

# The **Farm Consultancy** Group



Planning Justification  
to accompany a Planning Application for the  
re-building of a farm dwelling at Pendducae  
Farm, Bedlinog, Treharris, CF46 6UE on behalf  
of Mr Bernard Llewellyn

Andy Dodd – August 2022

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## **Planning Justification to accompany an Outline Planning Application for the re-building of an existing farmhouse at Pendducae Farm, Bedlinog, Treharris**

### **1. Introduction**

This report has been prepared by Andy Dodd of *The Farm Consultancy Group* on behalf of Mr Bernard Llewellyn, to confirm agricultural justification for the re-building of a previously fire damaged farmhouse at Pendducae Farm, Bedlinog.

The report is produced based on information provided by the client, farm records and standard costings data where appropriate.

This report provides justification for the re-building of the farmhouse, gutted by fire a number of years ago to re-instate a residential property on the farm to allow the farm to be fully utilised and animal welfare to be ensured.

### **2. Background**

Pendducae Farm is located in the hills between Aberfan to the southwest, Bedlinog to the east and to the south of Merthyr Tydfil. The farm is a typical Welsh Upland farm in the area running 105 suckler cows, plus calves at foot and 500 hill sheep, plus lambs. The farm extends to approximately 500 acres of grassland used to graze and rear the beef suckler herd and sheep flock. The farm has various typical agricultural buildings, areas of hard standing/concrete and the shell of the old farmhouse that was gutted by fire.

The remains of the farmhouse are located to the north of the farm buildings and on the edge of the main farmyard/hard standing.

The farmland at Pendducae Farm is largely used for grazing the suckler herd and sheep flock. Approximately 120 acres are cut for hay and forage, which is sufficient to support both the beef and sheep enterprise, making the farm sustainable for the future. The main agricultural shed on the farm was also damaged by fire and has recently been re-built as seen in photos 1, 2 & 3 below.



*Photo 1 – Shell of fire damaged agricultural shed prior to being re-built*



*Photo 2 & 3 - External and internal view of re-built agricultural shed for livestock*

### **3. Proposal**

The lack of a residential dwelling on the farm does create a major issue from both an animal welfare point of view but also security of the farm site. This justification outlines the need to re-build the farmhouse to allow a stock person to live on site all year round to manage the suckler cows both at calving and then the herd in general as well as manage the large ewe and lamb flock.

The burnt-out farmhouse will be re-built on the same site to provide a modest rural dwelling for the stock person and family to live in. The design and size of the dwelling have been carefully thought though to fit in with existing rural dwellings in the area whilst meeting the needs of a busy, mixed livestock enterprise farming business. Photos 4 & 5 below show the burnt-out farmhouse.



*Photos 4 & 5 showing the internal and external burnt-out shell of the old farmhouse*

#### 4. Access

The remains of the current farmhouse is accessed down the existing farm drive, which is located off Parish Road, which is single track and gated from the North where it joins Bogey Road, leading from the A4060 and gated from the south just before the farm drive entrance. The farm is mainly accessed from the south off Cardiff Road.

Photo 6 below shows the gated road from the south with the farm drive just in the distance.



*Photo 6 – Parish Road gated just prior to the farm drive, opposite the telegraph pole in the distance.*

#### 5. Siting

The proposed farmhouse will be located on the same site as the existing farmhouse that has been burnt down, therefore no adverse impact will be had on the landscape other than removing the current, unsightly burnt out and dangerous shell and relevant health and safety signage as below in photo 7.



*Photo 7 – health and safety signage to prevent entry to burnt out and dangerous old farmhouse.*

## **6. Designations**

### Public Right of Way

There are no Public Rights of Way that cross the location of the proposed farmhouse.

### Flooding

The area lies outside of the flood risk zone of the river Usk and is not considered a flood risk area.

Evidence of this can be found on the Natural Resources Wales Page:

[https://maps.cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk/Html5Viewer/Index.html?configBase=https://maps.cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk/Geocortex/Essentials/REST/sites/Flood\\_Risk/viewers/Flood\\_Risk/virtualdirectory/Resources/Config/Default&layerTheme=0](https://maps.cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk/Html5Viewer/Index.html?configBase=https://maps.cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk/Geocortex/Essentials/REST/sites/Flood_Risk/viewers/Flood_Risk/virtualdirectory/Resources/Config/Default&layerTheme=0)

### Listed Buildings

There are no listed buildings within the proximity of the proposal

### Scheduled Monuments

There are no scheduled monuments in the vicinity to the proposal

### SSSI's

There are no SSSI's in the vicinity to the proposal

## **7. Planning Policy**

### National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework outlines that planning policies should support sustainable economic growth in rural areas by taking a positive approach to new development. Planning strategies should maintain a prosperous rural economy including policies to support the sustainable growth of rural businesses. It should promote the development and diversification of agricultural businesses and support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit rural businesses, communities and visitors which respect the character of the countryside.

### Local Planning Policy

Within the planning authority of Merthyr Tydfil, the 'Technical Advice Note 6 (TAN6) - Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities', which was produced by the Welsh Government in July 2010, runs alongside the NPPF and gives guidance on how local authorities should approach proposals for rural dwellings such as ones of this nature.

The policy requires that any application be appraised for the following, and satisfy these tests:

- The functional test to provide evidence of whether there is a need for a resident worker for the proper functioning of the enterprise.
- The time test to provide evidence of the labour requirement for the worker who is working on the justifying enterprise.
- The financial test to provide evidence of the economic sustainability of the justifying enterprise and identify the size of dwelling that the enterprise can sustain, ensuring that the size of the dwelling is commensurate with its functional need and financial justification.
- The other dwellings test to identify whether there is an existing dwelling or building suitable for conversion on the enterprise or dwelling in the locality that could meet the identified functional need.
- Other normal planning requirements test to demonstrate that the dwelling is suitably located to fulfil its identified need and to minimise impact on the wider environment.

The key points to also note are under section 4.3.:

*One of the few circumstances in which new isolated residential development in the open countryside may be justified is when accommodation is required to enable rural enterprise workers to live at, or close to, their place of work.*

*A new dwelling on an established rural enterprise (including farms) where there is a functional need for a full-time worker and the business case demonstrates that the employment is likely to remain financially sustainable.*

### **8. Financial viability of the unit**

The farm is currently run under a tenancy agreement with approximately 105 suckler animals and 500 hill sheep, with lambs. The farm topography means the land has always been run with mixed upland farming enterprises but is now well established as a beef and sheep farm with the renovated farm building providing cover from extreme weather for the suckler herd as and when needed.

Farm financial data demonstrates the sucker herd will generate in the region of £150/head gross margin, equating to £15,750 as a total for the herd, the sheep herd then generates £38.10/head on average, totaling £19,050 for the flock.

Both enterprises are crucial to the management of the upland farming area around Pendducae Farm to ensure the landscape is managed in an environmentally friendly way to maximise the diversity and species rich landscape.

Alongside the enterprise incomes, further funding is obtained through the Welsh Rural Payment Scheme and in future, schemes to support the environment, including maximising soil, air and water quality.

## 9. Functional Test

All figures for labour requirements have been obtained from 'The Agricultural Budget and Costings Book – 93<sup>rd</sup> Edition' (2021) by Agro Business Consultants.

The beneath table demonstrates the labour requirement of the business as a whole at Pendducae Farm.

|                                       | <b>Numbers of animals</b> | <b>Standard Man-Hours/Year/Head</b> | <b>Enterprise Total</b> |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Suckler Cows                          | 105                       | 12                                  | 1260.00                 |
| Hill Sheep                            | 500                       | 2.5                                 | 1250.00                 |
| <b>Total Enterprise Requirement</b>   |                           |                                     | <b>2510.00</b>          |
| <b>Allowance for Farm Maintenance</b> |                           | <b>3 /Wk</b>                        | 156.00                  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                          |                           |                                     | <b>2666.00</b>          |

The table above details the labour requirement for the suckler enterprise, sheep enterprise and time for basic farm maintenance.

A labour unit of one person is assumed to work 2,200 hours per year. These total hours are converted into 275 notional 'Standard Man Days' of 8 hours (ABC, 2021). As per TAN 6, it is required that an enterprise show an essential need for the proper functioning of the enterprise, this includes at least one rural worker to be readily available on site at most times to deal with animals requiring essential care at short notice or the ability to deal quickly with emergencies that could otherwise cause serious loss.

The proper functioning of a livestock farm requires that skilled stock attendants are available at very short notice at any time of the day or night. Practically, there is sometimes a requirement for two or more people to be available. However, the proposal to re-instate the dwelling at Pendducae Farm will ensure any basic animal welfare requirements, as stipulated in the Code of Recommendations For the Welfare Of Livestock for both sheep and beef animals can be met by the stock person living on site.

## **10. Proper Functioning**

The management of a sucker herd means the calving period takes place over several months, including utilizing the newly re-constructed agricultural shed, however, calves are on the farm for 12 months of the year, thus needing routine monitoring both early in the morning and last thing at night.

The cattle due to calve and all youngstock require close supervision at all times. This identifies that there is an essential need for one person to live on site.

Farm Assurance Codes of Practice require that suitable trained persons are available 24 hours a day and the Government's Strategy for Food and Farming states that 'high standards of animal health and welfare are important because they are a vital part of producing safe food and because we care about how animals are treated. High standards are also essential for the economic success of the industry.

Appropriately skilled workers will need to be available at short notice to manage the animals' health and welfare. The Code of Recommendation for the Welfare of Livestock (Cattle) states that 'no matter how acceptable a system may be in principle, without competent, diligent stockmanship, the welfare of animals cannot be adequately catered for.'

One of the principal reasons to support the need for a permanent dwelling to be situated nearby is to continuously monitor animals when they are giving birth, and to foster young onto their mothers whilst observing the young to check they are healthy as and when required. The relatively remote nature of the farm makes this very challenging during periods of inclement weather.

The Welfare of Farmed Animal Regulations stress that animals which appear to be ill or injured shall be cared for appropriately without delay and that action should be taken immediately if any animals are injured or appear ill or distressed. From a financial perspective it is also vital to the success of the business that any losses are kept to an absolute minimum. Adequate and timely supervision at all times is therefore essential.

To enable a suitably qualified and experienced stock person to be available on farm 24 hours a day, it is important, in any farming business, that the accommodation is of a sufficient standard. In relation to this business, the proposed dwelling will be used by to accommodate a stock person and their family to be close to the stock and flock.

The owner has made significant investment in the farm in recent years, including re-building the main agricultural shed, improving fencing and has an ongoing programme of clearing and tidying the farmyard.

## **11. Availability of Other Houses**

There is currently no habitable dwelling at Pendducae Farm and therefore animal welfare needs are not being met.

The proposed dwelling will have an agricultural tie as it is critical to the running and long-term sustainability of Pendducae Farm.

The dwelling will have an agricultural tie due to its locality on the farm. If the farmbusiness was sold in the future there would be a functional requirement for this dwelling and the holding, which is of significant size and will always remain as a mixed livestock farm, due to its locality, topography and agricultural buildings.

## **12. Conclusion and formal request**

Mr Llewellyn has re-invested in Pendducae Farm over a number of years to return it to a viable farm business, including re-building the main multipurpose agricultural farm building. The farm now comfortably supports over 100 sucker animals, with calves at foot and a further 500 ewes with lambs.

With this level of livestock on farm, which are needed to graze both the lower fields and uplands of the farm, it is critical that the lack of stock person living on farm is addressed to meet the basic animal welfare needs of both the sucker animals and sheep.

With the burnt out remains of the farmhouse on the main holding, we feel it is justified to apply for planning permission to re-build this property and make it a suitable dwelling for a qualified and experienced stockperson and their family to move into and run the farm on a day-to-day basis and managed the mixed farming enterprise the highest health and welfare standards.

The re-building of the property will remove the currently dangerous ruin that is on the site of the proposed dwelling as well as ensure the stock persons personal safety rather than driving a narrow, treacherous road in poor weather conditions both early in the morning and late at night.