

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/26/0104
Site Address:	Cefn Fforest Farm Twynygarreg Treharris CF46 5RN
Development:	Erection of building to store hay/fodder and agricultural equipment (Prior Notification)
Case Officer:	Rebecca Owens
Site Visit:	27th May 2026
Application Expiry Date:	9th July 2026

APPLICATION SITE

The application relates to a parcel of agricultural land that forms part of a unit which amounts to some 185 acres. The site and wider unit is located within a Special Landscape Area 5 (SLA5) Gelligaer and Taf Bargoed and it is also in close proximity to three designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) with SINC 63 St Tydfils Forest to the west, SINC 46 Coed Cefn-fforest & Cwm Cothio to the east and SINC 47 Treharris Park & Cardiff Road Woodlands to the south and south west. The site is located over 400m to the south/south east of the farmhouse and the exiting complex of buildings, with the main access road to the west separated from the site by a stone boundary wall which wraps around the site on three sides.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks a determination as to whether prior approval is required from the local authority for the erection of an agricultural building which would be used to store hay/fodder and machinery/equipment. The building would be 18.3m in length by 12.2m (223.26m²) in width and would have a pitched roof with an eaves height of 3.6m and a ridge height of 5.3m. The external walls of the structure would be finished with a mixture of concrete panels to the lower walls and box profile panels (juniper green in colour) to the upper sections. The roof would be covered with grey fibre cement sheeting and there would be barn doors on either end.

PLANNING HISTORY

There is no relevant planning history.

CONSULTATION

No statutory consultees were contacted as part of this application.

PUBLICITY

Due to the nature of this application, no publicity has been undertaken.

POLICY CONTEXT

As this application is for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the local planning authority is required for the erection of a building under Part 6 of the GPDO, there is no requirement to assess the scheme against national or local planning policies. However, the following policies of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031 would be relevant should prior approval be required:

- SW4 Settlement Boundaries
- SW11 Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- SW12 Improving the Transport Network
- EnW1 Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- EnW2 Internationally and Nationally Protected Sites and Species
- EnW3 Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves and Priority Habitats and Species
- EnW4 Environmental Protection
- EnW5 Landscape Protection
- EcW10 Sustainably Supplying Minerals
- EcW13 Minerals Safeguarding

In addition, regard should be given to the advice contained within the following Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Notes:

- Note 4, Sustainable Design.
- Note 5, Nature and Development.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The applicant has been submitted under the procedures set out in Part 6 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (GPDO), for the erection of an extension to an existing storage barn to provide accommodation for livestock and associated works. In assessing such applications, the test is as follows:

- whether the proposal would fall under Part 6 of the GPDO;
- whether these works are reasonably necessary for agriculture, and;
- whether the siting, design and external appearance of the building is acceptable.

When considering an application for Prior Notification for an agricultural building associated with a holding of 5 hectares or more, Class A states that the following is permitted:

'A. The carrying out on agricultural land comprised in an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more in area of –

- a) Works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building; or*
- b) Any excavation or engineering operations,*

Which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit'.

It then goes on to list the relevant criteria that the development must comply with in order to be permitted. These have been assessed against the proposed extension which would appear to comply with the following:

- The development would not be carried out on a separate parcel of land forming part of the unit which is less than 1 hectare in area;
- It would not consist of, or include, the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling;
- The building is of a design typical of that for agricultural purposes.
- The proposal is for a structure that would cover a ground area of 223.26 square meters which is below the 465 square meter allowance and would not be within 90m of another building or works constructed within the preceding two years.
- The extension would not be within 3km of the perimeter of an aerodrome.
- The extension would not exceed 12m in height
- The extension would not be within 25m of a trunk road or classified road.
- It would not be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewerage sludge.
- The site is not within article 1(6) land and the works would not involve excavations or engineering operations connected with fish farming.
- It would not be used for storing fuel for or waste from a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system

Class A also requires the development to be “***reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit***”. The proposal put forward as part of this application seeks to provide an agricultural building which would be used for the storage of hay/fodder and agricultural equipment used in connection with the farm. It has been indicated in the application form that the farm comprises of 185 acres with over 80 acres of land suitable to mow and grow hay on and that there is only one old building. However, it is noted that there appears to be a number of structures within the farmstead including a barn adjoining the dwelling. It has not been set out what these structures are currently used for, why they would not be suitable to store equipment, hay and fodder or where these are currently accommodated within the unit. It is therefore not clear if the additional building is entirely necessary.

Setting aside the above concerns regarding whether the building is reasonably necessary, Under Part 6, Class A, development consisting of the erection of a building is subject to the condition that the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority is required for siting, design and external appearance of the structure. In this respect, the design and scale and general appearance of the building is considered to be typical of a modern agricultural building as are the proposed material finishes. There are also concerns with respect to the siting of the agricultural building, being located in a somewhat prominent position in isolation from the existing collection of farm buildings that are located to the north. **As such it is considered that Prior Approval would be required for the siting of the structure.**

It is considered that sufficient information has been submitted to consider the acceptability of the proposal in terms of its siting. In this respect it is noted that application site is located in the open countryside and is within Special Landscape Area 5 (SLA5) Gelligaer and Taf Bargoed where the landscape is remote and open, characterised by undeveloped pasture land. Policy EnW5 seeks to protect these areas, allowing developments that are sensitive, which respect the character and distinctiveness of the area. However, the

proposed agricultural building is of a substantial scale and height and would be located in close proximity to a highway. Despite being separated from this by a stone boundary wall and vegetation, in this location it would be readily visible for users of the highway and indeed would be apparent is longer distance views. The building would be located over 400m from what appears to be the main farmstead comprising of the farmhouse, yard area and a number of structures. Thus, it would result in additional sprawl into the open countryside and represent an isolated and singular structure that would be discordant in the openness of the surrounding area. The siting of the building in a field away from any obvious mean of access also raises questions as to how the building would be accessed and whether there would be the need for a track or hard surfacing to be created which would further erode the largely unspoilt landscape. Whilst there is no objection in principle to the provision of a building to serve the needs of the farm, this would be better sited alongside the existing buildings where it would be viewed in the context of the farmstead, would benefit from natural surveillance and where it would be easily accessible.

As a result of the above concerns, it is considered that the development would harm the character of this Special Landscape Area, which has been designated because of its openness, accessibility and vegetation type coverage with few trees, little habitation and lack of enclosure. The addition of the proposed building would not preserve this character and would be detrimental to the openness and character of the SLA and the open countryside, contrary to Policy EnW5 of the LDP. Additionally, the scale and siting of the building would not appropriately integrate with its countryside location.

It is noted that the Local Planning Authority's Ecologist has not identified the need for any ecological survey works or raised any concerns with respect to protected species. Whilst he has referred to the need to secure ecological enhancement in line with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the requirements of Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales, which outlines the need for Net Benefit for Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Statements, these would not be applicable to this type of application given that it is a Prior Notification of works considered to be otherwise permitted development.

Accordingly the following recommendations are made:

RECOMMENDATION: A) PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIRED

**B) APPROVAL BE REFUSED FOR THE FOLLOWING
REASON:**

1. By virtue of its prominent siting and singular location within an area of open countryside, the proposed agricultural building would represent an incongruous and isolated development which would be harmful to the character of the Special Landscape Area in which it is situated contrary to Policies EnW5 and SW11 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 04.06.2026