

AGRICULTURAL JUSTIFICATION REPORT
FOR
A NEW STEEL PORTAL FRAMED AGRICULTURAL
LIVESTOCK AND FODDER BUILDING ON AGRICULTURAL
LAND AT HIGHER WYCH

Prepared on behalf of

**Mr I C Edwards
Oaks Farm
Bronnington
Shropshire
SY13 3EU**

Prepared by: Tony Rimmer MRICS FAAV

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CONTENTS

	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Qualifications and Experts Duty	1
1.2 Purpose of Report	1
1.3 The Farm & Brief History	1
2. FARM DETAILS	2
2.1 Introduction – Oaks Farm and Land at Higher Wych	2
2.2 Cropping	2
2.3 Application Site Land	2
3. PROPOSED SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA	3
3.1 Reason for Location of Site	3
3.2 Site Situation	3
3.2.1 Animal Welfare Standards	3
3.3 Site Details	4
3.3.1 Special Landscape Area 16b	4
4. VISUAL IMPACT MITIGATION	5
5. HIGHWAYS & ACCESS	5
6. OTHER RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY	5
7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	6

APPENDICES

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Appendix 1 | Location Plan |
| Appendix 2 | Farm Plan |
| Appendix 3 | Site Plan |
| Appendix 4 | Elevation Drawings |
| Appendix 5 | Letter of Support |
| Appendix 6 | SMR 11: Welfare Standards for the Protection of Calves – January 2017, produced by the Welsh Government |
| Appendix 7 | SMR 13: Welfare Standards for the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes – January 2017, Produced by the Welsh Government |
| Appendix 8 | Wych Valley 12b Landscape Character Area Extract and Plan |
| Appendix 9 | Views of Agricultural/Outbuildings in the Locality from the Highway |

I. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Rostons following instructions from Mr I C Edwards who farms the land at Higher Wych as an additional holding, situated away from the family farm in Bronington, known as Oaks farm.

I.1. Qualifications and Experts Duty

I, Tony Rimmer, am a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyor and a Fellow of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers and work for the firm of Rostons Limited.

I understand my duties in the preparation of this report and have complied with that duty.

The substance of the instruction I have received and the information I have been provided with are set out within this report and its appendices. I am a Chartered surveyor.

I act on behalf of dairy, mixed and arable farmers throughout North Wales and Cheshire. Through this work I have gained a great deal of experience in understanding the needs of dairy farms and the industry.

I.2. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to fully justify the planning application for a much needed livestock and fodder building situated on land at Higher Wych, Wrexham. The report will go on to show how the building is fully justified within the context of Planning Policy. The Report provides the appraisal for the need of the building for the purposes of agriculture and that no other alternatives are available to the applicant.

I.3. The Farm & Brief History

Mr I C Edwards farms a total of approximately 335 acres (135.57 ha) of owned and rented land at his farm at Bronington and Higher Wych. The farm is managed in a way where two farming systems are in place. Firstly, the main dairy enterprise at Oaks Farm and secondly, a beef and sheep enterprise operated predominantly from Higher Wych. Higher Wych is the application site comprising 165 acres of grazing land.

At the time of application there are approximately 120 head of dairy and beef young stock on the land at Higher Wych where there is currently no housing provision for the winter months or during calving.

In addition, the sheep enterprise does not have the benefit of any housing for use when lambing, hence this application has been made. In total, the applicant currently has approximately 620 sheep, comprising 315 ewes and 305 store lambs.

The entire farm holding is shown on the farm plans within appendix 2.

2. FARM DETAILS

2.1. Introduction and Stocking – Oakes Farm and Land at Higher Wych

The applicants farming business operates from Oaks Farm and 165 acres at Higher Wych. The dairy herd at Oaks Farm currently comprises 128 cows in milk plus approximately 158 head of young stock and followers.

The sheep flock are predominantly located at Higher Wych together with approximately 120 head of cattle, these being beef store cattle and some of the dairy young stock.

2.2. Cropping

At the time of application the majority of the land is down to grass. The applicant also grows additional fodder as a supplement feed for both the dairy and sheep enterprises.

2.3. Land at the Application Site

The applicant owns a total of 52 acres (21 hectares). In addition, the partnership rents an additional 113 acres (46 ha) of land on a Farm Business Tenancy and Grazing Licence agreement.

This land is shown outlined red on the plans included within appendix 2.

3. PROPOSED SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

3.1. Reason for the Location of the Site

The proposed building is located at the site identified in the location plan as it is a substantial block of land farmed by the applicant located away from the main holding, Oaks Farm. Oaks Farm and the application site are situated approximately 5.34km apart by road. Consequently, the land at the application site has a separate holding number and therefore exists as its own farm unit.

There are no existing farm buildings or livestock housing facilities available at the application site. The nature of the farming operation requires a building to be in place to be able to house livestock over winter and during the lambing period. At present, the applicants lamb ewes and calve cows in the open field at the application site without a dry and safe area in which to work.

There is a requirement to ensure that there are adequate animal welfare facilities for young animals, in-calf cows and in-lamb ewes to have a safe, comfortable and secure place to be housed over the cold winter months and to be monitored when near to giving birth. Not only this, but there is a need to provide adequate space undercover all year round for animals requiring regular monitoring and attention.

3.2. Site Situation

The purpose of this application is to ensure the continued efficiency and sustainability of the business. The building is required in order to enable the applicant to care for and manage animals and ensure that welfare standards are maintained. Therefore the housing facilities required form a vital element of the future success of the family farming business.

The proposed building is a modern steel portal framed constructions with good ventilation. The building will provide livestock housing over the winter so that the animals are kept in a dry and sheltered environment. Resultantly there will be a reduced risk of illness.

3.2.1. Animal Welfare Standards

With reference to the enclosures in appendix 6 and 7, the applicant is obligated by the Welsh Government to ensure that the holding meets set Animal Welfare Standards.

SMR II: Welfare Standards for the protection of calves sets a minimum standard for "sick or injured calves to be isolated in suitable accommodation with dry comfortable bedding." Currently, this facility is not available to the applicant.

The applicant currently has to relocate sick animals to Oaks Farm where they can be monitored closely in a building. This involves moving these animals unnecessarily in livestock transportation and registering the movement with the BCMS to the holding number at Oaks Farm.

Moving livestock between holdings causes extreme complications for TB restrictions should the farm be become restricted on movements as a result of a positive or inconclusive periodic TB test. This is not a sustainable way of farming the land at Higher Wych.

SMR13: Welfare Standards for animals kept for farming purposes states clearly the building requirements. This advice has been considered when preparing this application and designing the proposed building in terms of materials, size and construction.

3.3. Site Details

The land is located in Bronnington parish, within Wrexham County Borough Council.

As identified in the site plan, the proposed building is situated at a minimum distance of 10 meters from the existing tree.

3.3.1. Special Landscape Area 16b

A previous application which was withdrawn (Ref: P/2016/0986) was originally for a site closer to the designated Special Landscape Area 12b Wych Valley.

The extract available from Wrexham Planning website is included in appendix 8.

It can be noted that the new application site is outside of the designated area.

It is also within a built environment which across the highway are a number of similar buildings already erected which can be seen from the application site.

It must also be noted that within the extract of the area 12b (appendix 8) it also states that the management guidance is to "sustain farming and to reflect agricultural change."

This application has arisen as a result of changing farming policy requirements and the need to be 100% efficient to ensure the farm business is profitable for future generations.

The applicants vet, livestock feed consultant and the NFU have provided letters of support for this application, clarifying the essential need for the building. These are included within appendix 5.

4. VISUAL IMPACT MITIGATION

The applicants have looked to mitigate any potential visual impact of the building by situating it to the west of the field access gate so as to not obstruct the view from the listed building opposite.

The colour of the proposed building will compliment the vegetation and surrounding landscape. The roof is to be constructed of grey roofing sheets which will blend in with the sky.

5. HIGHWAYS AND ACCESS

It is believed that the current access into the parcel of land which the proposed building stands is suitable as an access going forward. There is sufficient visibility from both directions and naturally any highway user would slow down when approaching the farm drive which is opposite the application site.

More details are covered within the Design and Access Statement.

6. OTHER RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

6.1. Policy ECS of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996- 2011

In line with Policy EC3 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011, whilst it is noted that this is somewhat out of date, it is believed that there is currently no policy to supersede.

Policy EC3 states that the construction of new agricultural buildings will be permitted unless the development is materially detrimental in terms of its impact to the environmental surrounding landscapes. As part of the mitigation and the relocation of the site, it is believed that this development is not materially detrimental to the environment or surrounding landscape.

More so, the Policy also states that development should form part of an existing farm complex. Whilst the building sits on the opposite side of the highway there is a further farm complex with similar buildings close by as can be seen within appendix 9.

Policy EC3 also states that in exceptional circumstances where there is an essential agricultural need and no reasonable alternative location for the development, the construction of new agricultural buildings will be permitted. There is clearly an essential agricultural need in this instance and no reasonable alternative location is available to the applicant.

6.2 Policy GDPI – Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011

Also in accordance with Policy GDPI the developments meets the considerations and objectives A – K where applicable.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Rostons have been instructed to provide an assessment of the need for an essential livestock building to serve the existing farming system on the land at Higher Wych. This need has been examined within the context of national and local planning policy guidance on the sustainability of agriculture and the rural economy.

Planning policy supports the sustainability of agricultural businesses as is evidenced in this report.

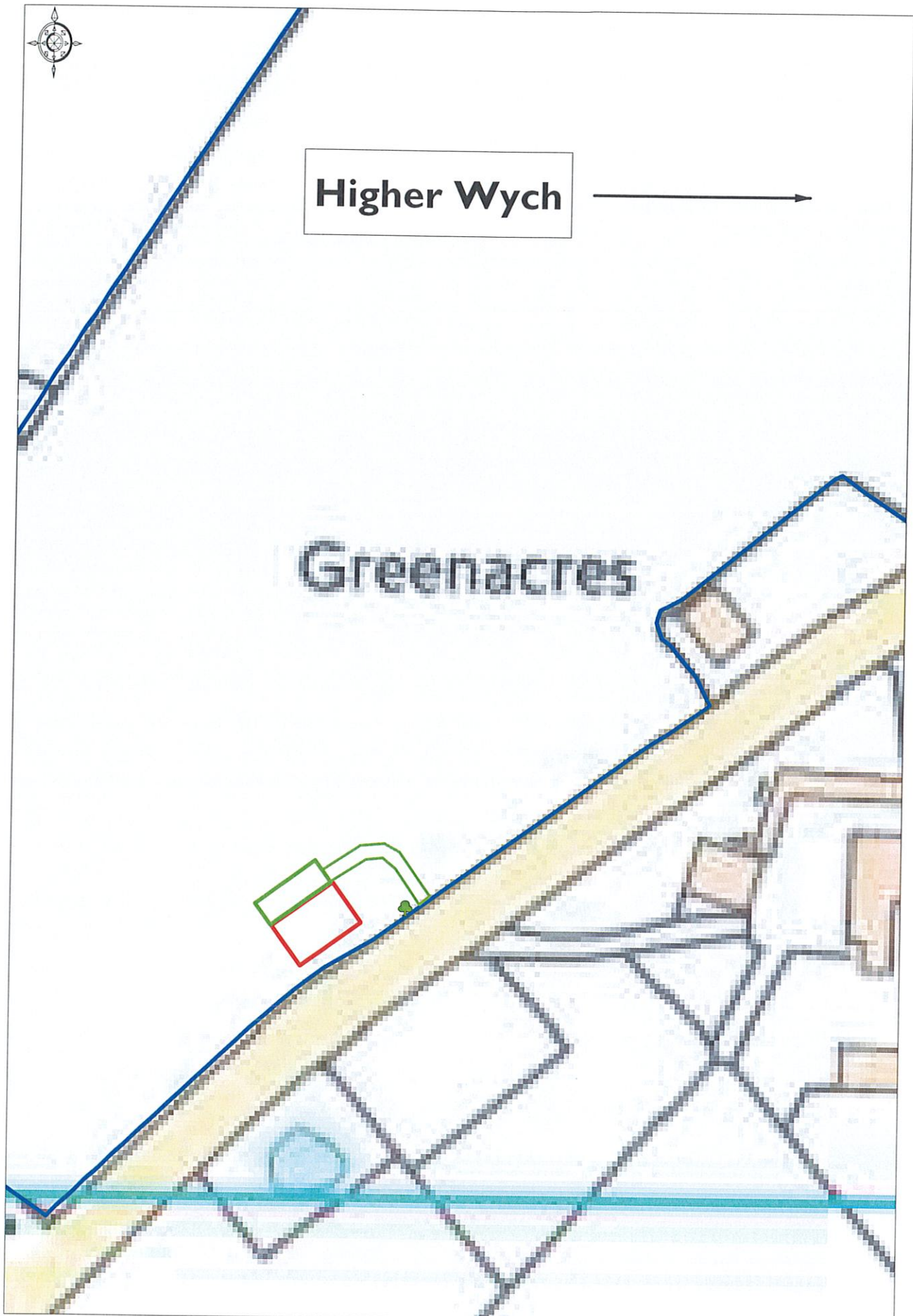
Local planning authorities are urged to take into account the need for farm businesses to adapt to change in market conditions, animal welfare regulations and the need to maintain an efficient flexible agricultural business to support future generations.

The applicant is the owner-occupier of the land on which the application stands at Higher Wych. There is currently no livestock housing whatsoever available to the applicant at the application site. Endeavours to mitigate visual impact to the landscape area and to ensure a safe highway access have been thoroughly considered as part of the re-submission of the previous application (ref:P/2016/0986) and all alternatives/options have been considered.

APPENDIX I

Location Plan

Location of Proposed Agricultural Building



APPENDIX 2

Farm Plan



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Welsh Government

Ffurflen Cais Sengl

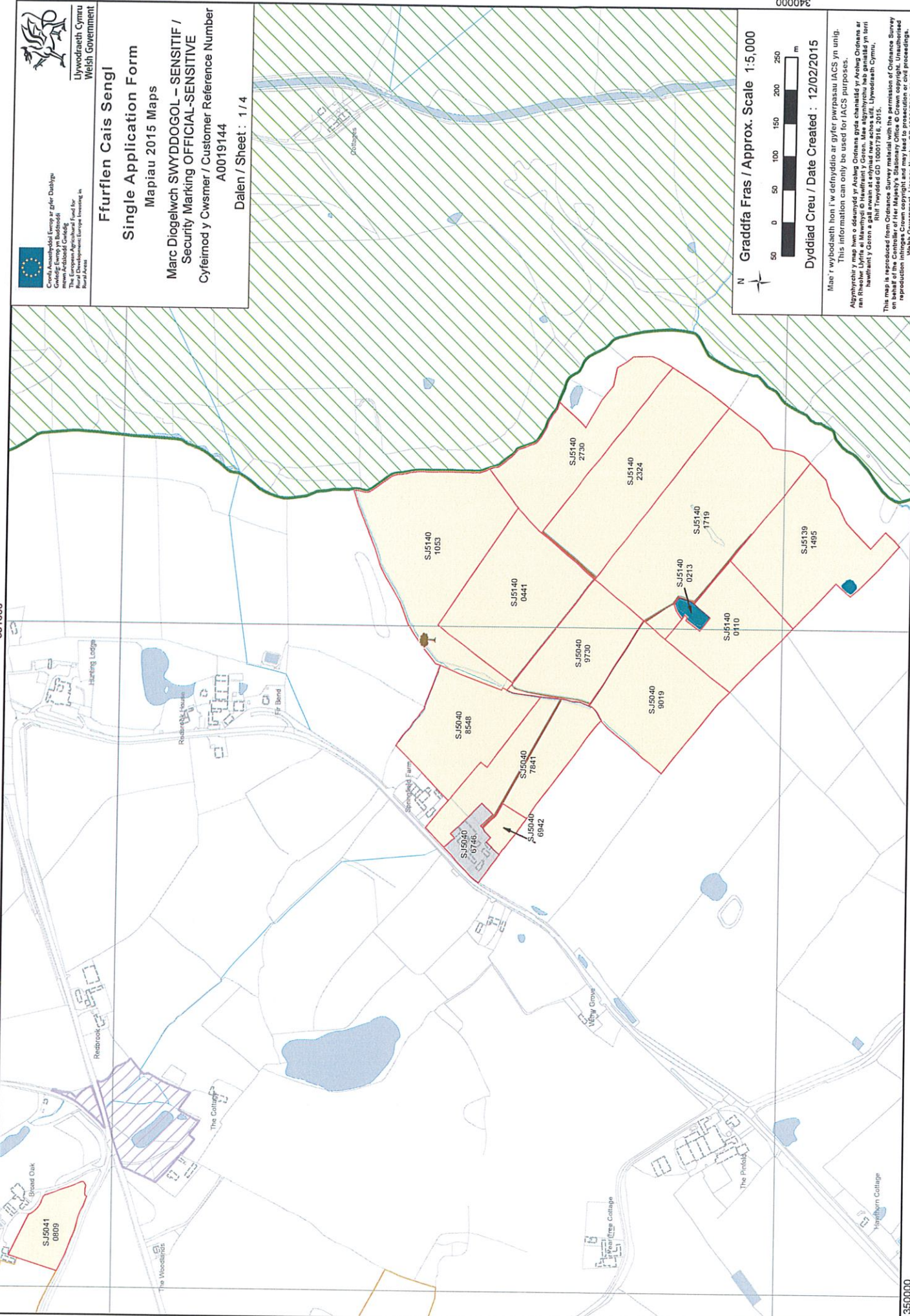
Single Application Form

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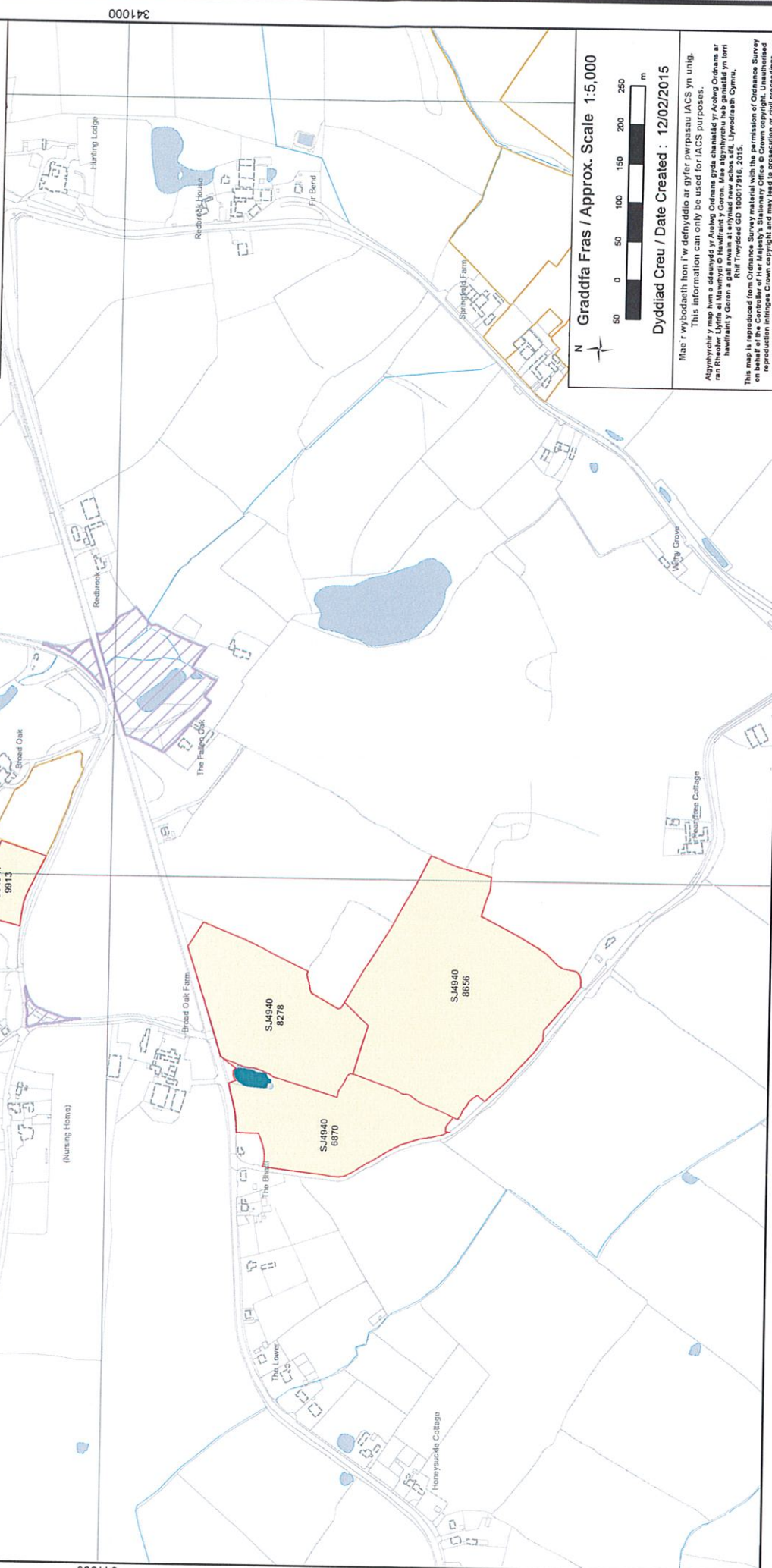
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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Cwmwl Mawrddodol Eiddo ar yfer Dduallgu
Gwladol Eiddo yn Baidnodi
Rural Development Landmark
Rural Areas

Ffurflen Cais Sengl

Single Application Form

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ian Rhif Twyddid 100017916. Mae aglybysir hon yn ganiatáu i'r Llywodraeth Cymru
a'r Llywodraeth Saesneg gyswrtio'r map hon i'w defnyddio yn unig.

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Cwmwl Annwylhddol Ewrop ar ydyl Duthlgo
Gwladg Ewrop yn luddhnddi
Twm Artidddol Gwladg
Twm Artidddol Gwladg
Rural Development Europe Investing in
Rural Areas

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ffurflen Cais Sengl

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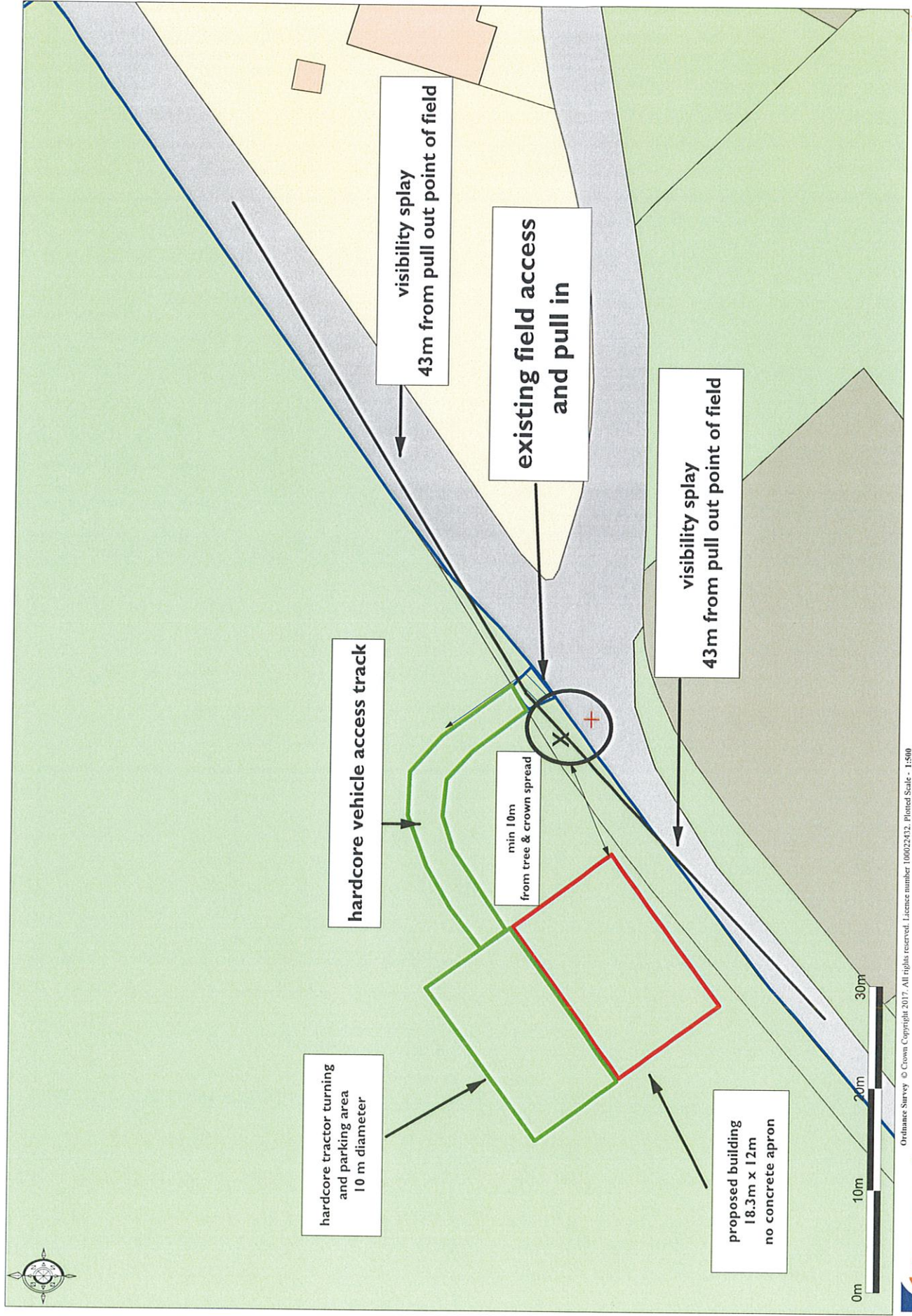
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hauddiutl y Gorn a gell arwain at erioed y Llywodraeth Cymru.
Rhif Twyddad GD 100017916, 2015.

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APPENDIX 3

Site Plan

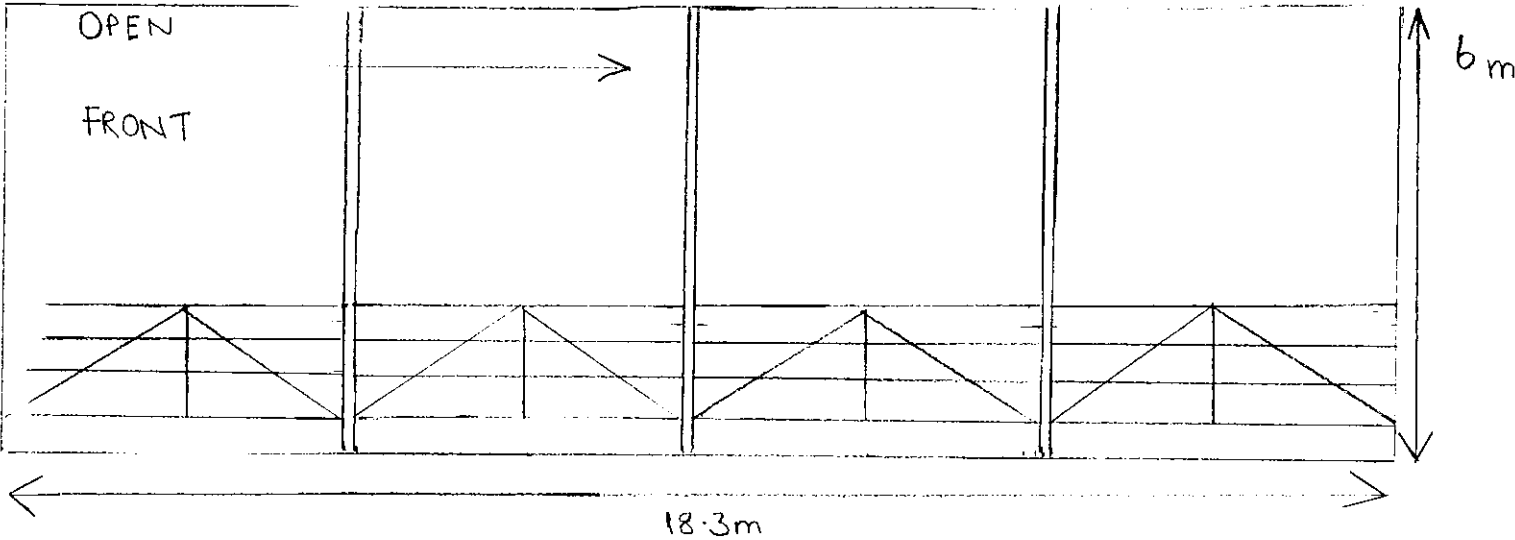
Proposed Site Plan



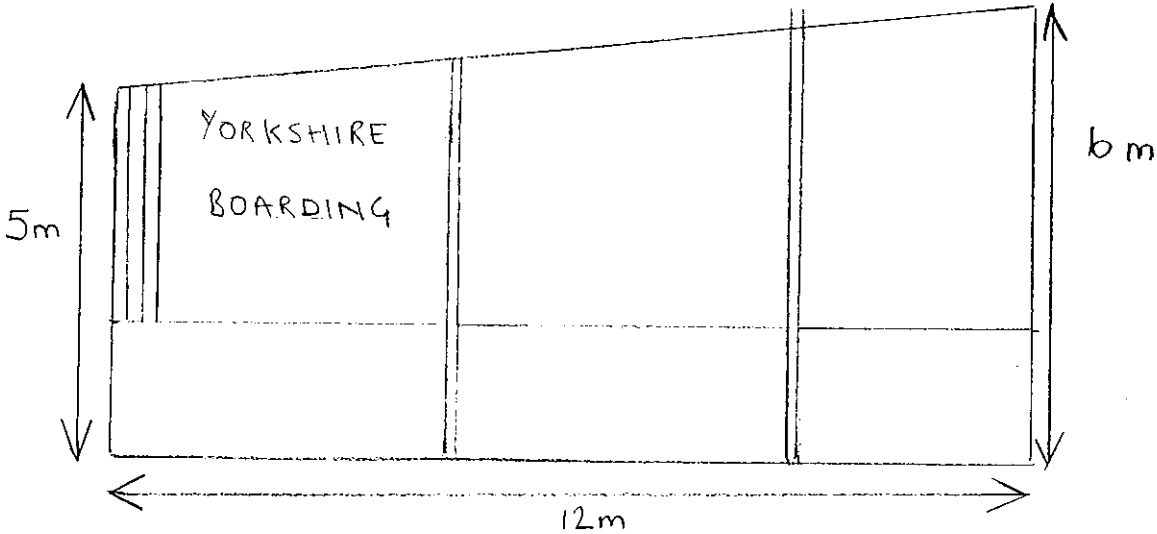
APPENDIX 4

Elevation Drawings

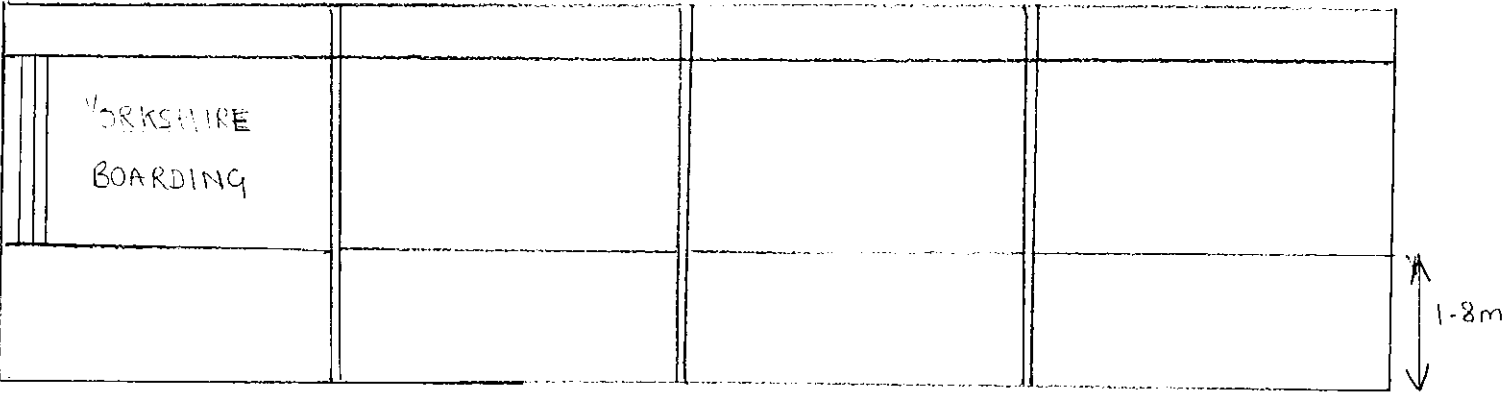
NORTH WEST ELEVATION



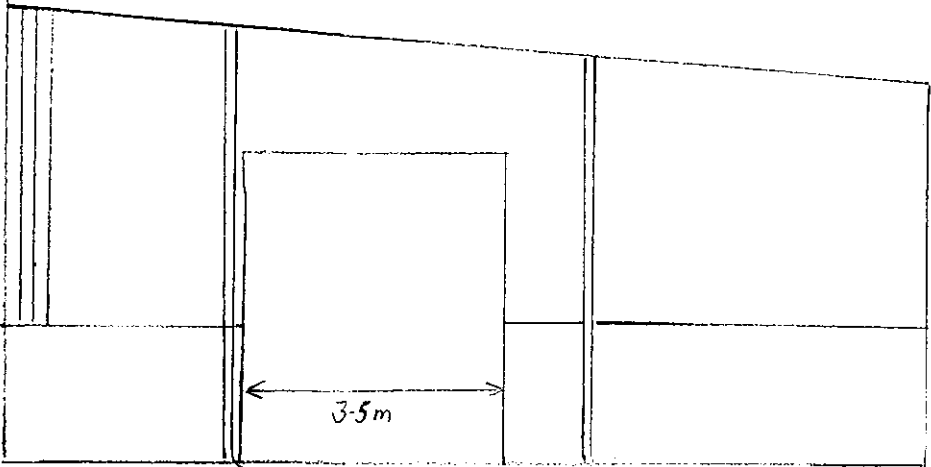
NORTH EAST GABLE



SOUTH EAST ELEVATION



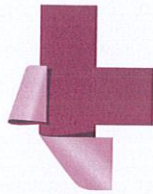
SOUTH WEST GABLE



APPENDIX 5

Letter of Support from:

- 1) Applicants Vet**
- 2) Livestock Feed Firm Consultant**
- 3) NFU**



Ternvets

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Putting Care into Practice

17/1/17

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir

I am writing in support of an application for planning on behalf of my client Mr I Edwards, Oaks Farm, Ellesmere Road, Bronington, Whitchurch, SY13 3EU.

Mr Edwards has land away from home that he uses for summer grazing of dry cows and heifer rearing. We visit for occasional emergencies, TB testing and other routine tasks. A shed with suitable handling facilities is required to improve personnel safety and also the welfare of these animals.

NS Rowe BVetMed MRCVS



The Planning Department
Wrexham Council

February 8th 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Mr & Mrs I C Edwards, The Oaks, Ellesmere Road, Bronington

LAND AT HIGHER WYCH

With regard to the planning application for an agricultural building for livestock and storage, I would comment as follows:

1. Livestock: There are no accessible agricultural buildings within easy reach of the land covered by this application. Any livestock requiring attention need to be transported back to the main farm buildings, which adds stress to an already distressed animal. An animal would recover quicker when in an environment they know and trust. It would be safer and easier to handle livestock in a modern accessible building not only for the Edwards family but for any vet that may be required to carry out the compulsory tuberculosis testing, vaccinations, blood testing and any pregnancy scanning of animals.
2. Storage: When we or any other company carry out a delivery we need somewhere to unload, put the feed in a dry place and somewhere that is secure. For the safety of our delivery drivers we need an accessible site; we deliver between 6am and 6pm.

I am supporting this application as an essential part of the Edwards family business plan; not only for the future of this agricultural holding but to maintain a high standard of livestock welfare.

Yours faithfully

Barry Rees

Barry Rees, Trematon, School Lane, Bronington SY13 3HN
Area Sales Manager, Carrs Billington Agriculture
Full Member of the Feed Advisory Register – ID No FAR637

Carrs Billington Agriculture
Cold Meece
Stone
Staffordshire, ST15 0QW

Tel - 01785 760535

Fax - 01785 760888



Miss J Prince
Agriculture House
Hanmer
Whitchurch
SY13 3DQ

Tel: 01948 830211
Email: jo_prince@nfumutual.co.uk

Date: 7th February 2017

I C & A L Edwards
Oaks Farm
Ellesmere Road
Bronington
Whitchurch
Shropshire
SY13 3EU

To whom it may concern,

Planning Application

Further to my above members application to erect a building for animal housing opposite Higher Lanes Farm, Iscoyd, Whitchurch SY13 3AX. This is a letter in support of the application on the grounds of animal welfare, this will assist my member in respect of the handling and housing of his livestock.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jo-Anne Prince'.

Miss Jo-Anne Prince
Group secretary

APPENDIX 6

**SMRI 1: Welfare Standards for the Protection of Calves – January 2017,
produced by the Welsh Government**

SMR 11: Welfare Standards for the Protection of Calves



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The aim of these requirements is to protect the welfare of calves by setting a minimum standard for their care and husbandry. They apply to all keepers of calves, in addition to the requirements for the welfare of farmed animals (please note SMR 13).

Main requirements

The following minimum standards have to be met when rearing or fattening calves:

- All housed calves must be inspected at least twice a day, and outdoor calves at least once a day;
- Calves must not be tethered unless for a short period to facilitate feeding of milk/milk substitute;
- For individual calf pens:
 - Pen length shall be at least equal to the body length of the calf when standing, to allow it to stand, turn, lie down and groom itself;
 - Pen width shall be at least equal to the height of the calf when standing.
- Calves older than 8 weeks should not be penned singly, unless a vet has advised that it needs to remain in isolation or is under treatment;
- Calf accommodation must be clean and disinfected as appropriate, have bedding and be lit by natural or artificial means;
- Calves should have:
 - Colostrum within 6 hours of life;
 - Sufficient feed appropriate to their age;
 - Access to clean drinking water at all times.
- Calves require at least two liquid feeds per day to gain sufficient nutrition. Only when solid feed can be properly digested should it be considered a 'feed'. Roughage should be provided from two weeks of age.

Field checks

- Check that calf housing meets the requirements above.
- Check the farmer has a copy or access to the Welfare Code for cattle.

Good Practice

- Follow guidelines given in the Welfare Code for housing calves.
- Milk from cows tested and found to be bTB reactors, or inconclusive, should **NOT** be fed to calves.
- Milk from infected cows may only be fed to animals on the same farm after suitable heat treatment.
- Provided milk from TB infected cows (reactors or clinical cases) is fed only to animals on the same farm after appropriate heat treatment (pasteurisation will kill *Mycobacterium bovis*) the livestock keeper is compliant with EU rules.
- If calves are reared in a system where milk is provided by artificial means, their feed intake should be closely monitored. If calves have a reduced or slower feed intake, this is often an early sign of disease.
- Sick or injured calves must be isolated in suitable accommodation where appropriate with dry comfortable bedding.

For further information please contact:

Animal and Plant Health Agency

See 'Useful Contacts' factsheet within this pack

www.gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/ahw/animal-welfare/livestockwelfare

APPENDIX 7

**SMR 13: Welfare Standards for the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming
Purposes – January 2017, Produced by the Welsh Government**

SMR 13: Welfare Standards for the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes



The aim of these requirements is to give consumers confidence that high welfare standards are being achieved, which in turn improves food safety and quality. They protect the welfare of farmed animals by setting minimum standards for their care and husbandry. They apply to any species that are kept for agricultural purposes.

Owners and keepers of all farm animals should look after the welfare of their animals and see that they are not caused unnecessary pain, suffering or injury.

Main requirements

The following standards are required:

- Farm Staff: there should be a sufficient number looking after the animals and they must have the appropriate ability and competence.
- Stock Inspection: all animals kept in husbandry systems in which their welfare depends on frequent human attention, must be inspected at least once a day. Injured or ill animals must be treated immediately and if necessary, isolated in suitable premises. Seek and act upon veterinary advice if appropriate.
- Records: the owner or keeper of the animals must keep a record of any medicines administered to their stock for at least three years from the date of treatment.
- Freedom of movement: all animals, even if tethered, chained or confined, must be given enough space to move without unnecessary suffering or injury.
- Buildings and accommodation: materials used in the construction of the buildings must be capable of being cleaned and disinfected. Maintain accommodation to ensure that there are no sharp edges or other hazards which may cause injury. Air circulation, dust levels, temperature and relative humidity should be kept within acceptable limits. Animals kept in buildings must not be kept in permanent darkness or constantly exposed to artificial light.
- Animals not kept in buildings: must, where necessary and possible, be given protection from adverse weather conditions, predators and risks to their health. They shall at all times, have access to a well-drained lying area.
- Automatic or mechanical equipment: such equipment essential for the health and well being of animals should be inspected at least once a day. Where an artificial ventilation system is in use, an appropriate backup system must be in place to guarantee sufficient air renewal.
- Feed, water and other substances: animals must be given a wholesome diet which is appropriate to their age and species and which is fed to them in sufficient quantities and at regular intervals. No substances should be administered to animals which are harmful to their health or welfare. In addition, feeding and watering equipment must pose minimal risk of contamination.
- Breeding procedures: natural or artificial breeding or breeding procedures which cause or are likely to cause, suffering or injury to any of the animals concerned are not permitted unless their impact is minimal, brief and do not cause injury.

APPENDIX 8

Wych Valley 12b Landscape Character Area Extract and Plan



Wych Valley 12b

This is one of a series of Local Planning Guidance Notes based on Wrexham LANDMAP (adopted November 2004), setting out recommendations for each Landscape Character area.



Wych Valley summary

- Hidden, picturesque and unspoilt valley of the Wych Brook
- Incised and intricate valley landform
- Unintensive pastoral farmland with woodland on steeper slopes
- Nature conservation value - ancient woodland, species-rich grassland, hedgerows, trees and scrub
- Scattered farmsteadings and cottages in red brick
- Winding lanes, difficult access

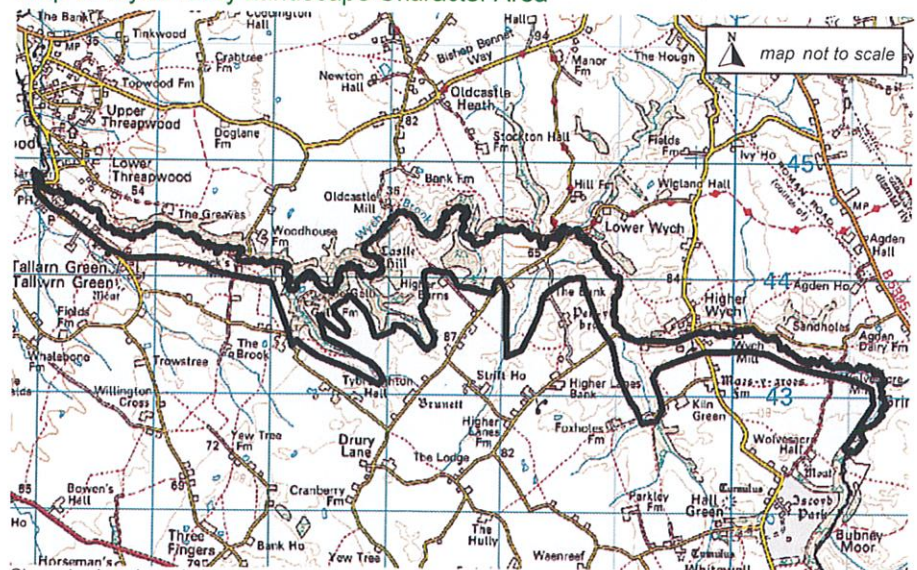


An enclosed, hidden and picturesque valley on the Cheshire border with scattered farms in a wooded pastoral landscape

Landscape context

One of a number of small enclosed predominantly wooded valleys within the rural Eastern Lowlands of Wrexham. The only other large enough to form a separate character area is the Dee/Ceiriog Wooded Valley

Map of Wych Valley Landscape Character Area



Character Area boundaries should be considered transitional rather than precise
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Key characteristics

Visual character:

- Tranquil and enclosed lowland valley with mosaic of woodland and pasture
- Picturesque views, particularly from the English side of the valley (where it is designated as an Area of Special County Value)
- Scattered red-brick farms reached via small winding roads and tracks
- Tallarn Green is a quiet village, of linear form, which follows the edge of the Wych Valley

Geological character:

- The Wych Brook, a tributary of the River Dee, has eroded deeply into glacial drift consisting of areas of till (boulder clay) and sands and

gravels. The middle section, between Lower Wych and Dymocks Mill is narrowest and deepest

- The drift lies over Triassic rocks of the Cheshire Plain, including salt beds, which were exploited until the late 19th century

Ecological character:

- Area of high biodiversity value with unintensive farming, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and remnants of lowland pasture, rush pasture, and upland mixed ash woodlands
- The edges of the valley grade into the general farmland of the English Maelor, characterised by a high density of field ponds



Historical character:

- Ridge and furrow remnants, part of the Wrexham Lowlands area with medieval open fields, and areas of semi-natural ancient woodland
- Remains of water-powered mills from the 19th century which were once used for corn grinding
- Evidence of former salt workings

Cultural character:

- Agricultural area with dispersed population on Welsh-English border

For further information contact:

Planning Environment
Planning Department
Wrexham County Borough Council
Lambpit Street, Wrexham. LL11 1AR
Tel: 01978 292019

www.wrexham.gov.uk/planning

All our information is available in accessible formats



Overall management strategy:

Conservation

Management guidance

Aims	Guidelines
Conserve visual qualities and tranquillity	● Maintain, manage and increase tree cover ● The area is particularly sensitive to built development or conversions which are not in harmony with existing built character
Conserve geodiversity	● Maintain integrity of landforms and assess new exposures ● Maintain morphological integrity of fluvial landforms
Conserve biodiversity	● Increase diversity in woodland structure and retain old/dead trees, standing or fallen ● Expand upland ash woodlands habitat ● Maintain woodland corridors
Conserve historic landscape features	● Carry out studies to determine survival of watermills and related features, conserve and manage ● Preserve surviving features and buildings of Tallarn Green and examine its associated wider landscape ● Conserve and manage structures and deposits associated with medieval and later salt workings
Sustain farming	● Management needs to reflect / anticipate social and agricultural change

Landscape sensitivity:

An enclosed small scale landscape sensitive to development or landuse change which could detract from or erode its rural character



APPENDIX 9

Views of Agricultural/Outbuildings in the Locality from the Highway

