

# **Agricultural Assessment Of The Farm Holding For Planning Purposes.**

**Mr Graham Robson  
Roe Farm  
Catterall  
Garstang  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR3 0PA**

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### **Appendix 6**

Rightmove Assessment to look at other properties in the local area to see if they would meet the needs of the farm.

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 ML Planning Consultancy have been instructed by Mr Graham Robson of 35 Croston Road, Garstang, Preston, PR3 1EN, to prepare an agricultural assessment of the farm holding at Roe Farm for planning purposes, specifically in respect of an agricultural workers dwelling. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF Paragraph 79) recognises that an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently on or near a site of agricultural work in the countryside.

1.2 The applicant is Mr Graham Robson. He is the third generation of his family to farm at the site.

1.3 There is one house already on site, that is owned by the applicant's father, John. John is 68 and Graham is 39. John is seeking to retire imminently, and will continue to live in the existing farmhouse. The SMD of the farm generates 8.44 days of labour per day, and they calve an average of three times per week.

1.4 This report will provide an assessment of the existing agricultural business carried out at the site, and will detail Graham's plans for expansion.

1.5 There is an essential need for a worker to reside on site, so as to ensure that the welfare of the animals in the applicant's care is maintained at all times. A Standard Man Day (SMD) calculation has indicated that the farm currently requires a yearly average of 8.44 workers to tend to the farm on a daily basis. This has been calculated using John Nix Farm Management Pocketbook (47<sup>th</sup> Edition). Due to an average of three calvings per week (which usually happen at night) there is an essential need for someone to be on site at all times. Graham currently lives an 8-10 minute drive away, which is not within sight and sound of the animals. The site is particularly complicated due to parts of the farm and the journey to it being in a flood zone. In the event of an emergency, hundreds of animals have to be evacuated and hindered travel to the site can mean the difference between life and death for the animals in their care. Graham needs to live on site in order to ensure that the business and the animals are as safe as possible. Out of hours emergencies average at three times per week where attendance is essential during the night. At present, John tends to these on his own in the first instance while he waits for Graham to arrive.

1.6 At present, John and Graham work on the farm together full time, both attending every calving to ensure the safety of both workers and animals. They employ a herdsman on a full time basis, and support an agricultural apprentice who works part time, When John retires, all the night time responsibility will fall to Graham, as employees and apprentices cannot be expected to tend to out of hours care for the animals.

1.7 This report has been produced to prove a genuine need for an agricultural workers' dwelling at the site. This is in line with Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas". This report was initially published in 2004, and we pay particular attention to Annex A of said document. Although PPS7 has been superseded by the NPPF, in light of recent appeal decisions we assert that the test remains pertinent in assessing the need for an agricultural workers' dwelling.

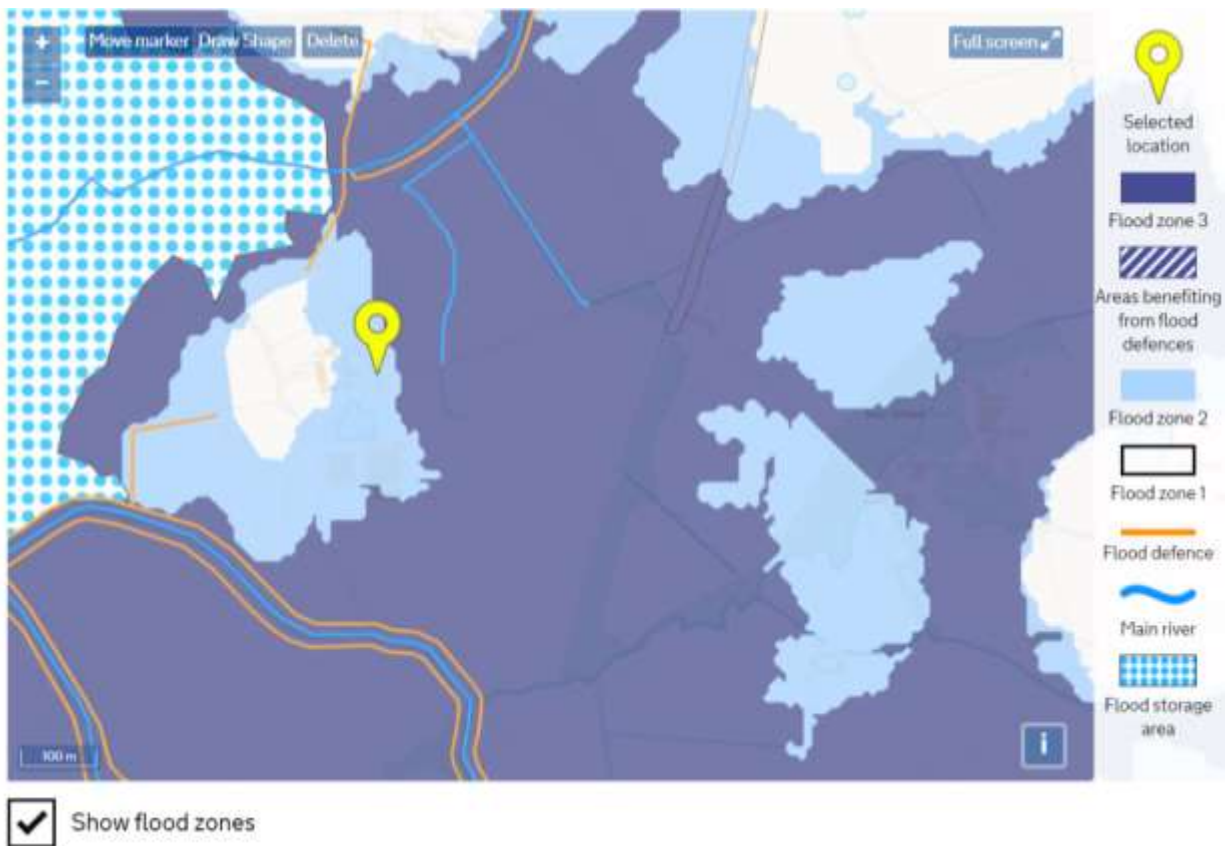
1.8 We will also include the following information, to allow a deeper understanding of the site and its specific requirements:

- how the livestock unit is operated

- explanations as to why it is necessary for the workers to be available on the site at all times, including tending to the needs of the animals to ensure adequate standards of care, crime prevention, and the requirement for the worker to be able to balance that need with the need to sustain a good level of family and personal life.

1.9 The site is not in the Green Belt, the AONB, a conservation area or a mineral safeguarding area. It is listed as countryside area on the Wyre Adopted Local Plan.

1.10 Parts of the site do fall in a Flood Zone, as can be viewed on the map below. Due to the site flooding, this can mean the evacuation of hundreds of animals in the event of an emergency. Furthermore, Catterall Lane is susceptible to flooding, and that is the only highway access to the farm in the event of an emergency.



## 2.0 ADAS requirements when submitting an application for an agricultural workers dwelling.

2.1 ADAS is an independent body that provides guidelines to enable applicants, their agents and councils to assess the need for an agricultural workers' dwelling using a common framework. Below is a list of the information requirements that are necessary on submission.

- i. Details of the Applicant's land holding. Information should be given regarding the tenure of any land utilised including a schedule of land owned and rented on an O.S. map. A distinction should be made between short term rental agreements (1 year or less) and long term tenancies. Whenever possible, RPA rural land register maps for the current year should be provided.  
*APPENDIX 1.*
- ii. A description for the agricultural/rural activities carried out, including information regarding the scale of each activity (information should include numbers and types of livestock kept and where applicable the type of cropping of the land.) Where the proposal relates to a new activity, a description of the nature and scale should be provided.  
*This is addressed in chapter 4 and Appendix 2 of this report.*
- iii. A schedule with an accompanying numbered plan of existing buildings describing the dimensions, type of construction and cladding and use.  
*This is addressed in Chapter 6 And Appendix 3 of this report.*
- iv. Details of the workers employed by the business specifying whether full or part time together with their main work responsibilities.  
*This is addressed in chapter 8 of this report.*
- v. Details of existing dwellings on the unit where the development is proposed whether or not in the applicant's ownership/occupation.  
*This is addressed on Appendix 4 of this report.*
- vi. Details of any dwellings owned by or sold within the past 5 years by the applicant located off the unit but within a 5 mile radius of the land holding.  
*This is addressed on Appendix 5 of this report.*
- vii. The location and nature of occupation of any dwellings occupied by the workers employed in the business.  
*This is addressed on Appendix 5 of this report.*
- viii. Financial details of the business for which the proposed dwelling is required. For existing enterprises, this will require the submission of the most recent three years' profit and loss accounts (audited where possible). Where the application relates to a new or an expansion of existing enterprise a whole farm budget (projected profit and loss account) covering each of the years for this the temporary period is proposed should be provided.  
*This is addressed in paragraph 9.1.c of this report. Accounts can be provided confidentially upon request.*
- ix. A justification/reasons for the provision of a new dwelling providing information regarding need, design and siting.  
*This is addressed throughout our report.*

### 3.0 Farm Description

3.1 The proposed site lies falls under Wyre Council. It covers a total area of 234 acres, and enables the care of 551 animals. 170 acres of land are owned and 64 are rented for summer grazing. The rented land has been on a gentleman's agreement for over ten years, and it is understood that this arrangement will continue long into the future.

3.2 The site is in Catterall and is accessed from Catterall Lane. As can be expected, the farm is in a relatively rural location, but the A6 is just a 2 minute drive away.

3.3 The comprehensive highway network surrounding the site provides good access to and from.

3.4 The business, run from Roe Farm, covers 234 acres of land. RPA maps and a location plan are to be supplied as supporting documents.

3.5 The business is owned by John and his wife, Christine, trading as HP & C Robson. Graham is entering into the partnership in the coming months.

3.6 Due to the vulnerable nature of calves and their mothers, high standards must be upheld at all times, with additional work being required in order to maintain these standards. This is essential to ensure that the animals' welfare is protected, and also to ensure the highest production and profitability for the business.

3.7 As it is a dairy herd, calves are removed from their mothers shortly after birth, and calves are fed manually by the applicant. This is best for both mother and calf, but it time consuming and complex to ensure the correct food for the calf. Soon after both, mothers are also given calcium to prevent deficiency. It vital for these animals to be cared for and monitored constantly for prevention of injury and disease, which calves are especially and particularly susceptible to.

### 4.0 Stocking & Cropping

4.1 The main enterprise on the farm is

- 240 dairy cows
- 240 calves
- 1 Stock Bull
- 30 dry cows

4.2 Cropping on the farm is as follows

- Silage – 170 acres – 4 Cuts (Owned)
- Grazing – 64 acres (Rented on long term gentleman's agreement)

### 5.0 Support Payments

5.1 The farm makes claims under the Single Payment Scheme and consequently all the land owned is registered and receiving payments on an annual basis.

## 6.0 Farm Buildings & Equipment

6.1 There are 14 farm buildings and sheds on site. Uses, dimensions and materials to be found in APPENDIX 3.

6.2 The farm business and the associated buildings have been there for many years.

## 7.0 Existing Accommodation

7.1 There is one dwelling on the unit which benefits from an agricultural tie. Graham's father, John, will continue to live here after he retires. On site accommodation is essential to provide the supervision and 24 hour care that the livestock require, especially due to the number of vulnerable calves born and reared on site. We therefore apply for a key worker dwelling on this basis. We are happy for an agricultural tie to be applied to the new dwelling.

7.2 Off-site accommodation is not suitable to house farm workers. Essential agriculture is accepted by the NPPF as warranting accommodation in rural locations. It is vital to be within sight and sound to the animals, and to be able to respond as quickly as possible in the event of an emergency.

7.3 Calculations using John Nix Farm Management Pocketbook show that the farm requires 8.44 standard man days. A 24 hour presence is required and but cannot be met as there is no available dwelling on site.

7.4 Due to the length of time that the business has been operating with a profit at the site, we apply for an agricultural worker dwelling rather than a temporary caravan for three years. The business is well established, and ownership of the farm has been with Graham and his family for many years. Three years of accounts are available upon request of the planning officer. The business has been profitable and has a clear prospect of remaining so. A letter of support from the accountant, who is qualified and accredited to provide professional, financial opinion and advice, is supplied.

7.5 A Rightmove search has shown that there is one house for sale within a 1 mile radius of the farm. The assessment was completed on 30/04/2020. When completing a Rightmove assessment we search for like for like properties. They must have parking, must be freehold and not shared ownership. They must be around £150,000 (as this is the estimated cost to build new). However, had properties met this criteria, they would still not be sufficient due to the demands for a number of 24 hour worker to be on site. It would not assist the checks during the night, it would not enable the swift evacuation of hundreds of animals in the event of an emergency, and it would not provide the adequate work life balance that Graham and his family should be able to achieve. Lastly, the volume of animals being born and reared on the farm require the presence of the current workers on a 24 hour basis.

## 8.0 Labour

8.1 Labour on the farm comprises of the following:

Name	Full / Part / Seasonal	Duties
John Robson	FT	Calf feeding, general husbandry, site maintenance, administrative duties, contract management, mucking out etc
Graham Robson	FT	Calf feeding, general husbandry, site maintenance, administrative duties, contract management, mucking out etc
Liam Masson	FT	Herdsman
Ryan Peck	PT	Apprentice

8.2 Roe Farm benefits from Red Tractor certification, requiring high standards to be upheld at all times. This includes two people being on hand during calving, and calving animals being left for no more than three hours at a time.

## 9.0 Planning Policy Statement 7 and the need for agricultural workers dwellings

9.1 The requirement for dwellings for agricultural workers is dealt with in Planning Policy Statement 7 'PPS7' "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas" (published 2004), the relevant section being Annex A of that publication. While the PPS has been replaced by the NPPF, recent appeal decisions indicate that this is still relevant. Guidance is given on the criteria that need to be met for approval of a permanent agricultural dwelling, these are as follows,

### a) There is a clearly established functional need.

The current enterprises at Roe Farm require a high level of supervision, due to high number of calves born and reared on site. Any shortfall in supervision at a critical moment could result in the loss of the calves and their mothers, with a consequential knock-on effect on farm profitability (and hence sustainability).

The dwelling required for the farm, which is to be sited as shown on the attached site plan, is needed to allow a worker to live on the farm and so be on hand at all times. There are a number of other reasons why a dwelling is considered essential so that a member of the farm staff is available to deal with:

- i. supervision and monitoring of livestock. The applicant wants to try and be antibiotic free to supply the best produce to the food chain. This is both economically more efficient, and prevents antibiotics entering the foodchain;
- ii. regular inspections need to be carried out to detect illness and provide essential care for the livestock. Guidance provided by DEFRA state that vigilance and good stockmanship are vital in the fight against animal disease;
- iii. This is reiterated by the legislation and regulations contained within the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and by the Farm Welfare Council; it is essential that 24-hour supervision is in place to protect livestock against theft, predators and intruders. Likewise, if livestock escape from the farm buildings or fields, someone needs to be on hand to gather the livestock up and return them to the buildings or fields;



- iv. Any calves brought onto site must be handfed until they are old enough to do this themselves. This is usually until 6 weeks of age. This is labour intensive and takes a lot of time to complete;
- v. Calving happens at night, and mothers need to be checked every three hours in order to ensure their health and safety. This is not feasible with the current arrangement as it would require three, hour long visits (inclusive of travel time);
- vi. Mothers can be particularly volatile when calving, as it is a high stress situation for them. It is therefore recommended for all calvings to be attended to in pairs;
- vii. Recent case law has evidenced that it is unreasonable to expect a person in an existing dwelling on site to move out to make room for an essential worker (Kean V Secretary of State for the Environment and Aylesbury Vale District Council (1996) and JR Cussons & Sons v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (2008)). The applicant's father occupies the only farmhouse on site. As he nears retirement age, contributions to the maintenance of the farm will decrease, which will see the workload of the other farm workers increase. As case law evidences that the applicant's father should not be expected to leave, and 8.44SMD will be spread between three, and because there will be no night time supervision for calving, we argue that this is evidence of an essential need for an additional agricultural worker dwelling for the farming unit that cannot be met by any other dwelling on site.

**(b) The need relates to a full time worker.**

Based on the current levels of stocking as set out at Section 3 of this report the labour requirement of the holding has been assessed, see Appendix 1. This assessment indicates that there is a need for 8.44 full time workers on the holding to cover the day to day farming activities as outlined to ensure good animal husbandry and welfare and to allow for general maintenance of the property & general management.

It is considered that in the interests of the welfare of the livestock (particularly due to their young age), it is essential that a worker is actively involved in the management of the unit and are living thereon.

**(c) The Financial Test**

The financial requirement is to show that the unit and the agricultural activity concerned has been established for three years and has been profitable for at least one of those years, is currently sound and has a clear prospect of remaining so.

The recent profit and loss accounts show the farm has been consistently generating good trading profits.

In the interests of confidentiality, the accounts have not been included here. A summary of the accounts can be made available for inspection if required. It is concluded that this business meets the requirements of the 'Financial Test', in that they are generating a profit, and have done so year on year.

A letter of support has been written by their accountant, who is suitably qualified to provide professional opinion on the viability of the enterprise.

#### **(d) Existing accommodation**

There is a requirement to show that the functional need could not be fulfilled off site due to 24 hour on site demands.

There are currently no available dwellings on the farm, but the calculation of 8.44 workers being required on the farm every day proves that on-site supervision is essential. The farm operates a year round calving pattern. This justifies the essential need for an agricultural worker dwelling on the site.

The use of existing accommodation in the wider area is not practical due to the long labour hours required on the farm, the nightly checks on the animals, prevention of crime and the 24 hour cover required for farm and livestock.

#### **(e) Other planning requirements**

Issues relating to design, access and siting along with other matters normally dealt with by the planning authority are beyond the scope of this report except to say that any dwelling would need to be sympathetic to the overall setting within the district.

## **10.0 Conclusion**

10.1 Using John Nix Farm Management Pocketbook, we have established the farm generates 8.44 standard man days of labour on the farm. The applicants work extremely hard in order to maintain such a high standard of farming. These efforts have seen the profitability of the business grow year on year, with stock ever increasing.

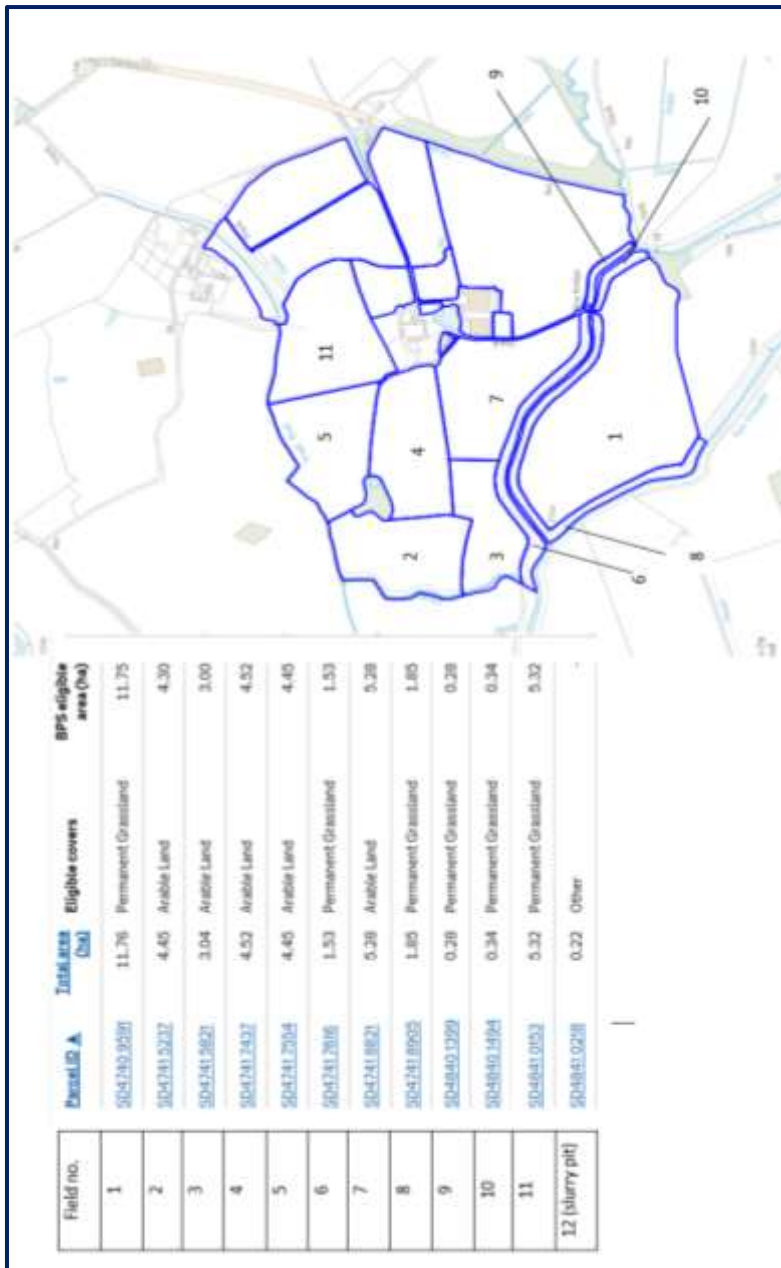
10.2 The NFU states “Farming grows more than food. Farming and food sectors support families and economic growth by providing some 4.9 million jobs, accounting for over 13% of all employees in the UK”.

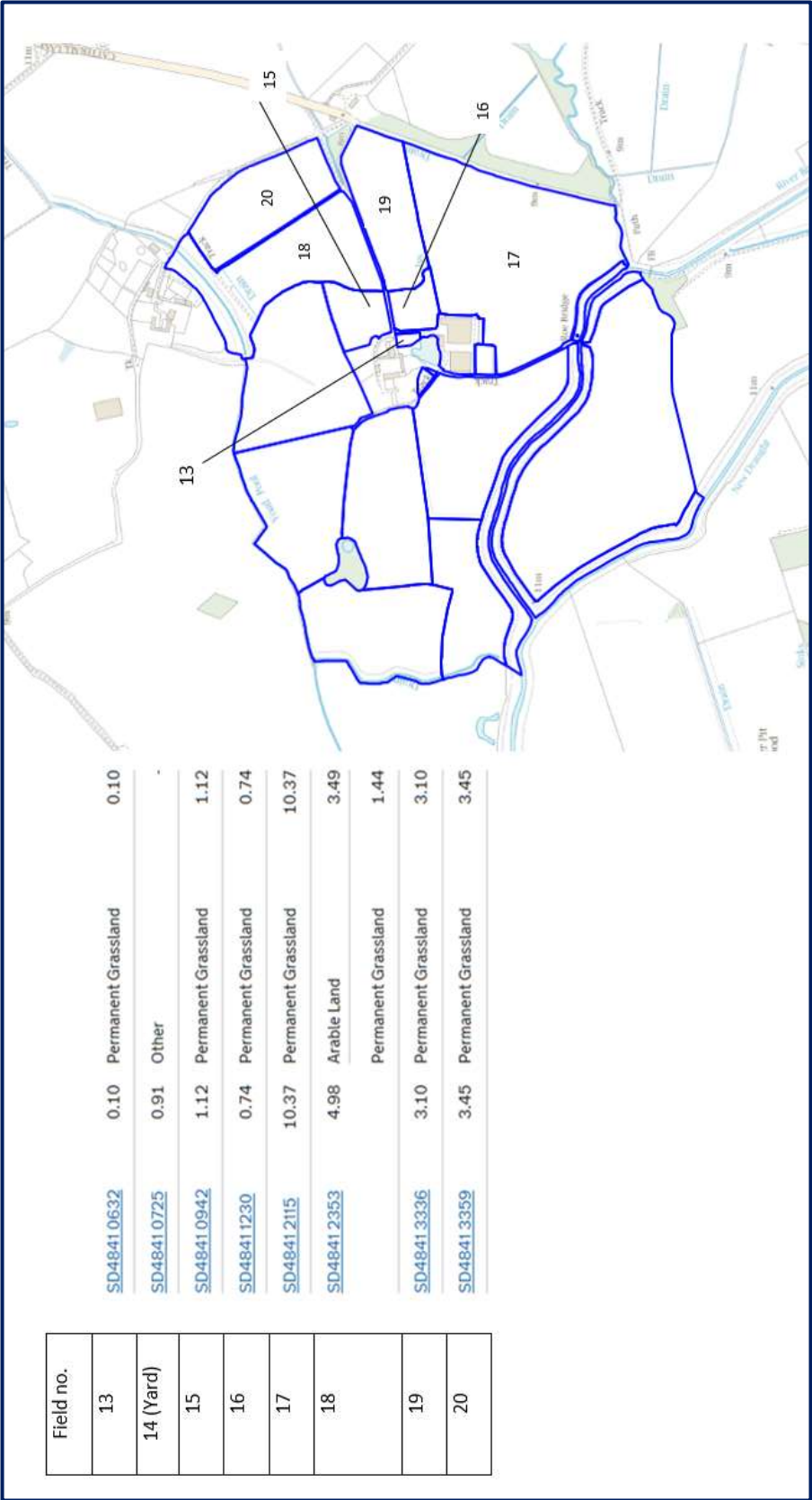
10.3 The NPPF aims to support all three elements of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Paragraph 7 states the need for the planning system to perform ‘a Social Role - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations’. Granting of this application will support the requirements of the next generation of this rural business and contribute to the life and economic viability of the farm.

10.4 It is concluded that the lack of available accommodation at the site is not sufficient for the 8.44 standard man days required at the farm and the level of vulnerable livestock held. The only way to maintain the quality of farming, to ensure the safety of the animals and to ensure the health and wellbeing of workers (by facilitating a healthier work life balance), is to secure an agricultural worker dwelling at Roe Farm. We therefore seek the approval of this proposal.

# Appendix 1

Details of the Applicant's land holding. Information should be given regarding the tenure of any land utilised including a schedule of land owned and rented on an O.S. map. A distinction should be made between short term rental agreements (1 year or less) and long term tenancies. Whenever possible, RPA rural land register maps for the current year should be provided.





# Appendix 2

## Calculation of Annual Labour Requirement. As of 30/04/2020.

All enterprise requirements in terms of Standard Man Days (SMD) have been taken from the Farm Management Pocketbook (2016 edition) by John Nix.

### Livestock:

Type	Quantity	SMD per head	Total SMD
Dairy Cows	240	4	960
0-6 month calves	120	1.6	195
6-12 month calves	120	0.3	36
Stock Bull	1	3.5	3.5
Dry Cows	30	3.5	45

SUBTOTAL

1239.5 SMD

### Land:

Product	Acres	Hectares	Cuts	SMD including reseeded	Total SMD
Silage	170	68.7	4	2.8	770.53
Grazing	64	25.9	1	0.4	10.3

SUBTOTAL

780.83 SMD

### Total Enterprise SMD Requirement/Year 2020.33 SMD

#### Plus:

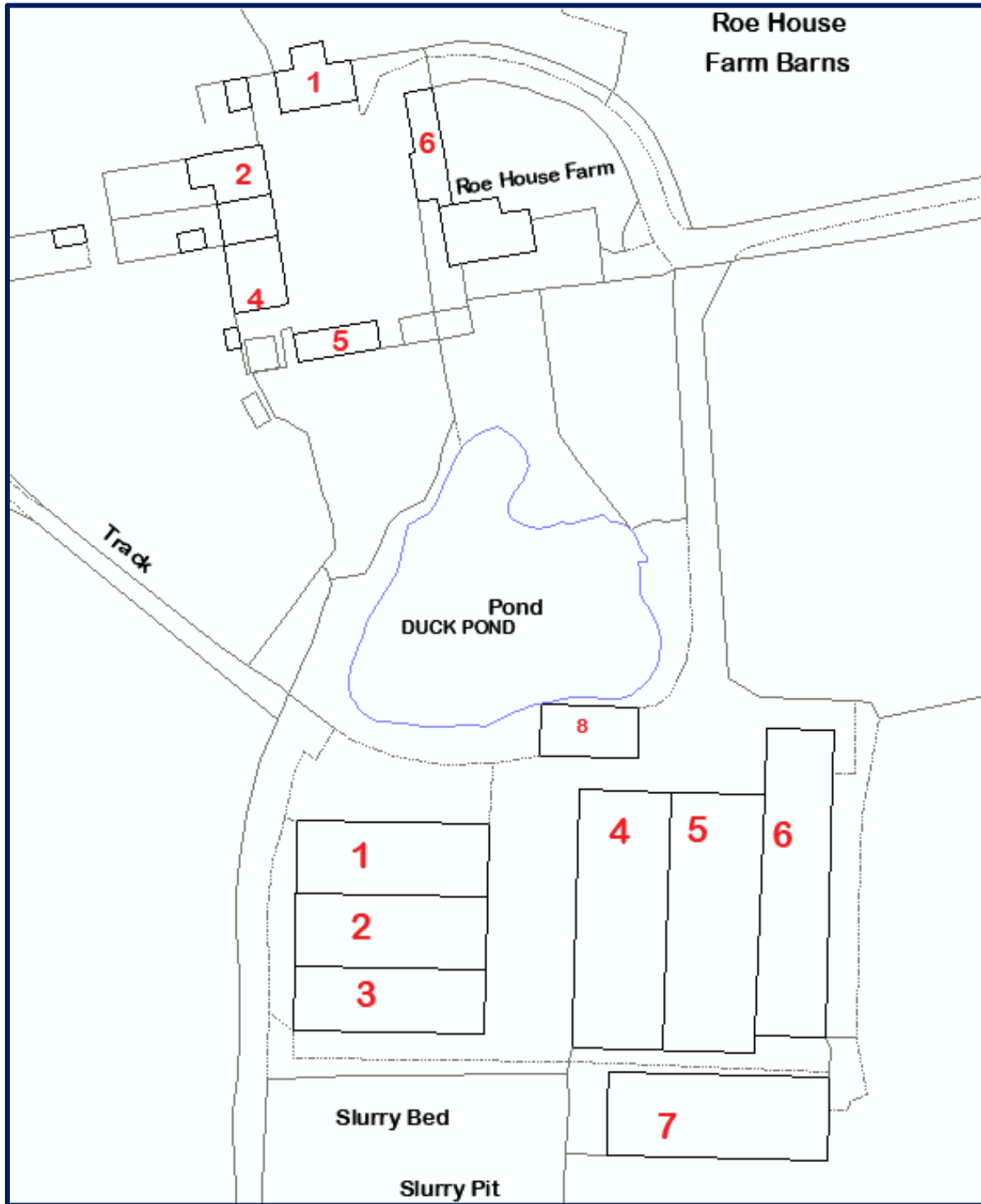
15% Addition for general maintenance & management  $1224.33 * 1.15 = 2323.38$  SMD

### Number of Workers Required

The average full time agricultural worker provides 275 standard man days; therefore, based on the above table, it can be calculated that the total labour requirement for the applicant's enterprise at the site equates to 8.44 full time workers ( $2323.38/275$ ).

# Appendix 3

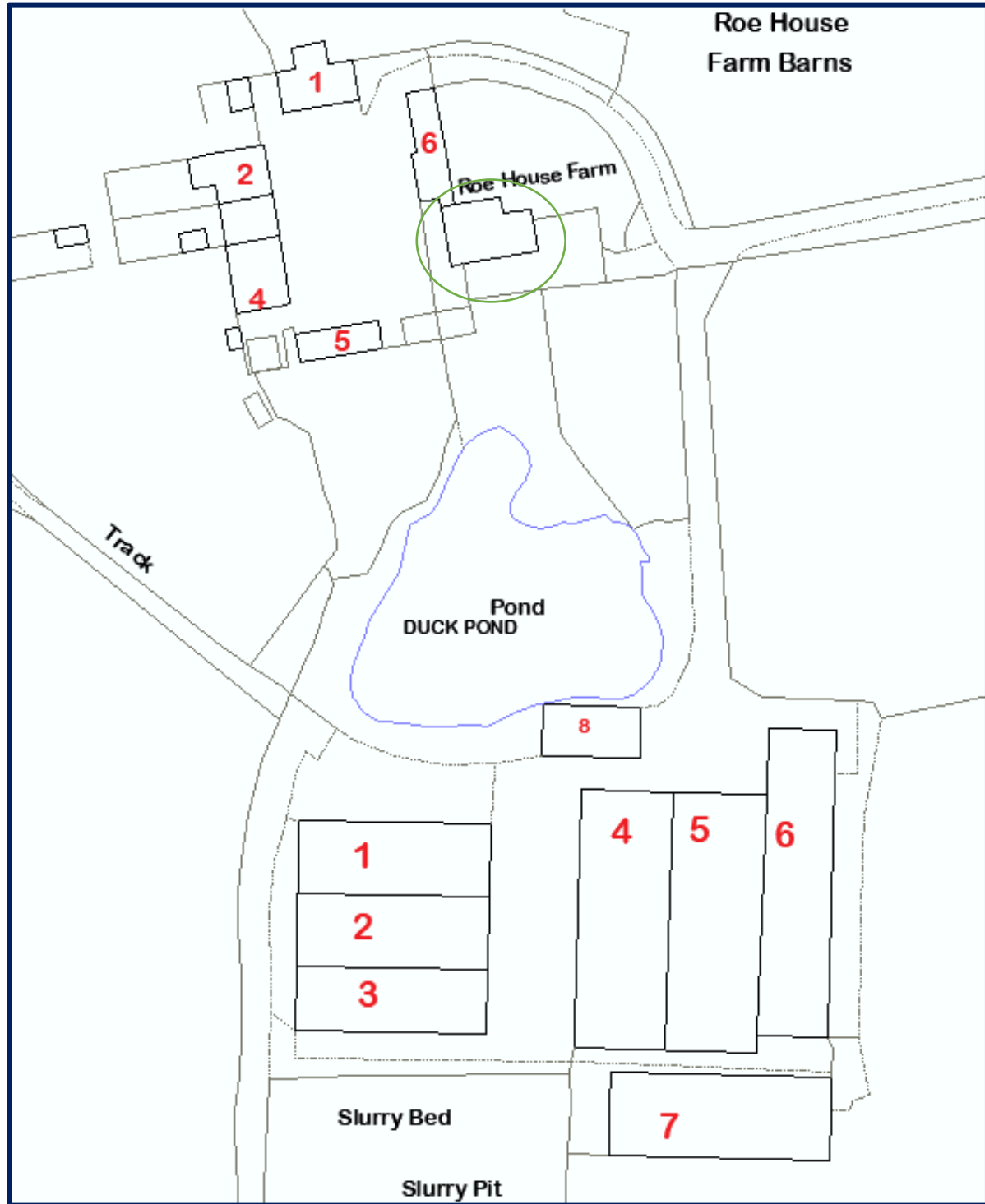
A schedule with an accompanying numbered plan of existing buildings describing the dimensions, type of construction and cladding and use.



Building Number	Use	Materials
1	Silage Clamp	Concrete panels and box profile tin sheets. Cement fibre roof
2	Silage Clamp	Concrete panels and box profile tin sheets. Cement fibre roof
3	Young Stock Buildings	Concrete panels, Yorkshire boards, cement fibre sheet roof
4	Dairy cow cubicles and robotic milking machines	Concrete panels, Yorkshire boards, cement fibre sheet roof
5	Dairy cow cubicles and robotic milking machines	Concrete panels, Yorkshire boards, cement fibre sheet roof
6	Heifer / Dry cow buildings	Concrete panels, Yorkshire boards, cement fibre sheet roof
7	Calving shed / store	Concrete panels, Yorkshire boards, cement fibre sheet roof
8	Young stock building	Concrete panels, Yorkshire boards, cement fibre sheet roof

# Appendix 4

Details of existing dwellings on the unit where the development is proposed whether or not in the applicant's ownership/occupation.

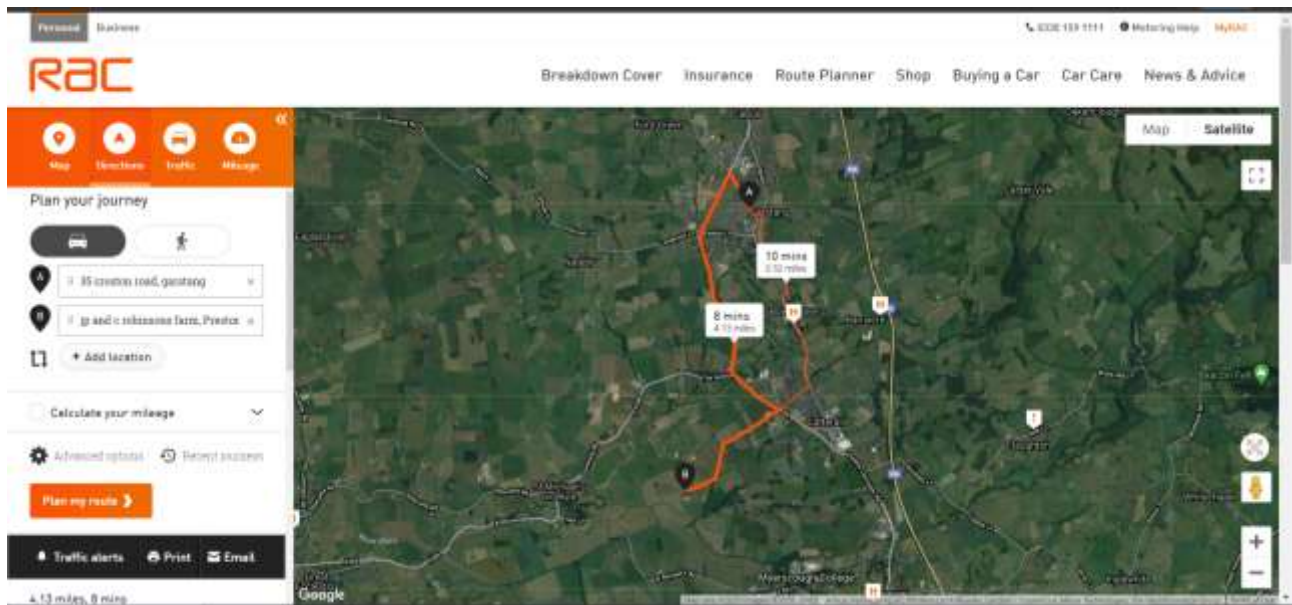




# Appendix 5

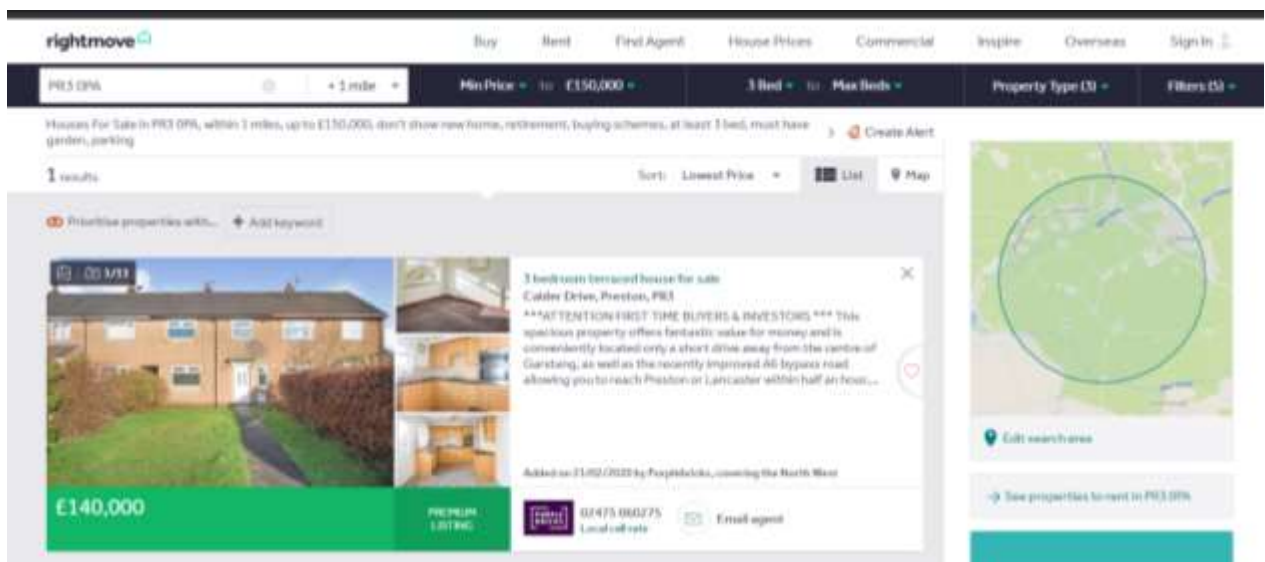
Details of any dwellings owned by or sold within the past 5 years by the applicant located off the unit but within a 5 mile radius of the land holding, and the location and nature of occupation of any dwellings occupied by the workers employed in the business.

The applicant has not owned or lived anywhere else in the last 5 years. The applicant currently lives at 35 Croston Road, Garstang, PR2 1EN. His travel time is 8-10 minutes, and the current address is not within sight and sound of the animals.



# Appendix 6

Within 1 mile  
Within a 10 minute drive  
With Parking  
Non-shared ownership  
Non-retirement  
3 Bedrooms  
Less than £150,000.00



There is just one property that meet the requirements of the Rightmove assessment. These are all criteria that need to be met in order to be a like for like property that would meet the needs of the farm. However, as there will be no supervision upon John's retirement, a dwelling on the unit is essential for the number of vulnerable livestock held, year round calving pattern, and 8.44SMD.