

HARVEY HUGHES

INDEPENDENT RURAL CONSULTANTS

John Bailey & sons

Greenway Bank Farm
Greenway Bank
Brindley Ford
Stoke-on-Trent
ST8 7QX

Planning and Justification statement for proposed General
Purpose agricultural storage building

At

Greenway Bank Farm, Brindley Ford, ST8 7QX

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1.0 Introduction

This application has been prepared and submitted on the instruction of Mr R Bailey of John Bailey & Sons, Greenway Bank Farm. To be submitted to Staffordshire Moorland District Council, for a proposed general purpose agricultural storage building.

This report has been prepared by Anna Goldie BSc (Hons) PgC ASAg, an agricultural consultant for Harvey Hughes Ltd in Northwich, Cheshire. The report outlines the planning proposal and the agricultural justification for the building.

2.0 Business summary

John Bailey & Sons is 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.

The herd operates under a seasonal grazing and housing regime, reflecting both animal welfare considerations and efficient grassland management. Milking cows are fully grazed during the summer months between June and September, with transitional periods of part-grazing and part-housing typically occurring in May and October. During the winter period, from November through to April, all cattle are housed to protect soil structure, maintain pasture condition, and ensure appropriate feeding and welfare standards are met during adverse weather conditions.

The farmstead comprises a mix of traditional and modern agricultural buildings. A number of older, brick-built structures remain in use and provide accommodation for calf rearing and the storage of smaller sundry items. These are complemented by more modern agricultural infrastructure, including purpose-built dairy cow housing, a milking parlour, and associated dairy facilities, all of which are designed to meet the operational requirements of a contemporary dairy enterprise.

However, the business has recently experienced a significant operational setback following a fire within an existing general-purpose storage building, caused by an electrical fault associated with farm machinery. The incident resulted in the complete loss and subsequent demolition of the structure, leaving the business without adequate covered storage for essential machinery, feed, and equipment. This has had a direct impact on the efficiency of the farm, with equipment currently exposed to the elements and feed storage arrangements compromised.

The current proposal follows the refusal of Prior Approval application reference DET/2026/0013 for an agricultural storage building on the holding. The Local Planning Authority concluded that the previous proposal, by reason of its siting, design and external appearance, would have an overbearing impact on users of Greenway Bank Country Park and would not appear sufficiently agricultural in character.

The revised proposal has been carefully designed to retain the operational functionality required by the agricultural business whilst significantly reducing its visual impact. The application seeks to provide essential replacement storage infrastructure following the loss of a former agricultural building due to fire, whilst responding positively to the issues identified by the Local Planning Authority within the previous determination.

3.0 Proposed Building

As set out above, the proposed general-purpose agricultural building is intended to replace the storage facility that was destroyed by fire and subsequently demolished. Since the previous submission, the scheme has been substantially amended in response to concerns raised regarding its scale and visual impact.

Length:	= 36.576
Width:	= 12.192
Height to Eaves:	= 4.267m
Height to Ridge:	= 5.9m
Cantilever:	= 1.8m

The total floor area of the building is **445m²**.

The scale and layout of the building have been designed to accommodate modern agricultural machinery and equipment, allowing for safe and efficient manoeuvring both into and within the structure. The open-fronted elevation provides full-length access to the building, enabling practical storage arrangements and facilitating ease of loading and unloading. This is particularly important for day-to-day farm operations, where large machinery and bulk materials require unrestricted access. The inclusion of a 1.8-metre cantilever further enhances the functionality of the building by providing additional weather protection to the frontage, reducing the ingress of rainwater and helping to maintain dry storage conditions.

In terms of design and appearance, the building adopts a form and palette of materials that are entirely consistent with modern agricultural buildings both on the farm and within the surrounding area. The roof will be clad in fibre cement sheeting, incorporating translucent panels to provide natural daylight within the building and reduce reliance on artificial lighting. The rear elevation and gable ends will be clad with 2-metre-high pre-cast concrete panels, with timber Yorkshire boarding above to the eaves. This combination of materials provides durability and weather resistance, ensuring the building is fit for purpose in an agricultural environment.

The solid rear and side elevations also serve to minimise weather ingress and provide a degree of visual containment, particularly in relation to views from the adjacent Greenway Bank Country Park, which lies close to the site boundary and is publicly accessible. The use of subdued agricultural materials and the positioning of the building within the existing farmstead context ensure that the development integrates appropriately with its surroundings and does not result in any undue visual intrusion.

Overall, the proposed building represents a well-considered and functional replacement that will support the efficient operation of the farm, while maintaining a design approach that is entirely appropriate to its rural and agricultural setting.

4.0 Visual impact and access

Access to the site is taken from an established agricultural entrance off Greenway Bank, via the existing farm drive. No alterations or intensification of the current access arrangements are proposed, and the development will operate within the established vehicular patterns associated with the holding.

The previous prior approval application was refused on the basis that the building was considered to have an overbearing impact upon users of Greenway Bank Country Park due to its length, solid appearance and proximity to the public footpath.

The revised proposal has been specifically designed to address these concerns.

Firstly, the reduction in length from approximately 61m to 36m substantially decreases the extent of built form visible from the Country Park. The proposed elevation is now approximately 40% shorter than that previously considered.

Secondly, the replacement of solid steel cladding with Yorkshire boarding allows daylight and filtered views to pass through the structure. As a result, the development no longer creates a continuous solid elevation and retains a degree of visual permeability when viewed from the adjacent footpath.

It is also important to note that views from the public footpath are already experienced within the context of an established working farmstead. Existing agricultural buildings within the yard are both taller and more visually prominent than the proposed structure. Consequently, the proposal will be viewed against an existing backdrop of agricultural development rather than appearing as an isolated feature within the landscape.

Furthermore, the building is proposed on the site of a former agricultural storage building that was lost as a result of a fire. The proposal therefore represents the reinstatement of storage capacity previously available to the business rather than a wholly new expansion into undeveloped countryside.

The existing belt of mature trees and vegetation between the farmstead and the Country Park continues to provide significant screening and softens views of the development. The revised scale and design ensure that the building remains visually subordinate within the wider farm complex and preserves the character and enjoyment of the surrounding landscape.

5.0 Requirement

This section outlines the operational storage requirements of the business that justify the need for the proposed agricultural building. The building is required to accommodate three primary functions:

- Storage of straw for bedding and feed purposes
- Secure storage of machinery and equipment

The following subsections quantify the storage requirements for each use and demonstrate the total floor area necessary to support the business's ongoing operations efficiently and sustainably.

5.1 Straw

The business procures straw for use as both livestock bedding and supplementary feed, as the landholding is unsuitable for cereal production. Straw is strategically purchased during the harvest period to mitigate seasonal price volatility, as market rates typically increase during the winter months due to reduced supply.

The provision of a new storage building will enable the business to increase bulk purchasing capacity during harvest, thereby improving cost efficiency and supply security. Currently, a proportion of straw is stored outdoors, which exposes it to precipitation and solar radiation.

This significantly increases the risk of moisture ingress and heat accumulation within the bales, leading to spoilage. Damp or degraded straw is unsuitable for both bedding and feed, resulting in avoidable financial losses. Therefore, enclosed storage is essential to maintain product quality and minimise waste.

The business requires a minimum of 300m² to safely stack and store straw.

5.2 Machinery

The proposed building will also provide secure storage for agricultural machinery and equipment. Exposure to weather conditions significantly accelerates deterioration, reducing operational lifespan and increasing maintenance costs. Additionally, machinery stored outdoors is at greater risk of theft and vandalism.

Provision of storage will protect capital assets, improve operational efficiency, and reduce long-term replacement and repair costs.

The below table demonstrates the storage requirement of the machinery owned by the business:

Machine/Equipment	Quantity	Storage Area Required	Total
Tractor	1	15m ²	15m ²
Telehandler	1	15m ²	15m ²
Round Baler	1	10m ²	10m ²
Feeder Wagon	1	12m ²	12m ²
Straw Chopper	1	8m ²	8m ²
Slurry Tanker	1	12m ²	12m ²
Telehandler Implements	3	3m ²	9m ²
Bale Trailer	1	15m ²	15m ²
Silage Trailer	1	15m ²	15m ²
Total			111m²

To ensure safe manoeuvrability, access, and operational practicality, an additional 30% circulation space allowance is applied. This increases the total machinery storage requirement to **144 m²**.

5.3 Summary of requirements

The total storage requirement for the proposed development is derived from the combined needs for straw, haylage, and machinery storage. These elements are essential to the efficient operation and financial sustainability of the agricultural business.

- Straw storage: **300 m²**
- Machinery storage: **144 m²**

This results in a total required floor area of approximately: **444 m²**

The proposed building has therefore been designed to meet these operational requirements, ensuring sufficient capacity for feed and bedding storage, while also providing safe and secure accommodation for machinery. The scale of the building is considered proportionate to the functional needs of the business and will support improved efficiency, reduced waste, and enhanced long-term viability.

6.0 Conclusion

This report has been prepared to support a full planning application for the erection of a general-purpose agricultural building at Greenway Bank Farm, Brindley Ford, on behalf of John Bailey & Sons.

The proposal arises from a clear and evidenced operational need following the loss of an existing storage building due to fire. The absence of adequate covered storage has had a demonstrable negative impact on the efficiency, organisation, and resilience of the farm business, particularly in relation to the storage of forage, bedding materials, and machinery.

The application site forms part of an established and well-developed farmstead, and the proposed building has been carefully sited within this existing cluster of agricultural development. This ensures that the proposal does not extend built form into open countryside and maintains the visual cohesion of the farmstead. Furthermore, due to existing topography and established boundary vegetation, the development will have a negligible visual impact on the surrounding landscape, including views from the nearby Greenway Bank Country Park.

The design, scale, and materials of the building are entirely consistent with modern agricultural construction and are appropriate to both the functional requirements of the enterprise and the rural character of the area. The open-fronted design, combined with durable materials and a cantilevered overhang, ensures that the building is fit for purpose, providing effective weather protection, ease of access, and operational efficiency.

Critically, the quantitative assessment set out in Section 5.0 demonstrates a clear and justified need for the proposed floor area of approximately 445m². The building has been designed specifically to accommodate the storage of straw (280 m²) and machinery (144 m²), with the total requirement aligning closely with the proposed building footprint. This evidences that the scale of development is proportionate and directly related to the operational needs of the holding, rather than being excessive or speculative.

In addition, the proposal will deliver tangible benefits to the business, including:

- Reduction in forage and bedding losses through improved storage conditions
- Increased ability to bulk purchase inputs at favourable seasonal prices
- Protection of valuable machinery and equipment, reducing depreciation and repair costs
- Improved site organisation, health and safety, and day-to-day operational efficiency

Overall, the proposed development represents a necessary and proportionate reinvestment in agricultural infrastructure, enabling the continued efficient and sustainable operation of a well-established dairy enterprise. The proposal accords with the principles of supporting rural businesses and sustainable agricultural development, without giving rise to any adverse impacts in terms of visual amenity, character, or environmental quality.

On this basis, it is respectfully concluded that the application is fully justified, and planning permission should be granted.