



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 May 2026

by Mr C Tivey BSc (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 May 2026

Appeal Ref: 6007366

Hayes Gate Farm, Star Bank, Cotton, Staffordshire ST10 3BN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Mellor against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
 - The application Ref. is SMD/2025/0541.
 - The development proposed is for the demolition of the existing parking area and the erection of a secure garage building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I note that the planning application, the subject of this appeal, was submitted as a householder proposal notwithstanding that the proposed building would accommodate a tractor the appellants use for the management of the adjoining grassland; and which is identified as an agricultural holding with a Single Business Identifier number issued by the Rural Payments Agency. I have not been made aware that the Council had requested that the standard application forms for full planning permission be submitted for the proposal, and in any event had I been so minded to have granted planning permission, the end result would have been the same whichever forms were used. I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. Hayes Gate Farm comprises a residential barn conversion with an ancillary stone barn and an open-fronted former agricultural shed which has the benefit of planning permission for domestic parking.

5. The shed is in a relatively poor state of repair, and I note that the appellants have suffered from thefts of equipment in the relatively recent past; and therefore seek to provide more secure storage not only for their domestic occupation of Hayes Gate Farm, but also for the parking of their tractor and associated land management equipment. In principle I consider this to be a reasonable proposal.
6. The existing shed is fairly innocuous within the rural scene with a modest overall ridge height and a relatively shallow mono-pitched roof. The proposed replacement building, whilst only being marginally deeper than the structure that it would replace, would be higher and whilst the present roof form provides a visual bookend to the former farmyard, when viewing the site up the driveway from the road, the proposed building would appear slightly incongruous with the roof pitch being reversed. I understand the reasoning behind this, which is to accommodate solar panels, but ultimately, I consider that the overall increase in scale over and above that of the existing shed, would render it far more visually incongruous.
7. I note that the tractor's roller-shutter door is shown to be provided on the south east elevation and is stipulated as requiring a minimum height of 3.1m for access, however that is shown to be taken from the highest ground of the application site. Indeed, if the roller-shutter door were to be provided on the north west elevation facing the road, then it would not be necessary to provide a building of such a height as that proposed. Therefore I am not convinced that the building before me is the minimum height necessary in order to accommodate the tractor. The subject building would be very functional in its appearance, and I consider that it would not appear subservient to the host dwelling, nonetheless its form of construction would be typical of modern farm buildings as can be illustrated by the barn to the north that is within separate ownership.
8. Much mention is made within the appellants submissions with regard to the site now constituting previously developed land and whilst I am not in a position to disagree with this view, that does not negate the importance of assessing the visual implications of the proposal. In reality, the views of the proposed barn from the diverted Public Right of Way would not be significantly different from the existing situation ie. the view from the north east would remain of a blank elevation. Nonetheless, the increase in the overall scale would render the subject building as incongruous, particularly bearing in mind its primarily purported domestic use. I say this having regard to the fallback position and that planning permission has previously been granted for a new external envelope, enclosing of the side elevations with new cladding and a corrugated metal roof permitted pursuant to planning permission SMD/2019/0453.
9. I cannot agree that the proposal is not any more dominant than the building it would replace and whilst I fully appreciate the benefits of generating renewable energy, and the cited need for the building, these matters do not outweigh the visual harm that would arise from the proposal.
10. I therefore find that the building would have a harmful effect upon the character and appearance of the rural area and the proposal conflicts with Policies SS10, DC1 and DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan adopted September 2020 which in the 'other rural areas' which permit additional domestic outbuildings provided they are appropriate in scale and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area, whilst resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside.

Conclusion

11. Having regard to the above and all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

C Tivey

INSPECTOR