

21 September 2026

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Dear Sirs

Our client – Mr B Proctor, Upper Stonehouse Farm, Stonehouse Lane, Brown Edge, Staffordshire ST6 8TF. Planning application for an agricultural livestock building at Upper Stonehouse Farm, Stonehouse Lane, Brown Edge, Staffordshire ST6 8TF

We have submitted a full planning application via the Planning Portal for the above-mentioned development and the application has been allocated the Portal Reference PP-15151373, and the application fee and the Planning Portal fee have been paid directly via the Planning Portal.

The application form is accompanied by the following plans and documents:

- This covering letter
- Existing site plan
- Proposed site plan
- Location plan
- Building drawing – plan and elevations
- Landholding plan (identifying the farmland area)

The details of the development are outlined below:

Background

The proposed building is required in association with Upper Stonehouse Farm. The farm holding extends to approximately 52.6Ha (130 acres) or thereabouts, which now includes the farmland associated with Old Woodhouse Farm 18.21Ha (45 acres) which was acquired 4 years ago. All the farmland is down to grass and used for livestock grazing and making hay/silage (for winter forage), the land extends in a west/south-west direction from the farmyard complex of Upper Stonehouse Farm (see the submitted landholding map which shows the farmland as edged in blue).

The farm enterprise consists of a beef enterprise, which entails calves (and young cattle) being bought in at 3-9 months of age and then reared to 20-24 months of age. The cattle are ultimately sold at the local cattle market as store cattle. The applicant has circa 110 head of cattle of varying ages, on the holding at any one time.

The cattle graze the land in the summer months and are housed in the buildings at Upper Stonehouse Farm over the winter months – in loose housing accommodation on straw bedding and fed on hay/silage.

Proposed building

The proposed building is a standard design steel portal frame agricultural building which will be open fronted (east elevation), providing a feeding area for the cattle.

The building is required to provide suitable winter housing accommodation for the cattle. On the site previously was an agricultural building which was in a poor state of repair and was no longer appropriate and suitable for modern farming practices. The proposed building will provide the requisite housing accommodation for the cattle and also provide a better means for the cattle to be managed and cared for, e.g. feeding and handling.

The dimensions and materials for the building are as follows:

- 24.4m x 13.7m (80' x 45'), with a 1.8m (6') overhang to the east elevation (over the open side/feed area);
- 4.8m (16') to the eaves;
- Concrete panel walls with timber space boarding above; and
- Corrugated reinforced fibre cement roof sheets to the roof (natural grey), with clear Perspex roof lights

Siting

We have reviewed the Council's SPD on Design Principles and consider that the proposed building for the reasons set out below conforms with the guidance set out in this document.

The proposed building will be located on the site of a former traditional agricultural building which had fallen into a very poor and dangerous condition and because it posed a serious risk to health and safety it was demolished by the applicant. The proposed building will therefore be located entirely within the existing built-up area of the farmstead and will not involve the loss of any productive agricultural land. The building will form part of a group of existing buildings and therefore it will not appear as an isolated building, and it will function as an integral part of the existing agricultural buildings.

The building will not appear on the skyline; the building will have contrasting materials for the roof and side cladding and will not require a new access or yard areas.

Planning Policy

Local planning policy is contained within the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, which was adopted in September 2020. However, within the local plan there is no real reference to agricultural development or specific policies regarding agricultural development, the only relevant policy being as follows:

Policy SS 10 Other Rural Areas Strategy

The other rural areas comprise the countryside and the green belt outside of the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages and the open countryside surrounding the smaller villages.

These areas will provide only for development which 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. The Council and its partners will achieve this through the following actions:

Points 1-5 are not relevant. Point 6 reads as follows:

6. 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.

Clearly agricultural development has an essential need to be located in the countryside and therefore the proposed development complies in principle with Policy SS 10.

National planning policy is contained within the recently updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was published in August. The site is located within the Green Belt, and hence national Green Belt planning policy is applicable (as noted above in the Local Plan extract) as are the business development policies of the NPPF.

I set out below the NPPF policies that are relevant to the determination of the application.

GB7: Development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt

1. The following categories of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt, and therefore should not be regarded as harmful to the Green Belt or be required to demonstrate very special circumstances:

a. Development which is for agriculture, horticulture and forestry, or which is solely for nature conservation, restoration and/or enhancement;

E2: Meeting the need for business land and premises

1. To support business growth, substantial weight should be given to:

.....

b. Benefits for domestic food production, animal welfare and/or the environment which can be demonstrated through proposals for development for farm and agricultural modernisation.

E4: Rural business development

1. In applying policy E2, the sustainable growth of businesses in rural areas should be supported, including through:

.....

d. Development to maintain and enhance farm viability and sustainability and support domestic food production, such as improved accommodation for livestock, on-farm reservoirs, greenhouses, polytunnels, farm shops and temporary accommodation for seasonal workers (where this accommodation is ancillary to the agricultural use and not for permanent occupation).

Summary

As noted above, the building is required for agriculture to provide improved winter housing accommodation for the beef cattle that are reared at Upper Stonehouse Farm. The proposed building will provide housing accommodation for the cattle with a better means for the cattle to be managed and cared for than the original building that it replaces, improving animal welfare standards at the farm.

As per the policy GB7 of the NPPF, the proposed development is appropriate, not inappropriate, development in the Green Belt. The provision of new improved livestock accommodation at the farm is completely in accordance with the business development policies E2 and E4 of the NPPF as set out above. Policy E2 supports and encourages agricultural development that benefits domestic food production and specifically supports agricultural development that will improve animal welfare and farm and agricultural modernisation. Policy E4 supports development to help farm viability and specifically improved accommodation for livestock.

To conclude it is considered that the proposal fully complies with the relevant local and national planning policy and should therefore be considered acceptable and approved by the Council.

I trust we have provided all of the information that you need to register, validate and determine the application. However, if there is anything further you require no doubt you will let me know, otherwise I look forward to receiving confirmation of the validation of the application and details of the officer appointed to deal with it in due course.

Yours faithfully



Gary Hoerty

CC Mr B Proctor