.

I am satisfied, on the basis of the further information received on 11th April to justify the chosen location of the building, that the proposed building would be placed in the most practical siting on the farm that would minimise the visual impact on the landscape and from the nearest roads and public footpaths.

CONCLUSION

It is considered that on the basis of amended plans and further information, that the siting, design and appearance of the proposed building is acceptable, hence passing the tests in Part 6 Class A.2 and that an approval can therefore be given for it to be built as permitted development under Part 6 of the GPDO.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston

Recommendation Date: 15/05/2025

X *J Curley*

Signed by: Jane Curley

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council