PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

Construction of New Storage Building

Lloyd Watson Haulage, Boundary Garage, Ellesmere Road, Bronington, Whitchurch, SY13 3HD



Applicant:

Lloyd Watson Haulage Ltd

February 2025

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning & Design Statement supports a full planning application for a new storage building at Lloyd Watson Haulage, Boundary Garage, Ellesmere Road, Bronington, Whitchurch, SY13 3HD.

1.2 The applicant received pre-application advice from Wrexham Council in February 2024 (ref: ENQ 2024/0024). This was constructive and the proposal has been refined following careful consideration of this advice; and further supporting information has been commissioned to enable a full planning application to be submitted.

1.3 The proposed development is a new steel portal framed storage building with a footprint and gross floorspace of 912 sq. m. to be constructed on part of the current hard-paved haulage yard area.

1.4 This application is submitted to Wrexham Council via the Planning Portal and is accompanied by:

- Planning Application Form
- Location Plan
- Existing Site Plan
- Proposed Site Plan
- Proposed Floor Plan
- Proposed Elevations
- Proposed Landscaping & Biodiversity Plan
- Green Infrastructure Statement
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Tree Constraints Plan
- Tree Protection Plan
- Ecology Assessment
- Construction Environmental Management Plan
- Drainage Strategy
- Planning, Design & Access Statement

2.0 The Existing Site and its Operation

2.1 Site Location

The site is located on the A495 Ellesmere Road approximately 900m / 0.5 miles from the village of Bronington. It is close to the Wales / England border. Wrexham is approximately 13 miles to the north west and Whitchurch is 3 miles to the north east.





Above: Site location outlined in red taken from Google Maps





Above: Site location of proposed new storage building





Above: Photos showing typical trees and hedgerows along the site boundary

2.2 Site Description

The application site forms part of an established HGV haulage and distribution yard totalling 0.43 hectares and comprises concrete hardstanding. The site is accessed from Ellesmere Road via a gated driveway which leads onto the hardstanding. There are two existing storage and workshop buildings presently on site. Immediately to the east of the site is the applicant's family home.

2.3 The site is within the open countryside. To the north and west of the site, beyond extensive boundary hedges, trees and drainage ditches, is agricultural land. To the south of the site on the opposite side of the road there is a small cluster of houses with their boundaries approximately 100 metres from the site access. The wider area is agricultural, but there are scattered houses, agricultural sheds and some commercial buildings.

2.4 Site Operation

Lloyd Watson Haulage Ltd is a long established family-owned transport, logistics and haulage company that is now owned and operated by the original founder's son. The business employs 5 people and serves customers throughout North Wales, Shropshire, Cheshire and further afield. Regular customers include agricultural businesses, manufacturers and retailers whose transport needs range from the collection, delivery and short-term storage of a single pallet to several wagon loads. In an age where the large national logistics companies are increasingly concentrating on the needs of a few large customers using large centralised 'distribution hubs', smaller family-owned hauliers such as Lloyd Watson are often the only choice for small to medium-sized local businesses located in smaller towns and rural enterprises who require regular and occasional transport needs.

2.5 The business operates a fleet of 5 no. HGVs working a pre-arranged schedule of pick-ups and deliveries to and from customers' premises or from established logistics hubs such as the ports of Liverpool or Holyhead. Some customers may not be able to receive their delivery at a specific time, so in this situation the facility provides short term storage if a

delivery has nowhere to go. This frees up the driver and vehicle to proceed to other collections or deliveries and gives greater flexibility in scheduling delivery routes so as not to waste time and fuel. The facility also offers storage during busy periods to ensure no disruption in customers' supply chains.

3.0 Rationale and Description of the Proposal

3.1 Rationale

The justification for the development is simply to ensure the business can remain sustainable, competitive and continue to meet its customers' needs. The applicant has been considering how best to develop his haulage business and ensure it remains relevant and viable given the wider market conditions and changes in the industry generally. Customers' needs are evolving, supply chains are becoming more complex and traditional operating methods are becoming obsolete as a result.

3.2 The industry has become more environmentally sustainable and saving fuel is a priority, which means that collection and delivery schedules and routes have to be carefully planned to minimise the time that empty or partially loaded wagons are travelling on the roads.

3.3 Operating margins are very tight due to the cost of fuel, wages, employment overheads and other regulations. All of which requires more efficient ways of working which avoids vehicles either standing idle, running with partial loads, or spending excessive time for loading.

3.4 In response to this and to meet customers' needs and be environmentally sustainable, the haulage industry is moving towards an integrated haulage and storage model, which combines the traditional pick-up and delivery service with short-term storage solutions. As has already been stated, this frees up the driver and vehicle to proceed to other collections or deliveries and gives greater flexibility in planning and scheduling delivery routes so as not to waste time and fuel.

3.5 There is already a storage building onsite which was granted in 2019 under P/2019/0435. This is used for bulk items that the business transports, such as building and agricultural materials. Presently there is limited storage space for customers' pallets and loose loads, so these often have to be kept in the trailers parked on the yard overnight, which causes security concerns and prevents the vehicles from being used to their full potential and thus incurring fixed costs while not generating revenue. This is a pinch point for the business and massively reduces flexibility and competitiveness.

3.6 With regard to the continued operation at Lloyd Watson Haulage, there is now a need for a modern, dry and fit-for-purpose logistics storage facility and this can be readily accommodated on the site, as there would no longer be a need for the large external haulage yard area, as the HGV vehicles would not be parked up or laying over, but in constant service.

3.7 <u>Description of the Proposal</u>

The proposal is to construct a new storage building that will be ancillary to and support the operation of the wider haulage and transport facility. This is not a separate or additional operation, as appears to be the suggestion made by the planning officer in the pre-application advice. This is discussed further in section 5.3 of this statement. On-site storage is necessary to ensure the continued viability of the current lawful haulage and distribution use, as already explained in the rationale for this development.

3.8 The proposed size of the storage building is the minimum required for operational reasons, given the size of the customer base and it will meet the needs of the business for many years to come. The footprint and volume of the building is also determined by the standardisation of equipment used by the wider haulage industry – including the spacing and stacking of pallets, standardisation in pallet storage racks and shelving and space for the safe operation of fork lift trucks to handle pallets.

3.9 The applicant has carefully considered the comments in the pre-application advice, which stated: *"the scale of the development is considered to be excessive in terms of the existing development"* and *"the building would be prominent in the landscape due to its height"*. In response to this, the building's footprint has been reduced from that put forward in the pre-application. The ridge height is 2.0m lower than the 1999 planning approval. The applicant's architectural designer has considered how the form of the roof could be adapted to reduce the scale and mass, together with a recessive colour scheme to help visually absorb with the landscape. This is explained in the design appraisal in Section 6.0 of this document.

3.10 The location for the building within the wider site has been carefully chosen to enable safe access and circulation for HGVs, but just as importantly, to avoid encroaching into the tree root protection areas along the site boundary; and to enable additional landscaping and biodiversity improvements to be implemented along the site boundary ditch and hedgerows, which are the principal ecological features on site. This is explained in detail in the Arboricultural and Ecology Reports and Landscape Scheme which support this application.

4.0 Planning History

4.1 The site benefits from historic lawful use as an employment site comprising a haulage yard, workshop and store. This has existed since the 1950's or 1960's. Recent planning history, taken from the Wrexham Council public access planning website is as follows:

- CB02746 Erection of warehouse for storage Granted 8/3/1999 (not implemented).
- P/2019/0435 Replacement storage building Granted 5/8/2019 (completed).

5.0 Planning Policy

5.1 The Development Plan is the Wrexham Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2), which was adopted on 20th December 2023. This provides the basis for decisions on land use planning in this area, along with national Welsh planning policy set out in Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 and Future Wales: The National Plan 2040. The key issues in the consideration of this application, which all carry equal weight, are as follows:

- Principle of development
- Traffic, access and parking
- Trees
- Visual Amenity
- Noise, Neighbour Amenity and Living Conditions
- Flood Risk and surface water
- Green infrastructure and Ecology
- Environmental Protection

5.2 The following local planning policies are relevant as they cover the issues above and the proposal has been developed to be fully compliant as set out below:

- SP2 Location of development
- SP8 Economic growth and enterprise
- SP11 Transport and accessibility
- SP12 Design principles
- SP13 Health and wellbeing
- SP14 Natural environment
- DM1 Development management considerations
- NE1 National and international nature conservation designations
- NE2 Local nature conservation designations
- NE3 Trees woodlands and hedgerows
- NE6 Waste water treatment and river water quality
- T1 Managing transport impacts
- EM4 Employment development outside of settlement limits

5.3 Principle of Development

The site lies outside of any settlement boundary and is within the open countryside. The pre-application advice referred to conflict with Local Plan Policy EM4: Employment Development Outside of Settlement Limits, on the basis that *"the proposed use as a storage warehouse is additional to the existing HGV depot use".* The storage facility would not be additional to the HGV depot use, it would be ancillary to and support the operation of the wider haulage and transport facility that is the present lawful land use. This is not a separate operation, as appears to be the suggestion made by the planning officer in the pre-application advice.

5.4 Policy EM4 sets out the criteria where new employment development outside of settlement limits will be permitted. Criterion (ii) (a) of the policy permits new development required in connection with a rural enterprise, including proposals for farm diversification where "*the development is located within or forms a logical extension to the complex of buildings on an existing rural enterprise"*. In this case the policy would be satisfied as the storage building is located within the existing site boundary.

5.5 With regard to national Welsh planning policy, PPW 12 section 5.6 sets out how the planning system should support the development of the rural economy and Technical Advice Note 6 (TAN 6): Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities, Welsh Assembly Government, 2010, sets out further guidance. This states that by supporting the development of a broad range of employment opportunities in rural areas, planning authorities can increase economic prosperity. Many commercial and light manufacturing activities can be located in rural areas without causing unacceptable disturbance or other adverse effects. Small enterprises have a vital role to play in the rural economy, and contribute to both local and national competitiveness and prosperity. Planning authorities should adopt a positive approach, and the expansion of existing businesses located in the open countryside should be supported provided there are no unacceptable impacts.

5.6 Traffic, Access and Parking Provision

The lawful use of the site as a haulage yard is a very significant material consideration and there are no restrictions on the number or size of HGVs that can currently visit the site, nor restrictions on the hours of operation under the existing lawful use. The size and type of vehicles visiting the site is unlikely to change as a result of the proposed development.

5.7 The development is unlikely to generate an increase in traffic as the storage building is ancillary to the existing haulage yard. There is ample space within the site for vehicles to turn prior to exiting onto the highway as well as for staff parking. The site plan shows tracking for HGV vehicle manoeuvring which demonstrates that all movements can take place on site and HGVs would enter and egress from the site in forward gear using the existing site entrance onto the A495 Ellesmere Road. A Construction Traffic Management Plan is included as part of the Construction Environmental Management Plan which accompanies this application.

5.8 Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposed development would not give rise to highway safety concerns and it therefore accords with policies SP11 Transport and Accessibility and T1 Managing Transport Impacts.

5.9 Trees

There are no statutorily protected trees on the site or adjacent to the site. However, there is a group of trees adjacent to the western and northern site boundaries within the neighbouring land ownership. Although not protected nor in the ownership or control of the applicant, these trees are an important landscape feature and provide biodiversity as well as screening. All these trees will be retained. A BS5837 Arboricultural Impact Assessment supports this application and includes recommendations for tree protection to ensure no harm to these trees arising from construction works and the proposed use. The new building has been positioned without damage to, or future conflict with any trees.

5.10 Visual Amenity

Local Plan Policy DM1 requires new development to 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.

5.11 Section 6.0 of this Statement provides a 'design appraisal', which justifies how the design and layout has been carefully considered with regard to the local surroundings to accord with the character, local distinctiveness and appearance of the site, existing buildings and surrounding landscape, and meets the policy requirements.

5.12 Noise, Neighbour Amenity and Living Conditions

Policy DM1 protects the living conditions of occupiers from any harmful effects of new development including overlooking, harm to outlook, increased activity, disturbance and noise.

5.13 The site is located immediately adjacent to the applicant's own family home. There is a small group of dwellings located c100m to the south of the site. These are the nearest receptors and consideration must be made to minimise harm to their occupants' living conditions. The pre-application advice expressed concern over HGV vehicles parked against the boundary with the adjoining bungalow, as this could involve noise from refrigeration equipment.

5.14 As has already been stated, the existing lawful use of the site as a haulage yard is unrestricted and could result in HGVs entering, leaving and manoeuvring within the site at any time of day or night. This is a very significant material consideration. In terms of disturbance arising from the use of the proposed storage building, this would be used purely for the storage of palleted goods on racked shelving. No industrial processes will take place within the building, nor will there be any noise-generating machinery such as refrigeration units, chillers or mechanical ventilation installed. The development is therefore unlikely to generate

levels of noise that would be harmful to the living conditions of the occupiers of the adjacent property.

5.15 With regard to impact on the group of houses situated 100m to the south, the busy A495 trunk road is the source of background noise, acts as a barrier and the operation coincides with times when the A495 will be busy. In any event, the issues discussed in paragraph 5.14 above will not cause disturbance to these properties.

5.16 Flood Risk and Surface Water

The site is within Flood Zone A, which is considered to be at little or no risk of fluvial or tidal flooding. There are no adopted watercourses on or adjacent to the site. A flood consequence assessment is not required and there is no need to consider flood risk further.

5.17 A drainage strategy supports this application. This showed there will be no increase in surface water arising from the construction of a new storage building wholly on the present impermeable hardstanding area. At present, the yard area surface water runoff drains into the adjacent drainage ditch, which is regularly maintained. The roof area of the new building would also drain into this ditch via the existing outfall pipe. There would be no increase in phosphate levels in the River Dee catchment.

5.18 Green infrastructure and Ecology

The accompanying Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) has identified no green infrastructure present on the actual site of the proposed new building and concludes there will be no loss of green infrastructure arising from this development.

5.19 The GIS has identified significant green infrastructure along the site boundary and within the neighbouring land adjacent to this site and recommends that mitigation measures are implemented to avoid harm to this from construction activities and use of the building. All of this has been accepted. Subject to the implementation of these measures being

secured by a suitably worded condition, the development would comply with the Step-Wise Approach outlined in Chapter 6 of PPW 12.

5.20 The Ecology Report has identified there are no statutorily protected ecological sites nearby. There are no ecological features present on the actual site of the proposed new building and the wider haulage site and buildings have negligible habitat potential. However, there are primary features of ecological importance present along the site boundaries, comprising ditches, hedgerows and trees. These provide habitats and wildlife movement corridors by providing links with areas of natural habitat off site.

5.21 The development presents an opportunity for the biodiversity enhancements listed below to be incorporated on site, which will generate a net biodiversity gain. These are all acceptable and are included in the development proposal and application documents:

- Planting up gaps in the boundary hedgerows using native species including hawthorne, holly, mountain ash and hornbeam, which will strengthen the habitat and attract birds and insect pollinators;
- No artificial lighting installed along the northern and western site boundary to maintain this area as a ‘dark zone’ to encourage wildlife;
- All other external lighting to be shielded and comply with Bat Conservation Trust guidelines;
- Incorporation of universal small bird / swift nesting boxes;
- Creation of dead wood and stone piles along the along north and west site boundaries;
- Creation of a new 4m deep planted shrubbery area on the applicant’s land along the northern and western site boundaries;
- A Construction Environmental Management Plan detailing how the construction works will be carried out in a manner that does not harm the environment, is included for assessment.

5.22 Environmental Protection

Consideration has been given to the likely impact of the proposed development on pollution and waste generation. Noise generation has already been covered in Paragraph 5.12 (Neighbour Amenity and Living Conditions) and is not considered to be an issue; therefore a noise assessment is not required.

5.23 The proposed storage building will not result in additional pollution from any effluent, noxious gasses or dust. The haulage business does not deal with the transportation of controlled chemical substances which could catch fire or leak, resulting in danger to the public and environmental pollution.

5.24 The business currently has a commercial waste contract with a licensed waste disposal company and has a 1000 litre Eurobin on site, which is emptied weekly. The proposed storage building will not generate any additional waste over and above what is currently managed within the existing waste disposal contract.

6.0 Design Appraisal

6.1 Local Plan Policy DM1 requires new development to 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.

6.2 The starting point is to identify and assess the character of the surrounding area. The site is not located within or adjacent to any designated areas of special landscape character or near to any designated heritage assets. This is an open landscape of agricultural fields, but punctuated by scattered houses, small clusters of buildings, occasional agricultural sheds interspersed with trees and hedgerows. Indeed, the presence of many trees and hedgerows are very prominent landscape features.

6.3 It is accepted that the proposed new building is larger than what currently exists on the site, but we disagree this is 'excessive' or overly prominent due to its height. The extant use of the site means it already has an appearance incongruous to its otherwise rural setting. As already set out in paragraphs 3.8 and 3,9 of this Statement, the size of the building is the minimum required for operational reasons.

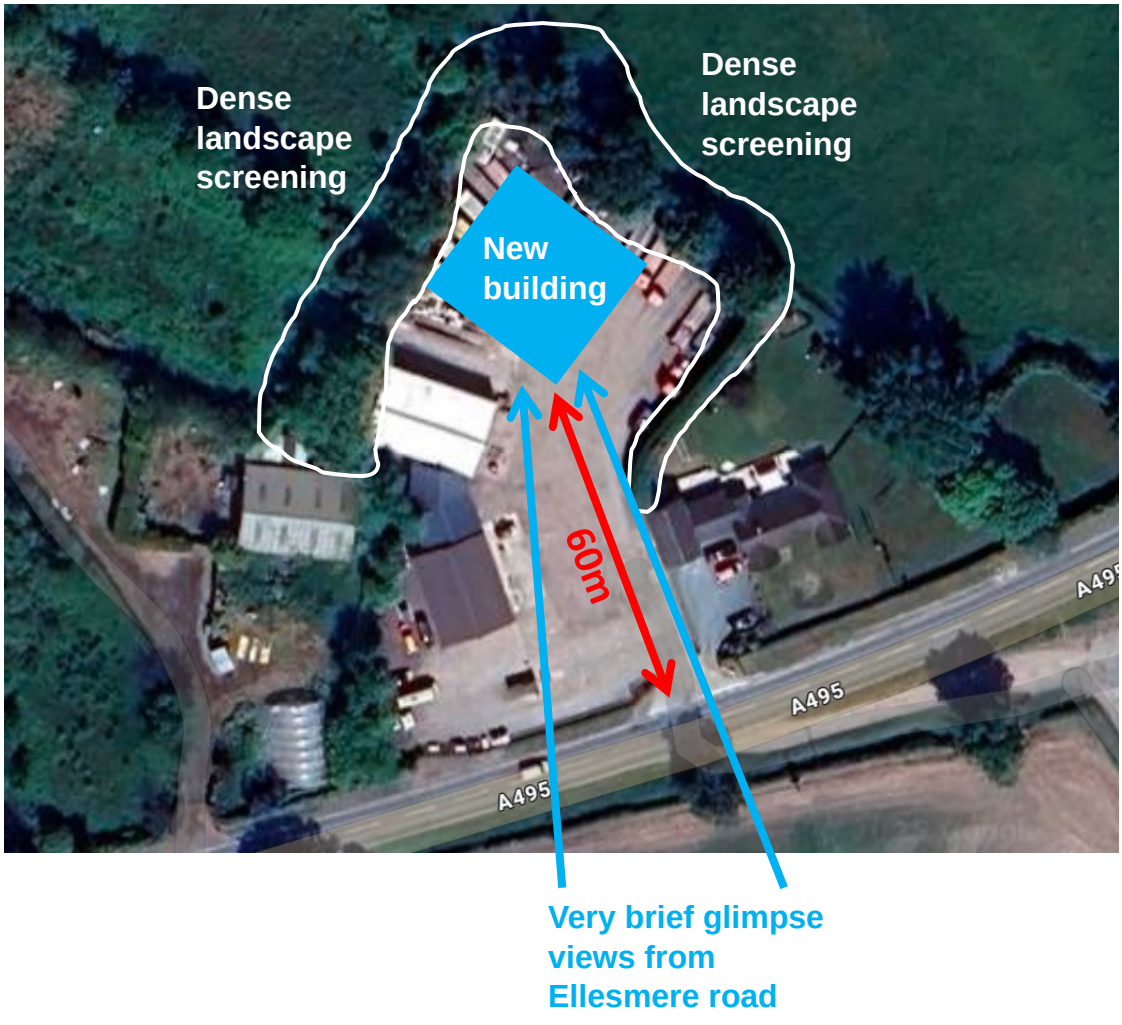
6.4 Careful consideration has been given to positioning the new building where it would not materially alter the character and appearance of the immediate locality or appear overly intrusive.

6.5 A visual assessment has been undertaken and recommended locating the new building at the north west portion of the site, where it would act as a backdrop and coalesce with the existing group of buildings on site. It would therefore not be viewed as an isolated feature in the landscape, but as part of an associated cluster of buildings. Only very brief and glimpse views would be apparent when travelling along Ellesmere Road as the building is set back 60m from the road. The site is within the existing

group of buildings and the new building would not encroach into the open countryside. The site is not elevated above the wider landscape.

6.6 The site benefits from extensive screening provided by trees and hedges along the site boundary, which provides a strong edge delineation and reduces the visual contrast between the buildings and the surrounding landscape. The boundary hedgerows will be enhanced as part of this proposal, by filling gaps with new planting to further strengthen this buffer, as well as increasing biodiversity. An appropriate recessive colour scheme is also proposed.

6.7 All of these measures will help to absorb the new building into the wider landscape. It will not appear visually isolated from the wider group, nor will it be readily discernible any more than similar typical agricultural type buildings that are already present in the wider landscape.



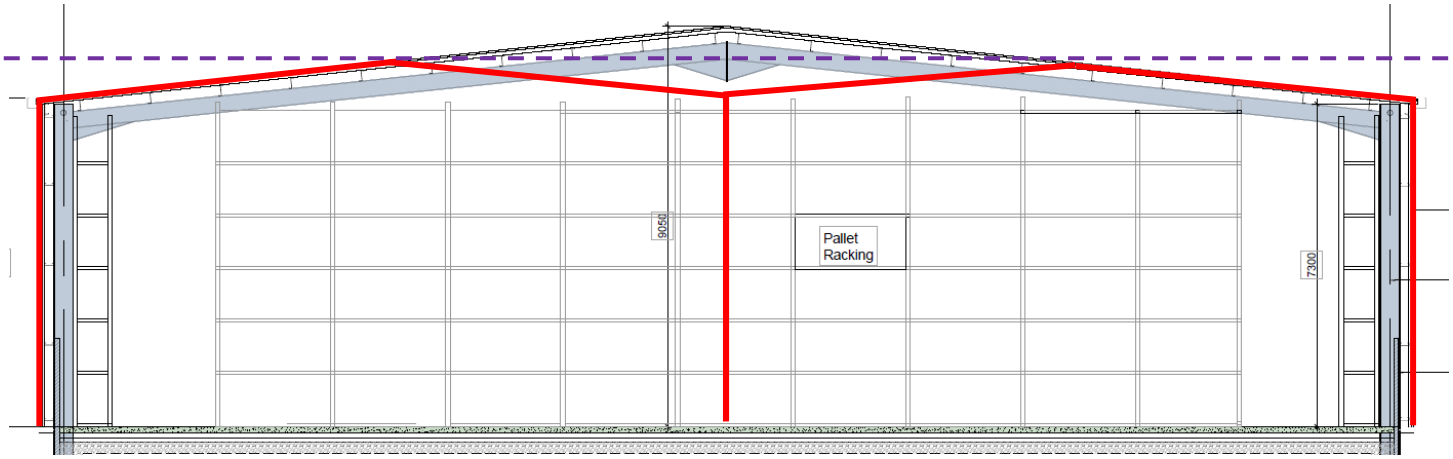
6.8 It is proposed to specify profiled metal cladding for the building's roof and elevations. The proposal is designed to be in-keeping with the character and style of typical rural agricultural type buildings, blend in and not present a visual shock to the prevailing character. Appropriate external colours that should appear recessed and visually absorbed into the landscape have been identified in red outline below and will be discussed with the Council.

6.9 'Willow green' is proposed for the external walls as this is a neutral colour that would blend with the surrounding landscape throughout the year on sunny and overcast days. 'Goosewing grey' is a warm grey that would be appropriate for the roof covering and blend with the sky. The shallow pitch of the roof would not be readily visible from ground. Consideration must also be given to the internal temperature of the building. Dark cladding colours would absorb the sun's heat during summer and this would raise the inside temperature of the building and require mechanical cooling which would use energy and generate noise, consequently the cladding colours should be pale. It is considered the 'willow green' and 'goosewing grey' would be both functional and aesthetically appropriate.



6.10 Consideration has been given to reducing the building's size in response to the pre-application advice, which stated: *"the scale of the development is considered to be excessive in terms of the existing development"* and *"the building would be prominent in the landscape due to its height"*.

6.11 In response to this, the building's footprint has been reduced from that put forward in the pre-application. The ridge height is 2.0m lower than the 1999 planning approval. The applicant's architectural designer has considered how the form of the roof could be adapted to reduce the scale and mass, as shown below.



Above: Option to reduce the ridge height using a dual pitched roof

6.12 The ridge height could be reduced by approximately 1.5m if a double-pitched roof was utilised instead of the proposed single span. Unfortunately, this would not be operationally efficient for the internal layout as there would need to be a row of columns in the centre of the building. The operational use requires uninterrupted open plan internal floorspace.

6.13 It is considered that this 'design appraisal' provides sufficient justification for the scale and footprint of the proposed storage building, which needs to be functionally for purpose. Careful consideration has been given to its positioning and aesthetic design. The visual appraisal has demonstrated it will not be an overly dominant or contrasting feature in the landscape, as it forms part of a very well-screened existing building group.

7.0 Conclusion and Benefits of the Proposed Development

7.1 This development is necessary to support the operation of the wider haulage and transport facility, and will ensure that a long standing family run business, which employs five people, can remain sustainable, competitive and continue to meet its customers' needs. The planning balance assessment shows no policy conflicts exist and the development will provide the following benefits:

- By supporting the development of individual employment opportunities in rural areas, such as this, planning authorities can collectively increase economic prosperity;

- It will help to secure the future of a long standing small business with strong local links to the area;

- The design accords with and does not harm the character or appearance of the landscape and complements the existing design, scale and form of the surrounding buildings;

- There will be no harm to, or conflict with the existing trees adjacent to the site;

- The proposal will not create highway safety implications, nor have any detrimental impact on amenity, public protection or increase flood risk;

- The proposal will not harm ecology or the natural environment and will generate a net gain in biodiversity through extensive new native wildlife-friendly planting and implementation of the recommendations of the ecology report;

- The development of this site sends out a strong signal that Wrexham's rural economy remains viable, as opposed to stagnation and decline.

- This proposal therefore fully accords with overarching local and national planning policy and should be fully supported.

7.2 A balanced judgement should be taken for this site. Whilst development in the open countryside and outside settlement boundaries should be tightly controlled, the lawful use of this site as a haulage yard is a very significant material consideration. The business intends to remain on this site and develop in a sustainable manner so that it can continue to thrive. The development will allow for the more efficient use of an existing site.

7.3 Justification as to why this storage facility is required by the applicant has been made in paragraphs 3.1 - 3.6. It will secure the future of this local business and ensure it can remain competitive in a rapidly changing industry and continue to employ and serve local people. In an age where the haulage industry is becoming increasingly consolidated into large and often global logistics companies, often only smaller local operators such as Lloyd Watson are prepared to serve the needs of independent businesses.

7.4 It is hoped that Wrexham Council as planning authority is in a position to support the proposal. The applicant is happy to work positively and proactively with the planning authority and statutory consultees to consider any policy issues or queries, in order to ensure the proposal is fully sustainable and can be recommended for approval.

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