AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM ANALYSIS LTD

APPRAISAL FOR FARM WORKERS DWELLING AT

Martin Nest Farm, Victoria, Hepworth, Huddersfield

FOR Mr. Turner

Febuary 2012

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QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

I am Robert I Pigg Principal of Agricultural Systems Analysis Ltd., based at West Ayton, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, a company specialising in agricultural planning issues.

The practice undertakes survey work and agricultural advice for a large number of major house builders and developers countrywide, and specialist agricultural planning advice to private clients as well.

Of relevance to this report is the experience this practice has in providing advice on viability and housing requirements for farm workers dwellings.

The practice also supply specialist advice on horse related issues and have a wide range of private clients ranging from commercial stables, to race horse breeders, livery yards to Masters of Foxhounds.

I am also a Senior Partner of J. L. Pigg & Sons, who farm 200 hectares at West Ayton.

Prior to this I was a full time Lecturer at Humberside College of Agriculture where I am still called upon for specialist lecturing and examination duties, and sit on the Advanced Machinery Advisory Committee.

I hold an Honours Degree from Newcastle University in Agricultural Engineering and Farm Mechanisation, one of the disciplines being building design.

I also hold a Master of Science Degree from Newcastle University in Agriculture specialising in Soil Science and in particular Soil Physics

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this appraisal is to examine the requirements at Martin Nest Farm, Victoria, Hepworth, Huddersfield.

2. GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

Introduction

2.1. Government guidance for farm worker's dwellings is contained in the current version of Planning Policy Statement 7.

2.2. Supplementary to this guidance is an 'aide memoir', written by the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food, produced to aid planning authorities in what information was necessary in assessing farm workers dwelling, although this is an old document it still forms an excellent basis for workers assessments.

Guidance

2.3. Government guidance for farm workers or Agricultural, Forestry and Other Occupational Dwellings to give them the correct title, is contained in Planning Policy Statement 7.

2.4. In PPS7 in the main text at paragraph 10 it states :-

10. *Isolated new houses in the countryside will require special justification for planning permission to be granted. Where the special justification for an isolated new house relates to the essential need for a worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside, planning authorities should follow the advice in* ***Annex A*** *to this PPS.*

2.5. This, in my view is the most important section in the guidance and is the raison d^etre of the rest of the guidance contained in this annex.

2.6. Annex A amplifies and continues:-

2.7. "*One of the few circumstances in which isolated residential development may be justified is when accommodation is required to enable agricultural, forestry and certain other full-time workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their place of work. It will often be as convenient and more sustainable for such workers to live in nearby towns or villages, or suitable existing dwellings, so avoiding new and potentially intrusive development in the countryside. However, there will be some cases where the nature and demands of the work concerned make it essential for one or more people engaged in the enterprise to live at, or very close to, the site of their work. Whether this is essential in any particular case will depend on the needs of the enterprise concerned and not on the personal preferences or circumstances of any of the individuals involved".*

2.8. Next guidance is given to the approach to be taken and advises that:-

3. New permanent dwellings should only be allowed to support existing agricultural activities on well-established agricultural units, providing: (i) there is a clearly established existing functional need (see paragraph 4 below);

(ii) the need relates to a full-time worker, or one who is primarily employed in agriculture and does not relate to a part-time requirement;

(iii) the unit and the agricultural activity concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and have a clear prospect of remaining so (see paragraph 8 below);

(iv) 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

(v) other planning requirements, e.g. in relation to access, or impact on the countryside, are satisfied.

2.9. This appraisal is conducted addressing the issues contained in the guidance in PPS7 and using the MAFF guidance as a template for the assessment and for completeness the paragraph headings correspond to the original paragraph headings of the MAFF document.

3. THE FARM BUSINESS

THE LAND

3.1. The farm is owned by Mr Turner. The day to day farming at Martin nest is performed by Mr. Turner the applicant, who farms with his wife and two sons.

3.2. Martin Nest farm extends to some 100 hectares and includes two intensive livestock enterprises. Martin Nest is approximately 5miles away from Holmfirth and 12 miles from Barnsley.

LAND USE

3.3. The land is approximately 16 hectares owner occupied contained within a ring fence and is all permanent grass. A further 60 hectares of grassland is farmed.

3.4. The grassland is utilized by a large flock of 700 ewes with any excess grass being taken as a hay crop.

LIVESTOCK

3.5. The livestock enterprises can be subdivided into two, the intensive enterprises, pigs and egg production, and the extensive sheep flock.

3.6. The sheep enterprise extends to some 700 ewes and is run on traditional lines with all progeny finished on the farm.

3.7. The Intensive pig enterprise comprises 200 sows presently expanding to 250 sows. All progeny is finished on the farm to bacon weight.

3.8. The poultry enterprise is a 5000 bird laying flock. All eggs are graded and packed on the farm and are retailed off farm.

FARM LABOUR

3.9. The farm labour force is composed of Mr. Turner his wife and two sons and one full time worker.

FARM BUILDINGS AND FIXED EQUIPMENT

3.10. The buildings are a range of relatively modern farm buildings within a hard-core and concrete farmyard and comprise a mixture of large portal framed buildings and specialist pig and poultry buildings and a slurry store.

3.11. All buildings have been approved and the planning history shows a slow and progressive expansion of the business.

FARM DWELLINGS

3.12. A farmhouse/stockmen's dwelling exist at Martin nest this is the main and only farmhouse and is occupied by Mr and Mrs Turner being on the farmyard it offers "site and sound" supervision for the pigs at Martin Nest. The house is relatively modest and extends to 2 bedrooms and a small further bedroom of half height, it is thus only capable of serving one family. Extending the house is also clearly limited by the site and farm buildings.

3.13. On the North of the site is a caravan this was introduced for seasonal use but due to work pressure is now occupied by one of Mr Turner's sons.

3.14. Performing a Standard Man Day Assessment using figures from John Nix's Farm Management Pocketbook the industry standard.

	Number	SMD factor	SMD
Pigs	250Sows 400AvMonthly Baconers	2.5 0.3	625 120
Hens	5000	0.017	85

Ewes	700 1400 progeny	0.45 0.3	315 420
forage	15 hectares	2.5	37.5

3.15. This gives a figure for total Standard Man Days of 1602, to which should be added 15% for maintenance and 10% for management giving a grand total of 2026 Standard Man Days. According to Nix each farm worker is capable of delivering 275 SMD with normal holiday entitlements, some stockmen can deliver 300. This gives a total labour requirement by a Nix SMD of between 6 and 7 workers.

3.16. Including Mrs Turner the farm has 5 available workers, indicating all the staff working exceptional hours, and this obviously leads to the extreme pressure on the workers. Properly housing key workers is a priority.

NEW DWELLING

3.17. The new dwelling is required by the unit as the level of activities is sufficiently high that key workers are now having to spend a significantly high proportion of their time on the unit out of normal working hours in order for the unit to function

3.18. The replacement of the existing caravan on site with a permanent dwelling will accommodate Mr. Turner's son who will act as relief pigmen.

FARMING SYSTEM AND HUSBANDRY PRACTICE

3.19. As previously stated the main enterprises are the production and rearing of pigs to slaughter, also the production of eggs and lambs.

3.20. The husbandry practices are relatively straightforward mainstream and commercial.

3.21. The pig enterprise supplies over 4000 bacon weight pigs per annum into Morrisons the local supermarket, this will rise to over 5000 as the expansion of the sows occurs.

3.22. The egg rearing supplies the local retail and some wholesale suppliers, all in the neighbourhood and sheep likewise are marketed rearing at Martin nest.

SECURITY

3.23. Due to remoteness of the farm steading, the unit is particularly vulnerable to theft, with the only dwelling being situated at one end of a relatively large farmyard. The present location of the caravan has greatly improved security.

CHANGES TO EXISTING OR PROPOSED FARMING SYSTEM

3.24. The changes that have occurred to this unit stems from the expansion that has occurred as Mr Turners business has developed and expanded over the last 20 years.

3.25. Originally Martin Nest was a small traditional livestock farm and had it remained like that it is unlikely it would have remained a viable business. The first stage of expansion was the introduction of the laying flock, and then in 1998 a bankrupt pig unit was purchased and moved to Martin Nest.

3.26. The application for the pig buildings was approved by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council in 1999 and the 70 sow unit was established in that year. Since then the pig unit has expanded to its present size of 200 sows. For 2011, 75 new gilts are to be introduced into the herd consolidating and expanding the size to 250 sows.

3.27. Mr Turner has been responsible for most of the farrowing of the pig unit, until aided by David Turner when he took up residence in the caravan.

3.28. The sheep enterprise has also seen substantial expansion over a similar period rising from 200 ewes to 700.

3.29. The expansion of the sheep flock put severe pressure on the unit at lambing time and a caravan was introduced on the farm over 4 years ago and occupied on a part time basis for this seasonal activity.

3.30. With the expansion of the pig unit farrowing had become a significant problem. With 200 sows farrowing at 2.2 litters per annum, over 400 farrowings were occurring. Of these a significant quantity was obviously occurring out of "office hours" i.e. on a weekend and at night, and with only one dwelling on the unit the work load on the person living in the dwelling was unsustainable.

3.31. Successful pig units do have to pay particular attention to farrowing, as without this care pigs reared per sow, which are crucial to profit, fall. There is also the issue of animal welfare and care of such young sensitive vulnerable animals is an important part of achieving high welfare standards. All in all, successful farrowing is without doubt the most important single factor in pig production.

3.32. Therefore as pig numbers increased at the same time Mr Turners grown up sons had moved out of the cramped conditions in Martin Nest Farmhouse and when they were required to help with farrowing as they lived off site, this arrangement proved impractical. The obvious solution was to use the seasonal lambing caravan, and to this ends one of Mr Turner's sons has been occupying the caravan for approximately 4 years.

3.33. The further expansion of the pig enterprise to 250 sows , 550 farrowings per annum will put greater pressure on the farm

workforce and require the provision of a permanent additional dwelling to replace the caravan.

3.34. Appended to this report is a letter from Mr. Frank Tobin (Appendix A) an eminent veterinary surgeon specializing in pigs who know the enterprise well, and Mr. Tobin professional opinion supports the need for an additional dwelling.

3.35. Also submitted to the Council (appendix B) is an accountants report clarifying the financial situation, and this report confirms the business has been profitable for 3 years and can finance the building of the house.

AVAILABILITY OF ACCOMMODATION OUTSIDE THE APPLICANTS CONTROL IN THE AREA

3.36. There is no suitable accommodation in a close enough proximity to serve as an on site dwelling.

DIVERSIFICATION/ NON AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

3.37. There are strictly speaking no diverse enterprises however the retailing of the eggs does involve a significant labour input and part of this retailing involves delivery and selling off the farm. When the staff are servicing this need they are thus off farm and not able to help on the farm putting further pressure on the unit. The retailing of the eggs is a key generator of farm margins.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.

4.1. In summary there is a clear functional need for an additional dwelling when assessed in line with the approach recommended by PPS7 annex A. This requirement is confirmed by a Standard Man Day analysis indicating a workforce requirement of 6 to 7 persons, compared to the units actual workforce of 5 persons. Thus each person is performing a very high level of overtime, confirming a large portion of each works time being out of normal working hours.

4.2. The business has been established and grown significantly for over 20 years has clearly sustained itself financial over that period, and the ongoing further expansion of the pig unit shows a real commitment to maintain this sustainability.

4.3. The need for an additional dwelling is necessary and appropriate not only to met the existing need but to allow for the present expansion.

4.4. This dwelling should be located in the farmyard to provide sight and sound supervision.

5. APPENDIX

Appendix A - Letter Mr Frank Tobin Veterinary Surgeon

Our Ref: FT/MJO

10th November 2010

Mr Robert Pigg
Agricultural System Analysis Limited
The Elms
West Ayton
Scarborough
YO13 9JD

Dear Mr Pigg

We are writing on behalf of Mr Peter Turner of Martin Nest Farm, Victoria, Hepworth, Huddersfield, HD9 7TG.

Mr Turner has recently expanded his farrowing accommodation to 250 sows with the resulting increase to 10 farrowings per week. Many of these being outside normal working hours. Mr Turner is solely in charge of all the farrowings which means that he is on duty at all times, which is, for obvious reasons, unsustainable in the long term.

As a result, it is our recommendation that Mr Turner needs an additional member of staff to be resident on site to assist in this work.

Yours sincerely

Frank Tobin - BVSc, CertPM, MRCVS

Appendix B – Accountant's Supportive Statement

Our Ref: CMSL/AS/sjh/T4001
Your Ref:
Email: angela.slade@moore-scarrott.co.uk

02 February 2012

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FAO: The Chief Planning Officer

Dear Sir

Mr D Turner - Martin Nest Farm

David Turner is a partner in the family partnership trading as Mr & Mrs P M Turner. In the last three years, the partnership has made average profits of around £80,000. It is our opinion that, in order for the business to continue to expand, Mr Turner needs to live in the proximity of the farm. Based on the last three years of profits, the farm would benefit from a further house on site. The business is financially stable and there is no reason to suggest it will not be in the foreseeable future.

It is our opinion that the business is in a position to financially support the construction of a dwelling costing in the region of £155,000.

This information is provided solely for the use of Barnsley Borough Council for the consideration of the planning application. No responsibility for any loss or damage to any other person acting or refraining from acting as a result of any information herein can be accepted on the part of The Moore Scarrott Partnership LLP and any of its employees. This reply should not exclude you from making further reasonable enquiries.

Yours faithfully

The Moore Scarrott Partnership LLP

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