

**REQUEST TO DELEGATE  
PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT**

**Case Officer:** Nicola Glanville

**Parish:** Sourton **Ward:** Bridestowe

**Application No:** 1055/19/FUL

**Agent/Applicant:**

Mr Paul Brookes  
Brookes Powell Chartered Architect  
Vale Down  
Lydford  
Okehampton, Devon  
BS21 7QH

**Applicant:**

Mr Darrin Cole  
Henscott  
Tavistock  
PL19 9QC

**Site Address:** Field At East Linnacombe Farm, Sourton Down, Okehampton, EX20 4HR

**Development:** Erection of single-storey agricultural building for general agricultural storage using existing access



**Reason item is being put before Committee:**

Called in by Cllr Mott: 'I am concerned that the field is separate from the main bulk of the holding and would not appear to be sited in the optimum location in relation to the functioning of the agricultural holding'.

**Recommendation:**  
Conditional Approval

**Pre-Commencement Conditions**

Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation – Agreed 11 May 2020  
Surface Water Drainage Details – Agreed 11 May 2020

**Conditions**

Time limit  
Accord with plans  
Materials to be Dark Grey roofing and Dark Brown cladding and doors  
No external lighting  
Remove if no longer required for agriculture

**Key issues for consideration:**

Agricultural justification, landscape and visual impact, surface water drainage.

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**Site Description:**

This site is a linear 2 acre field situated between the A30 and the West Devon Drive (old A30 road) at Sourton Down. The site is south of the south bound A30 slip road.

The proposed barn is to be sited against the rear treed hedge boundary with the A30. It is accessed via a 5-bar gate off a layby immediately alongside the West Devon Drive, sited at the south-west corner of the field. The boundaries are fully screened from all sides by mature hedging and trees with the addition of a bank to the west and a ditch to the south. The boundary is defined by a post and rail fence running inboard of the hedging right around the site.

The site is not in any designated area of landscape protection, but close to the National Park boundary. There are no dwellings or Listed buildings within the vicinity of the proposed building.

**Proposal:**

The proposal is for a general purpose agricultural building to provide secure storage for farm machinery and equipment. The proposed building measures 20m x 15m with blockwork and metal cladding walls under a 10 degree pitched metal cladding roof, which is 5.5m to its ridge. It will be served by overhead rolling/ sectional doors to allow loading and unloading within the building. Officers have requested that the sides of the building are clad in brown steel sheeting rather than green coloured sheeting, as it is felt that this would be less visually intrusive.

The existing access will remain and this access will be hard surfaced, but only in a crushed stone/ hardcore material to ensure the surface is fully drained whilst still providing stability for vehicles.

The building has been sited within this parcel of land as it has good road access. The building is intended to serve a separate parcel of land to the north of the A30. This land is marshy and the applicant owns no other farm buildings on this land. The proposed building would act as a hay and feed store, in order to reduce the requirement for transportation between the site and the applicants main farmlands at East Linnacombe, Lydford and Sourton. The building will also provide a lockable storage area for small farming machinery. There are 170 acres of land at Sourton which is approximately 5 miles from the main Farm and Farm storage areas.

## **Consultations:**

- County Highways Authority - No Highways implications
- Environmental Health Section - No comments
- Parish Council - Object

Sourton Parish Council objects to this application because of the sheds inappropriate scale. The shed is too big for the site. It is too high and will be visible from the boundary roads and the moor. It is disproportionate to the size of the field. Access will also be poor.

## **Representations:**

None received.

**Relevant Planning History – None relevant**

## **ANALYSIS**

### Principle of Development/Sustainability

As the site falls within open countryside, all new agricultural buildings must be justified with regard to policy TTV26 and “respond to a proven agricultural, forestry and other occupational need that requires a countryside location”. TTV26 is to be read alongside Policy TTV2. TTV2 provides that the specific objectives of rural sustainability that are to be supported include the development of agricultural businesses. In addition, policy DEV15 provides support for the rural economy where proposals “meet the essential needs of agriculture”. The building is proposed for use as a secure agricultural store for farm machinery and feed stuffs. The new building is sited some 5 miles distance from the main farm holding at Lydford, but the applicant also owns land at Sourton and to the north of the site and A30, which is without its own buildings and thus this new building is justified on the basis that it is the most practical option for siting a building close to their northern land holdings, with good access and road links to the other parcels of land. It is also a drier, less marshy site than the farm land to the north.

On this basis, the proposed building is considered reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture as part of an existing and well established farm and as such, is considered to accord with the provisions of TTV26 and DEV15. However, it is considered necessary to impose a planning condition requiring the removal of the building if no longer required for the purposes of agriculture, as the development is permitted in this countryside location on the basis of an established agricultural need without which permission would not have been granted.

### Design/Landscape

The site falls within open countryside but not within any protective landscape designations. It is however close to the National Park boundary and as such landscape quality is still a key consideration, with policy DEV23 requiring that proposals are “located and designed to respect scenic quality and maintain an area’s distinctive sense of place and reinforce local distinctiveness” and that they “conserve and enhance the characteristics and views of the area along with valued attributes and existing site features”.

The Parish Council have objected to the scale, size and height of the proposed building and feel that it is too big for the site, being visible from the boundary roads and the moor. They are concerned that it is disproportionate to the size of the field and consider access to be poor.

The building measures 20m x 15m and is 5.5m in height. Officers do not consider this to be excessive in scale and given the justification for the building on a small parcel of land ie to serve other separate parcels of land from one midway location, it is felt to be reasonable.

In this instance, the application is set in between existing mature hedges and tree screening, in the context of a small parcel of agricultural land that is situated between the A30 and West Devon Drive - a hard landscaped environment, with wide open fields and moorland beyond. It is considered that the existing natural screening will serve to limit wider views of the development and soften the visual impact of the proposal. In this context, it is considered that the proposal will have a neutral impact on the characteristics and views of the area, thereby conserving the scenic quality and distinctive sense of place. Brown, rather than green cladding has been secured by a materials condition, as it is felt this will be visually less obtrusive. It is also considered necessary to restrict external lighting by condition, in order to protect the countryside from intrusive development. On this basis, the proposal is considered to accord with the provisions of DEV23.

#### Neighbour Amenity

There are no near neighbours to the site, therefore it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to detrimental impacts on neighbour amenity. It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with the provisions of DEV1.

#### Highways/Access

The proposal does not seek to make any changes to current access arrangements. It is likely that there will be an increase in traffic movements from the site access from the use of the proposed agricultural building, especially as it is to be used as a store associated with the wider agricultural operation between the separated parcels of land. As the agent has stated: 'The site has been chosen as it is easily accessible from the main roads, Okehampton and the A30 allowing easy access for transport to and from the site. This negates any need for large vehicles to use the narrow country lanes around the rest of the farm. Distribution of the feedstuffs both to and from this building will then be carried out via tractor and trailer, or truck, to the rest of the farm... the building would act as a hay and feed store, in order to reduce the requirement for transportation between the site and the main Farm at East Linnacombe. The building will also provide a lockable storage area for small farming machinery. The building is ideally located in the position identified, as it is easily accessible from both areas of land in Sourton and it is the closet area of land to Sourton Tor for gathering purposes.'

The existing field access via a 5-bar gate is to the rear of an existing road layby, providing a good off-road pull-in, with good visibility in either direction along a straight stretch of highway. On this basis, the proposal is unlikely to result in an increased risk to highways safety and is considered to accord with the provisions of DEV29.

#### Surface Water Drainage

The Council's Drainage Engineer has reviewed the proposal and has recommended a surface water drainage condition. It is a low risk site and therefore it is considered appropriate to secure these details by condition to ensure surface water runoff does not increase to the detriment of the public highway or other local properties as a result of the development. The condition must be discharged prior to commencement as the application

site is located within a Critical Drainage Area. The applicant accepted the condition in writing on 11 May 2020. On this basis, the proposal is considered to accord with the provisions of DEV35 and is acceptable.

### Archeology

The site coincides with the known position of the Roman road westward from Okehampton towards Cornwall. This road has been recorded by excavation during the A30 road scheme in the 1980s and 1990s. As groundworks for the creation of the new building may cut into and destroy the Roman road. The Historic Environment Team has recommended that this application should be supported by the submission of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) setting out a programme of archaeological work to be undertaken in mitigation for the loss of heritage assets with archaeological interest. A WSI has therefore been secured by condition. The condition must be discharged prior to commencement. The applicant accepted the condition in writing on 11 May 2020.

### Conclusion

The proposal is considered to be reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture and is located so as to minimise its impact within the wider landscape. On this basis, it is therefore recommended that the application be granted approval, subject the conditions outlined above.

***This application has been considered in accordance with Section 38 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and, with Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.***

### **Planning Policy**

Section 70 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act requires that regard be had to the development plan, any local finance and any other material considerations. Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compensation Act requires that applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes of decision making, as of 26 March 2019, the development plan for Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council (other than parts South Hams and West Devon within Dartmoor National Park) comprises the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014 - 2034.

Following adoption of the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan by all three of the component authorities, monitoring will be undertaken at a whole plan level. At the whole plan level, the combined authorities have a Housing Delivery Test percentage of 166%. This requires a 5% buffer to be applied for the purposes of calculating a 5 year land supply at a whole plan level. When applying the 5% buffer, the combined authorities can demonstrate a 5-year land supply of 6.5 years at the point of adoption.

Adopted policy names and numbers may have changed since the publication of the Main Modifications version of the JLP.

The relevant development plan policies are set out below:

**The Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan was adopted by South Hams District Council on 21 March 2019 and West Devon Borough Council on 26 March 2019.**

SPT1 Delivering sustainable development  
SPT2 Sustainable linked neighbourhoods and sustainable rural communities  
SPT9 Strategic principles for transport planning and strategy  
SPT10 Balanced transport strategy for growth and healthy and sustainable communities  
SPT11 Strategic approach to the Historic environment  
SPT12 Strategic approach to the natural environment  
TTV1 Prioritising growth through a hierarchy of sustainable settlements  
TTV2 Delivering sustainable development in the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area  
TTV26 Development in the Countryside  
DEV1 Protecting health and amenity  
DEV2 Air, water, soil, noise, land and light  
DEV15 Supporting the rural economy  
DEV20 Place shaping and the quality of the built environment  
DEV23 Landscape character  
DEV26 Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation  
DEV28 Trees, woodlands and hedgerows  
DEV29 Specific provisions relating to transport  
DEV31 Waste management  
DEV32 Delivering low carbon development  
DEV35 Managing flood risk and Water Quality Impacts

Other material considerations include the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and guidance within the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). Additionally, the following planning documents are also material considerations in the determination of the application: Draft Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document 2019.