

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2026/0215
Valid 06/05/2026

HOUGH FARM CLAY LAKE
ENDON

RETROSPECTIVE
APPLICATION FOR OPEN
FRONTED TIMBER POLE
STORAGE BUILDING FOR
AGRICULTURAL USE

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Whether the proposal comprises an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- Design
- Amenity
- Trees

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site comprises of a plot of agricultural, Green Belt land associated with Hough Farm, Clay Lake, located in the Brown Edge and Endon ward. It lies outside the residential curtilage of the applicants property (Hough Farm). Furthermore, the site is located on open countryside land. The rear curtilages of Hough Farm, Clay Lake, Spring Cottage, Clay Lake and Highpoint, Clay Lake adjoin the plot of land. No. 1 and No. 2 Hough Cottage, Clay Lake are located South-West of the site, separated from the site by a private access road which leads to Henridding Farm, Clay Lake. A cluster of TPO's are located within relatively close proximity to the site.

PROPOSAL

The retrospective development comprises of an open fronted timber pole storage building. The Planning Statement submitted outlines that the proposed building serves a clear and necessary agricultural function. The listed uses for the building are as follows:

- The storage of agricultural implements and equipment required for land management
- Shelter for machinery used in grass cutting, hedge maintenance, fencing, and general upkeep
- Storage of materials such as fencing supplies, timber, and maintenance tools
- Occasional use for the keeping of sheep

The open fronted storage building would be constructed from unstained tanalised Yorkshire boarding and Natural colour Fibre Cement Sheeting.

Notably, the application is a resubmission of SMD/2026/0012, which was refused as it was considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
NE2 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14
Section(s) 4 – Decision making, 12 – Achieving well designed places, 13 – Protecting Greenbelt Land

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD

Section 7 – Details and Materials

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/1988/1209 – Details of dwelling and garage. Approved.
SMD/2001/1045 – Retention of nature area, pool and store shed. Refused.
SMD/2002/0263 – Implement store (revised submission). Refused.
SMD/2002/1365 – Hay store and wildlife pond. Approved.
SMD/2007/0871 – Agricultural building. Withdrawn.
SMD/2007/1233 – Agricultural building. Refused.
SMD/2026/0012 – Retrospective application for open fronted timber pole storage building, for ancillary use of existing dwelling. Refused.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 11/06/2026
Neighbour consultation period ends: 10/06/2026
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

One public comment of concern has been received, as follows:

"1) The proposed retrospective planning application is in the green belt. The green belt is there for a reason.

2) The application is for a building for agricultural purposes. At present it "houses" a large digger suitable for digging trenches and a large dumper truck. These are NOT agricultural equipment and are excessive for a property of two small fields.

3) Finally I would like to point out that Hough Farm has a large wooden storage building opening up onto their fields and not in the green belt. This should be big enough and suitable enough to accommodate any "agricultural" machinery."

Town / Parish Comments

At a meeting of Endon with Stanley Parish Council on 9th June, the application was noted as previously having been submitted under a domestic classification but should have been submitted under agricultural use and was previously refused on a technicality. No objection.

Arboriculture Officer

This property has recently had approval to remove a protected tree which is located alongside the access to this development. The removal was granted due to the trees poor and declining condition, and replacement planting has been secured as a condition to that removal. Whilst there has not been any redevelopment of the access to the development, it is fair to assume that the increased vehicle traffic to the development has, to some extent, contributed to the decline of this tree. The vehicle usage will have contributed to the compaction of soil within its rooting area in close proximity to its stem, which would ordinarily be regarded as its root protection area when British Standards 5837 dimensions are applied. However, there is an existing access from clay lake which runs passed the developments access. To a lesser extent, due to it being further away from the tree, this track will have also contributed to the compaction of the trees rooting area here.

There are two remaining protected sycamore trees in this location, one located within the field of the development and the other within the garden of Hough Farm.

Because the development has already been created, its construction does not present a significant concern to the retained protected trees and indeed the newly planted trees which will be afforded the same protection from the existing order. However, the sites usage has now changed and is likely to introduce increased vehicle traffic to the site, presenting further pressure on the rooting areas of the retained protected trees.

To further safeguard the trees, should the application be approved, the installation of a permanent no-dig construction access road comprising of a cellular confinement system with permeable gravel surfacing shall be installed where vehicle movements are anticipated within the root protection areas of retained trees. The access construction shall be implemented in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing to the Local Planning Authority.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development / Green Belt

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. For decision takers this means (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or (d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are more important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless: i) the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development as being economic, social and environmental.

In accordance with Policies SS1 and SS2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan the Council expects all new development to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protect and where possible enhance the environment. When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The application site is located in the Open Countryside and Green Belt whereby Policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020) is applicable. Policy SS10 states that these rural areas will provide only for development that 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.

Part (3) of policy SS10 seeks to protect the quality and character of the area and requires all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape.

The site is located within the Green Belt. Part (6) of Policy SS10 states that the Council will "maintain the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands. Strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy."

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2024) outlines that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it meets an exception.

Notably, the application is a resubmission of SMD/2026/0012, which was refused. Whilst the retrospective timber storage building was proposed to be for the ancillary use of the residential property known as Hough Farm, the building is not located within the domestic curtilage of the dwelling. Instead, it is located on an agricultural field to the rear of the dwelling. No evidence was put forward that the building is for agricultural purposes and it was described as being an ancillary building, thus it was regarded as being a domestic use. Therefore the development did not fall within

any of the exceptions outlined in the NPPF (2024). Accordingly, the development constituted inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would have a detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

At present, the application as presented to the Council outlines that the proposed building serves a necessary agricultural function. The listed uses for the building are as follows:

- The storage of agricultural implements and equipment required for land management
- Shelter for machinery used in grass cutting, hedge maintenance, fencing, and general upkeep
- Storage of materials such as fencing supplies, timber, and maintenance tools
- Occasional use for the keeping of sheep

The first three bullet points cover land maintenance equipment, which the Council do not consider to be agricultural. Land management practices are only usually considered to be agricultural if they have an association with farming processes. The listed land management practices are not associated with farming practices.

The bottom bullet point covers the occasional keeping of sheep. Notably, two site visits have been completed at different times of the year (one during lambing season) and sheep have not been present during either visit.

The site is only 3.5 acres, thus it is considered to be a very small parcel of land. Furthermore, there is no evidence of any form of agricultural use for instance keeping of animals, grazing management or production of crops. On this basis, the building would not comply with any of the exceptions identified at paragraph 154 of the NPPF and amounts to inappropriate development. It therefore constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would have a detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Furthermore, the open fronted timber pole storage building results in increased built form which encroaches into the open countryside.

The applicants have submitted a package of evidence regarding how the building would have an agricultural use. This includes photographs with accompanying explanations. Regardless of the evidence submitted, the Council hold the stance that land maintenance / management is not classed as an agricultural use of the land. Whilst photographs of red and green tractors have been submitted, it remains unclear if these are owned by the applicant or hired in. Furthermore, they seem excessive for this smaller parcel of land. Whilst the Council accept that hay is cut twice a year, there is no information regarding where it goes afterwards, in terms of whether it is used on the farm or whether it goes elsewhere. The retrospective building could not be considered to have an agricultural use based on sheep, as the presence of sheep on the land is very intermittent. The photos submitted of apple and cherry trees, given the amount do not demonstrate an agricultural use. Therefore, the Council have concluded that overall, there is no / insufficient evidence of an agricultural activity taking place on the land to justify the need for the building, thus the retrospective timber pole storage building cannot be considered to have an agricultural use.

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF (2024) states that 'inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances'. No very special circumstances have been specified in the submitted documentation which outweigh the harm to the Green Belt land. As such, the retrospective development conflicts with Policy SS10 of the Local Plan and section 13 of the NPPF (2024).

Notably, a neighbour objection has been received relating to the retrospective development being located on agricultural, Green Belt land. The retrospective development is considered inappropriate as it would impact the openness of the Green Belt land. Furthermore, the neighbour comment goes on to state that at present, the building "houses" a large digger suitable for digging trenches and a large dumper truck, which are not agricultural equipment. The Council has also reached the conclusion that the building would not be used for agricultural purposes, for the reasons stated above.

Lastly, the public comment goes on to mention that Hough Farm has a large wooden storage building opening up onto their fields which is not in the Green Belt, which should be big enough and suitable enough to accommodate any agricultural machinery. Whilst the Council note this comment, the Council can only consider the application as presented, which is for a retrospective building. The Council have concluded that the addition of this building would amount to inappropriate development in the green belt and impact the openness of the green belt.

Design

Policy DC3 of the Local Plan seeks to protect and where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

Policy DC1 seeks to ensure that all development is well designed and of a high quality, contributing to local distinctiveness and harmonising with sense of place.

The open fronted timber pole storage building is substantially set back from the public highway, located on a field sited behind the immediate row of dwellings on Clay Lake. The field runs adjacent to a privately owned access road. Thus, the building would be predominantly screened from the wider public domain and would not be widely visible from outside the site or the surrounding countryside.

The open fronted timber pole storage building is constructed from unstained tanalised Yorkshire boarding and Natural colour Fibre Cement Sheeting. As stated in the Council's Design Guide SPD, "there is no tradition of external timber boarding in Staffordshire Moorlands... Vertical boarding has been used more recently on large agricultural sheds as an alternative to metal sheeting but such buildings are regarded exceptions, as the development is seen in the context of traditional buildings or open landscape." Although the storage building would not be an agricultural building per se, it would be located on agricultural land in the context of open landscape. Therefore, the timber boarding would be considered acceptable in this instance. Thus, the proposed materials would not detract from the character of

the wider area.

The proposal, by virtue of its size, scale and siting would maintain the character of the existing area. The proposal would therefore accord with the provisions of local plan policies DC1, DC3 and section 12 of the NPPF in this regard.

Amenity

Paragraph 135 f) of the NPPF seeks to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants. Local Plan Policy DC1 requires development to achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjacent development and to not cause unacceptable effects by reason of visual intrusion, overlooking, shadowing, overbearing effect, noise, light pollution or other adverse impacts on local character and amenity.

The retrospective addition of the open fronted timber pole storage building would not lead to any overlooking or amenity impact on any of the nearby neighbours. The storage building is located approximately 75 metres away from the rear elevation of Spring Cottage, Clay Lake and approximately 78 metres from the rear elevation of Highpoint, Clay Lake. Furthermore, the closest neighbouring dwellings at No. 1 and No. 2 Hough Cottage, Clay Lake are situated approximately 51 metres from the storage building. Therefore, neither light nor the privacy amenity of these neighbours would be impacted due to the substantial distances between the development and these dwellings.

Trees

Policy NE2 of the Local Plan seeks to protect existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows, in particular, ancient woodland, veteran trees and ancient or species-rich hedgerows from loss or deterioration.

The Council's Arboriculture Officer has stated that because the development has already been created, its construction does not present a significant concern to the retained protected trees and indeed the newly planted trees which will be afforded the same protection from the existing order. However, the sites usage has now changed and is likely to introduce increased vehicle traffic to the site, presenting further pressure on the rooting areas of the retained protected trees.

To further safeguard the trees, should the application be approved, the installation of a permanent no-dig construction access road comprising of a cellular confinement system with permeable gravel surfacing shall be installed where vehicle movements are anticipated within the root protection areas of retained trees.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

In consideration of all of the above, the application is recommended for refusal.

The retrospective application does not fall within any of the special exceptions outlined in the NPPF (2024). No very special circumstances have been specified in the submitted documentation which outweigh the harm to the Green Belt land. The proposed development would therefore have an impact on the openness of the greenbelt; thus it is not deemed acceptable under planning policy. Therefore, the proposed development is recommended for refusal.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE

Case Officer: Hannah Varley

Recommendation Date: 03/07/2026

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council