

Agricultural Justification for the proposed erection of a general purpose agricultural building at Trawlers Farm, Shipley

1. Introduction

RH & RW Clutton have been instructed to undertake an appraisal of and agricultural justification for the building requirements at Trawlers Farm, Shipley on behalf of Mrs M Burrell and Partners.

This Report has been prepared by Ben Lee MRICS FAAV a rural Chartered Surveyor and Fellow of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers with approximately 15 years' experience of working in the South East of England.

This Report outlines the demonstrable need for the erection of a new agricultural building at Trawlers Farm to replace previous buildings which were subject to a Farm Business Tenancy that terminates on 30th June 2026.

2. Background and details of farming system

Mrs M Burrell & Partners manage the farm and woodlands at Dragons Estate, extending to 535.37 Ha in total. This comprises 214.74 Ha of permanent pasture, 76.51 Ha of arable land (subject to temporary grass leys) and 244.12 Ha of woodland.

To date, the centre of farming operations has been located at Bakers Farm, Bakers Lane, Shipley

Appendix 1 encloses confirmation of this in the form of a letter from The Dickinson Trust Ltd as Trustees of the WWB Settlement.

The land at Dragons Estate is classified as Wickham 5 series, a slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine clayey soil. The soil survey of England and Wales recognises that such land is suitable for dairying on short term grassland and winter cereals. Deciduous woodland is also extensive across the Sussex Weald.

The land is subject to various Countryside Stewardship Agreements including options for the management of permanent grassland with very low inputs, wood pasture creation and woodland improvement.

The farming system operated focuses on extensively grazed Longhorn Cattle which graze the grassland and woodland to deliver the objectives of the wood pasture creation. The other grassland is also grazed by Aberdeen Angus stores, which are kept through to 18 months old and sold as fat. Longhorn Steers are grown through to fat at 28 months whilst heifers are brought in to the expanding breeding herd.

Cattle numbers, as at 1st June 2026, total:

- 37 Aberdeen Angus Stores
- 25 Longhorn Breeding Cows

- 37 Longhorn Longstock
- 1 Longhorn Bull

All farming operations are undertaken in-house as far as possible, with buildings used for general purpose storage, including machinery, fertilizer, hay and straw, together with forestry and woodland management equipment. Due to the soil type, youngstock are housed during the winter, from October to April. Calving then takes place in the spring, with the Longhorn cows temporarily housed for welfare purposes during this period. Cattle are loose housed on straw bedded yards.

The woodland is managed in-house, with routine harvesting and thinning operations, tree safety works, woodland creation and day to day maintenance works completed by Mrs M Burrell & Partners. Large scale operations, such as addressing ash dieback, or specialist works in high risk locations require third party contractors.

3. Building Requirements

As identified above, the farming business requires extensive buildings for machinery and equipment storage, cattle housing, straw and fodder storage, workshop, milling of timber for on-farm use and general purpose storage. The minimum required space can be summarised as follows:

Machinery Storage – to include:

- 6 tractors for farming and forestry activity
- Telehandler, Polaris and quad bikes
- Farm maintenance equipment
- Forage equipment
- Livestock and other trailers
- Forestry crane trailer

The current space, which is optimally occupied, totals – **1,211 m²** of buildings and **3,125 m²** of hardstanding.

Livestock Housing – based on the cattle numbers identified above and using the minimum requirements for livestock housing identified in the Red Tractor Beef & Lamb Standards (October 2022), with an additional allowance made for the Longhorn breed and additional space required due to their large horns, the minimum required livestock housing totals 725.4 m². The below table outlines this.

Livestock	Number	Minimum space requirement per head (m²)	Total minimum space requirement (m²)
Finishing stock	37	6.8	251.6
Suckler cows	25	5.85	146.25

Youngstock	37	6.8	251.6
Bulls	1	10	10
Sub Total			659.45
Additional allowance for Longhorns			65.95
Total			725.4

In practice, however, the actual cattle housing area at Bakers Farm considerably exceeds this due to animal welfare and human health and safety reasons – in particular, due to the extensive grazing system of the Longhorns and limited handling they receive, mothers can be highly protective when calving and access is required for a tractor and loader amongst the cows and calves when bedding up. The actual area used for cattle housing is therefore **1,201 m²** at Bakers Farm.

Hay & Straw Storage – based on peak storage requirements, of 665 hay/haylage bales and 70 straw bales, assuming round bales stacked to 5m height, the estimated required storage area totals **338 m²**.

Workshop & General Purpose Storage – based on the existing workshop space for maintenance of farm machinery and equipment, the ongoing requirement totals **273 m²**.

The above calculations therefore demonstrate a requirement for building space totaling **3,023 m²** and hardstanding of **3,125 m²**.

4. Existing Building Space

Mrs M Burrell & Partners currently have use of extensive buildings across Dragons Estate, at various locations which are shown on plans 1-4 in Appendix 2. The use of the buildings, their area and whether they are to be retained for future use is outlined below:

Bakers Farm (Plan 1)

Ref	Description	Use	Area (m ²)	Retained?
1	Farm/Estate Office	Office	22.29	No
2	Middle Yard	Machinery & general purpose storage	193.24	No
3	New Shed	Cattle housing, straw & fodder storage	1,201.70	No
4	Cattle Sheds, Grain Store	Cattle housing	1,602.39	No
5	Lock Up, Store, Tyre Bay	Storage	91.04	No
6	Brewhouse & Lock Up	Workshop	272.67	No
7	Red Container	Vehicle storage	36.70	No
8	Polaris Lock Up	Vehicle storage	15.33	No
	Total Area		3,435.36	

Two further areas (refs 9 & 10 on Plan 1) are hardstanding used for the storage of machinery or the stacking of wrapped haylage, measuring a further 3,125.90 m².

Brick Kiln Farm (Plan 2)

Ref	Description	Use	Area (m ²)	Retained?
1	General Purpose Building	Cattle housing and fodder storage.	862.60	Yes
2	Open fronted lean-to	Machinery Storage	103.49	Yes

Trawlers Farm (Plan 3)

Ref	Description	Use	Area (m ²)	Retained?
4	Dutch Barn	Not used. Potential fodder storage.	(85.47)	Yes

Birchwood Farm (Plan 4)

Ref	Description	Use	Area (m ²)	Retained?
1	General Purpose Barn	Machinery storage	862.63	Yes
2	Dutch Barn	Not used. Potential fodder storage.	(145.93)	Yes
3	Former Stables	Vacant/Not used.	(35.30)	Yes
4	Redundant Stores	Not safe for occupation.	(71.44)	N/A

The total space currently available and occupied by the farming business totals 5,998.01 m².

5. Future Building Space

The termination of the tenancy at Bakers Farm will result in the loss of 3,435.36 m² of buildings, and 3,125.90 m² of hardstanding, which has been the centre of operations for the farming and forestry business. This will require repurposing of existing under-utilized buildings at Birchwood Farm and taking back control of buildings at Trawlers Farm.

The below schedule outlines the proposed future uses and demonstrates the need for a new general purpose building.

Brick Kiln Farm

Ref	Description	Use	Area (m ²)	Retained?
1	General Purpose Building	Cattle housing.	862.60	Yes
2	Open fronted lean-to	Machinery storage	103.49	Yes

Trawlers Farm

Ref	Description	Use	Area (m ²)	Retained?
1	Calf Shed	Small tools workshop/storage	33.09	Yes
2	Reed Cutters Shed	Small tools/equipment storage.	67.90	Yes
3	Nissen Hut	Small tools/equipment storage.	117.21	Yes
4	Dutch Barn	Hay/straw storage	85.47	Yes

Birchwood Farm

Ref	Description	Use	Area (m ²)	Retained?
1	General Purpose Barn	Potential livestock housing.	862.63	Yes
2	Dutch Barn	Hay/straw storage.	145.93	Yes
3	Redundant Stables	Small tools/equipment storage.	35.30	Yes

Despite the increased use of existing buildings, the required storage space will still see a deficit of 2,854.73 m² compared to that which was previously occupied. The change in space can be summarised as:

	Requirement (m ²)	Before (m ²)	After (m ²)
Cattle	1,201	2,632	1,725
Hay/straw	338	1,030	231
Machinery	1,211	1,211	103
Workshop/storage	273	273	253.5
Farm office	22	22	0
Hardstanding	3125	3125	0
Total	6,148	5,168	2,314

The above therefore clearly demonstrates the requirement for the erection of a new general purpose agricultural building.

6. Design of the proposed development

The building is designed for the purposes of agriculture due to its scale, construction and materials, including:

- The height of 4.57m to the eaves enables the safe movement of machinery without risking damage to the fabric of the structure.

- The open elevation on the northern side of the building further facilitates access to the building by machinery and ensures maximum visibility for operators when entering and exiting the building.
- The pre-cast concrete panels to a height of 2m provides further protection to the fabric of the building from the operation of machinery, particularly telehandlers or fore-end loaders used for the movement of hay and straw.
- The hit and miss timber cladding provides ventilation to the building, which allows the safe storage of hay and straw and mitigates the risk of combustion if over-heating were to occur.
- The ventilated ridge future proofs the building, in the event that it may be required for housing cattle in the circumstances permitted under clause D1 (3) (b) (ii) of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015, which states that “in the case of animals normally kept out of doors, they require temporary accommodation in a building or other structure because they are sick or giving birth or newly born, or to provide shelter against extreme weather conditions”.

The location of the proposed building is immaterial to the determination of whether planning permission is required however the site has been identified due to the central location of Trawlers Farm on Dragons Estate. The specific location, to the north of the small ghyll, has been chosen to ensure that there is sufficient space around the building to enable the safe movement of machinery and to ensure that there is sufficient distance from mature trees which could either be impacted by compaction of their root zone, or present a health and safety risk to farm workers from dropped branches in the future.

7. Conclusion

In summary, whilst the existing provision of buildings used by Mrs M Burrell & Partners is arguably in excess of their current need, the loss of the tenancy of Bakers Farm necessitates the urgent provision of additional buildings to enable the continued operation of the farming and forestry business. The loss of buildings will partly be mitigated through the efficient re-use of existing buildings on the holding, however there remains a requirement to construct a new general purpose agricultural building for the storage of machinery, hay and straw.

8. Schedule of accompanying documents

Appendix 1 – Letter confirming notice to terminate tenancy of Bakers Farm.

Appendix 2 –

Plan 1 – Bakers Farm Buildings

Plan 2 – Brick Kiln Farm Buildings

Plan 3 – Trawlers Farm Buildings

Plan 4 – Birchwood Farm Buildings