



**Applicant:** Telbridge Properties Ltd

Viability Assessment of agricultural operations at

Twineham Court Farm

Bob Lane

Henfield

West Sussex

RH17 5NH

Report Prepared By:

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East Sussex TN21 8JD

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<sup>1</sup>Figures taken from John Nix Pocketbook 2023 (53<sup>rd</sup> Edition) pages 92 and 245.

<sup>2</sup>Figures taken from John Nix Pocketbook 2023 (53<sup>rd</sup> Edition) page 205

## **INTRODUCTION**

MJH Land and Property Ltd have been instructed by Telbridge Properties Ltd to undertake an assessment into the viability of potential agricultural operations at Twineham Court Farm, Bob Lane, Henfield, West Sussex RH17 5NH.

This report has been prepared by Mark Henty MRICS FAAV. I am a rural Chartered Surveyor, registered valuer and a Fellow of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers. I have over a decade of industry experience as well as a Bachelors Degree in Agriculture and a Masters in Rural Land and Business Management.

A site inspection of the property was carried out on 30 January 2023. In attendance was the Applicant, Henry Wagstaff of Wilbury Planning Ltd, Maggie Henderson of HB Archaeology and Conservation Limited and Michael Greve of G3 Architecture.

## **LOCATION**

Twineham Court Farm (TCF) is situated a short distance to the west of the Hamlet of Twineham Green and approximately four miles to the west of the large town of Burgess Hill with its mainline railway connection to London.

The property is accessed from Bob Lane over a hardcore and road planings track which is within the ownership of the applicant. Immediately to the west of the site is the Bolney substation which is owned by National Grid, the previous owner of TCF (see below).

Please refer to the location plan submitted as part of the application.

## **SITE OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND**

A detailed history of the development of TCF over the years has been provided by HB Archaeology and Conservation, as part of the submitted application.

From reviewing this report, it is understood that the farmhouse was constructed in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and that it is Grade II listed.

<sup>1</sup>Figures taken from John Nix Pocketbook 2023 (53<sup>rd</sup> Edition) pages 92 and 245.

<sup>2</sup>Figures taken from John Nix Pocketbook 2023 (53<sup>rd</sup> Edition) page 205

There was significant post war investment in TCF and in the OS Map dated 1956 the extensive footprint of modern agricultural buildings is shown.

It is understood that the farm formed part of the Twineham Grange Estate until it was sold in the early 1960s. It is understood that the National Grid acquired TCF and surrounding Land and in 1965 they started building Bolney Substation.

The residual parts of TCF were retained as part of the National Grid's estate and the farm was privately rented to an individual called Bernie who lived in the farmhouse and carried out de minimis agricultural activities at TCF.

Today, TCF extends to a total of approximately 7.96 acres (3.22 hectares) and comprises a detached two bedroom Grade II Listed Farmhouse, with nearby traditional building, and an extensive range of post war livestock buildings, with a total footprint of approximately 1,049m<sup>2</sup> (11,291ft<sup>2</sup>). All of the agricultural buildings on site are in extremely dilapidated states of repair and pose a significant health and safety risk due to their poor structural integrity and large quantities of asbestos cement roof sheeting.

Please refer to the current block plan submitted as part of the application and set below is a breakdown of land use and a schedule of Acreages.

Land Use	Acres	Hectares
Residential Curtilage	0.18	0.07
Farmyard	1.75	0.71
Permanent Pasture	6.21	2.44
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.96</b>	<b>3.22</b>

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## **APPRAISAL OF POSSIBLE AGRICULTURAL USES**

The land at TCF was laid to pasture on the date of our inspection. The land is identified as Grade 3 on the Land classification map of England and Wales. From an inspection of the Soilscales database the soil type is shown as being rich loamy and clayey soils, slowly permeable and seasonally wet and with impeded drainage, which is typical of the local area.

Taking into account the above, and due to the field sizes at TCF, it is reasonable to assume that the land is not suitable for modern arable farming and therefore any potential farming use would have to centre around the permanent pasture or the intensive use of agricultural buildings in the farmyard.

Whilst the operational history of TCF is unknown, due to the configuration of the buildings present, it is considered likely since the post war development that the farmstead was the base of a piggery operation. However, this was likely when the farm formed part of a larger agricultural unit or in association with the Twineham Grange Estate. Piggery operations require a significant amount of inputs (feed and bedding) and as such they will require either a reasonable acreage of in-hand land under combinable crop production or they will be dependent on purchasing required inputs from third party suppliers, which increases cost of production reducing the enterprise gross margin.

When looking at the possibility of intensively utilizing the farmyard, you would need to look at the state and condition of the buildings present. Please refer to some site photographs of the buildings present included at Appendix I. As already stated, the range of agricultural buildings are in an extremely dilapidated state, some partially collapsed, with the majority having low eaves heights, poor ventilation and poor access arrangements which would not allow access for larger modern agricultural machinery.

Taking into account the above, there are two enterprises possible to consider on the holding. First, is the development of the farmyard to a purpose-built piggery unit and second is to utilize the pasture for the production of hay for sale to third parties.

<sup>1</sup>Figures taken from John Nix Pocketbook 2023 (53<sup>rd</sup> Edition) pages 92 and 245.

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Please note, utilizing the pasture for livestock production (sheep or beef) is not considered viable due to the acreage needed to support a flock / herd. Saying this, the same applies in respect of the acreage needed for a viable forage business, however, this analysis has been included below for completeness of this appraisal.

### **Pig Enterprise**

It is clear from the inspection of the buildings that any incoming farmer would be likely to demolish the dilapidated buildings on site and reconstruct purpose-built steel portal frame buildings suited to their specific enterprise.

Due to the extensive amount of corrugated asbestos cement roof sheeting on site, which before the cost of removal has a landfill disposal cost in excess of £300/t, it is considered the cost to demolish the post war era buildings on the site is likely to be in excess of £70,000.

Once the site is cleared, the incomer would have to invest more monies to build their purpose-built buildings. If one were to assume that an incomer might look to set up a 50 sow farrowing unit, bringing on progeny until fit for slaughter, set out below is an overview of the investment required<sup>1</sup>.

<b>Operation / Investment</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Site Clearance	£70,000
50 sow unit inc. followers (£4,850/sow assuming 23 pigs per year per sow) <sup>1</sup>	£242,500
Ancillary buildings (manure and workshop / machinery store etc.)	£50,000
Initial purchase of gilts (£250/head) <sup>1</sup>	£12,500
Contingency at 10%	£37,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>£412,500</b>

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<sup>2</sup>Figures taken from John Nix Pocketbook 2023 (53<sup>rd</sup> Edition) page 205

<b>Gross Margin Analysis<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>£</b>
Sales Revenue Per Weaner	£155
Sow and Boar Depreciation	£4.23
Mortality Charge	£2.20
<b>Output</b>	<b>£148</b>
Feed	£114
Misc (vet, meds, utilities, bedding etc.)	£13
<b>Total Variable Costs</b>	<b>£127</b>
Labour Cost Per Pig	£18
Labour Cost Per Sow	£483
<b>Gross Margin Per Pig (inc Labour)</b>	<b>£3</b>
<b>Gross Margin Per Sow (inc Labour) (28 pigs sold)</b>	<b>£84</b>
<b>Therefore total annual revenue from 50 sows =</b>	<b>£4,200</b>

Taking into account the above, disregarding the freehold site purchase, this would generate an annual return in the region of 1% and it is therefore an unviable operation to be carried out on the holding.

### **Forage Enterprise**

The agricultural land at TCF extends to around 6.2 acres formed from 3 parcels.

For completeness of this report, it is considered that the pasture could be bought back into production and improved and utilised for the production of forage.

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<sup>2</sup>Figures taken from John Nix Pocketbook 2023 (53<sup>rd</sup> Edition) page 205

<b>Gross Margin Analysis (Per Acre)<sup>2</sup></b>	
Sale of Hay per acre (80 bales at £4.50/bale)	£360
Fertiliser and Sprays	£75
Mowing	£14.80
Tedding and Raking	£19.11
Baling (50p/bale)	£40
Handling and Stacking (assume 1 hour tractor and man)	£50
<b>Gross Margin per Acre</b>	<b>£161.09</b>
<b>Annual Gross Margin for Pasture at TCF</b>	<b>£998.76</b>

Taking into account the above, it is clear that the land and buildings are of insufficient quantity and quality to be able to maintain a farming business. As such it is without doubt that TCF cannot reasonably be expected to support a viable full time agricultural enterprise that would require a two bedroom farmhouse or such an extensive range of buildings and therefore it is prudent for the applicant to explore alternative uses of the site.

### **SUMMARY**

To conclude, this statement evidences that due to the size of Twineham Court Farm, it is not a viable agricultural unit. Overall, it is considered the proposal put forward by the applicant represents an acceptable form of rural development in principle providing jobs for the local community, whilst sympathetically utilizing the traditional buildings on site. Furthermore, the regeneration of the site will remove the eyesore of redundant agricultural buildings in the landscape and overall enhancing the setting of the Grade II listed farmhouse.

Yours faithfully,

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## Appendix I – Site Photographs



<sup>1</sup>Figures taken from John Nix Pocketbook 2023 (53<sup>rd</sup> Edition) pages 92 and 245.

<sup>2</sup>Figures taken from John Nix Pocketbook 2023 (53<sup>rd</sup> Edition) page 205