BASE

PLANNING STATEMENT

PROJECT REFERENCE: CA4135

PROJECT NAME: Chetwynd Grove

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Retrospective planning consent for the change of use of disused farm buildings into offices, which have extant permission for the conversion into 2 no. residential units (Previous planning reference: P/2017/0871).

PROJECT LOCATION: Chetwynd Grove, Bangor Road, Marchwiel, Wrexham, LL13 0TF

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This retrospective planning application is for the change of use of disused farm buildings into offices, which have extant permission for the conversion into 2 no. residential units at Chetwynd Grove, Bangor Road, Marchwiel, Wrexham, LL13 0TF.
- The accommodation will be used to support the applicant's urgent requirement for additional office space in relation to his existing business, Ningbo Walking Floors.
- The accommodation is currently occupied by no more than 5 full time members of staff.
- This planning application relates to commercial use and therefore there will be no increase to the Phosphate impact of the site, when compared with its previously approved residential use.
- This retrospective planning submission follows a previously refused application. The reasons for refusal have since been addressed through further consultation with a qualified ecological consultant to assess and demonstrate that the works that have already been carried out have a low impact with regards to the biodiversity and ecological value of the site. The ecological consultant has also stipulated measures to enhance the sites ecological and biodiversity value.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This design and access statement has been produced in support of a retrospective planning application for the change of use of disused farm buildings into offices at Chetwynd Grove, Bangor Road, Marchwiel, Wrexham, LL13 0TF.

The local authority for the application is Wrexham County Borough Council.

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the associated supporting documents including:

- Application Form
- PL-001 Location
- PL-002 Block Plan
- PL-003 Existing Ground Floor Plan
- PL-004 Existing Elevations
- PL-005 Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- PL-006 Proposed Elevations

2 THE LOCATION AND CONTEXT



Ariel View of Chetwydn Grove. Source: Google Maps

2.1 THE LOCATION

The site is located in Cross Lanes, 2.8 miles south east of Wrexham City Centre, within close proximity to the Wrexham Industrial Estate (1.3 miles). The site is accessed off the A525 and contains a range of agricultural barns.

2.2 CONTEXT

The existing site is currently and partly used by Ningbo Walking Floors as overflow office space to support their business operations. The main business operations are located nearby in the Maelor Works industrial park, 1.6 miles away, but due to a recent expansion, additional office space was required for administration staff.

The barns had a previous planning permission granted in 2018 for the 'conversion of disused farm buildings into two residential units together with access and parking arrangements' (P/2017/0871). However, due to the commercial circumstances in Maelor Works, part of the barn at Chetwynd Grove was converted into office space for 6 members of staff shortly after the planning permission was granted.

The most relevant policy within the council's Unitary Development Plan is Policy E5 which states that:

"Small-scale employment development in the countryside will only be permitted through the conversion of an existing building where:-

a) the proposal accords with Policy GDP1; and

b) the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive rebuilding tantamount to the erection of a new building; and

c) any inherent characteristics of merit in the building are retained; and

d) the building and resulting curtilage does not constitute an undesirable intrusion into the landscape, create access problems, nor require the provision of services at public cost."

The existing building, which complies with policy GDP1, is structurally sound and all inherent characteristics have been retained. The building does not constitute an undesirable intrusion into the landscape, nor does it create access problems or require the provision of services at a public cost. The proposed development therefore complies with local policy E5.

3 USE

Prior to the planning permission granted in 2018, the barn was used for agricultural purposes. Currently, only part of the building (which this application relates to) is office space and the other half remains as agricultural stables.

The applicant has advised that the barn(s) were partly converted and occupied for their consented use (Residential) for a 12 month period following permission being granted. However they are unable to evident this as part of this submission.

The barns are now being used for commercial use to support with business operations.

4 SCALE

The scale of the buildings will not change as a result of the development.

5 APPEARANCE

The existing external appearance of the building will remain unaltered as part of this planning application.



PL-002 Block Plan

6 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

MAR P/2023/0856

A retrospective planning application (MAR P/2023/0856) was submitted in November 2023 for the change of use of a dwelling into offices and was refused by the local authority in January 2024.

The main concern with the proposal was that there was not enough information to demonstrate how the works that have already been carried out have affected the biodiversity and ecological value of the site nor how this will be compensated for. Therefore, the application does not comply with Policies SP14, NE2 and DM1 of the Wrexham Local Development Plan. It also contravenes the advice contained within TAN 5 and Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11).

In addition to the ecological value of the site, not enough information was provided to demonstrate that the development would not cause a likely significant effect upon the integrity of the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC by way of increased phosphate inputs. The application (MAR P/2023/0856) is therefore contrary to the requirements of TAN 5 and Policies NE1 and NE6 of the adopted Wrexham Local Development Plan.

This follow up planning application submission seeks to address these concerns through the production of a preliminary ecological appraisal (phase 1) which demonstrates how the works that have already been carried out have not affected the biodiversity and the ecological value of the site, see potential ecological impact breakdown below;

- **HABITAT ASSESSMENT –** The habitats on site are limited to built features and hardstanding. The proposals do not appear to have impacted any ecologically significant habitat.

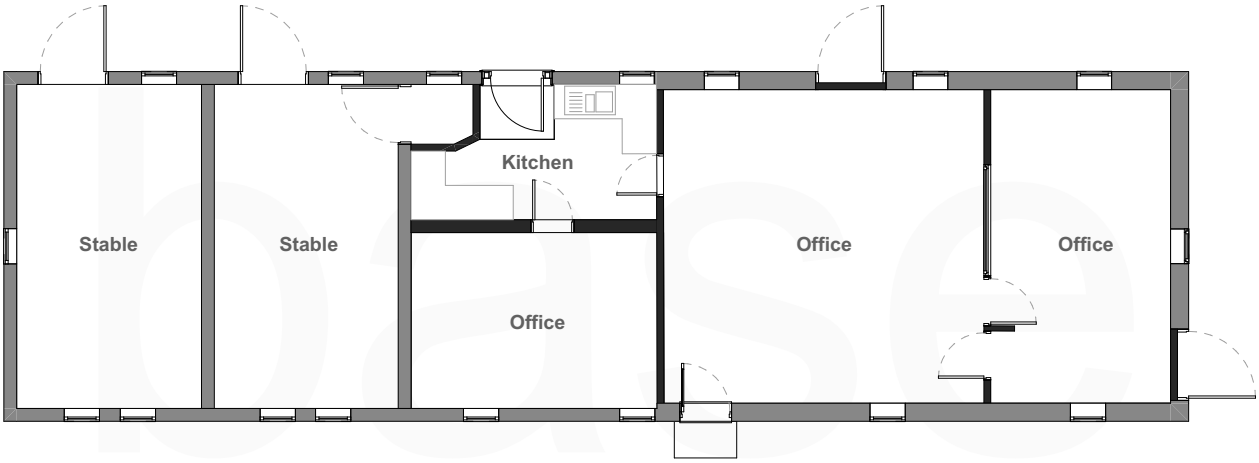
- **PROTECTED SPECIES ASSESSMENT (BATS) –** The retained stable sections give us some idea of what condition the building was in. Neither of the retained stables showed any evidence of bat presence, and externally, no potential roosting features were identified. Given that no evidence of bats was found in the retained stable, this may suggest that no bats had been using the building prior to its change of use.

- **PROTECTED SPECIES ASSESSMENT (BREEDING BIRDS) –** Given that there are four swallow nests in the retained stable block, there could have been other swallow nests within the building which has been turned into an office. Mitigation is not possible at this stage but the opportunity will be taken to increase the number of nesting sites present.

- **PROTECTED SPECIES ASSESSMENT (GREAT CRESTED NEWT) –** GCN have been recorded within 100m of the site but records date back to 2003 at the latest. These records are now over 20 years old but given the availability of ponds in the locality, and the known population of GCN within the area, it is reasonable to assume that at least some of the 6 ponds within 250m are inhabited by GCN. However, the works carried out on site have taken place exclusively on areas of existing hardstanding, and the change of use relates solely to an existing building. It is therefore highly unlikely that GCN would have been impacted during the works to change the use of the building.

With respect of the comments raised in relation to the increase phosphate levels, it would not be anticipated that there will be an increase in phosphates as a result of the development. This planning application relates to commercial use and therefore there will be no increase to the Phosphate impact of the site, when compared with its previously approved residential use.

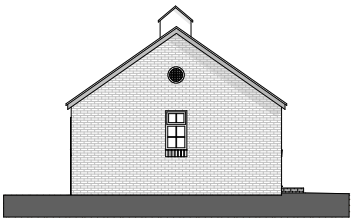
The offices will be primarily used during typical business hours of 9am to 5pm and therefore the building will not be permanently occupied. There will be no perceived increase to phosphate levels on the basis there will be a zero net increase in residential units/occupation as a result of this application. The proposal does not include additional permanent occupation and is used as an overflow office, therefore, the overall phosphate loading for the site would not be expected to increase.



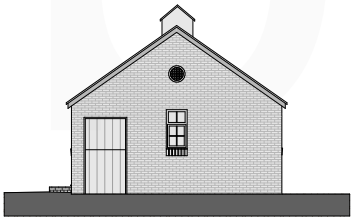
Ground Floor Plan



Proposed Front Elevation
1:100



Proposed Side Elevation
1:100



Proposed Side Elevation
1:100



Proposed Rear Elevation
1:100

Elevations



View of south west facade.



View of north east facade.

7 LANDSCAPING

The proposal does not affect any of the existing landscaping within or around the site and all parking is positioned on existing hardstanding.

8 ACCESS & HIGHWAYS

The proposed development utilises the existing access into the site and it is not envisaged that the proposal will impact highway safety or the existing highway network.

9 BIODIVERSITY

Due to the refusal of the previous application, a preliminary ecological appraisal (phase 1) will be submitted alongside this application to address the concerns raised in the response from the Local Authority to demonstrate how the works that have already been carried out have not affected the biodiversity and the ecological value of the site, see summary of report below.

- *Retrospective planning permission will be sought for a change of use of a dwelling to offices at Chetwynd Grange, Marchwiel. Arbor Vitae were commissioned by Base Architects to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in order to assess the impact of the development on habitats and protected species.*

- *Given that the application is retrospective, the ecological assessment is limited to presenting the condition of the current building. Any conditions prior to change of use are essentially lost, and cannot be assessed.*

- *Any impact upon bat species is impossible to quantify at this stage, but given that no evidence of bats was found in the retained stable, this may suggest that no bats had been using the building prior to its change of use. Opportunities for bats at the site will be required, to enhance habitats and roosting features present. A Wildlife Sensitive Lighting Plan will be implemented retrospectively in order to protect the surrounding landscape from any effects of additional artificial lighting.*

- *Given that there are four swallow nests in the retained stable block, there could have been other swallow nests within the building which has been turned into an office. Mitigation is not possible at this stage but the opportunity will be taken to increase the number of nesting sites present.*

- *GCN have been recorded within 100m of the site but records date back to 2003 at the latest. These records are now over 20 years old but given the availability of ponds in the locality, and the known population of GCN within the area, it is reasonable to assume that at least some of the 6 ponds within 250m are inhabited by GCN. However, the works carried out on site have taken place exclusively on areas of existing hardstanding, and the change of use relates solely to an existing building. It is therefore highly unlikely that GCN would have been impacted during the works to change the use of the building.*

10 DRAINAGE & FLOODING

10.1 DRAINAGE

The surface water drainage remains unaltered as part of this application and currently discharges into an existing soakaway.

10.2 FLOODING

After reviewing the Environment Agency flood maps we have ascertained that the site does not lie within a flood risk zone.

11 CONCLUSION

- This retrospective planning application is for the change of use of disused farm buildings into offices, which have extant permission for the conversion into 2 no. residential units at Chetwynd Grove, Bangor Road, Marchwiel, Wrexham, LL13 0TF.
- The accommodation will be used to support the applicants' urgent requirement for additional office space in relation to his existing business, Ningbo Walking Floors.
- The proposal retains the existing character of the building.
- Highway safety would not be compromised by the proposal.
- The proposal is line with the Council's unitary development plan and also national policy.

Shrewsbury Office:
**UNIT 1, NEXUS, ROUSHILL,
SHREWSBURY, SHROPSHIRE, SY1 1PT**

Tel: **01743 236 400**

Email: **HELLO@BASEARCHITECTURE.CO.UK**

Web: **BASEARCHITECTURE.CO.UK**

PROJECT REFERENCE: CA4135

PROJECT NAME: Chetwynd Grove

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Retrospective planning application for the change of use of an agricultural barn into offices.

PROJECT LOCATION: Chetwynd Grove, Bangor Road, Marchwiel, Wrexham, LL13 0TF