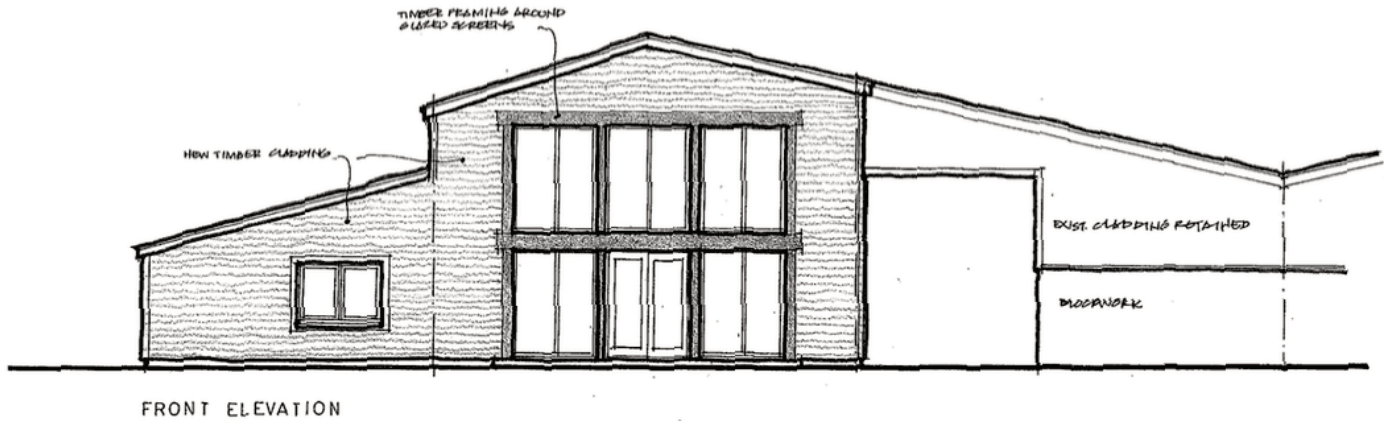


Farm plan would deliver 'unique' education facility



PLANS for a new outdoor education centre near Cheadle would deliver a 'unique learning environment' for schoolchildren.

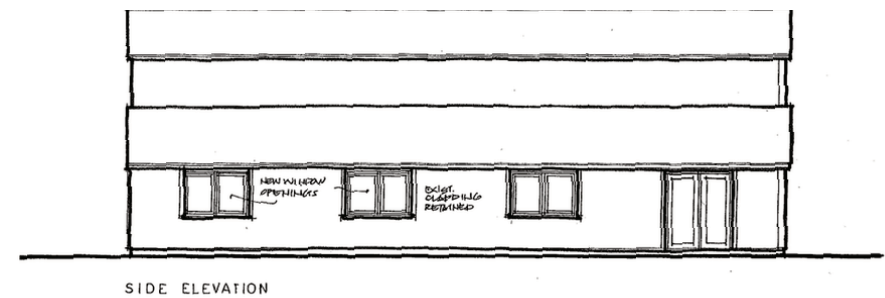
Parish councillors have raised no objections to a change of use application at Oak Tree Farm, Tickhill Lane, Dilhorne.

Permission would grant landscaping firm Great Grounds, which specialises in school garden projects, with the green light to turn a redundant agricultural building into an education centre as part of a farm diversification scheme.

Managing director Tony Miller says the project, subject to district council approval, would provide education and vocational learning experiences for children of primary school age and would create two full-time and four part-time jobs.

He said: "They'll learn about environmental issues and ecology in a farm setting and using real livestock.

"We want to show children there are different jobs out there that they don't always consider, such as tree surgeons and gardeners and there'll be first-



hand practical demonstrations of tree and hedge cutting, planting, grounds maintenance and building.

"We take what they're learning in school and make it relevant, for example how many bricks it will take to build a wall of specific dimensions, anything along those lines.

"We want to prove to the children that you don't always have to go to university - apprenticeships are available, especially outdoors related."

The plan includes the provision of toilet facilities, a shelter in case of bad weather and facilities for basic food preparation and hot drinks.

The centre will also specialise in supporting young children with a range of disabilities.

It is anticipated that around 30 children, including staff, will visit the centre per day, along

with teachers and support staff.

Schools from around the Moorlands, and further afield, would be invited to use the facility which aims to become a Centre of Excellence.

Mr Miller added: "Our priorities remain local with schools nearby being our main concern, but we also hope to approach big industries, including JCB, to work with us.

"We want to make learning fun for children, so our classrooms aren't your typical classrooms - it's a unique learning environment.

"We've designed them to look like the inside of your typical shed with nick-nacks on the wall and tools on the wall.

"It will certainly be unique and it's a very exciting project for us. If the plan is approved, we'll host an open day sometime in October."