Cassidy+Ashton

C+A

Cassidy+Ashton

Architecture + Building Surveying + Town Planning

Oak View, Bronington, Wrexham

Planning, Design and Access Statement

25th April 2024

CASSIDY + ASHTON
10 Hunters Walk, Canal Street,
Chester, CH1 4EB

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION 1
2.0 SITE AND CONTEXT 2
3.0 SITE HISTORY 4
4.0 PROPOSED SCHEME 5
5.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL 8
6.0 BUSINESS CASE / PERSONAL STATEMENT 12
7.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY 13
8.0 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT 25
9.0 DESIGN AND ACCESS 30
10.0 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS 34
11.0 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE REQUEST 37
12.0 MARKET DEMAND 39
13.0 CONCLUSIONS 41

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Cassidy + Ashton have been instructed by to oversee the preparation and submission of a detailed planning application to Wrexham County Borough Council.

1.2 The application site concerns land at Oak View, Chapel Lane, Bronington, Wrexham SY13 3HP.

1.3 The property is a residential dwelling with extensive land, previously being a market garden business.

1.4 The application is for the following:

> ***Change of use of land and siting of glamping pods (8no.), including ground-mounted solar array***

1.5 This planning, design and access statement sets out the context of the site, proceeding to outline and evaluate the design and access features of the proposal and how good quality design principles have been considered and applied. The statement proceeds to consider the planning merits of this proposal and reaches the conclusion that the proposed development is compliant with local and national planning policy. As such, it is clear there are no material considerations to indicate that permission should not be granted.

1.6 This statement is to be read in conjunction with a series of plans and other documentation, comprising the planning application pack as a whole, as follows:

- Application Forms
- Planning, Design and Access Statement
- Location Plan
- Existing Site Plan
- Proposed Site Plan
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (inc. Green Infrastructure Statement)

2.0 SITE AND CONTEXT



Fig. 1 Site Location [Source: Google Maps]*

**note, extensive tree clearance has been undertaken since the date of the aerial image*

2.1 The total site extends to c. 2.25 ha. The element that is the subject of this planning application comprises circa 0.5 ha (including the access track), concerning an area of land associated with Oak View.

2.2 The site is currently occupied as a single residential unit. Historically the site has operated as a market garden.

2.3 Development here is sought in response to various enquiries for a more extensive offering of tourist accommodation in the locality.

2.4 The site's success extends benefits to the wider local visitor economy, encouraging guests to attend local events and attractions, use local facilities and explore the wider tourism offer.

2.5 The site is located on the periphery of the village of Bronington, Wrexham. It adjoins the Fenn's Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses Nature Reserve. The site is circa 15 km from Wrexham Town Centre and circa 5 km from Whitchurch town centre.

2.6 The site is accessible off Chapel Lane, connecting to the A495, which is a key route running between Whitchurch and Ellesmere.

2.7 As such, the site is highly accessible via private motor car, situated in close proximity to a number of key A-roads - notably the A41 - which is 5 km to the East.

2.8 There is a sizeable extent of parking at the site, specifically on existing hardstanding areas. Any further development at the site would be supported by the appropriate parking provision.

2.9 The nearest bus stop is located less than a kilometre north of the site in the village of Bronington. The stop is serviced by routes to Whitchurch and Wrexham.

2.10 The nearest railway station is located 5 km from the site in Whitchurch, with frequent services to Crewe, Shrewsbury, Manchester, Cardiff and Carmarthen.

2.11 As such, it is considered that the site is in a sustainable and accessible location.

3.0 SITE HISTORY

3.1 A desktop study of the Wrexham County Borough Council Planning Register has highlighted a number of previous planning applications for the property.

Ref. Number	Description of Proposal	Decision	Address	Date
P/2016/0647	Removal of occupancy condition imposed under PP P/2016/0003	Approved	Oak View, Chapel Lane, Wrexham, SY13 3HP	08/08/2016

4.0 PROPOSED SCHEME

4.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the land for the siting of 8 no. glamping pods and associated solar array.

4.2 Glamping pods are typically of timber construction. Through considerable market research the site owner has identified a company that supplies a suitable product – www.cedartreepods.co.uk

4.3 The development of the site has the intention to make use of the currently underutilised site, diversifying the income for the property owners and creating a sustainable tourism offering within a high-quality environment and landscape.

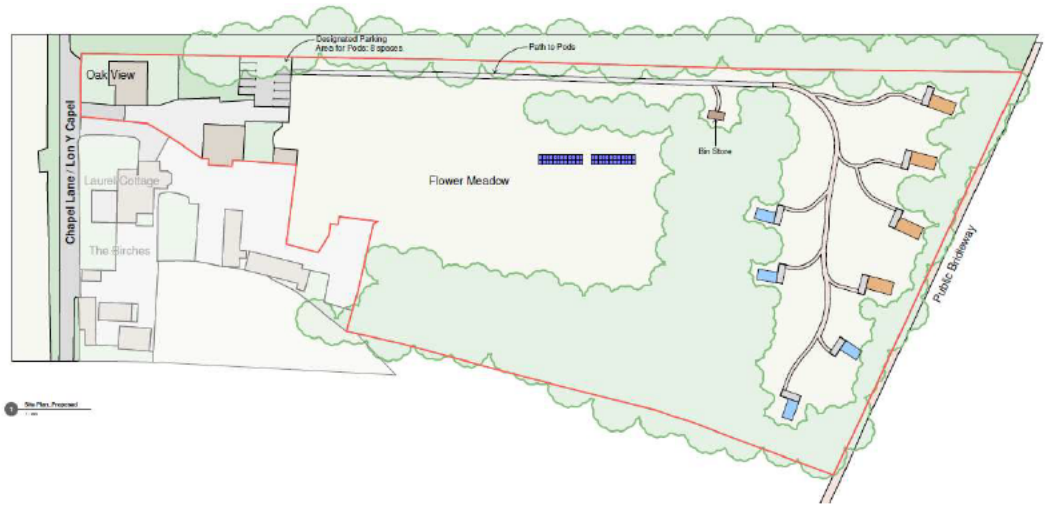


Fig. 2 Proposed Site Plan

4.4 The above site plan shows the proposed layout of the site, with the proposed locations for the 8 no. glamping pods, dedicated parking area and solar array.

4.5 The site is accessed from the main A495, via Chapel Lane. The proposed development would utilise this existing access which serves the residential property, with some minor improvements within the site boundary to accommodate an access track on the northern boundary (as shown on the proposed site plan).

4.6 The path shown to each of the individual pods is proposed to be soft landscaping with mown wayfinding.

4.7 The proposed site plan utilises the favourable topography and boundaries of the site to ensure the pods sit suitably within the landscape and do not negatively affect the landscape character and the strong visual amenity surrounding the site is retained.

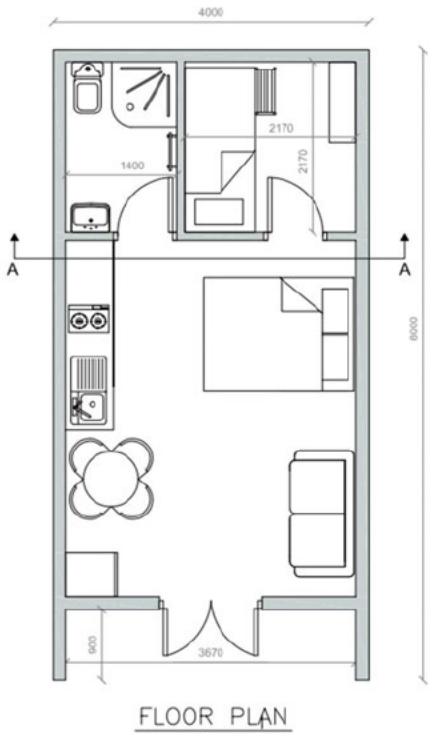


Fig. 3 Proposed Glamping Pods Floor Plan [Source: Cedar Tree Pods]

4.8 Each glamping pod is equipped with a bathroom, bedroom, combined living room / kitchen / dining room / bedroom and a porch area.

4.9 The proposed glamping pods occupy no more than 32m^2 each (less for the smaller pods) - one bedroom with a bunk bed, and a bed in the larger room, with total capacity for 4 people.

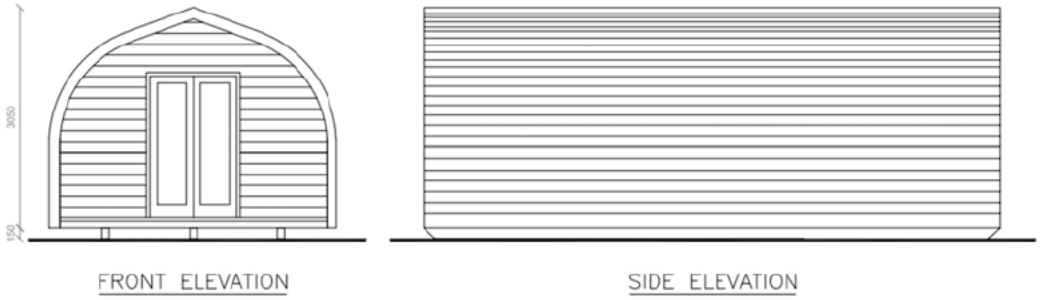


Fig. 4 Proposed Glamping Pods Front and Side Elevation [Source: Cedar Tree Pods]

4.10 The glamping pods are designed and manufactured by Cedar Tree Pods to the above design. The pods are of a scale and design that is sympathetic to the landscape, utilising natural materials to complement the environment.

5.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL

5.1 The below images represent an appraisal of the site characteristics, including its robust boundaries. The strong boundaries prevent visual impact of the proposal upon the surrounding landscape.



Area of site proposed for pods (looking north)



Area of site proposed for pods (looking south)



Area of site proposed for pods (looking north)



Looking back to existing property and outbuildings

– access path to be on site boundary

- *dedicated parking area to be adjacent to portal frame building*



Main area of site – proposed pods area beyond treeline (looking east)



Main area of site – proposed pods area beyond treeline (looking east)

5.2 The above site images demonstrate the particularly strong boundaries of the site characterised by mature hedging and trees.

5.3 Views into the site are considerably restricted, characterised by the mature trees and hedging.

5.4 As a result there will not be a visual impact on the surrounding area. Within the site, the pods are proposed to be located strategically within the openings of the tree line to reduce view and create a distinct development which is well connected with nature.

6.0 BUSINESS CASE / PERSONAL STATEMENT

6.1 A separately appended Business Plan has been prepared by the Applicant detailing their proposed case for the development. The business plan details the operations of the proposed business and use, along with target market for the accommodation, marketing, product considerations and business principles.

7.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

7.1 Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 (PPW) was published in February 2024. PPW sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's planning policies for Wales and how these should be applied. This provides local government with the guidance to prepare their own local development frameworks and guidance in decision making.

7.2 Future Wales: The National Plan to 2040 sets out the national development plan context and applies the key principles of PPW, establishing how Wales should develop and grow.

7.3 Alongside the **PPW** and **Future Wales** sits 24 **Technical Advice Notes (TAN)**, which form planning guidance at a national level on various topics.

7.4 This section will set out a summary of national planning policy guidance taken from PPW, Future Wales and the TAN documents.

FUTURE WALES: THE NATIONAL PLAN TO 2040

7.5 Future Wales is a 20-year framework for planning the change and development of Wales to 2040, with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system. These priorities include: sustaining and developing a **vibrant economy**; achieving **decarbonisation and climate-resilience**; developing **strong ecosystems**; and improving the **health and well-being of our communities**.

7.6 Future Wales sets out 11 ambitions / outcomes, supported by 36 specific policies.

7.7 **Outcome 2** sets out that in vibrant rural places, a **balance will be found between development and preserving the character of rural Wales, ensuring our small towns and villages have bright futures as attractive places to live and work**. The **rural economy will be thriving** and communities will be well connected digitally and physically.

Commentary

The proposed development will facilitate high quality visitor accommodation in a suitable location, which will be well located in proximity to a range of visitor attractions and landscape assets. The proposal will facilitate better use of the underutilised site and will promote the rural economy, encouraging use of nearby facilities and amenities.

7.8 **Outcome 6** sets out that increased prosperity and productivity will be pursued across all parts of Wales, building on current activity and promoting a culture of innovation, social partnership, entrepreneurialism and skills-development in sustainable industries and sectors. **The culture, heritage and environment of Wales will play a positive, modern role in the economy by attracting the interest and expenditure of tourists** and providing a distinctive and trusted brand for Welsh businesses.

Commentary

The proposed development will build upon the surrounding landscape assets and tourism attractions, providing a desirable form of visitor accommodation. The existing facilities in conjunction with the proposed accommodation will facilitate positive contribution to building prosperity and growth by attracting the interest and expenditure of tourists.

7.9 **Outcome 7** promotes sustainable travel, stating that Sustainable transport infrastructure will be embedded within development to enable easy and convenient access from one place to another for commuting, business, tourism and leisure purposes.

Commentary

The application site is located South of the village of Bronington. The site is well served by the highway network, notably the site is well linked with public rights of way through the landscape and into Fenn's, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses National Nature Reserve. With this in mind the proposed development would facilitate a tourism development which benefits from the distinct landscape within which it is sited.

7.10 **Outcome 10** sets out the ambition to protect and create places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems. While biodiversity has declined in recent decades, we will reverse these losses and enhance the resilience of ecosystems.

Commentary

The proposed development will make use of an existing underutilised plot whilst respecting biodiversity. The ecological appraisal undertaken as part of the application confirms that there will not be detriment to biodiversity.

7.11 **Policy 4** sets out the priority of supporting rural communities. The Welsh Government supports sustainable and vibrant rural communities.

Commentary

The proposed development is a suitable use within the rural area which is befitted to the rural nature of the area and local landscape character.

PLANNING POLICY WALES

7.12 The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015.

7.13 A plan-led approach is the most effective way to secure sustainable development through the planning system and it is essential that plans are adopted and kept under review. Legislation secures a presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, to ensure that social, economic, cultural and environmental issues are balanced and integrated.

7.14 The planning system should be efficient, effective and simple in operation. It is not the function of the planning system to interfere with or inhibit competition between users of and investors in land. It should not discriminate against or favour any particular group or members of society.

7.15 Figure 7 of PPW sets out how proposals should be prepared within the context of key planning principles of the planning system, this is included below (Figure 7).

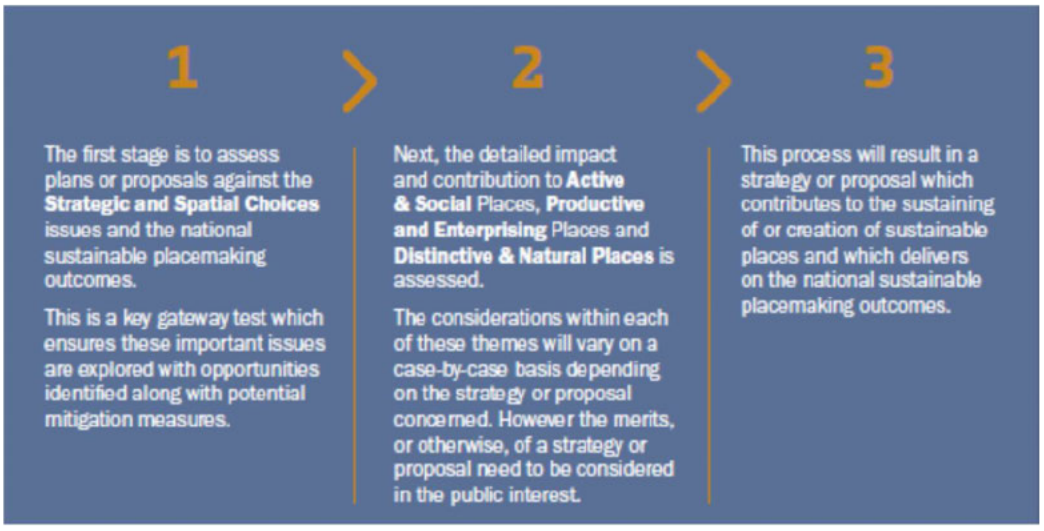


Fig. 5 PPW Extract

7.16 The first step is to assess the proposal against Strategic and Spatial Choices and the national sustainable placemaking outcomes.

7.17 The first aspect of this relates to placemaking in action and considers Good Design Making Better Places. Design is considered by PPW in 5 key aspects, Access, Character, Community Safety, Environmental Sustainability and Movement. The existing access to the Oak View site off Chapel Lane is to be maintained and traffic will be directed to a designated parking area to the North-east of the existing house.

7.18 ***The character of the area is defined by the location of the site and its wider rural nature. The proposed development will reinforce this character, ensuring no negative impact upon the setting of the wider landscape. The modest nature of the proposals, whilst ensuring not to infringe on a large site area will therefore protect and enhance this natural character. The proposal works within the existing landscape and tree cover across the site, proposing pods in openings within the tree cover which are well screened and connected with nature. The proposal responds positively to the existing character of the area and hence represents good design as defined within PPW.***

7.19 ***In regards to Community safety, the proposed development will support viability of a rural businesses, taking an unused parcel of land in a rural area and enhancing its use, thus increasing the natural surveillance. It is therefore considered that the presence of future visitors should increase natural surveillance in the area.***

7.20 Environmental Sustainability has been carefully considered and a full Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been completed by a suitably qualified ecologist. There has been site clearance undertaken in specific areas of the site, with authorisation of Natural Resources Wales. The scheme incorporates biodiversity enhancement through new planting.

7.21 The nature of the proposal means that very limited construction materials will be required with the proposed pods themselves being sourced from Cedar Tree Pods – a local company in Wrexham. As such, the proposed development seeks to protect and make efficient use of local and natural resources in accordance with national policy.

7.22 ***Given the nature of the proposals, it is likely that visitors will travel via private motor car, although travel whilst making day trips from the site will be encouraged via sustainable transport methods where possible. This will be supported by the surrounding walking and cycling facilities and is it expected that visitors will use the opportunity to observe the natural landscape including visiting Fenn's, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses National Nature Reserve. The existing footpaths in the area are also expected to be utilised given the nature of this proposal. On the basis of the above it is clear that the proposed development is compliant with design policy within PPW and should therefore be supported.***

7.23 Promoting Healthier Places is also identified as a key strategic and spatial choice within PPW. The proposed development, due to its rural location is ideally suited to promoting active lifestyles and creating a healthy place for visitors to stay and enjoy.

7.24 **Paragraph 3.7** sets out that:

Good design promotes environmental sustainability and contributes to the achievement of the well-being goals. Developments should seek to maximise energy efficiency and the efficient use of other resources (including land), maximise sustainable movement, minimise the use of non-renewable resources, encourage decarbonisation and prevent the generation of waste and pollution.

Commentary

Environmental sustainability has been a central design consideration - the site itself will be operated strictly environmentally sensitive. The development is to be powered through solar PV and rechargeable battery packs in conjunction with a proposed new solar array system on site. The development will make use of reclaimed/recycled products - all toiletries will be provided and will be environmentally friendly, compostable, paraben free, using organic argon oil. Grey water will feed directly into a new soakaway system, a strategy which has been discussed with Natural Resources Wales.

7.25 **Paragraph 3.9** highlights that the special characteristics of an area should be central to the design of a development. The layout, form, scale and visual appearance of a

proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are important planning considerations.

Commentary

The proposed site layout accommodates the 8no glamping pods comfortably within the open area of the site whilst utilising openings within tree cover and complementing the natural character of the site and its strong boundaries. Local character and landscape have therefore been carefully considered and respected with the modest, yet distinctive proposal.

7.26 **Paragraph 3.12** highlights the importance of safe, sustainable links within and between developments.

Commentary

The proposed development aims to provide short-term glamping in a rural area which will provide an overnight accommodation in connection with existing visitor attractions in the local area, including Fenn's, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses National Nature Reserve to its South. Whilst the site is not particularly well served by sustainable transport, visiting such natural assets encourages sustainable travel including walking, hiking, cycling. The distinct landscape value being an attraction to the local area in itself.

7.27 **Paragraph 4.1.50** states a design-led approach to the provision of car parking should be taken, which ensures an appropriate level of car parking is integrated. Car parking provision should be contextually informed and integrated in a way which does not dominate the development.

Commentary

Car parking provision has been included within the site layout which includes 8no spaces designated for the development. This is sufficient for one space per unit.

7.28 The proposals will be designed with the intention to ensure all amenities are resource efficient. On this basis, it is considered that the proposal meets PPW climate change choices.

7.29 Placemaking in Rural Areas is considered by PPW and states that proposals should contribute towards placemaking by preserving and enhancing ecology, geology, historical and archaeological value in its landscape. It is also made clear that within rural areas, opportunities for more sustainable forms of transport will be less than within urban settings. On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposed development represents a positive form of rural placemaking.

7.30 PPW goes on to consider strategic placemaking in detail, due to the modest nature of the proposals, it is considered that this aspect is not hugely relevant to the proposed development. However, the development of this site for tourism use will enhance the visitor economy in the local area and the feeling / sense of 'place' at the site in connection with surrounding landscape. It is therefore the intention that the proposal will extend the site's visitor accommodation offering and thus its prominence in the tourism sector.

7.31 Active and Social Places are the next aspect to be considered, many of the key aspects are not relevant to the proposed development due to the proposals modest scale and also because the works relate to a tourism use.

7.32 With regard to Chapter 5 'Productive and Enterprising Places', PPW identifies that to create sustainable places, the intention is "capitalising on our distinctive tourism offer to promote Wales to the world, creating high quality jobs in this sector which enhance skills and provide employment year-round".

Commentary

This proposal seeks to enhance the tourism industry in the area, providing tourism facilities at the site which link with use of the local natural landscape assets.

7.33 PPW goes on to state that the rural economy must develop a wide base if it is to be adaptable and resilient to the challenges it faces now and in the future.

Commentary

It is the intention of this proposal to develop a successful rural business through diversification of land use and is therefore in accordance with this objective of PPW. Accordingly, this proposal seeks to build on the opportunity of the landscape in building the local tourism economy and the continuing operational capacity of this rural business.

7.34 **Paragraph 6.3.3** highlights that the landscapes of Wales are valued for their intrinsic contribution to a sense of place, and local authorities should actively protect and enhance their special characteristics.

7.35 Distinctive and Natural Places consider that a 'Prosperous Wales' can be realised by valuing the quality of our landscapes and historic environment as important for tourism, business, local employment – among others. It is highlighted that strategies and policies should support development which ensures that the opportunities landscapes provide are taken into account, which includes tourism, outdoor recreation and local employment. The benefits for well-being for people and communities associated with these assets should be recognised and encouraged

Commentary

The proposed development seeks to facilitate the use of an underutilised plot for 8 no. glamping pods. The development will be fully screened from view due to the strong natural boundaries and considerable tree cover across the site. On this basis, the proposals are in line with the principles of PPW as set out above.

7.36 On the basis of the above, it can be considered that the proposed development is supported by PPW as it seeks to reinforce local distinctiveness, enhance the enjoyment of the natural landscape whilst developing a rural business.

TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTES

7.37 Technical advice notes (TANs) provide detailed planning advice. Local planning authorities take them into account when they are preparing development plans. Of those available, the most pertinent to the proposal are as follows:

Technical Advice Note 5 – Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)

Technical Advice Note 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)

Technical Advice Note 12 – Design (2016)

Technical Advice Note 13 – Tourism (1997)

Technical Advice Note 23 – Economic Development (2014)

TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTE 13 - TOURISM

7.38 Technical advice notes 13 is the most pertinent to this application and is considered in further detail below.

7.39 Technical advice note 13 sets out guidance for promoting and developing tourism in Wales, in line with the intentions of the Wales Tourist Board and their advice to the Government. Tourism is recognised for the contribution it makes to the Welsh economy, employment and wider communities.

7.40 Caravan parks are identified as being an important part of the self-catering holiday sector and their contribution to the local tourism economy is comparable to serviced holiday accommodation, whilst using less land in doing so.

7.41 The guidance sets out that new and extended sites should be effectively screened and planned so as not to be visually intrusive, however that in some instances, larger site area's should be considered where it would allow for improved layouts and landscaping

7.42 ***Commentary***

The principle of development is supported by Technical advice note 13, identifying static holiday and caravan parks as an important contribution to the local tourism

economy, in turn enhancing the wider Welsh economy, employment and communities. Pod developments are modern approach to static caravans and are therefore on the same principle to static caravans. Pods are in fact well suited to a countryside location being composed of natural materials and blending in well with the landscape.

Notwithstanding the above, the proposed development will be well screened from view and will not impact the landscape.

TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTE 23 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

7.43 In the full context of PPW:

- Economic development is development (new or change of use) where the resulting space will be occupied by economic activities;
- An economic activity, or economic land use, is an activity which directly generates wealth (output), jobs and income;
- Generating jobs includes providing or sustaining existing jobs as well as creating new jobs.

7.44 The economic benefits associated with development may be geographically spread out far beyond the area where the development is located. As a consequence, it is essential that the planning system recognises, and gives due weight to, the economic benefits associated with new development.

7.45 PPW advises that planning for economic land uses should aim to **provide the land that the market requires**, unless there are good reasons to the contrary.

7.46 Local planning authorities should recognise market signals and have regard to the need to guide economic development to the most appropriate locations, rather than prevent or discourage such development.

7.47 **It should not be assumed that economic objectives are necessarily in conflict with social and environmental objectives**. Often these different dimensions point in the same direction. Planning should positively and imaginatively seek such 'win-win' outcomes, where development contributes to all dimensions of sustainability.

7.48 A wide range of economic activities may be sustainably accommodated in rural areas, and this is recognised in PPW and other TANs, in particular TAN 6 Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities. TAN 6 also defines 'rural enterprise' for the purpose of determining rural enterprise dwellings, and amongst other things includes agriculture, forestry, **tourism and leisure** in that definition.

7.49 ***Commentary***

The proposed development will provide economic benefit to the area by introducing an economic use of a currently underutilised site. The visitor accommodation will link well with existing visitor attractions and encourage use of such provision. This is detailed further at Chapter 12.

8.0 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

8.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations of which PPW, together with emerging development plans, indicate otherwise.

8.2 The current adopted Development Plan is comprised of the Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013-2028 (adopted Dec'23).

WREXHAM LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2013-2028)

8.3 The Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028 was adopted on 20th December 2023. The key policies of relevance are as follows:

- SP8: Economic Growth, Employment and Enterprise
- SP14: Natural Environment
- SP19: Green Infrastructure
- NE3: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
- DM1: Development Management Considerations
- T1: Managing Transport Impacts
- MW5: Sustainable Waste Management

8.4 **Policy SP8** states that, to ensure the continued role of the County Borough as a key economic driver in North Wales and the wider region, the Plan will diversify the local economy and widen the economic base by:

- *Maintaining and enhancing the County Borough's tourism, culture and leisure offer taking into account the unique character, local distinctiveness and heritage of the area and its context in the wider sub-region.*

Commentary

The proposed development will provide economic benefit to the area by introducing an economic use of a currently underutilised site. The visitor accommodation will link well with existing visitor attractions and encourage use of such provision.

8.5 **Policy SP14** states that development will only be supported where it protects, conserves and enhances the natural environment.

Commentary

The proposed development is modest in quantum on the basis of the site size and given the site is particularly well screened, will not be in view. The development is proposed to function environmentally sustainably 'off grid' and will not detriment the natural environment. Waste is to be transported off site for treatment. Grey water from washing/shower facilities will enter into the soakaway system. To facilitate this strategy without detriment to the integrity of the natural drainage system, all toiletry products will be supplies as compostable, paraben free, using organic argon oil.

8.6 **Policy SP19** states that Wrexham's distinctive natural heritage provides a network of green and blue infrastructure. Protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage networks needs to be reconciled with the benefits of development.

8.7 Development will be required to maintain the extent, quality and connectivity of multifunctional green infrastructure on or near a site, and, where appropriate to enhance it.

Commentary

Environmental Sustainability has been carefully considered and a full Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been completed by a suitably qualified ecologist. There has been site clearance undertaken in specific areas of the site, with authorisation of Natural Resources Wales. The scheme incorporates biodiversity enhancement through new planting.

8.8 **Policy DM1** states that developments proposals, where relevant, must:

a) Accord with or enhance the character, local distinctiveness and appearance of the site, existing building(s) and surrounding landscape/ townscape in terms of its siting, layout, scale, height, design, density, use of materials and landscaping;

b) Not have an unacceptable effect on the amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties/land by virtue of noise, disturbance and overlooking; and provides a satisfactory standard of amenity for the occupiers/users of the development itself;

c) Safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land, light or air, or land instability, arising from development;

d) Take account of personal and community safety and security in its design and layout

e) Be safely and conveniently accessible for all potential users/occupiers of the development on foot, bicycle, by public transport and by car;

f) Not give rise to parking or highway safety problems on site or in the locality;

g) Maximise sustainable travel choices first and then provides for car related needs;

h) Contribute to low carbon communities through energy efficiency, be designed to minimise the use of non-renewable energy, water and the production of waste both during construction and when in use;

i) Not increase the risk of flooding but makes adequate provision for sustainably dealing with foul and surface water drainage and not result in an unacceptable impact upon the water environment;

j) Consider the needs of a diverse population including those with protected characteristics such as age or disability;

k) On sites which have previously been developed, new development proposals should make use of existing suitable building materials wherever possible for appropriate uses in order to re-use recyclable materials and reduce the amount of imported materials; and

l) Ensure that any risks arising from past coal mining, as indicated on the proposals map, can be adequately managed.

8.9 **Policy EM5** states means in which proposals for visitor accommodation outside settlement limits will be permitted, including;

b) It involves an extension to existing visitor accommodation provided that:

i) The existing accommodation is fully utilised and incapable of further adaptation, and

ii) The scale, form and location of the development does not have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside.

c) **New touring caravan and camping and glamping sites** and extensions to existing site provided that:

i) The **scale, form and location of the development does not have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside**, and

ii) The site is used for touring purposes only and **not for the storage of caravans which are not in use**.

Commentary

The proposals represent a new glamping site that is modest and would not have a harmful impact on the character of the countryside. The proposals present the opportunity to capitalise on the existing landscape character of the site in terms of the opportunity it provides for a distinct pod development which is well connected with nature.

9.0 DESIGN AND ACCESS

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENTS

9.1 It is a statutory requirement that applications for planning permission and listed building consent (with exceptions) are accompanied by a design and access statement (DAS). Further guidance relating to the requirement for a design and access statement is included in appendix 1 of TAN 12.

9.2 The DAS is a communication tool explaining how the objectives of good design (which include the principles of inclusive design) have been considered from the outset of the development process.

9.3 In relation to design, a DAS must explain the design concepts and principles applied to the development or works. A DAS accompanying an outline or full planning application must explain the concepts and principles in relation to (as a minimum):

- Access;
- Character (including amount, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping);
- Community safety;
- Environmental sustainability; and
- Movement to, from and within the development

DESIGN

9.4 The proposals have been designed with careful consideration towards the context of the site and its rural nature/setting.

9.5 The applicant is proposing visitor accommodation on a part of the site which is open on the ground yet fully surrounded and screened by tree cover.

9.6 The addition of structures will be minimal, concerning only the pods themselves which will be wooden structures made locally and therefore have a positive appearance on the site internally. The pods will be sited on an above ground base and served with soft

landscaping off a path from the main part of the site where vehicles will be left, keeping the area of works as natural as possible, limiting intervention.

ACCESS AND PARKING

9.7 Access to the development would be from an existing access point through the site off Chapel Lane.

9.8 Car parking provision has been included within the site layout which includes 8no. spaces designated for the development. This is sufficient for one space per unit, along with an overspill / visitor's space.

9.9 Vehicles will be left at the parking court in the main part of the site and transported to the proposed area of pods. This limits intervention on the ground and facilitates a feeling of 'with nature' within the pod site.

CHARACTER

9.10 The open character of the area will be protected due to the strong site boundaries in the form of tree cover.

9.11 The modest nature of the proposals will protect the natural character of the site itself through the use of natural materials (wooden pods), whilst creating the tourism character of the site as a productive rural business.

9.12 The site therefore seeks to build upon the rural nature of the site to develop a tourism asset that presents itself as an enjoyable natural environment.

USE

9.13 The use proposed is for visitor accommodation (pods, tourism use), a diversification of the site. The proposal seeks to make beneficial use of the currently underutilised land.

AMOUNT

9.14 The proposed development concerns 8 no. glamping pods along with a bin store and parking area (8no. spaces).

LAYOUT

9.15 The proposed layout as set out in Figure 6 below demonstrates the modest nature of the proposal which facilitates appropriate spacing between units to facilitate amenity to visitors.



Fig.6 Proposed Site Layout

9.16 The entire layout boasts an organic nature set within the tree line and openings within, so as to accord with the rural setting to which it relates.

SCALE

9.17 The scale of the proposed development is considered wholly suitable in the context of its setting, concerning a modest quantum and scale of development which will not be visible externally.

9.18 The developable site area has been selected seeking to minimise the impact on the surrounding area, limiting the extent of land area adopted.

9.19 The pods themselves are modest in scale extending to a height of just 3.2m at the highest point. As the pods are curved and boast wooden elevations, they complement the natural landscape.

LANDSCAPING

9.20 The landscaping seeks to safeguard the organic nature of the site and its layout, defining the development well within its rural setting.

9.21 The landscaping therefore limits hardstanding, implementing hard landscaping only where necessary, for the path from the main part of the site and for the bases of pods.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

9.22 The development of this site would support the vitality of the area and enhance its position as a visitor attraction.

9.23 As such, it is considered that the presence of future visitors would increase natural surveillance in the area and thus reduce crime and the fear of crime.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

9.24 The modest nature of this proposal seeks to limit impact on biodiversity and the wider environment. Through limiting the development area, permanent structures and hardstanding associated with these proposals, these impacts are minimal.

9.25 The proposed development protects existing trees, hedgerows and ponds on site, with the addition of further planting in the form of wildflower meadow.

10.0 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE



Fig. 7 Flood Risk Map [Source: Natural Resources Wales]

10.1 As demonstrated by Figure 7, the site and its adjoining land are not identified as being at risk of flooding.

10.2 Foul water is proposed to be drained through a private system, which is environmentally sensitive.

10.3 Toilet systems are to be provided by Loo Watt which do not require a drainage connection, all waste is contained within a waterless system and removed off site to be processed. Details of the system are appended to this planning application.

10.4 Grey water from washing/shower facilities will enter into the soakaway system. To facilitate this strategy without detriment to the integrity of the natural drainage system, all toiletry products will be supplies as compostable, paraben free, using organic argon oil. The Applicant has discussed this strategy with Natural Resources Wales.

HISTORICAL PROTECTIONS

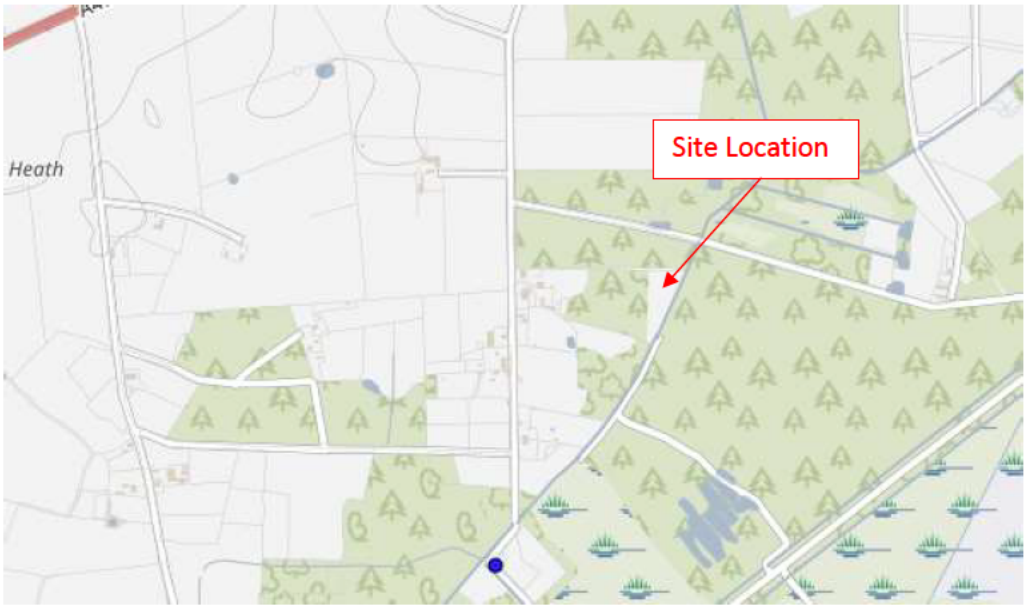


Fig. 8 Historic Protections [Source: CADW]

10.5 As demonstrated above, the site does not contain any buildings that are listed, or are there any listed buildings in proximity of the site.

10.6 The site is not situated within or adjacent to a Conservation Area.

TREEES

10.7 It is not anticipated that any trees will be removed as the proposed development will work with the existing natural environment and layout of the landscape. The considerable tree coverage will assist considerably in screening pods, which are located to take advantage of well screened areas as indicated in the proposed site layout.

10.8 The proposed pods are to be sited within openings of tree cover and the modest nature of the works with very limited groundworks is not expected to impact trees.

ECOLOGY

10.9 The intentions of the proposals in enhancing the landscape character and biodiversity value have been carried through the design process to secure protection and facilitate improvements across the site.

10.10 A Preliminary Ecological Assessment has been undertaken for the site which has demonstrated there is no negative impact upon biodiversity.

10.11 In accordance with PPW, Chapter 6, the proposal adopts the step-wise approach to biodiversity enhancement. The position is one of avoidance and enhancement on-site

10.12 Existing trees and hedgerows are to be protected and wildflower meadow planted to facilitate biodiversity net benefit.

HIGHWAYS

10.13 A highways appraisal has not been undertaken for this site as it is not considered necessary, given that this proposal concerns a small-scale visitor accommodation proposal at a site that is well supported by the highways network.

10.14 The historical market garden use of the site is deemed a material consideration, with the associated frequency of trips and visitors to the site.

11.0 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE REQUEST

11.1 A pre-application advice request has been undertaken with Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC), in the first instance to understand the local authorities' position in regard to the principle of a proposal for visitor accommodation coming forward at the site.

11.2 The pre-application advice request (ref. ENQ/2023/0140) was concluded by way of written response from WCBC dated 21/07/2023.

11.3 The Officer in their response dated 21/07/2023 concludes the following in regard to principle of development:

> *No detailed plans, site layouts, or an indication as to the number of units proposed on the site has been submitted, and therefore it is difficult for me to comment in this regard at this stage. Similarly, no elevation drawings of the units proposed have been provided. As such, it is not possible for me to comment upon whether the proposed development would be compliant with the requirements of LDP Policy EM5. However, it is considered that glamping pods may be more appropriate in this location rather than log cabins. Indeed, LDP Policy EM5 is explicit in its support for appropriately designed and located glamping sites, which would include proposals for glamping pods. Given their usual increased scale and bulk when viewed within the landscape, log cabins do often cause a larger visual impact and as such concern would be expressed if log cabins were to form a part of any future planning application.*
>
> *In principle, a proposed application for visitor accommodation may be acceptable however, this would be dependent upon the design and form of the proposed development. Furthermore, consideration would need to be given to ecological impacts, Arboricultural impacts, highways concerns relating to foul drainage and phosphates.*

11.4 The planning application before you has considered the pre-application response in detail and look to provide a form and quantum of development that is acceptable. The

proposal demonstrates how 6no glamping pods can be accommodated on site whilst not harming the character of the countryside. The scale and bulk of the proposed glamping pods as shown by the proposed floor plans and elevations are not significant and will sit sympathetically within the natural landscape.

12.0 MARKET DEMAND

12.1 The area and surroundings to the application site are rich in tourist attractions, which creates a significant economic benefit to the area. The key question is whether current accommodation options local to Bronington and the surrounding areas are sufficient to meet tourist demand and whether tourism trends suggest a new glamping site in this area are warranted.

MAIN TOURIST MARKETS

12.2 Domestic visitors, international visitors, tourists and sight seers are the main market for the Oak View proposal. Since the tourism sector in the area is expected to increase by almost 20% annually by 2027/2028, it is reasonable to suggest that there will be demand for this development well into the future.

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

12.3 The site is located as such that it will be a suitable base for people to benefit from the tourist attractions of Wrexham County Borough and Shropshire.

Wrexham Borough

- Pontcysyllte Aqueduct
- Erddig
- Xplore!
- Wrexham Football Club
- Bangor on Dee racecourse

Shropshire

Whitchurch hosts many events each year, many are within easy commuting distance from the proposed site:

- Party in the Park: annual event held on a Saturday in June the entertainment includes live music, food and stalls.
- Whitchurch Food & Drink Festival: Held in May the festival provides live cookery demonstrations and a wide range of exhibitors.
- Whitchurch Walking Festival: 3 days of walking opportunities and activities that provides an opportunity to explore Whitchurch and the surrounding countryside.

TOURISM DEMAND

12.4 Tourism in the area appears to be stably growing. It is expected that demand will grow in the coming years, due to Wrexham Council's Five-Year Business plan, along with an increasing focus on 'staycation' as an alternative to holidaying abroad.

12.5 The proposed development will boost the local rural economy and offers a unique visitor accommodation which is connected with nature.

12.6 We believe that the proposed development will be beneficial to the local economy and growth of Wrexham (and beyond), without detriment to ecology, landscape or residential amenity.

13.0 CONCLUSIONS

13.1 The proposed development seeks visitor accommodation in the form of 8no. pods on an underutilised parcel of land.

13.2 The proposal is modest and has been designed sympathetically toward the rural context within which it is located.

13.3 The proposed development represents a form of development which will improve the viability of the site as a rural family-run business. The development will encourage use of wider attractions and facilities in the wider area, further contributing to the local economy.

13.4 The proposed development is modest in nature and quantum, with low impact structures which are sympathetic to the natural landscape. The proposal has been developed considering the character of the countryside and the importance of protecting its natural character and openness.

13.5 On the basis of the above and the attached it can be considered that the proposed development represents sustainable development and will facilitate a unique form of visitor accommodation in an area that benefits from a variety of existing tourist attractions.

13.6 On the basis of the above it is kindly requested that planning permission be granted for the proposed development.

Cassidy+Ashton

C+A

Chester Office:

10 Hunters Walk, Canal Street,
Chester, CH1 4EB

T: +44(0)1244 402 900

E: chester@cassidyashton.co.uk

Preston Office:
7 East Cliff, Preston,
Lancashire, PR1 3JE

T: +44(0)1772 258 356

E: preston@cassidyashton.co.uk

Email us:

architecture@cassidyashton.co.uk

surveying@cassidyashton.co.uk

planning@cassidyashton.co.uk

Follow us on:

www.cassidyashton.co.uk

Architecture + Building Surveying + Town Planning

Cassidy and Ashton is a trading style of Cassidy and Ashton Group Limited
Registered in England and Wales No. 2510645 – 7 East Cliff, Preston, PR1 3JE

RIBA RICS RTPI ISO 9001 ISO 14001