
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 January 2026

by **S Harrington MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/E3335/W/25/3374475

Clivehayes Farm, Broad Street, Churchstanton, Taunton TA3 7FA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant approval required under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by Mrs J Howard against the decision of Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref is 10/25/0004/AGN.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a general purpose agricultural building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and prior approval is granted under the provisions of Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the erection of a general purpose agricultural building at Clivehayes Farm, Broad Street, Churchstanton, Taunton TA3 7FA in accordance with the application 10/25/0004/AGN and the details submitted with it.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development provided on the application form includes lengthy descriptive text, some of which are not acts of development. I therefore have utilised the description of development provided on the decision notice in the banner heading above as this adequately describes the proposal. However, I have excluded 'application for prior notification for' and 'at Clivehayes Farm, Broad Street, Churchinford', as these are not acts of development.
3. Prior approval appeals should not be determined, expressly or otherwise, on the basis of s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 or as though the development plan must be applied. The principle of development is established through the grant of permission by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (the GPDO). However, I have had regard to the policies of the Taunton Dean Core Strategy 2011-2028 (LP) which were referred to in the reason for refusal, insofar as it is relevant to the matters relating to the proposal.

Background and Main Issues

4. Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A of the GPDO permits the carrying out, on agricultural land comprised of an agriculture unit of 5 hectares (ha) or more in area, of works for the erection of a building which is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit. Paragraphs A.2.(1) to (7) of Class A set out a range of conditions that the permission granted by Class A is subject to. Amongst these, paragraph A.2.(2) states that the developer is required to apply to the local

planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval will be required as to the building's siting, design and appearance.

5. Therefore, the question of whether the proposal would be permitted development needs to be dealt with ahead of any consideration of the prior approval details. The Council's position is that the proposal is not permitted development under Part 6 Class A as it has not been demonstrated that the proposal due to its size, would be reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the established agricultural unit.
6. As such, having regard to the above, the main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would be reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture; and if so
 - the effect of the siting design and appearance of the building on the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to the Blackdown Hills National Landscape (NL).

Reasons

Reasonably necessary

7. The appeal site is part of an agricultural unit stated within the application form to be some 11.86 hectares in size. The Council have not disputed that the land is in use for agriculture and which is so used for the purposes of a trade or business. However, given the agricultural activities that are undertaken, the Council are concerned that the scale of the building proposed is not reasonably necessary given the scale of agricultural activity.
8. Within the GPDO there is no requirement that the proposed building must be intended to accommodate an 'existing' agricultural activity, provided there is an agricultural use of the land and the building is reasonably required for agriculture. The evidence before me indicates that the proposed building is part of more general plans for the farm and would be utilised for the storage of hay and silage bales, requiring 135m² of floor space. The additional space would be utilised for the storage of agricultural vehicles, plant and trailers as well as for purposes of livestock husbandry. The proposal would both help to facilitate a second cut of silage, as well as maintain a flock of between 20 – 30 lambs.
9. The proposed building would be of a typical utilitarian design suitable for agricultural purposes. Given the size of the agricultural holding, lack of existing agricultural buildings and the nature of activities undertaken and proposed, the proposal would be reasonably necessary for those activities. Even if a smaller building would suffice, this would be a question of 'absolutely' rather than 'reasonably' necessary.
10. Consequently, based on the evidence before me and my observations at my site visit, I am satisfied that the building would be reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the established agricultural unit.

Character and appearance

11. The appeal site is located within the NL and is part of a sloping field set to pasture. The area has a quiet rural character with an undulating topography, and agrarian

buildings and dwellings scattered within the landscape. The Blackdown Hills area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024 (MP) sets out that the Blackdown Hills remains an ancient landscape of small villages and farms, deep valleys and high hedges shaped by its unique geology.

12. The proposed building would be located on a gentle slope adjacent a hedge boundary and a private lane leading to the main farmstead of Clivehayes Farm. This farmstead is formed by a tightly knit cluster of buildings and located at a lower point in the valley landscape.
13. The proposed building would be a modern agricultural building, constructed from a typical agricultural material palette, including vertical timber cladding under a dark grey polycarbonate sheet roof.
14. In some views from Broad Street the building would be seen somewhat divorced from the associated farmstead. Nevertheless, other agricultural buildings appear on a similar contour of the hillside nearby and therefore the proposal would not appear unexpected or out of place within the landscape when viewed from Broad Street. In other views such as from the opposing side of the valley, the building would be seen in conjunction with existing farmstead buildings sited a short distance below the building. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed siting would be suitable in the context of the wider farmstead.
15. Agricultural buildings similar to that proposed are a feature of the wider surrounding landscape. Whilst the proposal would introduce new built form into the NL, this would not be seen either as a particularly dominant eye-catching building from surrounding viewpoints or otherwise be out of character or scale with the working rural landscape. As such it would conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the NL in line with the aims of the MP.
16. It follows that I conclude that the siting design and appearance of the building will not result in a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to the NL. The proposal would accord with LP policies CP8, DM1 and DM2. These policies seek, amongst other things, for development to conserve and enhance the natural environment and for new farm buildings to be commensurate with the role and function of the agricultural unit.

Conditions

17. Development is permitted subject to the standard conditions outlined within Paragraph A.2 of Part 6 Class A of the GPDO.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed and prior approval should be granted.

S Harrington

INSPECTOR