

# **Agricultural Viability Report**

**of land known as Hamble Airfield,  
Hamble Lane**

**For and on behalf of Cemex**



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## Appendices

Appendix 1	Photographs taken on site visit 14 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
Appendix 2	Plan of informal paths
Appendix 3	Estimate of Costs

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Ian Judd & Partners LLP have been instructed to provide an assessment of the Agricultural Viability of land at Hamble Airfield.
- 1.2. This Report has been prepared by Henry E R Brice MRICS FAAV, a Partner of Ian Judd & Partners Rural Surveyors and Land Agents at Bishops Waltham, a Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Rural Division and a Fellow of the Association of Agricultural Valuers.
- 1.3. Ian Judd & Partners are a single office firm based in Bishops Waltham undertaking Land Agency, Valuation and Rural Professional Work across South Hampshire. We believe that we have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to prepare this Report.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. We have been instructed to prepare a Report to assess the Agricultural Viability of the land known as Hamble Airfield following a request from Cemex on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2023.
- 2.2. An inspection was undertaken of the land on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2023 and a selection of photographs taken from the site visit can be found enclosed at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.3. It is clear from the photographs at **Appendix 1** that the land in its current state and condition is not suitable for any form of agricultural use without significant works to improve the holding.

## 3. Methodology

- 3.1. This report identifies the works required to reinstate the land to agricultural use and reviews the constraints of the reinstatement.
- 3.2. In **Appendix 3**. We have prepared an estimate of costs of reinstating the land back to agricultural use. In undertaking this estimate, it has been assumed that all legal consents and permissions have been granted and the works are undertaken without unforeseen difficulties.
- 3.3. The costs are estimates, with costs sourced from the CAAV Costings 2022/2023 - Detailed Workings, The Agricultural Budgeting Costing Book - 96th Ed. May 2023, The National Association of Agricultural Contractors - Contracting Price Survey 2023 and our local knowledge of contracting costs.
- 3.4. Whilst these costs are not exhaustive, it provides a good understanding of the likely work to be carried out and an estimate of likely costs.
- 3.5. We have not allowed any costs for agricultural infrastructure (tracks, buildings, yards etc.) or land drainage, as these substantial investments in the land, would add value, but are likely to be unviable and unlikely to be funded by a landlord.

- 3.6. We have considered two principal agricultural uses - improved grassland for forage and grazing and combinable arable cropping. To assess the viability, it has been assumed the likely rental value of land let in the geographical area for improved grassland and arable use.
- 3.7. We have assumed a Farm Business Tenancy on the basis that the land is to be used for arable cropping at a rate of £120 per acre per annum (£296/ha/pa) and a Farm Business Tenancy for pasture land returning £90 per acre per annum (£222/ha/pa). This is a full rental return, assuming the tenant claims any government subsidies.
- 3.8. To establish agricultural viability, we have considered a year' payback on the total costs vs the annual rent. No consideration has been given to the capital value of the holding or return on capital value.

#### 4. The Site

- 4.1. Hamble Airfield comprises 60.04 ha (148.35 acres) being a single field parcel. Hamble Airfield was established in 1912 with the northern section of Hamble Airfield acquired in 1924. During the Second World War, the main activity was the repair and overhaul of spitfires, in addition to other aircraft up to B17s.
- 4.2. From the end of the Second World War, the site was used for flight training operations for both military and civilian uses. The Airfield closed on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1986 after which it was purchased by Persimmon Homes and is understood to remain unmanaged ever since.
- 4.3. At the time of inspection, the property comprised an area of unmanaged scrub, woodland and amenity grassland with extensive informal public use.
- 4.4. There is no evidence of any agricultural activities such as cultivation, cutting or foraging of grass, grazing, fencing, vegetation management or general maintenance normally associated with either grassland or arable use. The site has been left to natural regeneration.
- 4.5. There are several oil pipes running through the land, linked to Esso's Hamble Oil Terminal approximately 1km to the south.

#### 5. Location

- 5.1. The land is located in a semi-urban location on the Hamble Peninsula approximately 1 km from the South Coast.
- 5.2. The land adjoins residential development along the southern and eastern boundaries adjoining the B3397 (Hamble Lane) to the west, and the Railway Line to the north which adjoins Portsmouth and Southampton. Satchell Lane to the north-east. The only vehicular existing access is via a pair of steel gates from Satchell Lane in the very north-east corner of the land. These gates have been bollarded with concrete and an earth bund behind the gate to reduce the risk of trespassers taking entry.

5.3. Hamble is a village which adjoins the estuary of the River Hamble to the east, Southampton Water to the south and the urban sprawl of Southampton, Netley and Bursledon to the north and west. There is a single road (Hamble Lane) through the residential settlements to reach the land which leads to the A27 and M27.

5.4. There is very limited agricultural land in the immediate area. The majority of the land surrounding is permanent pasture used for equine grazing principally for leisure and recreation purposes. Historically, land in the local vicinity was used as smallholdings and market garden properties producing strawberries and other fresh fruit and vegetables. A few small-scale producers remain in the surrounding area, however, there is limited commercial farming in the immediate vicinity, principally due to the urban sprawl and difficulty in accessing and transporting agricultural equipment and machinery to the site.

## 6. Current Agricultural Contracts

6.1. We have identified the following constraints, which limit the use of the land for agricultural purposes:

- **Extensive Vegetation**  
Extensive areas of brambles, trees, scrubs and other vegetation to be cleared, and large areas are inaccessible.
- **Fencing**  
The absence of any internal boundary features and no formal agricultural field systems or enclosures.  
No management of external field boundaries or vegetation.  
The remnants of old MOD fencing and poor repairs on all sides with significant public access made from the urban fringe.
- **Services**  
No evidence of a water supply or network of water pipes for livestock drinking.
- **Public Access**  
A labyrinth of informal footpaths used for recreational walking and dog exercise.  
Evidence of fly grazing horses/ponies.
- **Ground Levelling and Agricultural Reinstatement**  
An extensive area of ant hills and undulating ground conditions is to be levelled. Once cleared the land will need to be cultivated and re-seeded.
- **Soil condition and Nutrient assessment.**

## 7. Assessment of Agricultural Viability

I will address these constraints in turn and highlight the works required to bring the land into agricultural use.

## **7.1. Extensive Vegetation**

- 7.1.1. The quantity of scrub clearance required is a major operation and will require significant man hours to clear the entire site ready for agricultural use.
- 7.1.2. The use of a mechanical mulcher/flail will allow the scrub areas to be controlled. It must be noted that some of the bramble areas are over 2m in height. The volume of material will need to be chipped, composted and spread or removed from the site.
- 7.1.3. The mature trees, both within the land and overhanging from hedgerows will need to be felled, either using a chainsaw or tree shears. The material will need to be shredded and either be removed from the site or be composted and spread. The stumps will need to be removed with a stump grinder.
- 7.1.4. Both the scrub and tree clearance is an expensive and time-consuming operation. The loss of this habitat could impact the wildlife living on the site.
- 7.1.5. Once all existing vegetation has been removed, the land will need to be managed, both through regular cutting and spraying to avoid rapid regrowth.

## **7.2. Fencing**

- 7.2.1. To be able to graze the land with livestock, the site needs to be fenced. This will stop the public from entering the site and livestock from straying.
- 7.2.2. The historic MOD fence around the perimeter is in poor condition. The hedgerows have overgrown and will require extensive pruning or laying. The existing fencing that is damaged will need to be removed and the entire perimeter of the site needs to be fenced to keep stock in and trespassers out. The perimeter fence is approximately 3,600m.
- 7.2.3. Internal fencing would be required to subdivide the land into paddocks to allow rotational grazing. For an intensive grazing system, the land could be subdivided into 10 15 acre paddocks. This amounts to a further 4,000m of stock fencing.

## **7.3. Services**

- 7.3.1. For the land to be used for grazing, each paddock would require a water supply and trough. The cost of laying on water pipes is approximately £6/m, a central water pipe running the length of the field could cost in the region of £6,000.
- 7.3.2. The land is bare, with no agricultural infrastructure. Agricultural infrastructure such as grain stores or livestock handling facilities is not necessary to farm the land, however on a holding of this scale, no infrastructure would make it more challenging to farm efficiently.

#### **7.4. Public access**

- 7.4.1. The land continues to be used extensively by the general public. There is a single footpath HP/106/1-1 which runs along the eastern perimeter and enters the property running north to south approximately 335 metres in length.
- 7.4.2. To our knowledge there are no other public rights of way on the property, however, there is a labyrinth of paths as shown on the plan at **Appendix 2**. These informal paths are frequently walked as shown in the photographs at **Appendix 1**. The impact on any agricultural production would be significant.
- 7.4.3. An Application for the deposit under Section 316 of the Highways Act 1980 and Section 15 A(1) of the Commons Act 2006 was submitted to Hampshire County Council on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2014 confirming that there are no rights of way other than the public footpath on the land.
- 7.4.4. There remains a concern that the level of public access would be difficult to cease, particularly the level of dog walkers should the land be used for the grazing of livestock. This raises two issues. The first worrying the livestock and the second neosporosis can be found in dog faeces which causes cattle and sheep to abort their offspring.
- 7.4.5. Farming in this urbanised location therefore has significant challenges and stopping trespassing will require management and policing. This is likely to be most unpopular with local residents who have become accustomed to walking their dogs and using this land freely.
- 7.4.6. There was also evidence of fly-grazing, with horses tethered. I do not believe the horses have any consents or rights to use the land. Identifying the owners and removing these horses be challenging.

#### **7.5. Ground Levelling and Agricultural Reinstatement**

- 7.5.1. The land has become very undulating with ant hills, paths, ruts and tree roots. The whole area will likely need to be levelled with a blade of a digger or bulldozer before the land can be ploughed or cultivated. This is an expensive operation.
- 7.5.2. An assessment of the grassland for vulnerable or rare grass species will need to be undertaken before cultivation. The land has not been cultivated for over 100 years and a natural England screening will be required.
- 7.5.3. The soils will likely require a subsoil, to break the compaction and improve drainage, in addition to standard cultivations of ploughing, harrowing, drilling, rolling, fertilising and spraying.

## 7.6. Soils

- 7.6.1. A full Soil Assessment has been undertaken as part of the Environmental Assessment Section 14.4 1.16 which concludes that the soils require an application of lime to improve soil acidity.
- 7.6.2. Phosphorus levels were deemed very deficient and would require compound application to replenish the soils and potassium levels were slightly deficient. The organic matter was between 4.5% and 5.7%.
- 7.6.3. The land has not had any nitrogen input for many years and it is clear from the grasses growing on the land that the nitrogen level is low. The land will need several applications of farm yard manure or artificial fertiliser to improve the soils to render them suitable to grow crops.

## 7.7. Consents, Licences and Approvals

- 7.7.1. The land has not been in agricultural production for nearly 100 years and has been left unmanaged since 1986 (37 years). An Agricultural Environmental Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken with Natural England.
- 7.7.2. It is unclear if there are any rare plants or species on the holding, further specialist surveys will need to be undertaken prior to any works.
- 7.7.3. We do not believe there to be any projected trees (TPO's), however the volume of timber to be removed, may exceed the volume permitted without a Felling Licence. A further permit may be required. It was beyond our instructions to comment on the health of the boundary trees, but there are a large number of mature trees overhanging neighbouring properties, which require management.
- 7.7.4. There is evidence of extensive rabbit infestation. Whilst not found on inspection, it would not be a surprise to find evidence of badgers and their setts within the brambles. Caution should be taken to protect the setts and relocate the rabbits and other wildlife.

## 8. Conclusion

- 8.1. The land is not and has not been for nearly 100 years in agricultural production. In its current state and condition, it would be impossible to farm the land or grow a commercially viable crop in its current condition.
- 8.2. It is not impossible to reinstate the land for agricultural use, however, the level of work and the costs associated, as estimated within **Appendix 3**, indicate a conservative estimate cost of over £186,104 to bring the land back into commercial agricultural use.



- 8.3. This estimated cost equates to between 10.5 years rental payback (excluding any freehold capital cost).
- 8.4. The cost of reinstating the land vs likely rental return, make the reinstatement work economically unviable for a Landlord to invest the money to bring the land back into commercial agricultural use.
- 8.5. These costs do not address the issue of widespread unauthorised public access, which would (if unchanged) make the holding almost impossible to farm, or the lack of agricultural infrastructure, which would make the farming of the land more difficult and significantly less desirable.
- 8.6. The demand for agricultural land for agricultural purposes is limited in the semi-urban location and the local road network makes its particularly unpractical for modern farming.
- 8.7. We do not believe that an agricultural use of the land is viable or practical and do not believe the land should be classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land.



1. Damaged boundary fence— adjacent to sports field



2. No Fence Adjacent to Sports fields— Easy public access



3. Trees and brambles



4. self seeded trees and brambles.



5. Dense, inaccessible Brambles



6. Dense Brambles with well walked paths



7. semi mature trees within scrub



8. Scrub



9. Small areas cleared for ground investigation works



10. Semi mature trees



11. Dense scrub and well walked paths



12. Dense, inaccessible scrub



13. Mature self seeded trees



14. Dense Scrub



15. Areas of anthills



16. areas of less dense scrub



17.



18.



19.



20.



21. Dense Scrub



22. Dense Scrub



23. Dense Scrub



24. Dense Scrub



25.



26.



27.



28.





29. Oak Trees



30. Fly Grazing Horses



31. Fly Grazing Horses



32. Tufty Grassland



33. Well walked paths



34. Well walked paths and ant hills



35. Paths through dense scrub



36. Path through dense scrub



37. dense scrub



38. Scrub & grassland



39. Oil Pipeline



40. Road Access Gates



41. Esso Pipeline



42. Access Gates



Appendix 1

Appendix 1



## Land at Hamble

Table 1: Estimated costings for agricultural reversion

Operation	Schedule of Rates			Inputs Area-Ha Or Time	Cost Sub-Total
	£/hour (including Labour)	Ha/ Hour	£/ha		
<b>Vegetation Clearance and Infrastructure</b>					
Mechanical Flail/Mulcher	£54.41	0.20ha	£272	60 ha	£16,320
360 Excavator with Tree Shears	£60			40 hrs	£2,400
Chainsaw	£35			40 hrs	£1,400
Chipper/shredder	£44			40 hrs	£1,760
Stump Grinder	£44			16 hrs	£704
Collecting & composting of chipped/ shredded material	£50			40 hrs	£2,000
<b>Sub total</b>					<b>£24,584</b>
<b>Fencing</b>					
Cutting Back Existing hedges and overhanging trees	£60	100m/hr	£0.6/m	36hrs	£2,160
Removing damage perimeter fence	3600m		£1/m		£3,600
Installing perimeter fence Post and two strands of Barb	3600m		£10/m		£36,000
Internal Fencing	3600m		£10/m		£40,000
Gates	3x external 10x internal		£250 each £200 each		£2,700
<b>Sub total</b>					<b>£84,460</b>
<b>Services</b>					
Mains water connection					£2,500
Laying water pipe			£6/m	1000 m	£6,000
Troughs			£200 each	5 No	£1,000
<b>Sub total</b>					<b>£9,500</b>
<b>Carried forward</b>					<b>118.944</b>

## Land at Hamble

**Table 1: Estimated costings for agricultural reversion continued**

<b>Ground Levelling &amp; Agricultural Reinstatement</b>					
<b>Operation</b>	<b>Schedule of Rates</b>			<b>Inputs</b>	<b>Cost</b>
	<b>£/hour (including Labour)</b>	<b>Ha/ Hour</b>	<b>£/ha</b>	<b>Area-Ha Or Time</b>	<b>Sub-Total</b>
<b>Cultivations</b>					
Levelling the site with a blade	£55/hr	0.5ha/hr	£110/ha	60 ha	£6,600
Subsoiling	£70	1.1ha/hr	£77/ha	60 ha	£4,620
Spraying- Roundup		20ha/hr	£19/ha Operation £15/ha Chemical	60 ha	£2,040
Plough			£71/ha	60 ha	£4,260
Power Harrow			£73/ha	60 ha	£4,380
Flat Roll			£34/ha	60 ha	£2,040
<b>Grass Establishment</b>					
Drilling			£48/ha	60 ha	£2,880
Grass seed	4.29kg- 33kg/ha		£141/ha		£8,460
Ring Rolling			£25/ha	60ha	£1,500
Chain Harrowing			£33/ha	60/ha	£1,980
<b>Sub Total</b>					<b>£38,760</b>
<b>Soil Improvement</b>					
Lime with spreading	£40/t £7.5t spreading	5t/ha	£237.50/ha	60	£14,250
Application of compound Fertiliser for P & K	0:30:20 £400/t Application £15/ha	250kg/ha	£115/ha	60ha	£6,900
Application of Nitrogen	Urea- 46N £375/t Application £15/ha	300 kg/ha	£127.50/ha	60ha	£7,650
<b>Sub total</b>					<b>£28,800</b>
<b>Total Estimated Cost of Reinstatement to agricultural use</b>					<b>£186,104</b>

<b>Potential Income (Landlord)</b>					
<b>Rental Return for Agricultural land</b>					
<b>Agricultural Use</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Total</b>		
Arable Cropping	£296/ha	60ha	£17,760pa		
Pasture Land	£222/ha	60ha	£13,320pa		
<b>Payback</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Use</b>	<b>Return/annum</b>	<b>Payback (/yr)</b>	<b>%</b>
Cost	£186,104	Arable	£17,760	10.5	9.5
Cost	£186,104	Pasture	£13,320	14	7.2

Source

\*1 CAAV Costings 2022/2023 - Detailed Workings

\*2 The Agricultural Budgeting Costing Book - 96<sup>th</sup> Ed. May 2023

\*3 National Association of Agricultural Contractors - Contracting Price Survey 2023

Costs exclude

Future additional management after year 1

Land drainage renewal/installation which is likely to be required,

Composting of on-site materials, application and environmental permissions

New access off the highway, internal tracks, hardstandings or buildings