DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSED NEW DWELLING

LAND ADJACENT TO No 8 POPLAR ROAD, PENYCAE, WREXHAM. LL14 2PY

CONTENTS

1. Proposal and Site Description

2. Planning Policy Legislative Context

3. Relevant Planning History

4. DAS Planning Considerations
   Character
   Access
   Movement
   Environmental Sustainability
   Community Safety

5. Summary & Conclusions

1. Site Description & Proposal

The site is located within the Penycae Conservation Area, a prominently residential area. It previously contained a pair of cottages which have been demolished. The site has been neglected and is overgrown, and currently forms a gap between 8 Poplar Road, a relatively new detached dwelling to the west and Dwr y Ddol, a much older traditional property to the east. The site has a 10.5m frontage to Poplar Road with a wide pavement to the front. There is no existing vehicular access to the site, although dwellings either side have their own access onto Poplar road. Beyond Dwr y Ddol Poplar Road bends sharply to the north and then rises. Poplar Road falls away to the east after its relatively straight and level section in the vicinity of the site. The site is fenced along the rear boundary, beyond which the land rises containing mature vegetation. Opposite the site on Poplar is a public area of open space.

The application provides for the erection of a 3 bed dwelling providing for a kitchen/dining siting area, a living room, hall and WC on the ground floor with 3 bedrooms, one ensuite and a bathroom on the first floor. A garden area is provided to the rear. A new vehicular access is provided off the B5097 Poplar road, with parking at the front for 2 vehicles.

The property will be finished in render, colour to be agreed, with reconstituted stone cills, under a dark grey concrete roof tile. Dark grey pvcu windows are proposed but the colour can be conditioned.

2. Planning Policy Legislative Context

The requirement for a DAS to accompany certain types of planning applications is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (as amended). In this case a DAS is required as the proposed development involves the erection of a dwelling within a designated Conservation Area.

A DAS is a document which explains how the objectives of good design have been considered from the outset of the development process and how the objectives of good design have been used to inform this.

In line with the guidance, this DAS aims to explain the design concept of the proposed development in relation to

Character
Access
Movement
Environmental Sustainability
Community Safety

These will be addressed in Section 4 below.

National Planning Policy Context

Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 February 2024

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) forms the overarching national planning policy framework in Wales, providing guidance to Local Planning authorities for the preparation of Local Development Plans and the determination of planning applications.

Relevant guidance
Part 3 Strategic & Spatial Choices

Good Design Making Better Places
3.3 Good design is fundamental to creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise. Design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and between people and places. To achieve sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, economic, environmental, cultural aspects of the development, including how space is used, how buildings and the public realm support this use, as well as its construction, operation, management, and its relationship with the surrounding area.

Previously Developed Land
3.55 Previously developed (also referred to as brownfield) land (see definition overleaf) should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites where it is suitable for development. In settlements, such land should generally be considered suitable for

appropriate development where its re-use will promote sustainability principles and any constraints can be overcome. It is recognised, however, that not all previously developed land is suitable for development. This may be, for example, because of its unsustainable location, the presence of protected species or valuable habitats or industrial heritage, or because it is highly contaminated.

Part 6 Recognising the Special Characteristics of Places

The historic environment comprises all the surviving physical elements of previous human activity and illustrates how past generations have shaped the world around us. It is central to Wales's culture and its character, whilst contributing to our sense of place and identity. It enhances our quality of life, adds to regional and local distinctiveness and is an important economic and social asset.

6.1.2 The historic environment is made up of individual historic features which are collectively known as historic assets. Examples of what can constitute an historic asset include: • Listed buildings; • Conservation areas; • Historic assets of special local interest; • Historic parks and gardens; • Townscapes100; • Historic Landscapes; • World Heritage Sites; and • Archaeological remains (including scheduled monuments).

6.1.3 The ways in which historic assets are identified can vary. The most important historic assets often have statutory protection or are included in formal registers which identify them as being of special historic interest.

6.1.7 It is important that the planning system looks to protect, conserve and enhance the significance of historic assets. This will include consideration of the setting of an historic asset which might extend beyond its curtilage. Any change that impacts on an historic asset or its setting should be managed in a sensitive and sustainable way.

6.1.8 It is the responsibility of all those with an interest in the planning system, including planning authorities, applicants, developers and communities, to appropriately care for the historic environment in their area. The protection, conservation and enhancement of historic assets is most effective when it is considered at the earliest stage of plan preparation or when designing proposals new proposals.

6.1.9 Any decisions made through the planning system must fully consider the impact on the historic environment and on the significance and heritage values of individual historic assets and their contribution to the character of place.

6.1.14 There should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of conservation areas or their settings. Positive management of conservation areas is necessary if their character or appearance are to be preserved or enhanced and their heritage value is to be fully realised.

The following Welsh Government Technical Advice Notes are also applicable

TAN 12 Design

TAN 18 Transport

TAN 24 The Historic Environment

Local Planning Policy

The current adopted Development Plan is the WCBC Local Development Plan (LDP) adopted on 20th December 2024. This is the basis for the determination of planning applications and deals with the use and conservation of land and buildings within the plan period 2011-2026

The following LDP policies are relevant to this proposal

Policy SP12: Design Principles & Masterplanning Framework.

All development will be required to be of a high quality, sustainable design which makes a positive contribution to the creation of locally distinctive places by complying with the masterplanning framework SPG and KSS schematics. Proposals must demonstrate how they have taken account of the local characteristics of surrounding areas and how innovative design solutions will enhance the quality of the built and natural environment.

Policy SP15: Historic and Cultural Environment.

Development will only be supported where it conserves, protects, preserves or enhances the following cultural and historic assets of the County Borough and their setting:

i. Listed Buildings;
ii. Conservation Areas;
iii. Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site;
iv. Registered Historic Parks, Gardens and Landscapes; and v. Scheduled Monuments and Archaeological Remains.

Policy DM1: Development Management Considerations.

Development proposals, where relevant, must:

i. Accord with or enhance the character, local distinctiveness and appearance of the site, existing building(s) and surrounding landscape/ townscape in terms of their siting, layout, scale, height, design, density, use of materials and landscaping;
ii. Not have an unacceptable effect on the amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties/land; and provide a satisfactory standard of amenity for the occupiers/users of the development itself;
iii. Safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land, noise, light or air, or land instability, arising from development;
iv. Take account of personal and community safety and security in their design and layout;
v. Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport use ahead of travel by car;
vi. Not give rise to highway safety, pedestrian safety or parking problems on site or in the locality;

vii. 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;

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

ix. 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

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

In addition, the following Local Planning Guidance Notes are also relevant –

No 4 Conservation Areas

No 6 Access to and Use of Buildings

No 16 Parking Standards

No 21 Space around buildings

No 30 Design (formerly 22 Sustainable Development)

3. Relevant Planning History

PEN P/2002/0313 Erection of two-storey dwelling and alteration to existing vehicular and pedestrian access. Refused 20th May 2002

Reason for Refusal

1. Notwithstanding the site's location within the settlement limits as defined in the Wrexham Maelor Local Plan, the proposed development would be unsatisfactory and undesirable having regard to the substandard vehicular access serving the site in terms of visibility. To allow the development would be prejudicial to the safe and free flow of traffic using the classified Poplar Road, and is likely to cause serious safety issues for the occupants and visitors of the new dwelling.

Appeal Dismissed 23rd July 2003

It should be noted that in refusing the application and dismissing the appeal the sole issue related to highways. Neither the Planning Officer or the Appeal Inspector raised any concerns in relation to the principle of development on this site; any adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area; or the amenity of neighbouring residents. The highways considerations are dealt with separately.

Although the previous application was considered in relation to the former Wrexham Maelor UDP the policy objectives in terms of the Conservation area, and general development control considerations remain relatively unchanged in the recently adopted LDP. LDP policy DM1 very much reflects UDP policy S4 and similarly the current conservation policies in each Plan are consistent. In that respect there have been no change in circumstances since the previous decision and there should be no reason to resist this proposal on the basis of non-highway considerations, particularly when the current proposal represents a far better design solution than the previous proposal.

There has however been a significant material change in terms of highways which should allow for a favourable decision this time around.

4. DAS requirements

Character

The site lies within the Penycae Conservation Area. In fact, the boundary of the designated area runs along the eastern boundary of the site. The Penycae Conservation Area was first designated in 1976 and its boundary amended and reduced in January 2003 and June 2011. The Conservation Area Character Assessment and Management Plan was adopted in 2011.

The key objective of the Plan is to promote and support development that is in-keeping with or enhance the character of the Conservation area. It is not an attempt to stifle change. The aim is to strike a balance so that the interests of conservation are given their full weight against the need for change and development.

The Conservation Area has a strong rural character reinforced by the scattered layout of the buildings, narrow footpaths, abundance of trees and views of the surrounding landscape. This rural character is in direct contrast

to the more densely settled and barren streets to the south. The special character of the area is typified by narrow plots and enclosure offered by the buildings which together with the topography create an intimate feeling and offer a strong sense of enclosure.

The infilling of this plot respects this character and the scale, design, proportions and use of appropriate facing materials will strengthen the cohesion of the street, giving continuity to the built form and appearance of this side of Poplar road.

Historically, there was development on this site and it has become an eyesore in recent years. The depth and width of the plots reflects those elsewhere within the Conservation Area. The scale and proportions of the new dwelling will respect the differences in scale between the new and older properties on either side of the site. The siting also ensures it does not become a prominent feature in the streetscene but is naturally assimilated into the gap to create a seamless relationship with the road. This is also reinforced by the alignment of the ridgeline and roof pitch to ensure continuity with adjoining properties and an active frontage. This was not the case with the previous scheme, which appeared incongruous in terms of its footprint and relationship with the streetscene. The current proposal therefore represents a significant improvement.

The design draws upon the scale and character of existing housing in the Conservation Area through the use of a rendered finish to elevations, dark grey tiles, medium angle roof slopes and a well- proportioned window to void ratio. Window cills will be of re-constituted stone to reflect the prevailing historic stone character of traditional stone buildings and low walls (a characteristic feature of the area). All hardstanding will be finished in a recessive/natural colour. Any boundary treatment can be subject to condition but the intention is to retain the fence to the rear of the site. This will protect and avoid any encroachment upon the mature vegetation on higher ground at the back of the site, which is identified as an attractive feature in the Conservation Area Management Plan.

The proposed development would enhance the area and would therefore accord with LDP Policies SP15 and DM1 (i) set out above.

Access

A new vehicular access will be provided from Poplar Road. There are no walls effected, which are a characteristic feature of the area and the site already has an open frontage. Adequate visibility can be achieved in both directions (this is addressed in more detail in the Highway Statement) and the wide pedestrian footpath along the site frontage will remain. Off road parking for 2 vehicles is provided, which in a sustainable location and on a regular bus route should be adequate to meet the needs of the development. LPG 16 imposes maximum standards in accordance with Welsh government guidelines. A maximum requirement of 3 spaces for a 3 bed dwelling is considered excessive in this case, as the site lies within a sustainable location and on a regular bus route with a bus stop nearby. The Council have previously accepted similar parking provision ratios elsewhere in the County Borough and there is no reason why it should not be acceptable here.

In terms of inclusive access the dwelling is designed to be Part M compliant. The site is relatively level and hardstanding is provided around the property for ease of access. All access is step free.

Community Safety

It is considered that there will be no adverse effect upon community safety as a result of this application. The proposed new vehicular entrance to the site will meet current standards and the Highway Statement demonstrates that there will be no adverse impact upon highway safety in the area.

PPW 12 states that local planning authorities have a legal obligation to consider the need to prevent and reduce crime and disorder in all decisions they make. The land has been vacant and overgrown for some time and could potentially attract vandalism, anti-social behaviour and nuisance for neighbouring properties. This has created increased insecurity, particularly for the two adjoining dwellings. New development on this site will deny access and improve community safety. Secure by Design principles have been adhered to and the enclosed rear boundaries create a defensible space. Conversely, the open frontage will allow for improved naturally surveillance to Poplar Road and the large open space area opposite.

Movement

Given the scale and nature of development there will be minimal change in movement characteristics in the area. A new vehicular access serving a single dwelling is the only change. No other established pedestrian or other movement patterns are disturbed.

PPW 12 states that good design is about minimising the need to travel and reliance on the car, whilst maximising opportunities for people to make sustainable and healthy choices for their daily journey. The site is within walking distance to local amenities, schools etc and public transport is available.

Environmental Sustainability

The proposed development is situated in a sustainable location within an existing settlement. The proposal meets the requirements of national planning policy in terms of design and sustainable development and the site can be adequately accessed and serviced. It also satisfies PPW national policy in terms of the re-use and efficient use of land and will maximise energy efficiency and other resources.

The dwelling will be designed to modern building regulation standards. Materials will be sustainably/locally sourced where possible and materials will be specified as low maintenance and have a good degree of climate resilience.

5 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

The proposed dwelling would accord with the principles of both national and local planning policy. It represents an efficient re-use of land within an existing settlement. The siting, scale and design of the dwelling respects the character of the existing Conservation Area and will enhance the area. No objections or concerns were received in respect of the previous application in terms of the principle of development, or the impact upon residential amenity, and the current design is a significant improvement upon the original scheme. Despite the recent adoption of the LDP the general policy

criteria in relation to this proposal remains unchanged. The above demonstrates compliance with policy and satisfies the 5 key principles within a Design & Access Statement.

The only outstanding issue relates to Highways which is addressed separately. This issue represents the only material change in circumstances since the previous refusal. Due to the reduction in the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph adequate visibility can now be achieved. The provision of 2 parking spaces for a 3 bed dwelling is also consistent with similar approved schemes elsewhere in the County Borough. In the circumstances there is no reason planning permission should not be granted.