

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2025/0036
Valid 15/09/2025

HOLLY DALE FARM DOUSE
LANE
BRADNOP

APPLICATION TO DETERMINE
IF PRIOR APPROVAL IS
REQUIRED FOR A STEEL
FRAMED AGRICULTURAL
BUILDING FOR SECURE
STORAGE AND LIVESTOCK
HANDLING

(AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY
DETERMINATION)

MAIN ISSUES

Whether or not the proposed portal framed 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 the prior approval of the LPA is required as to the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed storage building and, if so, whether it can be granted.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site is on agricultural land located within Bradnop. The land was previously associated with a farmstead at Holly Dale Farm, the edge of which is some 110m to the south of the application site, where a stone barn has been converted to provide two dwellings. The application site is in the line of sight from the barn conversion's principal elevation.

A previous landowner, Mr. Clark from Longshaw Farm, purchased Holly Dale Farm and removed the farmstead sheds and converted the more traditional stone barns to provide two dwellings. The farmland surrounding Holly Dale Farm that includes the application site is said recently, under the cover of application SMD/2024/0490, to have been farmed in association with the agricultural holding at Longshaw Farm on the Ashbourne Road 1.5km to the south.

The application site location is 210m to the north of an access with Douse Lane and would be served by an existing access track that was granted planning permission retrospectively in 2019 (SMD/2019/0247). The access track passes alongside the western edge of Holly Dale Farm, the track circumvents the dwellings at Holly Dale and provides separate farming access to the wider land to the north.

The site is located on the westerly facing slope, above a valley in the landscape – the site slopes down from east to west. From the site location the land continues to fall to a valley bottom before rising again steeply to the west, to the west Douse Lane climbs steeply to the brow of a hill which provides views toward and across the application site on the opposite slope. The application site appears in a landscape character type that is identified in the Landscape Character Assessment as 'Gritsone Highland

Fringe' with a character type of 'Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands' lying to the western side of the valley. The landscape character type is classed in the assessment as being the 'highest of sensitivities'.

PROPOSAL

The application proposes the provision of a portal frame shed to house dry fodder and harvesting equipment. 19m by 10m with its long sides facing southwest and northeast. The building would have Yorkshire boarding above a concrete panel base and a fibre cement sheet roof. Half of the building's width, facing northeast, would be open fronted directed toward the edge of the track and the bankside of the rising slope and ground level.

It is said that the building would provide storage (plans detail around 50 bales and machinery and tool storage) and livestock handling. The building would be within 400m of (approx. 110m from) the barn conversion dwellings to the south.

This is a repeat prior approval application proposing the erection of a very similar building, to that which was recently proposed under the cover of a previous application to which the LPA responded to, and confirmed that prior approval was required and was refused on the 23rd July 2025. That previously proposed building would have been further to the southeast and closer to the barn conversion dwellings.

With this application, the statement seeks to clarify that the applicant in this case is a new owner of the Holly Dale Farm dwellings and the surrounding farmland, a Mrs Jennifer Louise Walker (confirmed by land title with land reg.), not the previous owner Mr. Clark. The proprietor's address on the land title is provided as a property at Eaves Lane in Cheadle.

It is said that Holly Dale Farm was acquired by the applicants in two separate transactions and that the first purchase, completed in January 2025, comprised the farmhouse and approximately 8 acres of land, with no agricultural buildings included. It is said that the second purchase, completed in June 2025, comprised the Parlour & Pastures barn and the remaining agricultural land.

It is said that the land is farmed as a working livestock unit comprising primarily, Highland Cattle, and Valais Blacknose Sheep, managed year-round by the applicants.

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

DET/2025/0029 Proposed portal framed agricultural building. PRIOR APPROVAL REFUSED.

DET/2025/0018 Change of use of former agricultural building (now replaced or converted to games room/bar) to a dwelling. PRIOR APPROVAL REFUSED.

SMD/2024/0490 Erection of Portal Frame Building to House Young Cattle.

REFUSED. SMD/2023/0597 Erection of agricultural building to house young cattle.

REFUSED. SMD/2023/0261 Erection of agricultural building to house young cattle.

REFUSED. SMD/2023/0569 Certificate of lawfulness confirming change of use to two dwellings rather than three was lawful. APPROVED. SMD/2019/0247

Retrospective application for retention of an agricultural field track. APPROVED.

DET/2017/0015 Change of use agricultural building into three residential dwellings. APPROVED.

OFFICER COMMENTS

By virtue of Class A.1 (i) at Part 6 of the GPDO development is not permitted if it would consist of, or include, the erection or construction of a building, structure, or an excavation to be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry where the building, structure or excavation is, or would be, within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building.

There have been applications recently refused, on four separate attempts, to provide cattle livestock buildings on the land ownership, in overtly conspicuous locations within the landscape, in each case the building would have been provided within 400m of 'protected dwellings' – namely the Hollydale farmhouse, no longer providing the dwelling on a farmstead/agricultural unit and let as a holiday cottage, and the two barn conversion dwellings, also let as holiday cottages.

Following prior approval in 2017, existing livestock sheds had been removed from the farmstead at Holly Dale in favour of converting a stone barn into two dwellings by the previous owner Mr. Clark, who operates from Longshaw Farm some 1.5km away. The original farmhouse became marketed and occupied as a holiday cottage and farming/agricultural activity circumvented the grouping of dwellings at Holly Dale via an unmade farm track that provides access to the surrounding farm land. The three dwellings, therefore, are no longer buildings within the agricultural unit, they are, by design and function, separate to the agricultural unit. They are therefore, for the purposes of Part 6, protected buildings as defined at D.1(1).

With this application the proposed building is described as an 'Agricultural Building for Secure Storage and Livestock Handling'. It would be 110m, within 400m of, the barn conversion dwellings to the south east (the protected buildings).

The application statement seeks to clarify that the applicant in this case is a new owner of the Holly Dale Farm dwellings and the surrounding farmland, a Mrs Walker, not the previous owner Mr. Clark. It is said that Holly Dale Farm was acquired by the applicants in two separate transactions and that the first purchase, completed in January 2025, comprised the farmhouse and approximately 8 acres of land, with no agricultural buildings included. It is said that the second purchase, completed in June 2025, comprised the Parlour & Pastures barn and the remaining agricultural land.

A web search reveals that the Holly Dale farm house and the barn conversions remain available and have recently been occupied as holiday cottages, it is not clear where the applicant currently resides, the land title provides an address at a property in Cheadle. The grouping of dwellings remain separate from agricultural activities and unit, with the application statement confirming that access to the farm land continues to be provided by the unmade track that circumvents the dwellings.

The application statement attempts to differentiate between the 'accommodation of livestock' and, what is said to be the intended use of the building, 'livestock handling' that, it is said, would be limited to handling during TB testing. The building would incorporate a gated handling area and cattle crush for statutory TB testing.

This distinction is not readily accepted. Part of the building, half of its floor space, would be very specifically designed to accommodate and house livestock, whether the accommodation is limited to a period when they are being 'handled' or not, the livestock would be housed or accommodated at that time and that is very specifically the intended purpose of the building. The development would, therefore, consist of the erection of a building 'to be used for the accommodation of livestock'.

By virtue of Class A.1 (i) at Part 6 of the GPDO development is not permitted if it would consist of, or include, the erection or construction of a building, structure, or an excavation to be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry where the building, structure or excavation is, or would be, within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building. Therefore, the "Notification of Prior Approval" process cannot be used to determine if the building can be permitted. It does not comply with the criteria and exceeds the limits at Class A.1, the building is not permitted development and can only be carried out with full planning permission.

Moreover, the land in question is a very recent acquisition by a person who's address is provided as being at a property in Cheadle that is very remote from the application site. The dwellings at Holly Dale are not being occupied by the applicant or a farm worker as they are available to let as holiday cottages. It is not clear therefore, that the land is agricultural land, being land so used for the purposes of a trade or business.

With consideration as to the design, siting and external appearance of the development, prior approval should be refused. The proposed building would appear prominent and obtrusive in the landscape. The proposed development would be sited in an isolated open countryside location and, when viewed from Douse Lane, it would appear centrally and prominently within a quality gritstone highland fringe farmland landscape and, in those regards, it would be intrusive in the landscape.

The key characteristics of this landscape type are apparent in the locality, relative to the location of the application site. The site appears to the side of a steeply sloping, smooth rolling upland landscape on the steep slope side above a valley. The development would be provided to the edge of a large field on elevated and rising ground, above the valley bottom, to the northeast. The proposed building would be sited in a remote and isolated position beyond the grouping of the original Holly Dale Farmstead. From Douse Lane, which rises on the other side of the valley to the southwest, the large functional building would appear exposed and centrally located within quality, sensitive landscape. The development would be viewed as a visually prominent building and result in an intrusion into the countryside. For these reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would result in a prominent intrusion into the countryside that would be harmful to the sensitivities and quality of the landscape and the character and appearance of the area. In these regards, there would be conflict with policies DC1 and DC3 of the Local Plan, the terms of the NPPF and the Council's design SPG.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposed building does not meet the criteria and exceeds the limits at Class A.1 for Part 6 development at Sched 2 of the GPDO. There is enough information submitted with the application to determine that the siting, design and external appearance of the development would result in a building that would appear obtrusive

in the landscape. The proposed building is therefore not considered to be permitted development and prior approval for the siting, design and external appearance of the development would be refused.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION:
PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIRED
AND REFUSED**

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date:

X 

Signed by: Jane Curley

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council