

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2025/0015
Valid 31/03/2025

SPRINGFIELD FARM
BRADLEY LANE
ALTON

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

**(AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY
DETERMINATION)**

MAIN ISSUES

Whether the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed building are acceptable

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 south end of the farm buildings close to the south access into the farm off Bradley Lane, on a scrubby area immediately to the west of a modern brick portal-framed storage building. The farm has been in operation for between 75 and 100 years.

However, the part of the farm and cluster of buildings where the proposed development is to take place, based on observations on the site visit and an examination of the planning history appear to have been in use for many years as a agricultural machinery dealership. The presence of the Business (PF Tideswell Plant and Machinery) at Springfield Farm is confirmed by the company website.

PROPOSAL

The application is a "Notification of Prior Approval" application for a brick-built farm storage building to adjoin an existing larger storage building of the same proposed design, i.e. with red-brick walls, green metal-clad low-pitch roof and roller shutter doors. It would have a floor dimension of 9.1 x 12.1 metres, an eaves height of 6.0 metres and a ridge height of 7.2m.

It would be used to safely secure and store farm machinery which is currently kept outdoors. A Design and Access Statement gives further details:

This building will provide a secure storage area for some of the larger machinery that cannot currently be stored in the smaller buildings. This will include a combine harvester and associated equipment as well as the larger tractors. 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 proposed building will be abutting the existing building as shown on drawing No. 1223-001. This is for ease of the farming process and also to remove unsightly temporary storage facilities including storage container.

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 28th April 2025, the Council decided that Prior Approval was required (as to the siting, design and external appearance) and issued the Decision Notice.

The applicant put up a Site Notice (as required under the GPDO) on 5th June 2025 and submitted a photo of the notice on the same day to remain in place for 21 days as required under Part 6 of the GPDO.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

N/A

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

DET/2024/0012: Proposed steel framed portal building, for the storage of crops and implements.

Prior Approval Required and Details Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 26.6.25

Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None.

Town / Parish Comments

None.

OFFICER COMMENTS

With regard to the siting, design and appearance of the proposed building, approval was given for another new agricultural storage building under Part 6, to the other side of the building in which this new building would be placed adjacent to (further to the south and next to a yard by the south access to the farm). However, this was approved for crops storage and implements. This new building would be for large items of machinery including a tractor and combine harvester, hence the high eaves height of the building. The new building would have the same eaves, form and materials as the building it would be placed against, but with a slightly lower roof ridge and much smaller footprint as the existing and the roof axis is also 90 degrees to the roof axis of the existing, making it appear as a separate building rather than an extension, but this is not untypical of farm buildings placed against each other.

The proposed building would have a significant degree of screening by being adjacent to an existing larger building and where there are buildings also to the north and south and would also benefit from the existing line of trees along the road to the east. Despite this, it was deemed that Prior Approval should be required due to the presence of a number of public footpaths nearby including across the open fields to the west where the proposed building could be potentially visible.

The building would not be easily visible from the road and whilst the building would be visible from the paths crossing, it would appear as being part of the group of farm buildings and would not encroach into the open countryside.

Despite this, it is sited in a part of the farm which is not used for agricultural purposes but for what appears to be commercial machinery/vehicle sales. Furthermore, the proposed building does not have a typical agricultural storage building design. It comprises a brick finish and has roller shutter doors. The eaves are very high and the building appears more as an industrial or commercial storage building for storage or maintenance of large agricultural vehicles rather than simply for storage of agricultural machinery in connection with farming operations. For these reasons, it is not considered the design, siting and appearance is acceptable and therefore the application should be refused.

CONCLUSION

The proposed building, by virtue of its brick finish, roller shutter doors and high eaves does not have the form of an agricultural storage building and are akin to a commercial vehicle workshop. Therefore it is considered its design and appearance are inappropriate as they do not reflect that of a building which is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the unit. Furthermore, the siting of the building is unacceptable being within an area used for non-agricultural purposes, (agricultural machinery dealership) which also does not indicate a building which is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the unit.

It is recommended that the application should be refused on this basis. Should the applicant wish to pursue the proposal as a commercial building it would require a full planning application.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston

Recommendation Date: 17/10/2025

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council