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(49)



# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 June 2010

by **D L Burrows** DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State  
for Communities and Local Government

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**Decision date:**  
**23 June 2010**

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## Appeal Ref: APP/C3430/A/10/2121934

### Acorn Farm Building, Acton Hill, Acton Trussell ST17 0RZ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Paul Harrison against the decision of South Staffordshire Council.
- The application Ref 09/00732/FUL, dated 3 October 2009, was refused by notice dated 2 December 2009.
- The development proposed is a warehouse extension.

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### Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

### Main issues

2. The main issues are firstly the principle of the proposed development on the site having regard to the prevailing countryside policies in the development plan and national policy guidance; and secondly the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding rural area.

### Reasons

3. There is a building on the site which is used for the storage and distribution of potatoes which are purchased from various producers in Europe. The existing enterprise is not therefore part of/dependant on a local agricultural operation. It is commercial in nature and does not fall within the definition of agriculture. Moreover even though the extension would replace a building which was destroyed by fire in 2000, little evidence of the former building remains. The extension would be erected on a mainly hard surfaced area which forms part of the yard - used for parking and manoeuvring of vehicles. Given these circumstances the proposal is contrary to policy OC1 of the South Staffordshire Local Plan (LP) which in line with national policy (PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) seeks to strictly control building in the open countryside.
  4. In both national and local policy there is support for the expansion of local businesses which would help diversify the rural economy. However in this case the development would not be a small expansion, it would more or less double the existing floorspace. In addition no reasons are given why the expansion could not take place within a nearby town or village which are more accessible locations than the open countryside. I do not therefore consider the proposal would be acceptable in terms of LP policy C13.
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5. I appreciate that the operation suffers from vandalism, fly tipping and the like and the proposal would provide staff facilities to enable overnight security. But internal reorganisation/alteration of the present building could provide this type of facility and security could be increased by other means than a 24 hour presence on site.
6. Turning now to the second issue. The appeal site is in the countryside to the north east of the village of Acton Trussell. Despite the rolling nature of the terrain, its position on a ridge makes it a prominent location. A building of the size proposed would be clearly visible in the landscape, particularly when travelling from Acton Trussell. The design and materials of the extension are similar to those on the existing building and I acknowledge that they are not dissimilar to numerous modern farm buildings. However the proposal is for a use unrelated to the surrounding rural area. No overriding clear need has been demonstrated for it to be located in the open countryside. The proposal would therefore consolidate and expand a storage/distribution business which would harm both the prevailing character and appearance of the locality.
7. I accept that it would be possible to provide a landscaping scheme which would screen the building, but appropriate landscaping would take some time to establish and would not in any event justify development which is fundamentally contrary to local and national countryside policies.
8. I have taken account of all the other matters raised but find none which are sufficient to alter my view that, for the reasons given above, the appeal should fail.

*D L Burrows*

INSPECTOR