

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2025/0535
Valid 15/01/2026

WASSAIL FARM EAVES
LANE
ARMSHEAD

ERECTION OF PIG STY
(PARTIALLY
RETROSPECTIVE)

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on the Green Belt
- Impact on character and appearance of the area

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site comprises of a rectangular parcel of land which extends to circa 450 sq metres and lies on the northeastern side of a long country track which joins the junction of Eaves Lane and Jack Haye Lane to the north. The track is not classified. The area is known as Kerry Hill with Wetley Moor to the south.

The application site, forms part of a larger agricultural field. It occupies an isolated position and is surrounded on all sides by open countryside interspersed with sporadic dwellings. For the purposes of the development plan the application site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt where restrictive development plan policies apply.

PROPOSAL

This is a full application which seeks planning permission for the development already carried out and to complete it to provide a pig sty and store. The building which has a simple rectangular floor plan equating to some 36 sq metres, has a simple pitched roof design with an eave's height of 1.7m and an overall ridge height of 3.4m. The building which sits close to the lane has been positioned with its ridge running parallel to the lane. Constructed from concrete blockwork walls with red brickwork pillars either side of the door openings the building has exposed timber rafters to accept reclaimed plain clay roof tiles.

The building which was commenced on 19th May 2025 is currently unfinished. The application proposes a number of works in order to complete the building. These comprise of cladding the existing concrete block walls with randomly coursed natural stone with quoins to the corners of the building with both gable openings treated with Yorkshire boarding in a hit and miss arrangement with the upper portion having a close boarded style. The existing red brick pillars to either side of the door openings will be retained, and vertically boarded timber doors shall be fitted. The roof will be finished with reclaimed plain clay roof tiles with timber fascia and barge boards fitted with black uPVC half round gutters with circular downpipes. Vehicular access to the site will be provided via the existing arrangement in the southeastern corner of the application site.

The application includes a statement of intent and justification:

Wassail Farm has been owned by Mr Jarvest since November 2020. The holding comprises of 22 acres (8.09 hectares) of land of which 13 acres (5.26 hectares) are owned, 5 acres (2.02 hectares) are provided by the neighbouring landowner as part of a reciprocal agreement and farmed by the applicant and the remaining 4 acres (1.62 ha) are rented by the applicant for hay production and lie just half a mile away.

Wassail Farm is an established small holding and registered with DEFRA under CPH number 37/102/0272. The applicant is registered with DEFRA to keep sheep (flock number is U1595193 433666), poultry (poultry number is U1595191) and pigs (pig number is U1446442 EJ3717). Since purchasing the site in November 2020, the applicant has committed to making improvements and using the land exclusively for livestock and growing of crops. Whilst the land has previously been farmed by neighbouring farmers and grazed with sheep and cattle this has provided the applicant with some experience and mentorship. The applicant has recently purchased a small flock of 8 pedigree Jacob ewe lambs with the intent of breeding these to support the traditional breed and because these are a hardy minimal intervention breed suitable for this location.

Approximately 1.5 acres of the land is used for pigs and divided into fenced paddocks which were erected in May 2024. Pigs were introduced to the holding in early June 2024 and the applicant currently has 8 adult pigs and at different times a varying number of piglets.

The pigs are:

1 x pedigree saddleback boar registered with the British Pig Breeders Association (BPA)

3 x Saddleback gilts currently in pig again registered with the BPA

1x Pedigree Berkshire boar registered with the BPA

1x Pedigree Berkshire Gilt registered with the BPA

2x Pure bred but not breed standard Berkshire sows both who have recently had good litters farrowing in the pig shed.

The applicant's aim is to produce pedigree breed standard pigs to maintain these traditional breeds both of which have been in decline Berkshires are now an at risk priority breed (only 236 breeding sows in the UK) and saddlebacks are also at risk (with only 315 registered breeding pedigree sows) Conservation - British Pig Association Both breeds are listed with the Rare Breeds Survival Trust Download.ashx The Government's publication Code of Practice for the Welfare of Pigs, which was updated in October 2023 sets out a number of requirements regarding the health and welfare of pigs. This document sets out that accommodation for pigs is required not only for isolation purposes when animals are sick or injured or introducing new stock to the holding but also prior to pigs farrowing when it is important that they are kept out of sight and sound of other pigs.

The RSPCA reiterates this advice stating that pigs easily get cold and it is therefore important for pigs to have warm, dry, draught-free, straw-bedded housing which is well ventilated, and give them enough room to make separate areas for dunging, exploring and sleeping. Pigs need somewhere dry to lie down, and a minimum area of 36 square metres (6 x 6 metres) per pig (ideally a larger space) is required. A pig can typically give birth to 2-3 litters per year as their gestation period is relatively short at 3 months,

3 weeks and 3 days. This allows for a quick turnaround for rebreeding after weaning piglets (around three weeks after birth). This rapid reproductive cycle means a single sow can potentially produce over 30 piglets annually making pigs very efficient livestock.

The application building has been built purely with the intention of housing the applicant's pigs hence its low eaves and modest size. There are currently no suitable buildings on site which would be capable of meeting these needs. Whilst the existing building is unauthorised the applicant's vet has confirmed that without it the recent litters born would have perished without it. The pig sty is therefore a much-needed facility which is both vital to the health and welfare of the animals on site and the efficient and effective management of the holding.

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
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

DET/2022/0039 A traditional style agricultural field barn. Prior Approval Refused.
DET/2023/0025 A traditional style agricultural field barn. Prior Approval Refused.
DET/2024/0032 Modern portal frame agricultural storage building. Prior Approval Refused.
DET/2025/0053 portal framed agricultural building. Prior Approval Refused.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 20th February 2026
Neighbour consultation period ends: 20th February 2026
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

33 supportive comments have been received the following points are raised:

- The building is required for the welfare of the animals particularly during the winter
- The building is not conspicuous in the farmland landscape
- No adverse effects on the area
- Support the breeding of rare/endangered breed pigs and heritage of farming
- In keeping agrarian character
- The building is of a size that does not lend itself to purposes other than agricultural

Town / Parish Comments

Bagnall PC: No response within consultation period

Environmental Health

No objection subject to conditions. The Site is remote from neighbouring properties but adjacent to the highway, we would advise consultation is made with the highways authority to check for potential runoff. Conditions set out below are advised to protect the local environmental quality post development.

Manure or effluent generated from the proposed unit shall be managed in accordance with the recognised Best Available Technique (BAT) outlined in the Protecting our Water, Soil and Air, A Code of Good Agricultural Practice growers and land managers (Defra, 2009) to ensure as far as is possible that there is no reasonable cause for annoyance from any odours at any nearby sensitive receptors and pollution of controlled waters is prevented.

Severn Trent Water

No response within consultation period

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No objection

OFFICER COMMENTS**Impact on the Green Belt**

The site is within the Green Belt where development is inappropriate and, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt unless it is provided for by one of the exceptions that appear on the closed lists at Chapter 13 of the NPPF. Substantial weight is attributed to any harm to the Green Belt and planning permission should not be granted unless there are other considerations, amounting to very special circumstances, that clearly outweighs the harm to the Green Belt and any other harms that would result from the development.

The list of exceptions includes: A building for agriculture.

The building has been provided on a unit of agricultural ownership of some 8ha. It is located within the proximity of the established access track that serves the land and the property at Little Armshead Farm further to the southeast. When the planning officer visited the site there was a pig housed inside the building and it was being used to store hay and feed. A row of three doorways faces north onto a concrete pad and the farmland beyond. The farmland was divided into small parcels with wire fencing and there was a pig arc shelter on each parcel. There were a muck heap and wheelbarrow on the concrete pad.

The building itself has been constructed with single skin concrete block walls and roof tiles laid on timber lathes and beams that form a full pitch roof. At each gable end Yorkshire board style timber panels have been provided in the apex beneath the roof. The building has not been provided with any insulation, cavity walling, or roofing felt. There is nothing about its size (internal dimension less than 37 sqm and low eaves

and height profile), architectural detailing, function, character or appearance that suggest the building has been provided for anything other than as a simple animal shelter and store. The application plans show that the building would be completed with facing stone constructed hard against the face of the concrete block and timber doors would be installed to openings.

The application statement explains how the applicant keeps and produces rare breed pigs, with evidence from the RSPCA, how the building has been designed and provided to house and farrow pigs.

Overall, on all the evidence, it is considered that the building has been provided and would be completed for agriculture. The development is therefore provided for by the exception, and it is not inappropriate or harmful to the Green Belt.

Policy Approach to Rural Development

In the 'other rural areas' of countryside that surround the villages and towns, as defined by the settlement hierarchy at Local Plan Policy SS2, Local Plan area strategy SS10 applies.

The Local Plan strategy for these rural areas, SS10, provides only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. Additionally, the strategy seeks to sustain the rural economy by supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprises.

Generally, development plan policy supports and enables rural diversification and agricultural development that benefits rural economy and would not adversely affect the Green Belt or the character and appearance of the area. The proposed development would find policy support in those regards.

Design and Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area

Local Plan Policy DC1 requires that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD.

In particular, new development should incorporate creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area; and, be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

Local Plan policy DC3 states that development which leads to a prominent intrusion into the countryside should be resisted.

The building, as a form of agricultural development, is relatively small. It is located to the edge of the field with proximity and association with the lane and the boundary dry stone wall and tree line. On approach, from the northwest, the little building sits in the foreground with the large isolated red brick dwelling of Little Armshead Farm behind (150m) to the southeast and a large electricity pylon (300m) to the east. In that context the building does not appear prominently intrusive in the countryside.

Of simple form and limited architectural detailing, the building has the agrarian character of a small functional shed. The full pitch roof and use of tiles give the building traditional rural appointment, and this would be further advanced through the proposal to complete the building with facing stone cladding.

Exterior elevations have low profile and the simple character and appearance of agrarian sheds common to the farmland landscape.

There would be no conflict with policy DC1 or DC3 of the SMDC Local Plan.

Impact on Amenity

The applicant and landowner is already keeping pigs on his land. The small building does not increase the site capacity and does not result in elevated noise or odours above those associated with the use of the land.

Environmental Health of not raised objection relative to the proposed buildings impacts on the amenity of near neighbours. There has not been any public objection to the nearest neighbour is more than 150m from the development and the near neighbour has sent comments of support.

CONCLUSION

Acceptable form of small-scale agricultural development. No harm to the Green Belt or the character and appearance of the area. No conflict with development plan policy.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 12/03/2026

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council