

AGRICULTURAL JUSTIFICATION REPORT
FOR
NEW STEEL PORTAL FRAME BUILDING

Prepared on behalf of

**Mr and Mrs Probin
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I. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Rostons following instructions from Mr and Mrs Probin who farm land at The Haven, Lower Wych, Malpas and land surrounding the Malpas and Whitchurch areas.

I.1. Qualifications and Experts Duty

I, Anthony John Rimmer am a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and Fellow of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers and a Director of 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 instructions 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 with some 20 years experience. I have been involved in the experience of farming all my life having been brought up on the family farm in Gloucestershire before studying at the Royal Agricultural College Cirencester. Throughout my time at the Royal Agricultural College, whenever the opportunity arose, I gained experience on both the family farm and the Gloucester livestock market. I joined the firm of Bruton Knowles in 1988 and qualified as a Rural Chartered Surveyor and fellow of the Association of Agricultural Valuers where I gained experience dealing with and on behalf of dairy and arable farmers.

In 1995 I moved to Cheshire to join the firm of Frank Marshall & Co based at their Knutsford office, dealing with professional matters on behalf of dairy and other farmers throughout Cheshire. I have continued to act on behalf of dairy, mixed and arable farmers throughout Cheshire since then and have gained a great deal of experience in understanding the needs of dairy farmers and the industry.

I.2. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to fully justify the planning application for a new steel portal frame building on land referred to as land at The Haven, Lower Wych, Malpas. This report will go on to show why this building is fully justified within the context of National Policy Guidance and Local Planning Policies and provide an appraisal for the need of the building addressing the following points;

- National & Local Planning Policies relating to agricultural buildings.
- The need for the building space in relation to the current farming activities.
- Summary of the agricultural operations carried out

I.3. The Farm

The Haven

The Haven is an agricultural holding extending to approximately 4 acres and comprises of a small traditional range of brick buildings with sheet roofs used for livestock handling and general storage. A detached residential property and approximately 4 acres of pasture land.

The property forms the base for the wider agricultural operations of R H Probin Farming.

2. FARM DETAILS

2.1. Introduction

R H Probin Farming is Mr Richard Probin's Agricultural Business which is an extensive agricultural operation farming land in South Cheshire, Wrexham and North Shropshire extending to approximately 185 acres in total.

Mr Probin's farming operations extend to the growing of maize on a contract basis for a number of well established dairy businesses in the locality.

The business also grows a significant amount of hay during the Spring and Summer period selling this on to local agricultural businesses throughout the northwest and north Wales. As well as providing hay the business also outsources straw from around the United Kingdom and provides a sale and delivery service to agricultural users.

All of the agricultural operations are carried out by Richard Probin with all necessary machinery being owned by the agricultural business.

The business has been established for over 20 years and has grown and evolved to its current position. The business has currently acquired the agricultural holding with a view to it forming a secure base for the agricultural operations.

3. PROPOSED BUILDING

3.1. The Building

The proposed building is to be a steel portal frame agricultural building measuring 80 ft. long x 40 ft. wide x 18 ft. to eaves.

The building is to be open to one side and clad down from eaves to the ground level on the two ends and one side.

3.2. Building Use

The building will be used for the following purposes;

- The storage of agricultural machinery
- The storage of hay and straw
- The storage of inorganic fertiliser, seed and sprays
- To form the hub of the agricultural operations conducted by R H Probin Farming.

3.3. Design of the Building

The building has been designed so that it will allow for the incorporation of all of the above uses without each one compromising the other and allowing for efficient use of the building.

The building has been designed so that it can store all of the required items effectively and it will also allow for machinery to manoeuvre in and out of the

building without the need to rearrange all of the items within it on every occasion.

The materials of the building have been chosen to ensure that the building blends in with the surrounding landscape as effectively as possible. Both ends and one side of the building will clad from eaves height down to ground level in juniper green box profile sheets and the roof will also be sheeted in juniper green box profile sheets.

These materials will ensure that the building blends in with the natural landscape and has a minimal visual impact on the surrounding area.

3.4 Building Location

The building is to be situated on the edge of the existing agricultural field at The Haven and will benefit from direct access off the public lane and will be adjacent to the residential property. By locating the building in this position it will remove the need for creating any new accesses onto the public highway and will involve a minimum amount of landscaping or the need to create a significant level of hardcore tracks.

3.5 Floor Level and Landscaping

The floor level of the proposed building will be the same as the existing property at The Haven. This will involve the levelling of the existing site which will require the ground levels to be reduced by approximately 30 cm and increasing to approximately 160 cm at the end elevation. This will result in the building being situated up to 4 ft below the existing ground levels resulting in significant level of natural screening with the existing landscape further reducing the building visual impact on the locality.

The soil to be removed from the construction site will be used to create an earth bund opposite the side elevation of the building to provide some natural screening and shelter.

3.6 Security

The building will provide the necessary security required by the business. The business has a significant amount of agricultural machinery as briefly listed in the table below with a total gross value of approximately £250,000

- Tractor and Loader
- Hedge Cutter
- Maize Drill
- Plough
- Fertiliser Spinner
- Crop Sprayer
- Trailers x 2
- Grass Mower
- Hay Turner
- Digger
- Loader Attachments
- Liquid Fertiliser Tanks

The secure storage of these items is crucial to the business. Rural theft is on the increase with machinery, tools and fuel being the three most popular items.

Currently the business rents a building on a farmyard and occasionally stores machinery outside at the former residential dwelling occupied by Mr and Mrs Probin prior to acquiring The Haven. This arrangement has allowed for the safe and secure storage required however as the business has developed the need for a farming base has grown. The purchase of The Haven will allow for the establishment of such a base that can be built for its purpose and located in a suitable location unlike previous arrangements.

3.7 Hay Storage

The business produces hay for farming clients and the majority of which is produced and delivered directly to customers, however, in the event of surplus hay being produced or extreme weather conditions the business must have the ability to provide a storage solution to wet weather to avoid financial losses to the business.

4. THE POLICY CONTEXT

This section contains and describes the planning policies commencing first with National Policy guidance, regional policy guidance before focussing on local planning policies with a supplementary planning guidance. The following section then describes the material considerations that are relevant to this application.

The most recent legislation in the form of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has re-enacted and reinforced what has been described as “a plan land” planning system. As section 38 (6) provides that *“if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under planning regulations, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless highlighted material considerations indicate otherwise”*

The proposed construction of the new agricultural buildings at The Haven (the development site), falls into the national planning policy guidance included within planning policy statement 7 (PPS7), “Sustainable Development in Rural Areas”, and the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011.

4.1. National Planning Policy

- 4.1.1. Policy governing development in the countryside is set out in **Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) “Sustainable Development in Rural Areas”** PPS7 endorses the principle of sustainable management of the countryside, which entails accommodating necessary change in rural areas and, where possible, enhancing the quality of the environment for local people and visitors. At paragraph 1.3, PPS7 identifies the need to:

“Promote the development of the English regions by improving their economic performance so that all are able to reach their full potential – by developing competitive, diverse and thriving rural enterprise that provides a range of jobs and underpins strong economies”

“To promote sustainable, diverse and adaptable agricultural sectors where farming achieves high environmental standards, minimising impact on natural resources, and manages valued landscapes and biodiversity”.

- 4.1.2. PPS7 recognises that whilst many activities in the countryside are outside the scope of the planning system, it can help to integrate the development necessary to meet all these needs by being in keeping in scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness.
- 4.1.3. At paragraph 27, it is noted “the Government recognises the important and varied roles of agriculture, including in the maintenance and management of the countryside and most of our valued landscapes”. It is also noted that development proposals that enable farmers to become more competitive, adapt to new and changing markets, comply with changing legislations, diversify or broaden their operations should be supported by planning policies.

4.2. Local Planning Policy – Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996 - 2011

GDPI- Development

Development should be within scale design and layout accords with character and site.

EC3 – Agricultural Buildings

The construction of new agricultural buildings will be permitted unless the development is materially detrimental in terms of its impact on the environment or surrounding landscape.

The development should form part of an existing farm complex and take advantage of topography and other landscape features for screening.

Isolated buildings will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where there is an essential agricultural need, and no reasonable alternative location for the development.

The proposed development at The Haven has been designed to ensure its visual impact is kept to a minimum through its location, layout and design.

The proposed building is to be situated at The Haven which is an established agricultural unit, however the existing agricultural buildings are no longer suitable for modern agriculture.

As explained in this report the ground levels will ensure the building is screened by earth banks, a soil bund and the existing roadside hedge.

The building will be adjacent to the property ensuring the development of the yard is kept to a minimum as well as providing further screening.

In the event of a building not being erected the machinery and implements would have to be stored outside and would result in a much greater visual impact on the surrounding area.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The application forms part of the ongoing development of Richard Probins farming enterprise. The business has worked tirelessly over the past 20 years to develop a customer base, land holding and a suitable range of machinery to sustain a viable farming enterprise.

The business has always had to operate out of a number of locations that has undermined the efficiency and viability of the business. The business has now secured an agricultural property to base the farming operations which will fully meet its intended function with the erection of this building.

The design and landscaping has been carefully considered to keep the visual impact to a minimum. The green side cladding and roof will blend in with surroundings and the 4 foot deep ground levels will provide natural earth screening assisted by the roadside hedge and residential property.