

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



**West View House
Whitchurch Road
Hatton Heath
Chester
CH3 9AU
Telephone: 01829 773000
Facsimile: 01829 773001
Email: tonyrimmer@rostons.co.uk
Ref: AJR.CPCP6126**

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	Proposed Final Images
Appendix 7	SMRI 1: Welfare Standards for the Protection of Calves – January 2017, produced by the Welsh Government
Appendix 8	SMR 13: Welfare Standards for the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes – January 2017, Produced by the Welsh Government
Appendix 9	Wych Valley 12b Landscape Character Area Extract and Plan
Appendix 10	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 Bronnington 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 7 and 8, the applicant is obligated by the Welsh Government to ensure that the holding meets set Animal Welfare Standards.

SMR11: 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 9.

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 9) 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 environment 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 10.

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

APPENDIX 2

Farm Plans

APPENDIX 3

Site Plan

APPENDIX 4

Elevation Drawings

APPENDIX 5

Letter of Support from:

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

APPENDIX 6

Proposed Final Images

APPENDIX 7

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

APPENDIX 8

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

APPENDIX 9

Wych Valley 12b Landscape Character Area Extract and Plan

APPENDIX 10

Views of Agricultural/Outbuildings in the Locality from the Highway

