

REPORT ASSESSING THE NEED FOR RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION

in association with

WESTFIELD FARM, LOWE LANE, WESTOW, NORTH YORKSHIRE, YO60 7LX

for

**Mr J F Lambert
Haybridge Mill Farm
Skirpenbeck
York
YO41 1HG**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been commissioned by Mr John F Lambert of Haybridge Mill Farm, Skirpenbeck, York, YO41 1HG.
- 1.2 The primary purpose of this report is to provide an objective evaluation of the existing and proposed farming activities of Mr Lambert, with particular emphasis regarding Westfield Farm in connection with a planning application for the siting of a static caravan at the site and a further cattle building.
- 1.3 The submission for the static caravan at the farm follows a planning application for a dwelling that was submitted in March 2012 (ref: 12/00331/FUL), which was refused by Ryedale District Council (November 2012) and later dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate at appeal (November 2013).
- 1.4 The report has been prepared in light of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was released on 27 March 2012, particular reference being made to paragraph 55 regarding the policy for occupational dwellings in the countryside.
- 1.5 The evaluation of the enterprise, and the preparation of this report, has been carried out by Anthony Atkinson. Anthony Atkinson is a Rural Planning Consultant with Acorus Rural Property Services. He holds a BSc in Rural Enterprise and Land Management and is a Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, having qualified within the Rural Practice Division of the Institution.

2. SITE INSPECTION AND INTERVIEW

- 2.1 On 20 December 2013 I met with Mr John Lambert to discuss his farming business, and notably his thoughts and requirements regarding Westfield Farm. The focus was the proposed expansion of the beef enterprise and the need for residential accommodation to oversee the activities at the farm.
- 2.2 This report is based on the information obtained from the applicant, subsequent communication with the applicant and professional judgement.

3. THE FARMING BUSINESS

- 3.1 Mr Lambert's farming business (which trades as 'Mr J F Lambert') is based at Haybridge Mill Farm, Skirpenbeck and Westfield Farm, Westow. The business operates an arable enterprise and a beef enterprise.

Area Occupied

- 3.2 The total land area as managed by the farming business amounts to 168.5ha (416 acres). The farm holding was established in 1986, the Defra holding number is: 51/388/0020.

The land comprises of the following:

Westfield Farm	Owner Occupied	6.5ha (16 acres)
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Haybridge Mill Farm	Family FBT	51ha (126 acres)
Manor Farm (adjoining Haybridge Mill) and land at Scaringham	FBT (originally a 10 year agreement)	97ha (240 acres)
Land at Skirpenbeck	2 year FBT	14ha (34 acres)

- 3.3 The land at Westow was purchased in March 2006 to further develop the farm and establish a beef enterprise. The land is free draining and is suited for livestock to be out-wintered.
- 3.4 Haybridge Mill Farm is family owned, by Mr Lambert's mother, and originally a 26½ year Farm Business Tenancy (FBT) was established (with 10 years now remaining). With the current family arrangement there is no reason to suggest that Mr Lambert will not be farming at Haybridge Mill Farm for the foreseeable future.
- 3.5 The farm is not 'ring fenced', although the land is spread between Skirpenbeck and Westow it is operated as a single interconnected farming enterprise.

Cropping

- 3.6 The land at Westfield Farm is down to grass and a further 12.5ha (31 acres) at Haybridge Mill Farm and 40ha (100 acres) of the land at FBT land. This land is managed to provide grazing and silage for the beef cattle.
- 3.7 The remainder of the land (109.5ha) is used for arable production. The majority of the land is cropped with wheat, and 12ha (30 acres) cropped with barley and 6ha (15 acres) cropped with fodder beet. The barley crop is retained for milling for the beef enterprise and likewise the fodder beet is lifted and fed to the cattle. The straw from the cereal crops is retained as required for the beef cattle (i.e. feed and bedding).
- 3.8 All the farmland (with the exception of the 14ha FBT at Skirpenbeck) is entered into the Entry Level Stewardship Scheme.

Stocking

- 3.9 The livestock on the holding comprises of a suckler cow herd and retained youngstock.
- 3.10 At present there are 72 cows in the herd (pedigree Charolais and commercial beef cows) with 12 replacement heifers to calve in the spring (2014). The bulls from the sucker cows are reared to fat over 12-14 months. The heifers are retained as replacements or sold as stores at 10-12 months.
- 3.11 Any better quality pedigree breeding stock (male or female) is retained and reared, then sold through specialist pedigree sales at Carlisle auction mart.

4. FARM BUILDINGS

4.1 At Westfield Farm the farm buildings comprise as follows:-

- General purpose storage building 32.0m x 9.15m (105' x 30');
- Livestock Roundhouse (30m diameter) providing accommodation for 70+ suckler cows and youngstock (approved 13 August 2010 Ref:10/00691/FUL).

4.2 At Haybridge Mill Farm the farm buildings comprise as follows:

- two grain stores;
- one cattle building; and
- two general purpose storage buildings, i.e. for machinery etc.

Also at the farm there is a range of traditional farm buildings, although these are not suitable for modern farm practices.

5. DWELLINGS

5.1 Mr Lambert and his wife and family live in the farmhouse at Haybridge Mill Farm, Skirpenbeck, which is 7 miles from Westfield Farm.

5.2 At Westfield Farm there is a static caravan which is used as a rest facility for the farming activity.

6. LABOUR

6.1 The labour force for the farming business is based upon Mr and Mrs Lambert, and local self employed workers used as required for seasonal activities at peak periods, i.e. during calving and harvest. Additionally contractors are used for harvesting the fodder beet and baling.

7. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

7.1 The development proposal involves a further cattle building at Westfield Farm to develop the beef enterprise, together with part of the existing storage building (as approved via a notification approval re: 07/00949/AGNOT) being used for cattle housing, and additionally the relocation of the existing static caravan at the site to provide residential accommodation (i.e. temporary residential accommodation).

7.2 Consent for the static caravan at the site (temporary residential accommodation) is considered to be required to oversee the beef enterprise at the site. Given that the farming business is developing and expanding, with continuing reliance on employed labour and contractors, the further expansion of the beef enterprise will require a full-time stockman to be employed and housed at Westfield Farm.

7.3 Provided consent is granted for the further cattle accommodation, and the cattle enterprise develops as planned, the intention will then be to apply for a permanent dwelling at Westfield Farm.

7.4 The additional livestock building will provide accommodation for bought-in calves and for the rearing of bought-in and home produced beef youngstock.

7.5 The proposed livestock agricultural building is as follows:

Dimensions: 27.4m x 12.2m (90' x 40')
4.2m (14') eaves height.

Construction: Steel portal frame building
Concrete panel walls with timber space boarding to eaves.
Grey reinforced fibre cement roof with clear perspex roof lights.
Open fronted feed fence on south side (excluding two bays enclosed for calves).

7.6 The building will accommodate up to 80 head of cattle; ranging in age from 2 week old calves to 12 month old beef cattle.

7.7 Five bays of the existing storage building are proposed to be used for cattle housing (i.e. 5 bays at 15', and 30' wide). The building will be used to accommodate beef cattle bought-in for fattening, and will accommodate a minimum of 50 head of store cattle. A planning application is being submitted for this use because originally consent was only applied for and approved as agricultural storage.

7.8 The existing Roundhouse will continue to be used for the suckler herd and the beef youngstock progeny. The suckler herd (cows and replacement heifers) will be maintained at 80 head with a proportion of the cows being out-wintered on the land at Westfield Farm, i.e. those cows recently weaned. The roundhouse would therefore accommodate 50 suckler cows (30 cows out-wintered) and 80 calves/beef rearing stock (i.e. the calves from the suckler herd).

7.9 As is the present regime, the beef cattle will be fed on home grown cereals, silage/hay and straw. The cattle will be bedded on the straw, which will then be returned to the land as manure (i.e. valuable organic manure).

7.10 The cattle building at Haybridge Mill will be used for general farm activities and also for any cattle that are identified to be reared and retained for pedigree sales.

8. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

8.1 The farming business has been operating since 1986 by Mr Lambert and is a profitable and viable business.

8.2 Extracts from the latest three years accounts for the business (year ended May 2010, 2011 & 2012) detail the following levels of net profit:

2010	2011	2012
£19,492	£17,364	£39,139

- 8.3 A farm budget has been prepared to detail the expected returns from the expanded beef enterprise at Westfield Farm. This is included at Appendix 1.

9. PLANNING POLICY FOR THE STATIC CARAVAN

9.1 National Planning Policy Framework

- 9.1.1 On 27th March 2012 the Government released the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 9.1.2 The relevant policy statement within the NPPF regarding the proposed dwelling at Westfield Farm is paragraph 55, which reads as follows:

'To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:

- *the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;...'*

9.2 Essential Need

- 9.2.1 With the release of the NPPF in March 2012 many previous national planning policy documents were revoked, i.e. PPGs and PPSs.
- 9.2.2 One such document was PPS7 which within Annex A detailed the criteria for agricultural, and occupational, dwellings (i.e. dwellings in the open countryside for people to live near their place of work).
- 9.2.3 Although the criteria of PPS7 is no longer valid as national planning policy, it remains as a useful means of assessing the merits of individual situations regarding the 'essential need' as expressed in the NPPF.
- 9.2.4 Paragraph 12 of Annex A (PPS7) detailed the criteria for temporary dwellings, stating as follows:

'If a new dwelling is essential to support a new farming activity, whether on a newly-created agricultural unit or an established one, it should normally, for the first three years, be provided by a caravan, a wooden structure which can be easily dismantled, or other temporary accommodation. It should satisfy the following criteria:

- a. *clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned (significant investment in new farm buildings is often a good indication of intentions);*
- b. *functional need;*
- c. *clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis;*

- d. *the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned; and*
- e. *other normal planning requirements, e.g. on siting and access, are satisfied.'*

9.3 Evaluation of the Business in Relation to 'Essential Need'

- 9.3.1 The functional need of the farming business and the need for on-site accommodation arises from the suckler cow enterprise and associated youngstock and the requirement for continuous management and welfare of the livestock.
- 9.3.2 The labour requirement of the cattle enterprise at Westfield Farm, using standard man day labour requirements, equates to over one full time worker, i.e. 1.5 workers (see Appendix 2).
- 9.3.3 The need for on-site supervision includes:
 - attending to all animals throughout the day for normal husbandry requirements;
 - attending to cows/heifers during calving;
 - to be available as necessary to attend to calving cows/heifers during the night;
 - to be available as necessary to attend to emergencies during the night e.g. sick animals, escaped animals, wind damage, etc.;
 - on site presence for site security to prevent theft and vandalism of the livestock and fixed equipment.
- 9.3.4 The buildings (existing and proposed) at Westfield Farm, and the land area available to the business, demonstrate that there is clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise.
- 9.3.5 The nature and scale of the beef enterprise at Westfield Farm amounts to a functional need for a key worker to be living on site throughout the day.
- 9.3.6 The recent accounts for the farming business, and the farm budget for the beef enterprise, demonstrates that there is clear evidence that the beef enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis.
- 9.3.7 There are no buildings on site that could be converted to create residential accommodation and there are no other dwellings in the immediate locality that could meet the functional need.
- 9.3.8 The static caravan is sited to meet the functional need.
- 9.3.9 In light of the above points, it is considered that the assessment of the proposal in relation to Annex A of PPS7 adequately demonstrates that there is an essential need for temporary residential accommodation at Westfield Farm.

10. CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 Due to the nature of the farming business and the on-going development of the beef enterprise at Westfield Farm there is a clear functional requirement for workers to be readily available and at hand at all times. It is my opinion, due to the scale of the enterprise at Westfield Farm that there is a requirement for a key worker to be readily available and on-site at all times.
- 10.2 It is considered that the proposal for a static caravan at Westfield Farm satisfies the requirements of NPPF regarding 'essential need', and it is therefore considered that consent for the static caravan should be granted for a three year period whilst the beef enterprise continues to develop.

ANTHONY W ATKINSON MRICS FAAV
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January 2014

APPENDIX 1

BEEF ENTERPRISE BUDGET

Gross Margins	£	£
80 Suckler Cows	130/head	10,400
130 Reared Beef Cattle	130/head	16,900
80 Cereal Beef	150/head	12,000
		<hr/>
		39,300
		<hr/>
Fixed Costs		
Full time farm worker		16,465
Proportion of costs of the whole business (i.e. water, electric, fuel, repairs, misc admin etc)		10,000
		<hr/>
		26,465
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Enterprise Net Profit		12,835

APPENDIX 2

THE LABOUR REQUIREMENT OF THE CATTLE ENTERPRISE AT WESTFIELD FARM

LABOUR REQUIREMENT USING
JOHN NIX'S FARM MANAGEMENT POCKETBOOK
(2014 EDITION) STANDARD MAN DAYS

Stocking and Cropping	Standard Man Days (SMD)	Total
80 Suckler Cows (inc. calf)	1.35	108
40 beef youngstock (i.e. 80 head but for 6 months following weaning)	1.1	44
80 Cereal beef	1.9	152
50 Store cattle	1.1	<u>55</u>
		<u>359</u>
6.5ha grazing	0.4	2.6
		<u>361.6</u>
+ 15% (General maintenance work)		54.24
		<u>415.84</u>
TOTAL		<u>415.84</u>

Using this method of calculation, and assuming that 275 standard man days are provided by workers per year, the labour requirement for this agricultural unit is in excess of one full time worker (1.5 SM years).