



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 June 2026

by C McDonagh BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 July 2026

Appeal Ref: 6008423

JCB Wardlow, Ashbourne Road, Rue Hill, Cauldron Low ST10 3HA

- 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 John Reid against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
 - The application Ref is SMD/2022/0149.
 - The development proposed is 'Erection of two pullet sheds.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a parcel of land to the south of the A52 road. The site is currently vacant although I understand that it previously included a detached dwelling. The proposal seeks to erect two pullet rearing sheds. These would measure some 20 metres (m) in length by 7.5m width and have a height of 3.5m to their respective ridges. The buildings would be faced in concrete panels and composite sheeting while a tree belt would be planted between the sheds and the A52 to screen the development and provide a biodiversity net gain.
4. The area is generally comprised of rolling hills and undulating topography, supporting a mixture of active agricultural land uses with woodland belts. As I observed on my site visit, there are some examples of agricultural or industrial type buildings visible in the landscape, such as to the south of the appeal site, although these are set well back from the road and the overriding character of the appeal site itself and surrounding location is generally open and bucolic valley farmland.
5. The buildings would be positioned in a very prominent manner which would allow views from large stretches of the road to motorists in very close proximity in either direction. The design of the buildings is reminiscent of some agricultural buildings generally speaking, such as the lower height and shallow pitched roofs, although the submitted elevation plans lack detail and they would seemingly be formed of composite materials. In any event, the proposal would appear as large, dominant structures detached from other buildings in a highly visible location adjacent a busy road. This would negatively affect and harm the rural landscape character to a moderate degree.

6. While screening from the trees may help in the long term, these would take some years to mature and in the intervening time the sheds would remain prominent and incongruous. There would be some biodiversity gain from the trees, and I agree this would be of benefit in the planning balance. There would also presumably be some economic benefit to a rural enterprise, although I have scant details of this before me. As such, to my mind this would not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area that I have identified. While there were no other identified harms, and technical consultees did not object, a lack of harm would be neutral in the planning balance rather than weighing in favour.
7. I understand that a dwelling formally occupied the site which had become dilapidated and was demolished some time in 2022. This has opened up the site and while this may have been as a consequence of its removal, the increased openness has positively impacted upon the local area. The buildings may have a lower overall height than the former dwelling, although from the imagery I have before me the dwelling was of distinct agricultural character and built from stone rather than the lower but distinctly industrial character of the proposed buildings.
8. I note that policy SS10 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (LP) (adopted September 2020) supports development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside. However, this is still contingent on the proposal being acceptable in other respects, including its impact on matters such as character and appearance; a matter to which I have concluded there would be harm.
9. Taken together, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. This would be contrary to policies DC1 and DC3 of the LP, which seek to ensure that development proposals that lead to prominent intrusions into the countryside will be resisted while they should be designed to respect the site and its surroundings. The proposal would also be contrary to paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to ensure that development proposals are sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

10. I understand that the planning application took a considerable amount of time to determine and the appellant is aggrieved with the Council's handling of it. Be that as it may, this does not add to the merits of the case, and they should make any complaints to the Council as it is not in my remit to consider such matters.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, the development is not consistent with the policies of the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations that would lead me to a different conclusion. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C McDonagh

INSPECTOR