PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

LLWYN KNOTTIA FARM
WREXHAM
LL13 9NP

GRID REF
SJ 35802 50457

PLANNING DESIGN ACCESS STATEMENT

April 2024

On behalf of Cefn Park Farms

Carter Jonas

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This statement has been prepared in accordance with the guidance provided in: Welsh Government Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design 2016.

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1. OVERVIEW

Introduction

1.1. Carter Jonas have been instructed by Cefn Park Farms to prepare this statement in order to accompany a planning application for the ***'Change of Use of a parcel of land at Llwyn Knottia Farm for Storage (Use Class B8 Storage Only)'.*** This statement extends to the site outlined in red in the accompanying site location plan.

1.2. This statement extends to the site outlined in the accompanying site location plan.

1.3. Carter Jonas is a national firm of chartered surveyors, town planners and property consultants established in 1855 with 33 offices nationwide. Carter Jonas aims to bring together the strengths of experience in every aspect of property together with a forward-looking approach. Openness and close co-operation are an essential part of achieving our aims and we look to work closely with interested parties in order to ensure the best possible outcome. Carter Jonas has created a comprehensive network of specialist regional teams, each with the full range of knowledge and experience in its field.

Location and Description

1.4. The Site is located on the Eastern fringe of Wrexham (Grid Ref: SJ: 35802 50457). Surrounding land uses include agricultural land, open countryside, residential dwellings, commercial enterprise and leisure.

1.5. The application site extends to circa 0.8ha and comprises of agricultural portal frame buildings and an existing storage enterprise.

The Proposed Development

1.6. Llwyn Knottia Farm is a self-managed farm. At present, the farmyard has a number of agricultural buildings upon it to allow for the storage of woodchip and machinery.

1.7. Due to logistics and economies, the surrounding land is mainly arable and farmed under contract and the portal framed building subject to this application is no longer required for the housing of cattle. The fundamental issue is that the farm requires an element of diversification in order to sustain itself and as such, it is proposed that the storage enterprise is expanded to include a segment of the existing farmyard and the footprint of the portal frame building. The proposal would in turn create an economic gain as it would create farm diversification and employment.

1.8. The existing storage is targeted at individuals for the storage of personal items. The traffic generation from this enterprise has been minimal as most storage clients do not re-visit their container for several months. There have been no complaints or concerns from local residents regarding traffic movements and it is intended that the expansion of the storage enterprise will continue to be low impact.

1.9. The proposal will allow for 41 (37x 20ft, 2x 40ft, 2x 10ft) containers within the footprint of the portal frame building plus 31 (26x 20ft, 5x 40ft) in the existing farmyard. The storage containers will be hidden from view as although the building itself will be removed, views will be obscured from the north by the woodchip store whilst views from the south will be obscured from the adjoining traditional brick range. To the west of the site an earth bund prevents views into the farm yard and to the east there are multiple farm buildings.

1.10. Vehicular access for the proposal is via the existing access off Cefn Road with parking provision within The Site.

1.11. The proposal will provide for the best use of previously developed land and buildings to create a sustainable storage facility which will provide employment and boost the local economy. Externally there will be very little change to the existing site and the units will be discretely located within the existing agricultural buildings.

Photograph 1: Existing Modern Portal Frame Buildings to be demolished



Photograph 2: Existing Storage Enterprise



2. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Planning Policy – National Guidance

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11, 2021)

2.1. Rural Business Diversification is considered in Chapter 5 of PPW. The Policy states that: *(Paragraph 5.6.10) Planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to diversification projects in rural areas. Additional small business activities can often be sustainably located on farms and provide additional income streams. Diversification can strengthen the rural economy and bring additional employment and prosperity to communities. Paragraph 5.6.11 states that whilst every effort should be made to locate diversification proposals so they are well-served by public transport, it is recognised that certain diversification proposals will only be accessible by car. While initial consideration should be given to adapting existing farm buildings, the provision of a sensitively designed new building on a working farm within existing farm complexes may be appropriate where a conversion opportunity does not exist. Paragraph 5.6.12 states that in terms of sustainable development it should be recognised that many small rural diversification proposals providing local services will actually reduce the journey length for users who would otherwise need to travel greater distances to access these services. Small rural diversification schemes can also contribute to the viability of a community by providing a focus for community life and hubs of economic activity.*

Technical Advice Note 12 (2016)

2.2. The proposal is compliant with **TAN 12** as it provides a new economic use within an established farm yard and building footprint. The proposal is not unduly prominent in the landscape and it will not significantly harm the amenity of the neighbouring areas. The proposal will not result in the loss of landscape features nor will it damage any important open space or public view. The proposal will utilise the existing access and this will not harm the locality or the amenities enjoyed by the occupants of nearby properties. The proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact, through increased

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resource use, discharges or emissions, on public health, surface and ground water (quality, quantity or ecology) or on air quality. Furthermore, the proposal will not cause significant harm to the environment or to neighbouring amenities by way of noise, light, dust, odour, vibration, hazardous materials or waste production.

Technical Advice Note 15 (2004)

2.3. In terms of flood risk, the site does not lie within an area of flood risk and the proposal will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Planning Policy – Local Guidance

Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan (LDP) 2013-2028 (Adopted 2023)

2.4. The Site is located within open countryside and therefore Policy EM4: Employment Development Outside of Settlement Limits is most relevant.

2.5. Policy EM4: Employment Development Outside of Settlement Limits states that 'ii. New development required in connection with a rural enterprise, including proposals for farm diversification where: a) The development is located within or forms a logical extension to the complex of buildings on an existing rural enterprise.'

2.6. The LDP recognises that new employment development in the countryside can help strengthen and diversify the rural economy. The proposal should be supported under EM4 as the development facilitates farm diversification and is sensitively located within or adjacent to the complex of existing buildings.

3. Justification

3.1. Need

The applicant has undertaken market research into the amount of storage facilities present within the surrounding area. It is noted that there are employment sites within the County, but there are few

facilities within such close proximity to Wrexham which makes this proposal more sustainable as clients do not have as far to travel for the storage facilities.

3.2. Sustainable Transport

In terms of the hierarchy of PPW with regards to sustainable transport, it is important to note that the majority, if not all customers would drive to the storage facility via private transport as they would be either collecting items or delivering them for storage. Certain activities are better suited to locations outside settlement boundaries as any traffic generated would not have a detrimental impact on the existing traffic flow within busy settlement boundaries.

This is recognised in PPW (Edition 11) paragraph 5.6.11 which states that 'Whilst every effort should be made to locate diversification proposals so they are well-served by public transport, it is recognised that certain diversification proposals will only be accessible by car'. Paragraph 5.6.12 goes onto state that 'In terms of sustainable development it should be recognised that many small rural diversification proposals providing local services will actually reduce the journey length for users who would otherwise need to travel greater distances to access these services.'

In addition, once the Storage Enterprise is established, the amount of traffic movement will be minimal as the intended purpose of the storage units is to provide storage, not distribution. Once established, we would anticipate up to 5 traffic movements per day on average. In terms of timing, the facility would be operational every day from 8am-8pm.

It is considered that there is ample space within the yard and sufficiently good access to accommodate the anticipated visitor levels to the Storage Enterprise as demonstrated in the proposed plan.

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3.3. Sustainable Development

It is also noted that the proposal makes the most efficient use of land as it utilises previously developed land and buildings. The proposal is sustainable in its design as it incorporates the footprint of the existing building and therefore does not involve any incursion into the open countryside or create a negative visual impact on the surrounding environment.

3.4. Employment

PPW (Edition 11) states that development in the countryside can be acceptable if it increases local economic activity. The Storage Enterprise will generate the employment of one worker to manage the units, make bookings and arrange access.

PPW (Para 5.6.10) and TAN 6 (Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities) state that 'Planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to diversification projects in rural areas. Additional small business activities can often be sustainably located on farms and provide additional income streams. Diversification can strengthen the rural economy and bring additional employment and prosperity to communities.

Paragraph 5.6.1 states 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. Events such as the climate emergency, the coronavirus pandemic and exiting the European Union all bring economic and societal uncertainty, and the ability to respond flexibly to these issues will be key to the future success of rural areas.'

Paragraph 5.6.2 goes onto state that 'Planning authorities should plan positively to meet rural employment needs by identifying policies in their development plans. By supporting the development of a broad range of employment opportunities in rural areas planning authorities can increase economic prosperity and help address the effects of rural decline or depopulation where it occurs. Greater opportunity can support and strengthen the future well-being and sustainability of rural communities.

In the case of this proposal, PPW provides further justification in paragraph 5.6.3 to state ‘Many commercial and light manufacturing activities can be located in rural areas without causing unacceptable disturbance or other adverse effects. Micro and small enterprises have a vital role to play in the rural economy, and contribute to both local and national competitiveness and prosperity. While some employment can be created in rural locations by the re-use of existing buildings, new development will be required in many areas.’ Paragraph 5.6.8 supports Local Authorities in adopting a positive approach to the conversion of rural buildings for business re-use.’

3.5. Management

The management of the proposed storage enterprise will be controlled and linked with the existing site. It will not be ran by an external company or contractor.

4. DESIGN STATEMENT

Introduction

4.1. The proposal aims to accord with Technical Advice Note 12: Design (TAN 12), and the Design and Access statement will appraise all matters therein.

Green Infrastructure Statement & Environmental Sustainability

4.2. The proposal utilises previously developed land and buildings and will have minimal impact on the existing environmental characteristics of The Site.

4.3. On 18 October 2023, the Minister for Climate Change announced, with immediate effect, changes to Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW). Those changes have now been incorporated into PPW12.

4.4. Paragraph 6.2.12 of PPW12 requires a green infrastructure statement (GIS) to be submitted with all planning applications. PPW states GIS should be '*proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be a short description and should not be an onerous requirement for applicants. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach has been applied.'*

4.5. The proposal will incorporate green infrastructure by way of inclusion of a range of woodcrete boxes around the site to provide an enhancement for passerine birds:



Cedarwood Sparrow Terrace



Schwegler 1b Bird Box

a. Sparrow Terraces should be erected under the eaves of a building at a minimum height of 3m, in a westerly, northerly or easterly aspect.

b. 26/32mm hole nest boxes (e.g. Schwegler 1b) should be installed at a minimum height of 3m in a westerly, northerly or easterly aspect.

Movement to, from and within the development

1.1. In terms of traffic movement, access to The Site is achieved through the existing access off Cefn Road. Ample car parking provision will be provided within The Site which will allow for sufficient manoeuvrability to enable vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear.

Character - Amount, Layout, Scale, Mass

1.2. The Site is not within a conservation area nor are any of the buildings subject to this application listed.

Character - Landscaping

1.3. The proposal presents an opportunity to enhance biodiversity with the addition of bird boxes on the remaining agricultural buildings.

Context – Physical

1.4. It is not considered that the proposal will have a detrimental impact upon the surrounding area as the proposal makes best use of previously developed land. The proposal will have minimal impact on the external appearance of the farm yard.

Context – Social & Economic

1.5. The proposal is for a low impact use and will provide a useful facility for the local area whilst also providing employment. Staffing will be required to greet new clients and ensure smooth running and administration duties.

Community Safety

1.6. The proposal is a private enterprise which will offer internal storage facilities to private clients in a secure and controlled environment. It will not have any negative impact on community safety or attract anti-social behaviour.

Access

1.7. The proposal will utilise the existing access off Cefn Road, as detailed in the Proposed Block Plan. It is considered that the expected traffic generation for the proposal will be no greater than the traffic movements created by agricultural machinery. By their very nature, storage units are not regularly visited and will therefore not create any significant changes to daily traffic flow. It is expected that there will initially be a higher number of movements whilst new customers are being established, however these movements will soon decline as the storage containers become occupied.

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