

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2026/0013
Valid 01/05/2026

GREENWAY BANK FARM
GREENWAY BANK
BIDDULPH

**APPLICATION TO DETERMINE
IF PRIOR APPROVAL IS
REQUIRED FOR A PROPOSED
AGRICULTURAL BUILDING
FOR STORAGE OF
MACHINERY AND PRODUCE**

**(AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY
DETERMINATION)**

MAIN ISSUES

Whether or not the proposed storage 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 LPA wishes to approve the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed storage building.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The proposed site is to the western edge of the Greenway Bank Farm farmstead which is to east of the Greenway Bank landscaped country park and the north and rear of 19th Century brick farm sheds that screen the visitor carpark from the working farm. The site is enclosed to east and south by existing farm sheds and to the west the wall and tree lined boundary of the country park. The site is currently used for the open storage of machinery and sileage bales. A key footpath that leads from the visitor's car park and into the woodland walks of the country park is to the edge of, and parallel to, the farm's western boundary.

The parkland that surrounds the site to the west and north has significance as a non-designated heritage asset - A landscape park originally established in the late 18th century by Hugh Henshall (who was responsible for the completion of the Trent and Mersey Canal following the death of James Brindley).

The brick haybarns and sheds to the south of the application site provide the remains of the 19th Century Farmstead. The original glass houses surviving well into the 20th Century, now lost and removed the area now provides the visitor's carpark.

PROPOSAL

To erect a building with 'simple agricultural form', with natural coloured fibre cement Roofing, Green box profile sheet cladding to walls, and prestressed concrete panels at lower level.

The building is specified on the application form and detailed in elevational drawings as 12.19m by 61m, 4.2m to eaves and 6.1m to ridge. Total floor area 743 sqm.

Open fronted along its entire length facing east toward the farmyard and adjacent farm shed. The building's closed rear elevation would align with the stone wall and mature tree line to the boundary of the country park. The proposed site is to the western edge of the farmstead enclosed to east and south by existing farm sheds and to the west the wall and tree lined boundary of the country park. The site is currently used for the open storage of machinery and silage bales.

It is submitted that the proposal is to support the ongoing operation of a long-established, family-run agricultural enterprise based at Greenway Bank Farm, Brindley Ford, surrounded by 90ha (222 Acres) of farmed grassland. The principal activity of the business is dairy production, centred on a semi-intensive Holstein/Friesian herd comprising approximately 250 head of cattle. This includes around 140 milking cows, together with approximately 110 replacement heifers reared on the holding to support a closed and sustainable breeding system.

It is said that there has been a recent fire within a general-purpose storage building (an electrical fault on farm machinery) resulting in the complete loss and demolition of the building.

In response, the current application seeks permission for the erection of a modern, purpose-built agricultural building of an appropriate scale to replace and improve upon the previous facility. The proposed building will provide essential covered storage for machinery, forage, and operational equipment, ensuring that assets are protected from weather-related deterioration, improving site organisation, and supporting the efficient day-to-day operation of the farm.

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

90/01336/OLD Slurry store and cattle buildings. APPROVED.

95/01041/OLD Agricultural stock building. APPROVED.

96/00236/OLD Agricultural building. APPROVED.

11/00263/FUL Erection of Agricultural Building for housing livestock. APPROVED.

SMD/2014/0491 Proposed new agricultural building to house the proposed parlour. APPROVED.

OFFICER COMMENTS

The proposal meets the criteria listed under Part 6 Class A.1 of the GPDO it would appear reasonably necessary for agriculture given that the structure would have the obvious design and function, as described, necessary for general storage associated with a long established, sizeable dairy enterprise on a unit of more than 5ha.

The proposed building would have a floorspace of less than 1,000m², and a height of less than 12 metres. The proposal lies over 3 kilometres from the perimeter of an aerodrome. The facility does not therefore appear excessive or unreasonable for the size of the enterprise and holding.

Therefore, the "Notification of Prior Approval" process can be used to determine if the building can be permitted. As it would not exceed the limits set at Class A.1, the building is permitted development that could be carried out without needing full planning permission.

Before carrying out the development the developer must comply with the conditions set out under class A2 and apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the siting, design and external appearance of the building.

Section W(10)(b) of the procedure for applications for prior approval under Part 3 states that the local planning authority, or in this case the Secretary of State, must have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) so far as relevant to the subject matter of the prior approval, as if the application were a planning application.

As such, the policies of both the development plan and Framework are material considerations insofar as they relate to the prior approval matters for consideration, but neither are determinative.

The local planning authority may, in the exercise of their discretion, determine both prior notification and prior approval on the same occasion if, in the particular circumstances, it is appropriate and procedurally fair to do so (*Lang J in R (oao Smolas) v Herefordshire Council [2021] EWHC 1663*). In this case full details and a comprehensive set of plans are provided with this prior notification application, and the planning authority has sufficient information to determine the application for prior approval.

The red edge on the location/site plan marks the position of the proposed building to be located 3m from the stone and brick boundary wall to the country park. The building's rear elevation would follow the tree line for 61m and flank the edge of the woodland footpath that would be just 10m from the rear of the building. The elevation presenting to the woodland would have significant height 4.2m to eaves and a ridge height of 6.1. That vast elevation would present green box profile cladding, sometimes used with the construction of agricultural buildings, but not exclusively and equally akin to an industrial unit on an employment site.

The tree line boundary is sparse in places, and this provides gaps and visual penetration out from the woodland toward more open countryside. Breaks in the tree line provide a sense of light and openness beyond. While there is a small amount of outside storage on the application site it retains a low profile below the boundary wall and does not appear particularly prominent or intrusive from the path.

The adjacent building line of the existing farm shed is some 30m from the boundary. It has a low eaves height to a timber clad elevation and a large sloping roof plane. All this assists to retain a low building profile that does not appear overtly overbearing or obtrusive from the woodland path. The existing building's low profile and distance from the parkland boundary helps preserve, presumably deliberately so, the sense of openness beyond and to the east of the woodland that would have been original to, and an intent of, the 19th Century designed landscape.



The proposed building by reason of its siting, design and external appearance would have an overbearing and imposing impact that would adversely affect the character of the woodland walk and the countryside amenity that is enjoyed and is available to public visitors to the park.

The building would present an elevation of significant length and height within proximity of the public footpath and the boundary of the country park. The experience of the woodland walk would become closed down and corralled along the vast elevation of the building that would obscure views, block a sense of light, and obstruct the visual penetration that is currently available through gaps in the tree line.

The external appearance of the building would not be distinctly agrarian in character, rather, with the use of box profile cladding on the facing elevation, it would have a generic appearance akin to an industrial or employment unit that would appear intrusive and unsightly.

For these reasons, it is considered that the proposed development 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

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 and unsightly from public vantage to the detriment of the character and amenity of the adjacent country park. The prior approval for the siting, design and external appearance of the development should be refused.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : PRIOR APPORVAL REQUIRED AND REFUSED

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 29th May 2026

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council