



AGRICULTURAL NEED APPRAISAL
IVY HOUSE FARM, ROWNALL ROAD, ROWNALL, STAFFORDSHIRE

Relating to the Retention of an Existing Agricultural Building

July 2016

Prepared by The Brown Rural Partnership LLP

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1. PRELIMINARY

1.1 Introduction

We are instructed by JCM Group Holdings (UK) Ltd to prepare an appraisal in respect of a retrospective planning application for the retention of an agricultural building at Ivy House Farm. This appraisal is prepared in connection with the retrospective planning application being made to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for this project.

Ivy House Farm is part of JCM Group Holdings (UK) Ltd and is part of the agricultural sector of the business. JCM Group Holdings (UK) Ltd have identified the need to expand the livestock aspect of the business to maintain the future viability of this sector and to meet new opportunities for the business. The building is required in order to enable JCM Group Holdings (UK) Ltd to achieve its aim of improving and expanding the farming enterprise.

1.2 Surveyor

This appraisal has been prepared by Michael Statham BSc (Hons) MRICS, FAAV, Associate at The Brown Rural Partnership LLP. He qualified as a Chartered Surveyor in 2012 and as an Agricultural Valuer in 2013.

1.3 Sources of Information

- Inspection of the holding and discussions with Mr Gary Robinson of JCM Group Holdings (UK).
- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Development Framework (Adopted 26th March 2014).
- National Planning Policy Framework.
- The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (SI 2015/596).
- The Agricultural Budgeting and Costing Book (82nd edition) published by Agro Business Consultants Ltd.

2. IVY HOUSE FARM

2.1 General Description

Ivy House Farm has been in the ownership of JCM Group Holdings (UK) Ltd for the past ten years and is farmed as part of the agricultural business within JCM Group Holdings (UK).

Ivy House Farm occupies an elevated position off Rownall Road, in the Wetley Rocks area of Staffordshire. The surrounding land is gently sloping and supports both arable and livestock enterprises, being generally Grade 4 land, with some Grade 3 land, according to the Natural England Agricultural Land Classification Map. A range of farm buildings, acting as the hub of the farming enterprise are situated at an altitude of 247m above sea level. The holding is located approximately 1.8 miles north west of the village of Wetley Rocks and 6.1 miles to the southwest of Leek.

JCM Group Holdings (UK) Ltd directly farm some 136ha (336.06 acres) of agricultural land as an in-hand operation and own a further 211ha (521.38 acres) of land which is let out. Ivy House Farm forms part of the in-hand farming enterprise which utilises a mixed farming system including arable crops (cereals), fodder crops as well as grass for grazing sheep. JCM Group Holdings (UK) Ltd also own Ashcombe Park which can be utilised for grazing livestock.

All of the land is registered for the Basic Payment Scheme.

2.2 Stocking and Cropping

Ivy House Farm and the wider JCM Group Holdings (UK) Ltd agricultural business supports a mixed farming enterprise. Of the total 136ha (336.06 acres) farmed in-hand currently includes 30ha (74.13 acres) of grass land for grazing and forage conservation.

The business currently runs a flock of approximately 65 spring lambing ewes which graze the pasture land. The existing system involves the ewes lambing in batches from March to April to help spread the workload, and ensure that there is sufficient housing for ewes and lambs until each batch is turned out onto pasture.

2.3 Farm Buildings

Ivy House Farm has a range of modern farm buildings.

- Lambing shed, approximately 19m x 6m
This building is the subject of the appraisal and is constructed as a lean-to adjacent to an existing general purpose building on the farmstead. The building is open fronted and constructed of concrete block half wall with metal cladding upper and roof.
- General purpose building, approximately 19.5m x 11m
Constructed of steel portal frame with concrete half wall and metal cladding upper and roof, there is roller door at front of building.
- Workshop, approximately 28m x 25m
Steel portal framed construction with breeze block half walls and metal cladding upper and roof.
- Stable , approximately 18m x 6m
Steel portal frame construction, part breeze block half wall, part metal cladding sides and roof.

2.4 Labour

JCM Group Holdings (UK) Ltd have 11 full time employees in their Estates team which undertake the agricultural operations. A shepherd is employed to deal with the sheep flock and during the lambing period at the holding, the shepherd stays on site to be able to deal with any emergencies.

During busy times, up to 30 contractors can be employed for a variety of tasks as part of the wider Estate Management department of JCM Group Holdings (UK).

2.5 Machinery

JMC Group Holdings (UK) Ltd currently operates a comprehensive range of agricultural machinery, including:

- 6 Tractors
- Plough
- Power harrow
- 2 Seed drills
- 3 Boom sprayers

- Buck rake
- 2 Teddors
- Umbilical kits (Slurry)
- Conventional baler
- Round baler
- 2 Bale grabs
- De-stoner
- Elevator
- Hedge cutter
- Fertilizer spinner
- Disc cultivator
- Corn dryer
- 2 Slurry tankers
- 2 Muck spreaders
- Loading shovel
- 2 Telescopic loaders
- JCB Loadall
- 2 Dump trailers
- 7 Trailers
- Hook loader trailer
- Wood chipper
- 5 Excavators
- 2 Flail mowers
- Round bale wrapper
- Hand tools
- Chainsaw
- Slurry stirrer

3. PLANNING CONTEXT

This Agricultural Need Appraisal is prepared in connection with a retrospective planning application to be made to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for the retention of an agricultural building at Ivy House Farm.

The Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy, adopted in March 2014 includes specific rural policies which relate to rural diversification and supporting the rural economy. In particular policy R1 sets out the criteria for economic, community and recreation development in rural areas. It indicates that the Council will be supportive of development that “promotes the sustainable diversification of the rural economy and facilitates economic activity” whilst not to have a detrimental impact on rural character or environmental quality.

This is in line with paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states “planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development”. It goes on to support well designed buildings and the development and diversification of other land-based rural businesses.

The NPPF also states in paragraph 19 that “the Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.”

Further to this, the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (Part 6 Class B) states that the test for agricultural and forestry development is generally what is “reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the unit”.

4. APPRAISAL

4.1 Functional Need

The livestock enterprise at Ivy House Farm is a well-established and important part of the farming business run by JCM Group Holdings (UK). It is the intention over the coming 4 years to expand the numbers in the sheep flock to between 100 to 120 ewes.

The current system involves the ewes lambing in batches during the Spring, generally from March to April. It is good practice to bring pregnant ewes indoors to sheltered accommodation during lambing, to help protect both ewes and new born lambs from inclement weather, and to allow for easier management of the flock at this crucial period and to be able to deal with emergencies that might otherwise result in serious distress to or losses of livestock.

The building is required to ensure that there is sufficient indoor housing for ewes and lambs until each batch is turned out onto pasture.

Flock Size	Space required per ewe with lambs (m²)	Total Space Required (m²)
65	1.4 to 1.9	91 to 123.5
100	1.4 to 1.9	140 to 190
120	1.4 to 1.9	168 to 228

Table 1 – Source ABC, 2016

As can be seen in table 1 above, the current flock requires up to 123.5m² when housed during the lambing period. The building that has been constructed extends to 117m² which although within the recommended requirements it is only just satisfactory to house the current flock. Notwithstanding the above, the flock is lambled in batches to provide additional space over and above the general space requirements in an attempt to provide increased welfare for the livestock when housed.

Once one batch has finished lambing, they are moved out on to fields, and a new batch of ewes is brought in ready to lamb. Table 1 clearly shows that there is an existing need for the building to remain on the holding, especially as the business plans to increase the flock in the coming years.

4.2 Availability of other buildings

At present the holding has no other buildings that could suitably accommodate the flock during lambing.

The workshop is already full with equipment and machinery utilised as part of the entire agricultural business of JCM Group Holdings (UK) Ltd. Any alternative use of this building would have detrimental effect to the site as equipment and machinery that is currently being kept inside would either need to be stored elsewhere and so reducing the currently well thought out and used space of the existing buildings or would need to be stored outside which would likely cause deterioration of the machinery as well as potentially having a negative visual impact in the area. In addition to this, the ongoing noise and disturbance generated by the daily use of the workshop would not be suitable to occur within the same building as the lambing flock and may cause distress to the flock.

The general purpose building immediately adjacent to the lambing shed is not available for use as it contains a biomass boiler run by JCM Group Holdings (UK) Ltd as well as the required ancillary equipment for the running of the boiler. Aside from this, the construction of the building would not allow sufficient ventilation for livestock to be housed within same and if used in its current state could increase the risk of disease such as pneumonia to the flock.

The stable is currently occupied by the tenant of Ivy House Farmhouse for stabling of horses and for the storage of hay and straw. The use of this structure for lambing would require that alternative housing is found for the horses, of which there is currently none available.

There is a further building owned by JCM Group Holdings (UK) Ltd on a nearby holding. This building is utilised for the storage of grain from the arable enterprise within the business and is covered by stringent regulations under a Farm Assurance scheme. The housing of livestock within any building used for the storage of grain would breach the conditions imposed by the scheme and correspondingly could then have an impact upon the saleability of the grain by the business.

Taking the above into account, the most efficient way to deal with the housing of the sheep flock was to leave the current buildings as they are and adopt a new build for the necessary development.

5. CONCLUSION

Having regard to the above, I conclude that

- The building addresses the needs of the agricultural business by supporting the existing livestock enterprise operating from the site and would help to secure its long term viability.
- The intention of the business and the ability to expand the livestock stocking rates will enhance the future profitability.
- The development is sited well within the existing buildings and makes good use of the existing layout of the farmstead.

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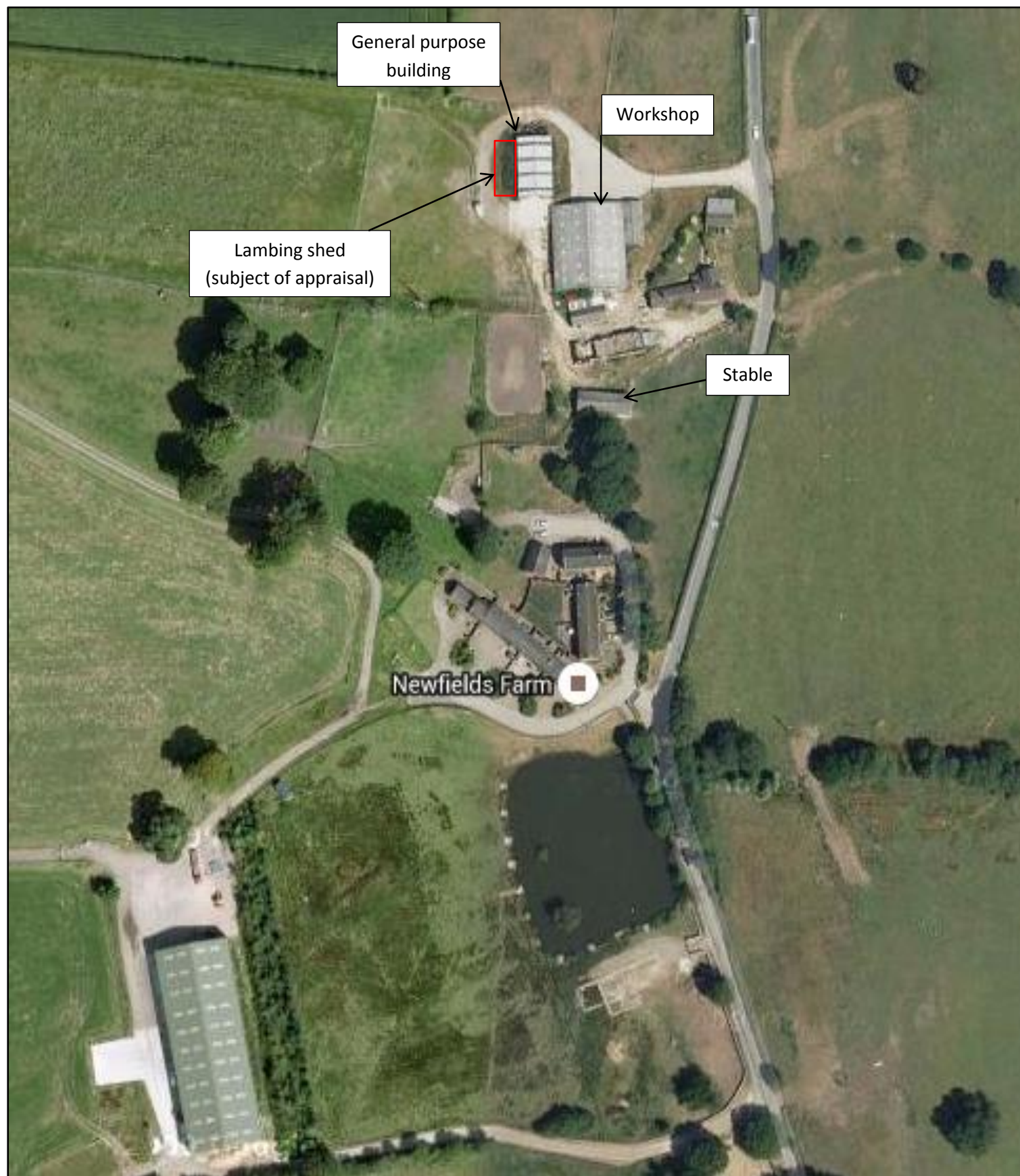
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APPENDIX 1

SITE IDENTIFICATION PLAN

Appendix 1 – Site Identification Plan at Ivy House Farm



APPENDIX 2

PHOTOGRAPHS



Picture 1: External view.



Picture 2: Internal view showing use as lambing shed.