

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2026/0021
Valid 08/07/2026

ACCESS TO COLLYHOLE
WOOD CHURCH LANE
IPSTONES

APPLICATION TO DETERMINE
IF PRIOR APPROVAL IS
REQUIRED FOR A SINGLE-
STOREY FORESTRY
STORAGE BUILDING FOR
SECURE ON-SITE
ACCOMMODATION OF
TOOLS, PPE, AND
MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR
WOODLAND MANAGEMENT.

(AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY
DETERMINATION)

MAIN ISSUES

Whether the proposed development would be permitted by Class E, Part 6, Sched 2 of the GPDO 2015 (*forestry developments*).

If the proposed development is permitted, then whether the prior approval of the LPA is required as to the siting, design and external appearance of the building, and should be granted.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Colleyhole/Stakebank Wood is in an 'other rural area' of countryside 1km to the northwest of Ipstones. The woodland has a Local Site of Biological Importance designation. The access to the woodland is taken from a roadside gate on the narrow unclassified Church Lane. Access alterations and hard standings have already been constructed creating roadside opening to the woodland edge.

PROPOSAL

A single-storey forestry storage building for secure on-site accommodation of tools, PPE, and materials required for woodland management.

6.06m by 2.44m. Height to eaves 2.89m, Height to ridge 2.89m.

Vertical rough-sawn timber cladding fixed over the structural frame. Ultra-matte charcoal / dark black timber stain.

Roof Low-profile timber tray supporting a pre-cultivated native evergreen moss/sedum blanket - Natural green (sedum/moss vegetation).

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

DET/2024/0040 Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed alteration of private ways for agricultural or forestry use. Prior Approval Refused.

SMD/2025/0052 Retrospective full application for the alteration and maintenance of private ways for full forestry use. APPROVED.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Permitted development is - The carrying out on land used for the purposes of forestry, including afforestation, of development reasonably necessary for those purposes consisting of—*works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building*;

Development not permitted by Class E if -

- it would consist of or include the provision or alteration of a dwelling;
- the height of any building or works within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 3 metres in height;
- any part of the development would be within 25 metres of the metalled portion of a trunk road or classified road; or
- any building for storing fuel for, or waste from, a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system would be used for storing waste not produced by that boiler or system or for storing fuel not produced on land which is occupied together with that building for the purposes of forestry.

None of those limitations are applicable or restrict the proposed development in this case.

The GPDO does not define 'forestry'. The approach is therefore, to ascertain the ordinary meaning of the language, construed in a broad and common-sense manner. The Oxford English definition of a forest is an "extensive tract of land covered with trees and undergrowth". Forestry would ordinarily encompass the management and maintenance of woodland/trees.

In this case, planning permission has already been granted for a roadside access and private way (SMD/2025/0052) on the basis that it would facilitate ongoing management of the woodland to deliver enhancements to ecology and biodiversity. Benefits and merits in those regards were considered to outweigh any visual impacts from the hardstanding.

To that extent the Council has accepted that the applicant is engaged in a programme of woodland management and enhancement – 'forestry' by definition. A small storage building is considered reasonably necessary for these purposes.

It is a condition of the development being permitted by Class E that the developer must, before beginning the development, 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.

The application provides a location/block plan that shows that the building would be positioned adjacent to the roadside, 5m from carriageway edge. The building would be placed on an area of ground outside of the hardstanding, between the parking area and the road.

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).

Full elevation drawings have not been provided with the application. However, a photomontage, in the form of a 'visual context and impact assessment' has been provided and the planning authority has sufficient information to determine the application for prior approval.

The assessment shows the building to be a darkly shaped unit with the form and character of what appears most likely to be a clad freight container. It is considered that the submitted assessment demonstrates how the proposed building would appear overly prominent and intrusive from the roadside and incongruous in its woodland setting.

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, and the terms of the NPPF.

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 as a prominent intrusion, incongruous, and unsightly from public roadside vantage to the detriment of the character and amenity of the woodland environment. The prior approval for the siting, design and external appearance of the development should be refused.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Prior Approval Required and REFUSED

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date:

X *J Curley*

Signed by: Jane Curley

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council