

For James Stannard at HPBC LPA

Further to your emailed request of 13 04 2023, I can supply the following information:

Notwithstanding that this is a permitted development building pertaining to contiguous land in agricultural use, the building is designed and needed for use in connection with commercial livestock farming.

It will be the only building on the land and can be deemed *reasonably required for agriculture*.

In this semi upland area comprising mostly permanent grass, livestock farming relates to cattle rearing and or sheep for lamb production. It is not feasible to farm thus without a supporting building so as offer shelter for grazing animals in inclement weather and for veterinary treatment with both being essential for animal welfare reasons.

The applicants have very recently acquired the land at auction and have just completed fencing at significant expense so as prevent livestock straying with sheep netting type fencing. This type of fence which will also prevent badgers from entering the land – see below..

The land comprises a separate agricultural holding in its own right and is shown on the site location plan comprising of two discrete but connected fields and two tree plantations.

An important attribute of the land is that can be utilised as a bovine tuberculosis (btb) isolation unit. That is:- a secure building, with grazing, for gathering grazing cattle for regular testing and for providing shelter in inclement weather as well as a weather store for dry feedstuffs and some farm equipment.

The btb isolation unit comprises the land as a whole in that it can be treated as such because there are no cattle grazing on land adjacent. The land is surrounded by roads and to the northern part by a playing field and a group of houses. Such land parcels with no adjacent cattle grazing possibility seldom arise on the open market and the applicants were quick to secure the land when it became available. As stated, the land has been fenced so as to prevent badgers entering. (badgers are a known vector for the disease).

The applicants have a large holding at Hollington in the Staffordshire Moorlands where they rear beef cattle to slaughter weight. They are like others in the North Midlands subject to vigorous btb eradication measures which involves regular testing and movement restrictions being applied if any animals in the herd test positive. Indeed the herd is currently under restriction because just one reactor was found a couple of weeks ago. This means that no cattle can leave the herd, unless directly to slaughter, until two clear tests are carried out over the next six months.

Such restrictions can easily last longer than six months and this leads to a build-up of growing stock with resultant significant impact on profitability arising from additional feed and grazing being required.

Stock can however be moved to a tb isolation unit such as the Brierlow land and allowed to grow on before returning to the main herd when restrictions are lifted. Thereby diluting the cost burden on the main holding.

When not being utilised as such, it is ideal for sheep grazing (the current use in fact) but again a building is required for gathering for periodic medication (worming / fly control / foot work / dagging / shearing and for lambing and for general sorting.

Another use of the land is for small baled hay production. This agricultural product is in short supply and sells at a premium but it is absolutely essential that it stored under cover for use when needed in the winter period (it is made in the summer of course).

The land parcels extend to some 15 acres and the building size proposed is commensurate with this.

The building is sited on the application drawings adjacent to the middle tree plantation in the smaller of the two land parcels. It could be sited anywhere in the smaller land parcel but the tree plantation site is ideal in that possible landscape impact objections are mitigated by the shielding effect of the trees when the site is approached from the north and the back drop effect when viewed from the south.

Also: stock can be gathered in front of the building (the long side facing Brierlow Road) where they can be corralled and fed outdoors when necessary.

Furthermore: it is proposed that cladding material is dark slate blue which has the effect of visually subduing the visual presence of the building in the landscape. With dark blue being the preferred colour in a limestone area. (a measure prescribed by the adjacent PDNPA when acting as LPA)

Rob Ford

17 04 2023