

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2025/0307
Valid 27/06/2025

HIGH LEE FARM MILL LANE
RUSHTON SPENCER

**PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL
OUTBUILDING TO PROVIDE
SHEEP & EQUIPMENT
STORAGE**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on the Green Belt
- Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area
- Impact on the non-designated heritage asset

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

High Lee (Great Hough) is a 19th C historic, roadside, farmhouse, with open farmland landscape surrounding and rising behind to the south.

An isolated, linear-plan farmstead with attached farmhouse and additional detached elements, which was probably established in the mid to late 19th century. A small, detached stone farm out building, included within the original farmstead, was, along with the attached barn, apparently converted to living accommodation in the 1970s.

At the rear of the farmstead against the rising ground behind, a large brick garage has been built dating from late 20th Century. Cut into the rising bankside on a raised tier of land to the rear of the brick garage there is a slim strip of hard surface used to park a tractor. The hard surface has been in place since 2017, more than 4 years, and would have been permitted under Class B, Part 6 of the GPDO.

An agricultural access and track that joins the lane to the northwest was granted a planning permission in 2016, it terminates to the southeast at the slim strip of hard surface to the rear of the garage.

PROPOSAL

The application is for the erection of an agricultural shed to temporarily house sheep and equipment. The shed would occupy the slim hard surface area with dimensions 15m by 5m. It would have a low profile (max height 2.7m) with a shallow mono pitch sheet roof. The easterly facing end elevation would be open fronted with a steel bar gate closure. The walls would be vented timber board above a brick plinth.

The proposed shed would provide a storage facility for the owners' sheep which need a place to be kept/treated at various times of the year. When the shed is vacated then it will house the applicant's machinery which are currently stored outside leaving them vulnerable to the elements and potential thieves.

The client has approximately 8.4 acres of land adjoining the application site and currently there is no storage facility the livestock or for the equipment to manage the land. The proposal will provide a new fully functioning agricultural shed along with a general store ancillary to the upkeep of the farm.

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
DC2 Historic Environment
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
E1 New Employment Development
NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

78/05963/OLDDC Conversion of barn to living accommodation. APPROVED.
SMD/2016/0188 agricultural access and track (retrospective) part reinstatement of new boundary wall. APPROVED.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 12/08/2025
Neighbour consultation period ends: 12/08/2025
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Rushton PC: No response

OFFICER COMMENTS

Impact on Green Belt

The site is in the Green Belt where development is inappropriate and, by definition, harmful unless it is provided for by one of the exceptions that appear in the closed lists at Chapter 13 of the NPPF.

One of the exceptions is for 'buildings for agriculture'. The proposed building would have the functional design and appearance of a simple shelter or shed with agricultural use obviously intended. It would be provided on land which at the time of the officer's site visit was clearly used to keep a tractor and is adjacent to grazing land which was used to farm/graze sheep.

The development is provided for by the relevant exception and it would not be inappropriate and harmful to the Green Belt.

Design and Impact on Character and Appearance

The proposed development has very much been designed to sit inconspicuously in a slim space of existing hardstanding between an existing garage building and the high bank side of a rising ground level. The shed would be almost flat roofed, save for a mono pitch sheet roof with a shallow slope to shed rainwater, and retain a low 2.7m height profile so that it would not be visible above the adjacent garage from the roadside. From the wider landscape to the south, the shed would be sat down in the cutting behind the steeply sided ground level.

The development would, therefore, not appear prominent or intrusive in the landscape. Presenting vented timber board walls and a sheet roof it would otherwise have the character of a small simple and functional rural building that would be appropriate to the farmland character of the surrounding landscape.

There would be no conflict with SMDC Local Plan policies DC1 or DC3.

Impact on the non-designated heritage asset (the 19th Century historic farmstead)

The 19th Century farmstead appears as a record on the County Council study of surviving historic farmstead. It is therefore a non-designated heritage asset. The farmhouse and the attached barn (converted to living accommodation in the late 20th century) retains its original linear form. The large brick garage built to the rear of the farmstead detracts somewhat from the original historic arrangement; however it is set back behind the dwelling. The proposed development would sit behind the garage building, at a higher ground level but with a restrained height profile which would mean that from the roadside the development would be concealed and not apparent within views across the farmstead. There would be no harm to the heritage asset in those regards and no conflict with policy DC2 of the SMDC Local Plan or the terms of the NPPF.

BNG

The application claims exemption from BNG requirements. The developments impact would be de minimus, affecting less than 25 sqm of habitat because it would be provided on existing hard standing. The hardstanding was provided by 2017 and has been in place for more than 4 years. In any event Class B, Part 6, Sched 2 of the GPDO permits the provision of a hardstanding reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture. It is accepted that the applicant can rightly rely on the exemption.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

A building for agriculture that would not be inappropriate and harmful to the Green Belt. The development would be sized and designed to sit inconspicuously between the side of a brick garage and the rising banked land level. It would not be intrusive in the landscape, would have the design and appearance of a simple/functional rural shed or shelter, and would be set behind and concealed from the historic farmstead below. The development would not be harmful to character and appearance of the

area or the significance of the historic farmstead. There would be no conflict with policies SS10, DC1, DC2 or DC3 of the SMDC Local Plan or the terms of the NPPF.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 21/08/2025

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council