
Design and Access Statement

**Stryt Yr Hwch Farm
Sontley
Wrexham
LL13 0YA**

Change of use of agricultural building to
commercial use class B1/B8 and all
associated works

[REDACTED]

April 2024

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1.0 Introduction

This report has been commissioned by [REDACTED], the purpose of which is to provide additional information and design details regarding the agricultural enterprise making a planning application for the change of use of an agricultural livestock building to commercial storage B1/B8 use and all associated works on land at Stryt Yr Hwch, Sontley, Wrexham.

The report provides an objective evaluation of the agricultural business operated by Mr R Williams in order to justify the requirements of the Planning Policy Wales when considering development in the open countryside.

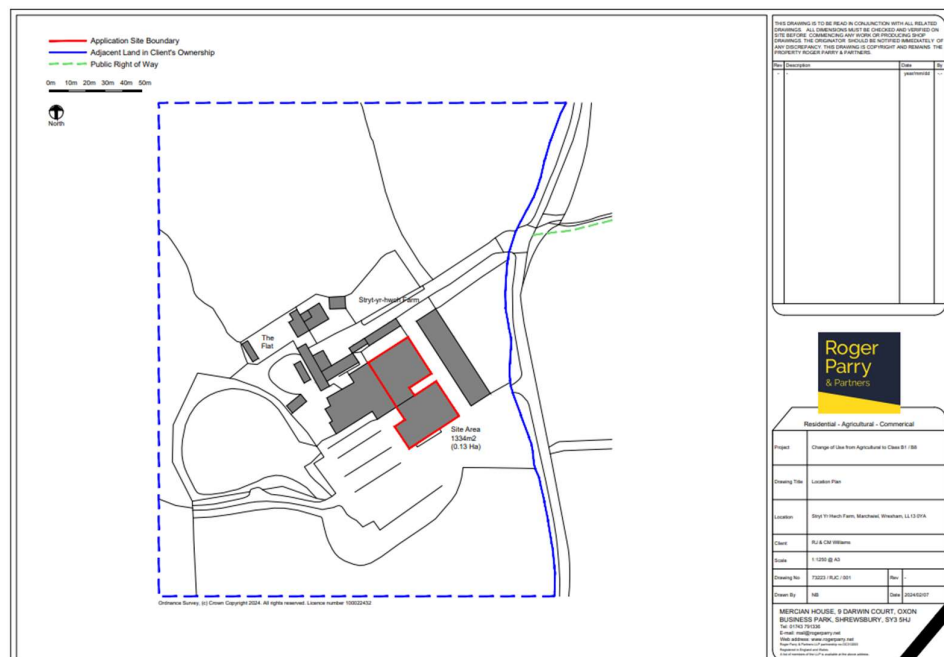
The design aims to keep a balance between the two aims of the planning system – efficient economic development and protection of the landscape.

2.0 Business Overview

The business trading name is [REDACTED] and is a farm unit based in Sontley, Wrexham and the farming enterprise is a dairy farm along with heifer rearing. The applicant, like many other farmers in the country, have found it necessary to diversify on order to survive commercially.

The applicants have been farming at Stryt Yr Hwch for generations and would now like to diversify from the current trade in dairy farm to commercial use of their existing building. This change of use will allow Mr R Williams to retain and manage the already existing traditional farm buildings, using several for the continuing heifer rearing farm business and one for the proposed commercial storage unit.

This considerable investment demonstrates a long term commitment to the business and sustainability of the farming unit and community.



3.0 The Proposal

Mr R Williams proposes to change the use of the existing agricultural livestock building to be used for class B1/B8 commercial storage at Stryt Yr Hwch.

The proposed change of use to a commercial building, wouldn't remove any grassland from agriculture. The building is currently used to house cattle. If the proposal is approved, the farm will sell these cattle therefore resulting in reduced livestock numbers and lower levels of phosphorus produced.

The applicant has researched fully the diversification scheme to run alongside the existing reduced agricultural business. Development proposals such as this contribute to farm income. Planning policies recognise the importance and the need to compliment agriculture as well as maintain and manage the countryside and general landscape. Diversification such as this allows the agricultural community to adapt to changing markets and enable substantial income to provide support for primary food production.

The proposed change of use to a commercial building will include:

- Perimeter protection
- Access control
- CCTV
- Security/amenity lighting
- Fire prevention measures
- Vermin control

The application, if successful, will lead to reduced traffic on the unclassified road leading to and from the A483. Any increase in commercial traffic will be mitigated by a decrease in agricultural traffic. Commercial related traffic could be termed as through traffic and will be quickly absorbed into the mainstream traffic and less likely to cause any local conflict or congestion.

There is an existing access from the highway construction to a good standard, capable of accommodating HGVs. This is a previously approved commercial access.

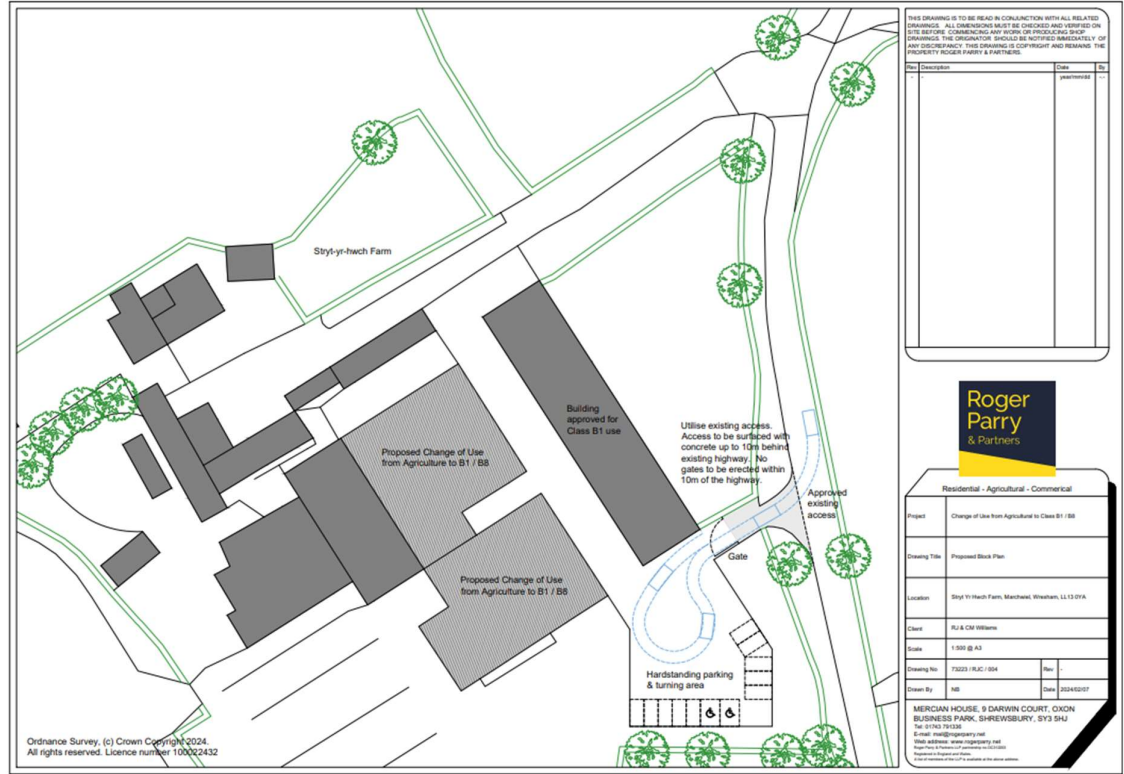
Access to the storage area will use the existing access off the main access with an adequate standing/parking area immediately on entering the storage site.

The ground is relatively level and presents no problems for vehicles or pedestrians entering or leaving the site.

The client has previously gained planning permission for the change of use of adjacent land and buildings within the farmstead from agricultural to use class b1 individual commercial workshops with ancillary storage and parking. Included within this, the site has benefitted from improved access and visibility. The proposal will be in keeping with the existing approved development and will form a natural extension to the diversification of agricultural buildings to commercial use, without the need to erect any new buildings.

It is proposed that the existing agricultural building will be converted into eight units for commercial storage use. Some minor alterations to the building will be undertaken to ensure they are suitable for use under class b1/b8. This includes cladding and roller doors on existing openings to improve security of the units, which will be essential for their use as storage spaces. The units vary in size giving the opportunity for a range of different business to utilise the spaces, while still all being relatively small. This will allow smaller businesses or those that are just starting up to have a unit that is financially viable.

The change of use to commercial will provide a secure and accessible to multiple businesses and allow them to increase employment, resulting in more jobs available. Wrexham council planning policy E5 supports the conversion of suitably located buildings for small scale economic development/employment generating use.



4.0 Constraints

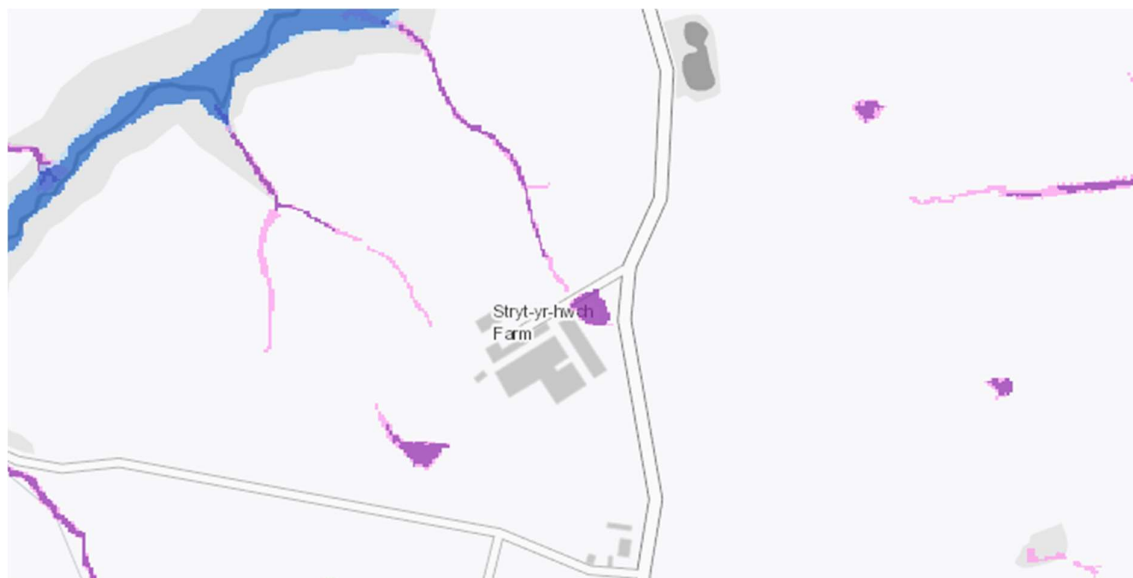
4.1 Public Rights of Way

There are no footpaths on or adjacent to the site. Any footpaths nearby will be unaffected and unobstructed by the development.



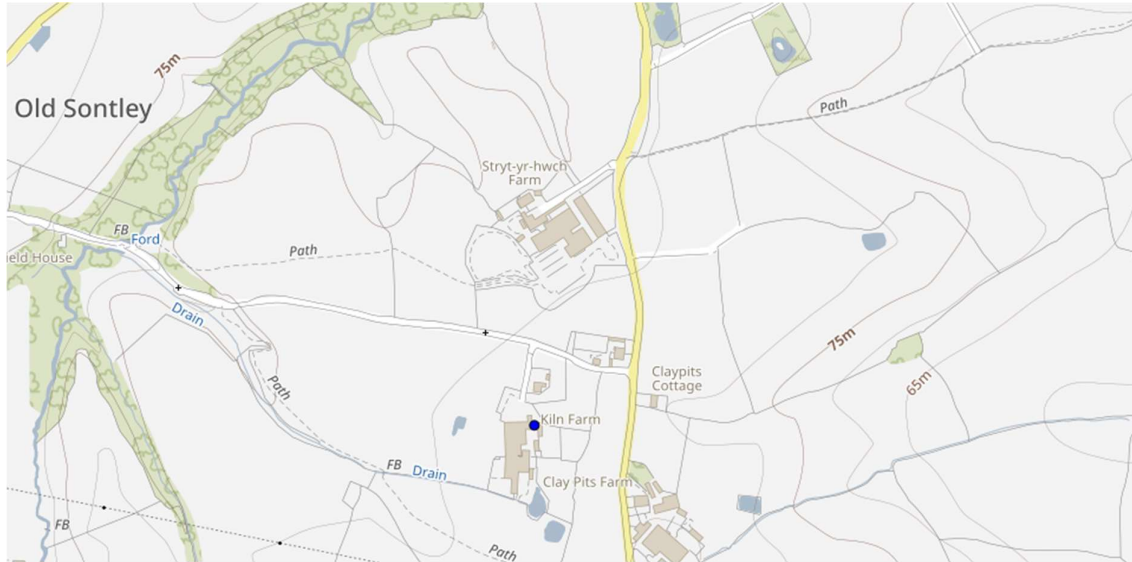
4.2 Flooding

The site is not within the flood zone for rivers or surface water and small watercourses. The development will not increase surface water flooding as the buildings are already existing.



4.3 Heritage Assets

There are no listed buildings or assets on or adjacent to the site. The closest listed building is over 200m from site. The proposed development will have no affect on the listed farmhouse as the building is existing and no major visual changes will be made.



4.4 Ecology

Arborvite were commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecology Appraisal in order to address the impact of the development on habitats and protected species, The survey concluded the proposal will have no impact on protected habitats or species.

4.5 Noise

In consideration of the planning application, it is predicted that there would be no significant increase in noise emissions over and above the noise emissions from existing agricultural operations.

4.6 Highway

Stryt yr Hwch is an established dairy and youngstock enterprise therefore traffic movements associated with farming activities would be of high volume. The business is looking to reduce their livestock numbers and diversify, so the proposed change of use would result in less traffic movements, and reduced vehicle size compared to large farm machinery.

The site is accessed via a lane off the B5426 with visibility in both directions and several passing places in each direction.

3.0 Planning Policy

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of how the proposal 'fits' with the relevant National, Regional and Local policies and legislative framework. This section is structured around the hierarchical policy framework of:

- National agricultural strategy and planning policy guidance
- Local development plans

Planning Policy Wales

The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation and resultant duties such as the Socio-economic Duty. A well-functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development and achieving sustainable places.

Planning Policy Wales edition 11 February 2021 has governed the planning policies and their application for England and Wales. Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should follow the guidelines below:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- proposals for diversification, new start-ups and micro-businesses should also be encouraged, where appropriate, to generate new job and wealth-creating opportunities.
- Local authorities should encourage the growth of self-employment and micro businesses in rural areas by adopting a supportive and flexible approach to home working and associated change of use applications.
- Planning authorities should adopt a constructive approach towards agricultural development proposals, especially those which are designed to meet the needs of changing farming practices. They should also adopt a positive approach to the conversion of rural buildings for business re-use.

Technical Advice Notes

TAN 6 - The proposal is for farm diversification that will re-use an existing building, which was most recently used as part of the dairy enterprise. This part of the farming business has ceased therefore an alternative use to generate income for the holding is required. The proposal will not result in any harm to the surrounding landscape. The proposal will have a positive impact on the local economy as it will provide premises for small businesses in the rural area.

TAN 23 - The re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of rural areas for commercial and industrial development. In recognising this, local planning authorities are expected to adopt a positive approach to the conversion of rural buildings for business re-use, especially those buildings located within or adjoining farm building complexes.

Wrexham County Borough Local Development Plan 2013-2028

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.

4.0 Conclusion

The proposed development seeks to gain permission for the change of use of an existing agricultural livestock building to use class B1/B8 commercial. This will be a betterment of the site and to the environment due to the reduction in livestock numbers which will therefore produce less phosphorus.

The purpose of this report is to outline the scale and type of diversification. The need for an alternative income is vital to sustain the remaining agricultural at Stryt Yr Hwch. The proposed change of use will have no impact on the site's ecology. It is felt that the proposed diversification accords with planning policy in encouraging farm diversifications into non-agricultural projects.

The proposal will be a natural extension of the previously approved change of use buildings on site to commercial use and will utilise existing buildings. It will provide the opportunity for much needed space for small businesses and create new jobs within these.

Access will be via a previously improved existing access with the appropriate visibility splays, turning area and parking spaces. The development will not adversely impact upon highway safety or residential amenity.

The development of the site will not be detrimental to the visual amenities of the area and is acceptable in its design, scale and use.

The proposed development will be an improvement of how the existing building is currently used, and therefore should be considered acceptable of gaining planning permission for change of use to b1/b8.