



AGRICULTURAL NEED APPRAISAL
BASFORD BRIDGE FARM, BASFORD BRIDGE LANE,
CHEDDLETON, STAFFORDSHIRE

Relating to the Justification for a Proposed
Extension to an Agricultural Building

October 2017

Prepared by The Brown Rural Partnership LLP

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Relating to a Planning Application for an Extension to an Agricultural Building

1. PRELIMINARY

1.1 Introduction

The Brown Rural Partnership LLP is instructed by Mr R. Day of Basford Bridge Farm to prepare an appraisal in respect of a planning application for an extension to an existing agricultural building at Basford Bridge Farm. This appraisal is prepared in connection with the planning application being made to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for this project.

Basford Bridge Farm extends to approximately 60.70 Hectares (150 acres) of which the farmstead and buildings is tenanted by Mr R. Day. Mr Day operates a mixed farming system which predominantly consists of the production of livestock and fodder crops for winter feeding along with an agricultural contracting business.

1.2 Surveyor

This appraisal has been prepared by Michael Statham BSc (Hons) MRICS FAAV, Partner 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 R Day.
- 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 (84th edition) published by Agro Business Consultants Ltd.
- Land Classification Maps.

2. BASFORD BRIDGE FARM (Existing)

2.1 General Description

Basford Bridge Farm is located along a private track off Basford Bridge Lane, in Cheddleton, 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 Agricultural Land Classification Maps. The farmstead is situated at an altitude of approximately 193m (634 feet) above sea level. By road the holding is located approximately 1.0 mile southeast of the village of Cheddleton and 4.5 miles to the southwest of the town of Leek.

Mr Day runs a livestock farm over the 60.70 Hectares (150 acres) which consists of a suckler herd and breeding flock of ewes. This is the main enterprise on the farm, however, due to ever increasingly tight profit margins Mr Day diversified and developed an agricultural contracting business in order to help spread the cost of the machinery that he already uses on the holding, and ultimately provide Mr Day with a secondary source of income.

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

2.2 Cropping and Stocking

The current cropping on the holding is predominantly grass utilised for both grazing and conservation purposes, to make silage and hay, both of which is used to feed the livestock on the holding during the winter months. There is also an area of approximately 16.19 ha (40 acres) of forage maize which is grown on an annual basis.

The stocking on the holding includes:

- 70 suckler cows with calves
- 150 breeding ewes with lambs

The majority of the suckler herd calves during the spring, however, there can be calving's at any time of the year. The breeding ewes all lamb during the spring months, March and April.

The existing system involves the cows often being housed from November through to May, weather and ground conditions dependant. The following year's lambs are often housed from the start of January through to the end of February in order to fatten them before leaving the holding for the market place. During the period of lambing the ewes are often housed from March through to April.

2.3 Farm Buildings

Basford Bridge Farm has the following existing modern farm buildings.

- Livestock and fodder storage, approximately 30m x 14.8m
Constructed of steel portal frame with a fibre cement type roof. The building is open fronted with concrete half walls and timber cladding upper on 3 elevations.
- Workshop and machinery storage, approximately 30m x 12m
Constructed of steel portal frame with concrete half walls, profiled sheet upper cladding and fibre cement type roof. There is a roller door located on the east and west elevations of the building.
- Silage clamps x2, approximately 40m x 14m as a whole
Constructed of concrete walls with open ends.

2.4 Labour

Mr. R Day has 4 full time employees which undertake the agricultural operations on Basford Bridge Farm and the services provided by the contract farming business. Mr Day lives nearby which enables him to deal with the livestock on a daily basis. This is especially important during the calving and lambing periods so that any emergencies can be dealt with swiftly.

2.5 Machinery

Mr. R Day currently operates an extensive range of agricultural machinery, including:

- 9x Tractors
- 1x JCB telescopic loader
- 3x Silage Trailers
- 5x Flatbed trailers
- 3x Slurry tankers
- 1x Quad rotary rake
- 2x Muck spreaders
- 3x Ploughs
- 2x Sub soilers
- 3x Balers
- 2x Maize header
- 1x Tedder
- Various loader attachments and hand tools

3. PLANNING CONTEXT

This Agricultural Need Appraisal is prepared in connection with the planning application submitted to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for the construction of a new agricultural building at Basford Bridge 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 enterprises and diversified agricultural contracting business at Basford Bridge Farm are both well-established, with the agricultural contracting business continuing to grow on an annual basis. It is important to note that the agricultural contracting business plays an essential part in the sustainability of the overall agricultural operation at Basford Bridge Farm.

The different elements of the agricultural enterprises all demand space requirements within the buildings on the holding, whether for the storage of the machinery utilised on the holding and as part of the diversified agricultural contracting enterprise, the housing of cattle and sheep or for the storage of fodder and bedding for the livestock enterprises.

As has been shown previously in the report, Mr Day has a significant range of tractors and machinery on the holding. These in themselves require building space for storage and also regular maintenance to ensure they are able to operate to their full capacity. Storage of machinery such as this outside would cause significant deterioration of the equipment, particularly during periods of inclement weather, as well as potentially increasing costs for maintenance which would also have a knock on effect of lost income due to increased “downtime” and therefore the viability of the enterprise. The existing building used for machinery storage and maintenance already does not provide sufficient space for the equipment on the holding and so the business would benefit from further building space for this element alone.

The livestock requirements on the holding is mainly required during following months:

- Suckler Cows - November to May, with calving’s typically during the Spring months.
- Fat Lambs - January to February
- Breeding Ewes – March to April, typically following the fat lambs to allow for the new season lambing indoors.

The suckler cows are housed throughout the months that both the fat lambs and breeding ewes also require housing. In order to stay compliant with the cross compliance regulations, it is good practice to winter cows inside. It is also good general practice to bring in pregnant and new-born livestock from the inclement weather, and to allow for easier management of the herd or flock at this crucial period

and to be able to deal with emergencies that might otherwise result in serious distress or losses of livestock.

The existing livestock requirements for the suckler cattle and breeding ewes is between 525m² and 670m², which in itself is larger than the current livestock and fodder shed. Typically, Mr Day will look to turn freshly calved cows with their calves and freshly lambed ewes with their lambs out to pasture a few days after giving birth. Due to the uncertainty over weather conditions and animal health at the time of returning the animals to pasture, Mr Day currently has to erect temporary pens out into the yard in front of the existing building when required in order to provide enough space for the livestock and to maintain a high standard of welfare, as well as protection from inclement weather.

The shortage of space also means that the fodder, which is required to feed and bed the animals while they are housed, is currently being stored in the existing workshop and machinery store. This reduces the number of machinery items that can be stored within the shed which is leading to a deterioration of the machinery and in turn accelerated depreciation. This is adding to the existing problem of the fact that there is not enough shed space to store all the machinery.

To overcome this issue going forwards, Mr Day is proposing to erect an extension to the existing buildings on site to provide additional machinery storage and maintenance space. This would then allow for the existing buildings to be much more efficiently utilised for the housing of livestock and the storage of fodder, without impacting on all of the farming enterprises through deterioration and possible welfare issues due to not having sufficient building space.

The above shows that there is an existing need for the new building extension to be erected on the holding, to cater for the existing operations and also to allow possible scope for future expansion to further enhance the viability of the holding.

4.2 Availability of other buildings

As mentioned above, there is not currently sufficient space on the holding to cater for the existing farming enterprises.

The workshop and existing machinery store is already full during the winter months with fodder and machinery utilised as part of the livestock enterprises and agricultural contracting business.

The existing livestock and fodder shed is already at its capacity during the winter and early spring months while the livestock are wintered inside.

There are no other buildings available on the holding and accordingly the only way to deal with the shortage in shed space is to construct a building extension which will allow the agricultural holding to grow while ensuring its sustainability in the future.

5. CONCLUSION

Having regard to the above, I conclude that

- The proposed building addresses the needs of the agricultural business by supporting the existing agricultural enterprises operating from the site and would help to secure its long term viability.
- The intentions of the business and the ability to expand its agricultural contracting business will enhance the future profitability.
- The development adjoins the existing buildings and makes good use of the existing layout of the farmstead.



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APPENDIX 1

SITE IDENTIFICATION PLAN

Appendix 1 – Site Identification Plan at Basford Bridge Farm



APPENDIX 2

PHOTOGRAPH



Picture 1: Existing Buildings and Farm Yard