



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 March 2026

by R Major BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/R0660/W/25/3375871

White Hall Farm, Holehouse Lane, Whiteley Green, Cheshire East SK10 5SJ

- 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 Belport Adlington Limited against the decision of Cheshire East Council.
- The application Ref is 25/1650/PRIOR-6.
- The development proposed is proposed new general purpose agricultural building.

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 proposed new general purpose agricultural building at White Hall Farm, Holehouse Lane, Whiteley Green, Cheshire East SK10 5SJ in accordance with the application 25/1650/PRIOR-6 and the following approved details:
 - Location Plan;
 - Agricultural Unit Plan;
 - Site Plan;
 - Plan & Elevations (Drg No. BDA/2024/01 Rev A); and
 - Landscape Mitigation Plan (Drg No. T1151-001)

Preliminary Matters

2. An Alternative Sites Assessment; a Landscape Statement; and a Landscape Mitigation Plan (Drg No. T1151-001) have been submitted with the appeal in response to the Council's reason for refusal. Having regard to the Wheatcroft¹ and Holborn² principles, as well as the procedural guidance³, the Council and interested parties had an opportunity to comment on these documents as part of their appeal submissions. As such, I do not consider that the Council, or other parties, would be prejudiced by my acceptance of these documents.
3. Furthermore, I find the additional landscaping proposed on the Landscape Mitigation Plan would result in a visual improvement in comparison to the proposal as originally submitted to the Council. I have therefore included the submitted Landscape Mitigation Plan as an approved document within my formal decision.

¹ Bernard Wheatcroft Ltd v SSE [JPL 1982 P37]

² Holborn Studios Ltd v The Council of the London Borough of Hackney [2017] EWHC 2823 (Admin)

³ Planning Inspectorate Procedural Guide: Planning Appeals – England (updated February 2026)

4. 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 GPDO) set out that on agricultural land comprised in an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more, the erection of a building reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit is permitted development, subject to limitations and conditions. Paragraph A.1 sets out a list of criteria by which development is not permitted by Class A. There is no dispute between the parties that the appeal proposal adheres to these criteria. Based on the information before me, I see no reason to come to a different conclusion and I have determined the appeal on this basis.
5. Paragraph A.2 requires, amongst other things, that where the erection of a building is proposed, development is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether prior approval of the authority will be required in relation to the siting, design and external appearance of the building. In this case the Council raises no objection to the design and external appearance of the proposed building and refused the application for prior approval solely on the basis of the proposed building's siting.

Main Issue

6. In view of the above, the main issue is whether prior approval should be granted having particular regard to the siting of the building.

Reasons

7. The appeal site lies in a rural area characterised by the activities of agriculture, consisting of buildings and houses associated with farming. Worked fields, enclosed by hedgerows and trees, within a gently undulating landscape, underpin the distinctive character of this area of the countryside. However, I also observed that this particular area of the wider rural landscape is somewhat visually dominated by the overhead power cables and associated pylons that run through a number of fields in a generally north – south direction.
8. The appeal site comprises part of an agricultural field situated a considerable distance north of Holehouse Lane, with an existing access track connecting the site to this highway. Directly to the south of the site is a narrow watercourse and a hedgerow that consists of groups of field trees. To the east, within the next field, is a large pylon.
9. The appeal scheme proposes a large agricultural building. Whilst it would be located away from other buildings, it would be sited adjacent to the southern boundary of the field, close to the existing hedgerow and trees. This existing vegetation would provide some partial screening when viewed from both Holehouse Lane to the south and the residential properties to the southwest, assisting the proposed building's integration into this rural setting. Additional landscaping, as indicated on the submitted Landscape Mitigation Plan, would only further enhance this screening and integration.
10. Furthermore, the existing hedgerow along the northern side of Holehouse Lane, as well as the proposed building's considerable set back from this highway, would also reduce the visibility of the appeal building from users of Holehouse Lane.

11. I also observed that other existing field boundary hedges and trees, as well as the undulating terrain, would provide some screening from other directions and therefore help to reduce the building's visual prominence on the wider landscape.
12. I do however acknowledge that the proposed building would still be visible from certain vantage points in the surrounding landscape. However, this does not necessarily mean it causes harm, as it would be read as an agricultural building, within a wider rural setting, and it would not therefore be out of keeping with the agricultural characteristics I observed within this area.
13. Consequently, and in view of all the above, I find the proposed agricultural building would not result in a prominent, incongruous and urbanising feature within its surrounding context. Furthermore, I find the existing pylon in the neighbouring field, and the overhead power cables, would remain the visually dominant features on this landscape and their proximity in relation to the proposed building would ensure that it is not viewed as an unduly isolated form of built development within this rural setting.
14. I note the Council's comments that the building could be located in a less isolated position, closer to existing buildings, and the interested party's comments that the site selection process was not exhaustive. However, the appellant's submission explains that the building would be used to house cattle on a more permanent basis than permitted under Class A, Paragraph D.1(3)(b).
15. As such, the building cannot be located within 400m of the curtilage of a protected building and as per the submitted details this significantly limits the locations where the building could be sited. The appellant's Alternative Site Selection document explains why this location is the preferred option out of all the sites considered, and the Council has not suggested a preference for any of the other locations detailed.
16. An interested party has also raised concerns in respect of the siting of the proposed building impacting upon their living conditions, particularly in relation to noise and light disturbance. The submitted application does not however propose any external lighting on the proposed building. Furthermore, given the significant distance between the proposed building and the nearest residential properties, I do not find the siting of the proposal would cause harm to the living conditions of any residential occupiers.
17. The Council also refer to the appeal site being located within the Green Belt and draw my attention to its key characteristics of openness and permanence. However, the location of the appeal site within the Green Belt is not a matter for consideration under Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A of the GDPO.
18. For the reasons above, I conclude that the siting of the proposed agricultural building would be acceptable within its surrounding rural context and landscape. Additionally, whilst not raised as a matter of concern by the Council, I also find the design and external appearance of the proposed agricultural building to be acceptable.

Other Matters

19. Concerns have been raised regarding the access to the site, including the suitability of the access track, increased traffic movements on the road, and visibility at the junction with Holehouse Lane. However, the proposal would be accessed via an existing agricultural track from Holehouse Lane and I note that the Council did not

raise any highway safety concerns. Based on the information before me, and my observations on site, I do not find that the siting of the proposal would result in any highway safety impacts.

20. A number of other issues have been raised by an interested party, including matters relating to the field flooding; the appellant not being based in the local area; this area being on the shortlist for a potential 'New Town'; and a lack of detail in respect of how utilities such as electricity and water would be provided to the proposed building. However, as the appeal relates to a prior approval application, the matters for consideration are restricted to those set out in the relevant paragraphs of the GPDO. Therefore, these other issues raised fall outside the matters I can consider.

Conditions

21. The GPDO does not provide any specific authority for imposing additional conditions beyond the deemed conditions for agricultural development on units of 5 hectares or more in paragraphs A.2(2) (v) and (vi). These specify that the development must be carried out in accordance with the approved details and within 5 years of the date of this approval. As such, there is no reason for me to impose any additional conditions.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal is allowed and prior approval is granted.

R Major

INSPECTOR