

REPORT OF THE CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER – 2 OCTOBER 2023

APPLICATION NO:
P/2022 /0066

LOCATION:
CARAVAN SITE LADY MARGARETS
PARK CHIRK WREXHAM
LL14 5AA

DATE RECEIVED:
22/10/2021

COMMUNITY:
Chirk

DESCRIPTION:
ESTYNIAD I SAFLE CARAFANAU
PRESENNOL YN CYNNWYS
LLEINIAU CARAFAN A FFORDD
DARMAC, UNEDAU GLAMPIO,
PEBYLL SAFFARI, MAES PARCIO,
SIED STORIO DILLAD A
LLWYBRAU'N CYSYLLTU A'R
UNEDAU /
EXTENSION OF EXISTING
CARAVAN SITE CONSISTING OF
CARAVAN PITCHES WITH TARMAC
ROAD, GLAMPING UNITS, SAFARI
TENTS, CAR PARK, LINEN
STORAGE SHED AND PATHS
LINKING TO UNITS

CASE OFFICER:
JP

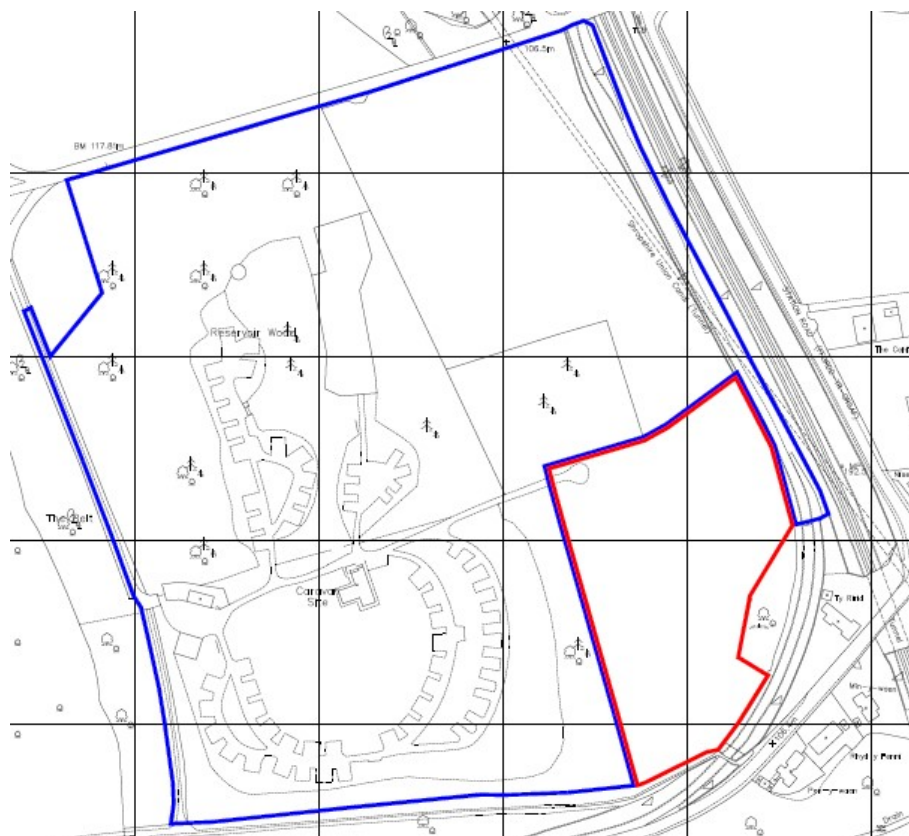
WARD:
Chirk South

AGENT NAME:
MR MICHAEL GORDON

APPLICANT(S) NAME:
MICHAEL GORDON

THE SITE

The site comprises an existing caravan park located on the outskirts of the Chirk Castle Estate situated in an open countryside.



PROPOSAL

The application seeks permission to extend the existing caravan park into an adjoining field. The extension would be used for the following:

- 15 glamping units of varying types, including two fully accessible units;
- Car park for glamping area, including 2 spaces with electric vehicle charging facilities;
- The erection of timber clad linen store to service the glamping units;
- 15 new all-weather touring caravan and motorhome pitches; and
- New service point;
- Associated access roads and paths;

HISTORY

P/2021/0481 ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING CARAVAN PARK INCLUDING NEW PITCHES, ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING PITCHES, NEW TOILET BLOCK, COMPOUNDS, WATER TANK, SERVICE POINTS, WIDENING OF INTERNAL ROAD AND NEW SECURITY BARRIERS. Granted 06/12/21.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

National Planning Policies

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Planning Policy Wales Ed 11
TAN 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities
TAN 13 – Tourism
TAN 18 – Transport
TAN 23 – Economic Development
Future Wales Plan 2020-40

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan

Outside of a defined settlement limit and within Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Buffer Site Zone. Policies PS2, GDP1, T8, EC4, EC5, EC6, EC11, EC12, PS2, CLF9 and CLF 10

Draft Local Development Plan

Outside of a defined settlement limit and within Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Buffer Site Zone. Policies SP12, SP14, SP15, BE1, DM1, T1, EM5, NE1, NE3 and NE6 are relevant.

CONSULTATIONS

Chirk Town Council

Consulted 26/1/22. No response received

Local Member

Notified 26/1/22. No response received

Highways Officer

Raises no objection. The Highway Officer advises that the additional traffic generated is unlikely to have a significant impact upon the highway network.

Parks, Countryside and Rights of Way Officer

Raises no objection to the application. However the PCRoW Officer has expressed concern about the proposed 1.8m palisade fence between the site and adjoining public footpath on the grounds that it may lead to users of the path feeling hemmed in and reduce natural surveillance.

Public Protection Officer

Raises no objection, but recommends an Advisory Note on air quality.

Tree Officer

Raises no objection subject to a planning condition being imposed to secure tree protection measures.

Ecology Officer

Raises no objection subject to conditions being imposed to secure an Ecological Management and Maintenance Plan, and external lighting scheme and Reasonable Avoidance Measures for Great Crested Newts.

Conservation Officer

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Raises no objection and advises that despite the sensitivity of the site, the application demonstrates that there will be little immediate visual impact on the WHS or Conservation Area.

Contaminated Land Officer

Has no comments to make.

Natural Resources Wales

Raises no objection subject to conditions being imposed to secure a biosecurity Risk Assessment and the Ecological Report being included as an approved document.

NRW have expressed concerns that further information is required regarding how foul drainage will be managed.

Welsh Water

Raises no objection but initially advised that it was unclear if the development would connect to the public sewer.

Re-consulted 5/9/2022

Ancient Monument Society

Consulted 26/1/22. No response received

The National Trust

Consulted 26/1/22. No response received

Canals and Rivers Trust

Raises no objections but has provided the following general advice and concerns:

- Three pitches appear to be close to the zone of influence of Chirk Tunnel (Grade II* listed). The CRT would not wish to see any development closer to the zone of influence of the tunnel. Care also needs to be taken during construction to avoid excessive vibration;
- Surface water drainage would not impact the canal structure;
- The site lies within the buffer zone of the World Heritage Site. Advises that based on the submitted details, the site would be well screened and not visible from the canal corridor. Future users would be able to visit the WHS which would be largely beneficial;
- The suggested enhancement suggested in the Ecology Assessment should be fully incorporated and embedded within the development.

CADW

No objection to the development

AONB/JAC

Consulted 26/1/22. No response received

Press Notice

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Expired 23.2.2022

Site Notice

Expired 21.2.2022

Neighbours

The owners/occupiers of 4 nearby properties notified 26/1/2022. Two representations received raising the following concerns:

- Visual Impact upon historic site;
- Increase in Light and noise pollution;
- Increase use of already narrow bridge;
- Use of palisade fencing (now removed from scheme); and
- Impact of vibrations upon tunnel.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Development: Unitary Development Plan Policy CLF 10 permits new touring caravan and camping sites, and extension to existing sites where:-

- The site is unobtrusive and well screened without the need for additional strategic landscaping;
- The site is not located within a green barrier or Special Landscape Area (SLA); and
- The site is used for touring purposes only and is not used for the storage of caravans which are not in use.

Policy EM5 of the draft LDP permits new existing touring caravan, camping and glamping sites and extensions to existing sites where:

- The scale, form and location of the development does not have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside; and
- The site is used for touring purposes only and not for the storage of caravans which are not in use.

The site is unobtrusive, being well screened by existing mature trees and hedges within the site and the wider landscape. The site is not within a UDP Green Barrier or SLA. The development would provide all weather pitches for touring caravans and glamping pitches. Caravans would not be stored on the site.

Having regard to the above, the proposal complies with both UDP policy CLF10 and draft LDP policy EM5. As such the principle of development is acceptable.

Visual Impact: The proposed development would provide for 15 additional touring caravan pitches, 15 glamping pitches, including two provided with

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ramped access, sufficient space and facilities for wheelchair use and a dedicated parking space. 12 of the glamping pitches would be occupied glamping pods and the 3 with safari tents.

A linen store is proposed to store cleaning equipment and spare consumables necessary to manage and operate the units. This would be a flat roofed timber clad building. The extension would be served by a new communal parking area.

The proposed landscaping scheme includes additional tree and thicket planting adjacent to the southern and eastern boundaries. Planting of native species hedges would be undertaken in between the glamping pitches along with the provision of a wildflower meadow in the open spaces surrounding them.

The site forms a logical extension to the existing caravan site. As noted above, it is well screened by existing trees and hedgerows on site and in the wider landscape. The proposed landscaping measures would also assist in providing screening. Whilst screening would be reduced in winter months, views of the development from nearby and distant viewpoints would be limited. The proposed development would not detract from rural character of the landscape surrounding the site.

The submitted landscaping scheme makes provision for a 1.8m high palisade fence along the south eastern boundary of the site. This part the site adjoins a public footpath. The Parks, Countryside and Footpaths Officer and a third party expressed concern that the style and height of the fence would be inappropriate and would to an unacceptable tunnelling affect upon adjacent footpath. The applicants are agreeable to using a weld mesh fence instead, which would be less intrusive and would lessen the impact on the footpath. A revised scheme of boundary treatment could be secured by a suitably worded condition.

Having regard to the above, the proposed development accords with UDP Policy GDP1 and draft LDP Policy DM1.

External Lighting: The proposed extension would be lit with low level lighting bollards throughout. Each glamping pod would also have an external light controlled by an infra-red sensor and each caravan pitch electrical hook-up point would have a level LED light to illuminate the location of the electrical cables where these rise up off the ground.

Whilst the proposals are likely to result in only limited illumination of the site at night, a lighting plan is required that provides details of the level of illumination and light spill. This is to ensure light levels do not adversely impact on the countryside at night or protected species (see below). This can be secured by an appropriately worded condition.

Impact on Heritage Assets: There are no heritage assets on the site but there are 9 Scheduled Monuments and 3 Registered Parks and Gardens

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within the wider locality. The site is also within the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site Buffer Zone. The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement which concludes a negligible adverse impact. Cadw concur with this conclusion and raise no objection to the application.

The Llangollen Canal passes through Chirk Tunnel which is located to the east of the site. The tunnel is Grade II* listed. The Canal and River Trust (CRT) raises no objection but has advised that care would also need to be taken to minimise any vibrations during construction. Given the nature of the proposed development, any vibration arising from construction pitches and access roads and paths is likely to be relatively limited.

Having regard to the visual impact considerations above, as well as conclusions of the HIA, there would be no significant impact or harm to heritage assets in the vicinity. In such terms, the development accords with policy EC11 of the UDP and policies SP15 and BE1 of the draft LDP.

Ecology: The Council's Ecology Officer raises no objection to the proposal subject to suitability worded conditions to secure the implementation of the Great Crested Newt mitigation and ecological enhancements outlined in the Ecology Report accompanying the application. A lighting plan is referred to in the Ecology Report but this has not been submitted.

The Ecology Report identifies the presence of Himalayan Balsam, an invasive species within the application site. Natural Resources Wales have recommended that a condition should be imposed if planning permission is granted for the proposal to ensure satisfactory long term management of biosecurity.

Subject to appropriately worded conditions to secure the measures set out in the Ecology Report and a lighting scheme, the development accords with UDP policy EC6 and draft LDP policy NE1.

Trees: The application is accompanied by a Tree Report. Whilst this identifies a number of trees that need to be removed due to ash dieback disease, no tree removal is required to accommodate the proposed development. A substantial oak tree within the application is to be retained and protection measures will be required during construction.

The Tree Officer raises no objection to the proposed development subject to works being undertaken in accordance with an Arboricultural Method Statement and Arboricultural Supervision. This can be secured by an appropriately worded condition.

Having regard to the above, the proposed development accords with the aims of policy EC 4 of the UDP and Policy NE3 of the draft LDP.

Highway Safety and Parking: No changes are proposed to the existing site access and additional traffic generated is unlikely to have a significant impact upon the highway network. The proposed site layout provides adequate

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parking to serve each of the new pitches. The Highway Officer therefore raises no objection to the application.

Having regard to the above, the development would not give rise to highway safety concerns and in such terms, accords with policy T8 of the UDP and policies DM1 and T1 of the draft LDP.

Residential Amenity: The nearest dwelling is over 30 metres from the site boundary. On this basis and given the proposed site layout, the development would not harm the living conditions neighbouring occupiers. In such terms, the development accords with policy GDP1 of the UDP and policy DM1 of the draft LDP.

Foul Drainage: The site would connect to the main foul sewer network which would drain to the Five Fords Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW). Following the recently completed review of the Environmental Permit for the WWTW have been re-consulted and asked to confirm that:

- There is capacity to treat additional wastewater from the proposed development within revised environmental permit limits, or
- That the sewer network and associated WwTW has the hydraulic capacity to accommodate additional wastewater without contributing to an increase in frequency or duration of storm overflows.

Provided Welsh Water are able to confirm the above, the development is unlikely to have a significant effect the River Dee and Bala Lake SAC and in such terms would accord with policy EC6 of the UDP and policy NE6 of the draft LDP.

Surface Water Drainage: The pitches are to be constructed using loose stone chippings resulting in a free-draining surface. The development would therefore not increase the risk of surface water flood risk.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development would provide for additional tourist accommodation in Chirk and not give rise to any undue landscape, ecology, tree, highway safety, flooding or residential amenity issues. Subject to Welsh Water's response to the foul drainage matters discussed above, the development accords with the relevant UDP policies and draft LDP policies.

RECOMMENDATION A

That planning permission be granted subject to Welsh Water confirming the WWTW and foul sewerage network have capacity to accommodate the foul water flows from the proposed development and to the conditions below.

RECOMMENDATION B

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That if Welsh Water do not confirm that the WWTW and/or the foul sewer network have the capacity to accommodate the foul water flows from the development, the Chief Officer Economy and Planning be given delegated authority to refuse planning permission and to determine the final form of the reason for refusal.

CONDITION(S)

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiry of five years from the date of this permission.
2. The development shall only be carried out in strict accordance with the details shown on the approved drawing(s) numbered LMP-2021-S-180, LMP-2021-S-100, LMP-2023-P-115, LMP-2023-P-114, LMP OS, LMP-2023-P-600, and as contained within the application documentation, Design and Access Statement, Heritage Impact Assessment, Updated PEA and Tree Report
3. No part of the development shall commence until a detailed Arboricultural Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No development or other operations shall take place except in strict accordance with the Method Statement as is approved. The Method Statement shall include the following:
 - a) A specification for tree protection fencing and ground protection measures that comply with British Standard 5837:2012;
 - b) A Tree Protection Plan showing the location of the trees to be removed and retained with their crown spreads, Root Protection Areas, Construction Exclusion Zones, and location of protective fencing and ground protection measures accurately plotted;
 - c) A full specification for any access, driveway, path, underground services or wall foundations within retained tree Root Protection Areas or Construction Exclusion Zone, including any related sections and method for avoiding damage to retained trees;
 - d) Details of general arboricultural matters including proposed practices with regards to cement mixing, material storage and fires;
 - e) Details of the frequency of supervisory visits and procedures for notifying the findings of such visits to the Local Planning Authority;
 - f) Method for protecting retained trees during demolition works;
 - g) Details of all proposed tree works, including felling and pruning.
4. Landscaping shall be undertaken in strict accordance with approved drawing no. LMP-2021-P-600 within three months of the first use of the development with the exception of soft landscaping which shall be carried out in the first planting season (November to March) or seeding season (April to September) following the first use. The landscaping scheme shall be retained thereafter.
5. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the findings and recommendations contained within the Ecology Assessment as carried out by Thomas, C and Kibble K (dated 2021) and updated PEA by CSA Environmental and dated August 2023 approved as part of this application. The mitigation and compensation measures hereby approved shall be fully implemented prior to first use of the development.
6. No part of the development shall commence until details of the proposed Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) have been submitted to

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and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the following:

- a) Details of a tool box talk on the identification and ecology of great crested newts to be made available to all construction staff employed on the project;
- b) Details of an artificial amphibian hibernacula to be constructed adjacent to the site (Details of the design can be found in great crested newt mitigation guidelines - August 2001);
- c) Details of a walk over survey of the site prior to commencement of development, and a destructive search (under the supervision of a licensed great crested newt handler) made of any potential great crested newt habitat (such as rubble piles or sheet materials that are on the site) on the site. Any amphibians found should be relocated to the artificial hibernacula;
- d) Details of storage of material on pallets off the ground, and bulk materials which are to be delivered on site and used within the day of delivery.
- e) Confirmation that excavated trenches will be covered over at the end of each working day with plywood and the edges sealed with sand or soil. Trenches are to be checked each morning for any amphibians. Any amphibians located are to be moved to the artificial hibernacula. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the RAMs as are approved.

7. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a Biosecurity Risk Assessment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The risk assessment shall include measures for the long term management of invasive species during both construction and operation. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved Biosecurity Risk Assessment.

8. No external illumination shall be installed at the site until a lighting scheme has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, no lighting shall be used on any external part of the development except in accordance with the approved lighting scheme.

9. Notwithstanding approved plans, no fences or other means of enclosure shall be erected along the southern boundary of the site other than in accordance with a scheme of boundary treatment that shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any fence or means of enclosure shall thereafter be retained in strict accordance with the approved scheme.

10. Within three months of commencement of development a Landscape Management Plan shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. Landscape management shall thereafter be undertaken in strict accordance with approved Landscape Management Plan.

REASON(S)

1. To comply with Section 91(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990.
2. To comply with section 71ZA (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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3. To ensure the work is carried out to accepted arboricultural practices for the long term wellbeing of the tree(s) in accordance with Policies GDP1, PS2 and EC4 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.
4. To ensure a satisfactory standard of appearance of the development in the interests of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policies GDP1 and PS2 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.
5. In order to protect wildlife interests, which are afforded special protection in accordance with Policies GDP1 and EC6 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.
6. To protect named species / habitats / biodiversity which would otherwise be damaged / lost by the development hereby permitted in accordance with Policies GDP1 and EC6 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.
7. To ensure that a Biosecurity Risk Assessment is implemented to secure measure to control the spread and effective management of non-native invasive species in accordance with Policy EC6 of the Unitary Development Plan.
8. To ensure a satisfactory standard of appearance of the development in the interests of the visual amenities of the area and order to protect wildlife interests, which are afforded special protection in accordance with Policies GDP1 and EC6 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.
9. To ensure a satisfactory standard of appearance of the development in the interests of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policies GDP1 and PS2 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.
10. To ensure a satisfactory standard of appearance of the development in the interests of the visual amenities of the area and in order to protect wildlife interests, which are afforded special protection in accordance with Policies GDP1 and EC6 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

NOTE(S) TO APPLICANT

The applicants attention is drawn to the comments received from the Canals and Rivers Trust, and advised to have specific regard to construction vibrations and the integrity of the Grade II* Listed Chirk Tunnel

The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Coal Authority on 0345 762 6848.

Further information is also available on the Coal Authority website at:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-coal-authority
