

Agricultural Business Appraisal

On behalf of
KR & C Hill & Son Ltd
Coxwood Farm
Cox Lane
Rossett
Wrexham
LL12 8BG

Application for An Agricultural Worker's Dwelling

September 2020

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1. Introduction

KR & C Hill & Son Ltd, Coxwood Farm Cox Lane,
Rossett, Wrexham, LL12 8BG

- 1.2 The report is required in order to provide an independent and objective assessment of the agricultural business being carried out by the applicant. The report is prepared in conjunction with a planning application for an agricultural worker's dwelling;
- 1.3 This report has been prepared by Jonty Cliffe, BSc (Hons), MRICS, FAAV who is a rural surveyor at Barbers Rural Consultancy in Market Drayton, Shropshire. The author has carried out many Agricultural Business Appraisals of this nature and has extensive knowledge of both the agricultural systems in place and planning process;
- 1.4 The land and buildings were inspected on 30th July 2020 by Jonty Cliffe, at which time the details of the farming policy, cropping and stocking rates were obtained;
- 1.5 This report has been prepared taking into consideration the national policies stated in the National Planning Policy Framework "Supporting a prosperous rural economy", together with regional policies within the Wrexham Council;

2. Property Details & Proposed Dwelling

- 2.1 Coxwood Farm is approximately 6 miles north of the town of Wrexham, with the city of Chester being 10 miles to the north. A location plan is included in Appendix I;
- 2.2 Coxwood Farm consists of a modern agricultural building and agricultural land;
- 2.3 The applicants propose a dwelling to be used for K & C Hill to live on site, which is proposed to be sited on land immediately adjacent to the farm building;
- 2.4 K & C Hill currently reside at 1 Castle Way, Dodleston, Nr Chester, Cheshire CH4 9NX which is 5 miles from the farm buildings at Coxwood Farm.
- 2.4 The applicants propose that the dwelling comprises a

arranged on two storeys that includes three bedrooms, two reception rooms and a kitchen. The proposed area of the curtilage, includes house, entrance drive, garden area and garage.

2.5 The agricultural part of the business consists of the two directors Kelly and Carol Hill.

2.6 It is proposed for Kelly and Carol to live in the agricultural worker's dwelling to provide site security and to meet the animal health and welfare measures that the livestock enterprise requires.

2.7 The proposed development is designed to be unobtrusive and to be in keeping with the surrounding landscape;

3. Farming Policy

3.1 Coxwood Farm is an owner-occupied holding extending to approximately 53 acres based in one principal block together with a 85ft x 75ft livestock building. A site plan of Coxwood Farm is included in Appendix II;

3.2 There are three enterprises carried out at Coxwood Farm, beef finishing unit, suckler herd and livestock procurement;

3.3 As part of the Beef Finishing Unit 150 bulls are finished per year by the business. Up to 100 bulls at any one time are loose housing being on the holding from 4-6 months old through to 12-15 months of age. Kelly and Carol Hill carry out all labour, feed, bedding and other necessary operations.

3.4 As part of the Suckler Herd, the business has an annual high of 32 head of Continental suckler cows and calves which graze throughout the year other than 8 weeks prior and post calving. The calves are sold as suckler reared store cattle at 8-10 months.

3.5 The applicant undertakes livestock procurement for the sale and purchase of dairy cattle. Completing the sale of 1000-1200 head annually or 80-100 per month. The livestock are purchased either from livestock auctions or direct from farms and delivered direct to the customer.

3.6 Kelly Hill is the farm manager in this 24 hour operation. Carrying out all labour, feed, bedding and operations alongside Carol Hill who also handles the book keeping.

4. Farm Building

- 4.1 The farm building at Coxwood Farm is an extensive modern steel portal framed building measuring 85ft x 75ft. This is utilised as part of the farming enterprise as all year round housing for the beef cattle and for suckler cow housing for the pre and post calving period.

5. Labour

- 5.1 The labour at Coxwood Farm is provided for by the following:

K Hill (Full time)

All operations on the beef, suckler and livestock procurement enterprises

Carol Hill (Full time)

All operations on the beef and suckler enterprises and the book keeping for the livestock procurement

- 5.2 The holding at Coxwood Farm employs only Kelly and Carol Hill

- 5.3 The calculations showing the labour requirement for the enterprises is included in Appendix IV;

- 5.4 Given the number of agricultural activities being carried out at Coxwood Farm and the labour requirement detailed above, there is a functional requirement for a full time agricultural worker to be readily available at all times. In order to adhere to the codes of welfare, there needs to be a regular requirement for workers to provide essential care at short notice to the animals, both during the day and night;

- 5.6 The requirement for a full-time worker to be available at any given time is justified through the labour requirement on the holding. There are three principal enterprises (beef cattle, suckler herd and livestock procurement) each having a specific labour requirement (Appendix IV). These enterprises can have any number of emergency situations arise, which require immediate supervision or assistance. This is in addition to the day-to-day running of the farming enterprises.

- 5.7 The preferred location for the new dwelling is close to the farm building and farm entrance, which will benefit the farming business for both security purposes and other

- 5.9 The new dwelling will satisfy the requirement for labour to be readily available at all times, which is currently not the case whilst residing at 1 Castle Way;

6. Proposed Site

- 6.1 The existing use on the proposed site is marginal unproductive agricultural field headland, within the existing farmstead area located a short distance to the south-east of the existing building;
- 6.2 The site has been chosen to be within close proximity of the livestock building, so that Mr K or C Hill can immediately be on hand in the event of an emergency;
- 6.3 There are no existing buildings which are suitable for conversion to a dwelling;
- 6.4 It is proposed to access the site directly off the existing access off Cox Lane;

7. Suitable Alternative Accommodation

- 7.1 A search of the local area for houses for sale or rent indicates that there is no suitable alternative accommodation currently available. It is reasonable to consider a value up to £250,000 to be viable and a rental figure of £700 pcm or less;
- 7.2 Any property must be of the size and type suitable for an agricultural worker and it is necessary to be within close proximity of the buildings, in case of emergency;
- 7.3 A copy of the search carried out is included in Appendix V;
- 7.4 Coxwood Farm is in a rural location and the local area has excellent communication routes onto main A-roads, together with local train stations. The area is relatively desirable and as such property prices are reasonably high. It is therefore not viable for a business such as this to purchase a property that does not fulfil its intended functional requirement;
- 7.5 There are no existing buildings which are suitable for

8. Evaluation of the Farm Business

- 8.1 In assessing the farm business and the need for a permanent dwelling on the land, the following has been considered:

Existing Functional Need

- 8.2 The nature and scale of the business principally determines whether there is a functional requirement, together with the operations which are carried out. The need to provide essential care at short notice is paramount on a livestock farm and is an example where a functional need arises.
- 8.3 The farm animal vet has provided a letter in support of a member of staff being available on site at all times for animal health and welfare purposes. This is from Phillip Jones who is a Veterinary Surgeon for Willow Farm Vets based in Mold, Flintshire. A copy of the letter is included in Appendix VI;
- 8.4 The letter highlights the potential animal and human welfare issues in particular the livestock care which is a 24 hour, 365 day responsibility and the issues with birthing of a calf, and the need for a dwelling to ensure the long-term sustainability of the livestock enterprise;

Miscellaneous

- **Trapped Animals**
Livestock can become trapped, especially on feed barriers or handling equipment. This can cause bruising, physical injury or perhaps dehydration if left for a significant period
- **Site Security**
It is important to have the property occupied both during the day and night to prevent further instances of theft
- **Calving**
A common emergency is issues during the birth of a calf, which require prompt intervention

Full-time Requirement

- 8.7 The standard labour requirement for the farming