

The application is for full planning permission for a replacement workshop building.

The site is located within the open countryside on land designated as Green Belt and locally as an Area of Landscape Restoration, as identified within the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The 8 week period for the determination of this application expired on the 24th September but the applicant has agreed to an extension of time until the 16th October 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PERMIT subject to conditions relating to the following matters:-

- 1. Time limit condition**
- 2. Approved Plans**
- 3. Materials**
- 4. Restriction on outside storage areas**
- 5. External lighting**

Reason for Recommendation

Whilst the development represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt, it is accepted that there are very special circumstances which would outweigh the associated harm to the openness of the Green Belt from this development. In all other respects the development accords with local and national planning policy.

Statement as to how the Local Planning Authority has worked in a positive and proactive manner in dealing with the planning application

Additional information has been requested during the consideration of the application and the applicant has submitted details to satisfy any concerns. The development is now considered to be a sustainable form of development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Key Issues

The application is for full planning permission for a replacement workshop building for the established rural business which repairs farm machinery.

The site is located within the open countryside on land designated as Green Belt and locally as an Area of Landscape Restoration, as identified within the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The key issues in the determination of this planning application are considered to be;

- Is the proposal appropriate development within the Green Belt?
- Design and impact on the character and appearance of the landscape, and
- Should it be concluded that the development is inappropriate in Green Belt terms do the required very special circumstances exist?

Is the proposal appropriate development within the Green Belt?

Paragraph 133 of the NPPF details that "The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence".

The NPPF further indicates in paragraph 145 that local planning authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt, however exceptions to this include, amongst other things, buildings for agriculture and forestry, the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building and the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

The existing buildings and structures are in use as part of a rural business which repairs farm machinery.

The existing buildings and structures have an approximate floor area of 372 square metres and an approximate volume of 1,235 cubic metres.

The applicant indicates that the existing buildings and structures are not fit for purpose due to the age, size and height. The business also repairs farm machinery which is getting bigger and repairs now have to take place outside. Therefore, whilst the floor area of the proposed purpose built building would be 374 squares (2 square metres bigger than the existing) it would have a volume of approximately 2,310 cubic metres because of its increased height.

On the basis of the above the proposed building would be materially larger than the existing buildings and structures to be replaced. The proposed development therefore represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt and should only be permitted if very special circumstances exist.

Design and impact on the character and appearance of the landscape

Paragraph 124 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 127 of the framework lists 6 criterion, a) – f) with which planning policies and decisions should accord and details, amongst other things, that developments should be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

Policy CSP1 of the Council's Core Spatial Strategy 2006-2026 requires that the design of the development is respectful to the character of the area.

As discussed, the site operates as an existing business which repairs farm machinery. The existing buildings are functional and in a state of disrepair. The site also has a large amount of outside storage because machinery is unable to fit into the buildings. Therefore the site has an unsightly appearance.

The proposed building would have a similar footprint to the existing buildings and structures but would have a height that is much greater – the height of the existing building is approximately 4 metres and the new building would have a height of 7.1 metres.

The proposed building would have a traditional modern appearance with metal profile sheeting, coloured green, and a cement fibre roof.

The design and appearance of the building is considered acceptable for this rural location and whilst large it would have minimal views from any main vantage points due to its location. It is also set amongst and adjacent to other neighbouring buildings in agricultural and equestrian uses. It would therefore be viewed within the context of the area.

On balance it is considered that the proposed building would not harm the character and appearance of the landscape and it accords with Policy N21 of the Local Plan, Policy CSP1 of the Core Spatial Strategy and the requirements of the NPPF.

Do very special circumstances exist which would outweigh the harm caused to the openness of the Green Belt, and any other harm?

As the development is considered to represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt, very special circumstances are required that would outweigh the harm caused by the inappropriate development, and any other harm, to the Green Belt.

Paragraph 144 of the NPPF sets out that; "When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."

The building is materially larger than the building it replaces due to its height and subsequent volume increase.

The applicant has submitted a case for very special circumstances which sets out that the existing buildings are impractical because farm machinery has become so much bigger and this has affected working conditions for employees. A lot of work has to be undertaken outside because the machinery cannot fit inside the existing buildings and structures. The location and arrangement of the existing buildings and structures also make it very difficult to manoeuvre machinery and tractors into the workshop.

The existing business employs 4 full time staff and the new building would ensure that the existing business can expand and adapt.

Paragraph 83 of the NPPF sets out that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.

Your officers accept that there is a genuine need for the size of building proposed in order to meet the needs of this established rural business. It is also considered that the new building would avoid the need for the large amount of machinery being stored outside which harms the appearance of the landscape. A condition which restricts the level of outside storage is considered justified without harming the business.

The proposed building has an acceptable appearance and given the circumstances and justification provided, it is considered that the necessary very special circumstances exist that would outweigh the harm that would result to the openness of this part of the Green Belt.

APPENDIX

Policies and proposals in the approved development plan relevant to this decision:-

[Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy \(CSS\) 2006-2026](#)

Policy ASP6: Rural Area Spatial Policy
Policy CSP1: Design Quality
Policy CSP3: Sustainability and Climate Change

[Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan \(NLP\) 2011](#)

Policy S3: Development in the Green Belt
Policy T16: Development – General Parking Requirements
Policy N17: Landscape Character - General Considerations
Policy N21: Area of Landscape Restoration

Other Material Considerations include:

[National Planning Policy](#)

[National Planning Policy Framework](#) (February 2019)

[Planning Practice Guidance](#) (March 2014)

[Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents](#)

[Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document](#) (2010)

[Relevant Planning History](#)

05/01144/COU Change of use of building from use as farm workshop/implement store to light industrial use/use as a workshop/implement store for purposes unrelated to use of the land for agriculture Permitted

[Views of Consultees](#)

Madeley Parish Council raises no objections.

The **Highways Authority** raises no objections.

The **Environmental Health Division** raises no objections subject to a condition regarding external lighting.

Cadent (National Grid) raises no objections but provide advisory notes to the applicant.

[Representations](#)

None received

[Applicant's/Agent's submission](#)

The submitted plans and very special circumstances justification for the development can be viewed on the Council's website using the following link: <https://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/plan/20/00619/FUL>

[Background papers](#)

Planning files referred to

Planning Documents referred to

Date report prepared

29th September 2020