

Supporting Planning Statement

Retrospective application for the Change of Use of an
agricultural building into a B8 Storage Unit

At

The Building at Conery Lane, Whitchurch, SY13 3EZ

On behalf of

The Barnston Estate

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This supporting statement has been prepared on behalf of the Barnston Estate for the retrospective change of use from agriculture to B8 storage at Building at Conery Lane, Whitchurch, SY13 3EZ.
- 1.2 This statement should be read in conjunction with other supporting information supplied as part of the planning application including:
- Application forms;
 - Location Plan;
 - Existing and Proposed Plans;
 - Elevations and Floor Plans.
- 1.3 The following sections of the statement provide a description of the site and context of the surrounding area; details of the proposal, alongside an overview and assessment of the planning policy context relevant to the proposed development.
- 1.4 This statement demonstrates that the proposal fully complies with all relevant local and national planning policy.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The site and building are located on Conery Lane, which feeds off the A495 (Long Lane).
- 2.2 The site is located within the administrative boundary of Wrexham County Borough Council.
- 2.3 The site is outlined approximately in red below (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Aerial view of the site (not to scale). Google Maps, 2024.

- 2.4 Figure 2 below shows the site, outlined approximately in red in its context with the wider surrounding area. The image shows the property in relation to development along Conery Lane as well as its relation to Bronington.
- 2.5 Bronington is a small village and community in Wrexham which is predominantly made up of residential development with local amenity services.

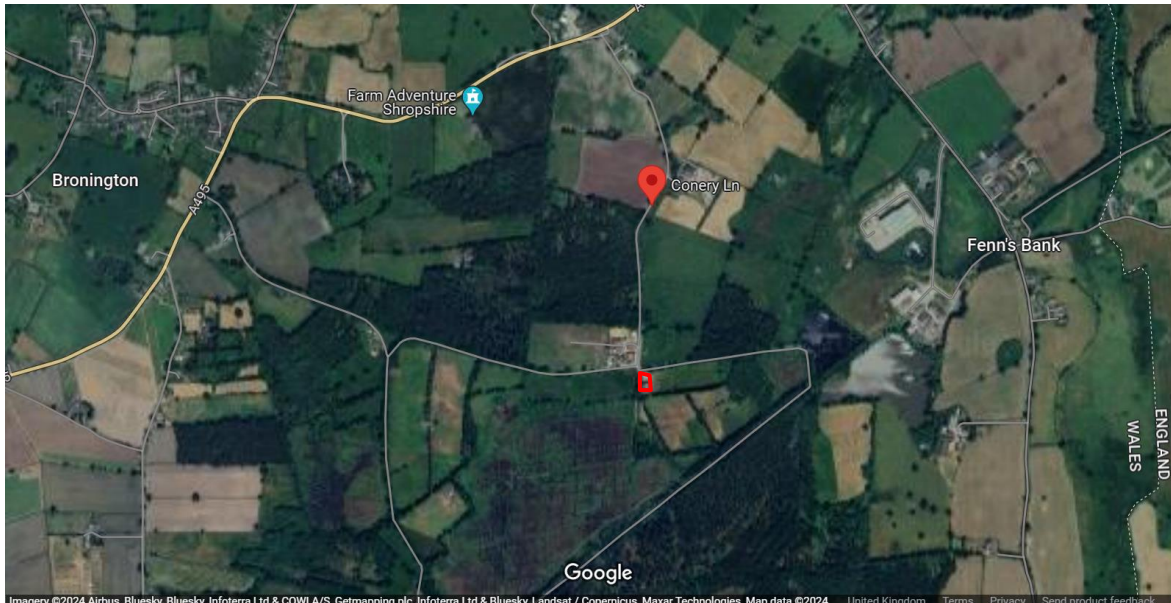


Figure 2. Aerial view of the site and surrounding context (not drawn to scale). Google Maps, 2024

- 2.6 The site consists of a large steel-portal framed agricultural barn with an area of hard standing to the front. Internally, the barn consists of two large open spaces which are divided by a partition wall. Both spaces are accessed via the front opening.
- 2.7 The site is accessed directly off Conery Lane, with Conery Farm located across from the Conery Lane and Moss Lane junction to which this barn is also located on.
- 2.8 Conery Lane is a minor route, comprising of both dwellings and farmsteads. The building sits to the south end of Conery Lane, with little traffic movement taking place further along Conery Lane to the south.
- 2.9 The building has been in an agricultural use since it was first built in the early 1990's. However, has recently started to be used as a B8 Storage building.
- 2.10 The site is not at risk from flooding, nor are there any surrounding areas that are at risk from flooding.
- 2.11 The building is not a listed Heritage Asset, nor are there any Heritage Assets within the immediate or surrounding area.

- 2.12 From reviewing the MAGIC Map, which is produced by DEFRA, this site sits on the edge of the Fenns, Wixall and Bettisfield Mosses National Nature Reserve which is a SSSI and a designated special area of conservation. This proposal has not and will not impact this area.
- 2.13 From reviewing the Wrexham County Local Development Plan, the site sits on the edge of an allocated Special Landscape Area. This allocated land is the Fenns, Wixall and Bettisfield Mosses National Nature Reserve, mentioned above. This proposed change will not interfere with this protected area, however it is worth noting its context to the land for future reference.
- 2.14 The protected land runs slightly south of the building, and therefore there is no scope to build behind the existing property, which has not been done and is not part of this proposal, but important to note, nonetheless.

3.0 PREVIOUS PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 There appears to be no recent planning history for the site, when completing an online history search.
- 3.2 The agricultural building was built circa early 1990's, however there are no applications online visible for this time frame.

4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The application is seeking retrospective permission to change the use of the existing building from agricultural to a B8 Storage Unit.
- 4.2 The fabric and appearance of the building externally and internally have done and will remain as it always has done. No alterations to the fabric of the building have been made, and none are proposed as part of this planning application.
- 4.3 The agricultural building has a green painted corrugated metal frame, which sits on top of grey breeze blocks. The building has been designed to blend in with the surrounding rural character of the area.

- 4.4 The size of the agricultural building is 815.6 m². The change of use has occurred for the whole building, not just part of it.
- 4.5 The building has an opening at the front, and a single door exit to the right on the rear elevation. Both of these openings can be seen on drawing reference: PE01. The main entrance is on the north elevation and consists of two large metal sliding doors that open in the middle. The rear elevation is a single doorway. Figure 3 below is a photo of the north elevation, showing the main entrance doors.



Figure 3. Photograph of the north elevation and parking area, March 2024.

- 4.6 There are no WC facilities on site. As the business employees only visit the agricultural building sporadically, there is no need for there to be facilities to be provided on site.
- 4.7 The business that is currently operating out of the building is a furniture supply company that supplies to individuals in bulk who then sell the wares online under their own company. Therefore, this business is not open to the public and only has around 2 van trips per week to collect and drop off furniture.

- 4.8 The operation hours for the company are only throughout the day, with trips to and from the site only occurring during operation hours.
- 4.9 The building is locked and secure when no one is on site, with approximately two trips per week in a van to and from the site. These trips are not done by purchasers, but instead by an employee of the business.
- 4.10 The building is accessed via the entrance that has always been in place, and through the change of use, there has been no works to the entrance or the surrounding land.
- 4.11 The wider field that is next to the building is not included within this change, it is strictly the agricultural building only.

Access and Parking

- 4.12 The building is accessed via the existing entrance off Conery Lane.
- 4.13 The main form of travel to and from the site will be by cars, and where necessary vans in the instance of larger furniture movements.
- 4.14 The area located to the front of the building has been used for vehicle parking. The proposed site plan (drawing reference: PP01) shows this area clearly marked. The parking arrangement is informal parking, however, is contained to this area.
- 4.15 Wrexham County Council have a range of Local Plan Guidance Notices, with SPG 16 relating to car parking standards. In this document it states that parking provision for changes of use of existing buildings will be 'judged on their own merits. Additional spaces may be required were the demand for parking arising from a new use, particularly where this is likely to cause highway problems in the locality.' While there will be additional vehicles on site with this new use, there will not be an adverse effect on Conery Lane, with traffic movement to and from the site throughout the week being minimal.
- 4.16 Notwithstanding the above, SPG 16 talks about B8 storage use requiring 1 car space per 100m² gross floor space and 1 cycle space per 100m² gross floor space. This would mean the building should have 8 parking and cycling spaces, however there will not be a need for this

number of cars to be on site at any one time. As previously explained, there is a van that visits the site on average twice a week to pick up and drop off furniture. Due to the nature of the business, being a storage facility for furniture which gets collected and dropped off, there will be no visitors arriving by a bike.

Green Infrastructure Statement

- 4.17 Planning Policy Wales has defined Green Infrastructure as 'the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places. Green Infrastructure can function at a range of different scales; from entire ecosystems such as wetlands and rivers to parks, fields and gardens at the local scale and street trees, hedgerows, roadside verges and green roofs/walls at the micro scale' (Planning Policy Wales, 2024).
- 4.18 The Welsh Government are asking all planning authorities in Wales to undertake a Green Infrastructure Assessment which Planning Policy Wales defines as 'an integrated map-based evidence resource which uses existing datasets and the best available information to map existing green infrastructure and ecological assets' (Planning Policy Wales, 2024).
- 4.19 It became a requirement for all new planning applications to create a Green Infrastructure Assessment representing how the development will enhance Green Infrastructure across Wales when Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales was updated in October 2023. Chapter 6.2 of the PPW document sets out the definition of Green Infrastructure and the requirements of delivering it.
- 4.20 The agricultural building at Conery Lane, does not have any of its surrounding land attached to this change of use. Rather, the building is in a separate red line to the surrounding green spaces and therefore there is no green space accounted for within this application.
- 4.21 As well as the above, as this is a change of use application, there is no requirement to enhance Green Infrastructure on the site.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 Wrexham Council adopted their new Local Development Plan (LDP) in December 2023. The LDP is the adopted policy for decision making.

- 5.2 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is the national planning policy for Wales. This was recently updated in February 2024.

Wrexham Council Local Development Plan 2024

- 5.3 Policy SP14 – This policy supports development which protects, conserves and enhances the Special Landscape Area. Figure 4 below shows the site outlined in red within the context of the Special Landscape Area which is outlined in green.

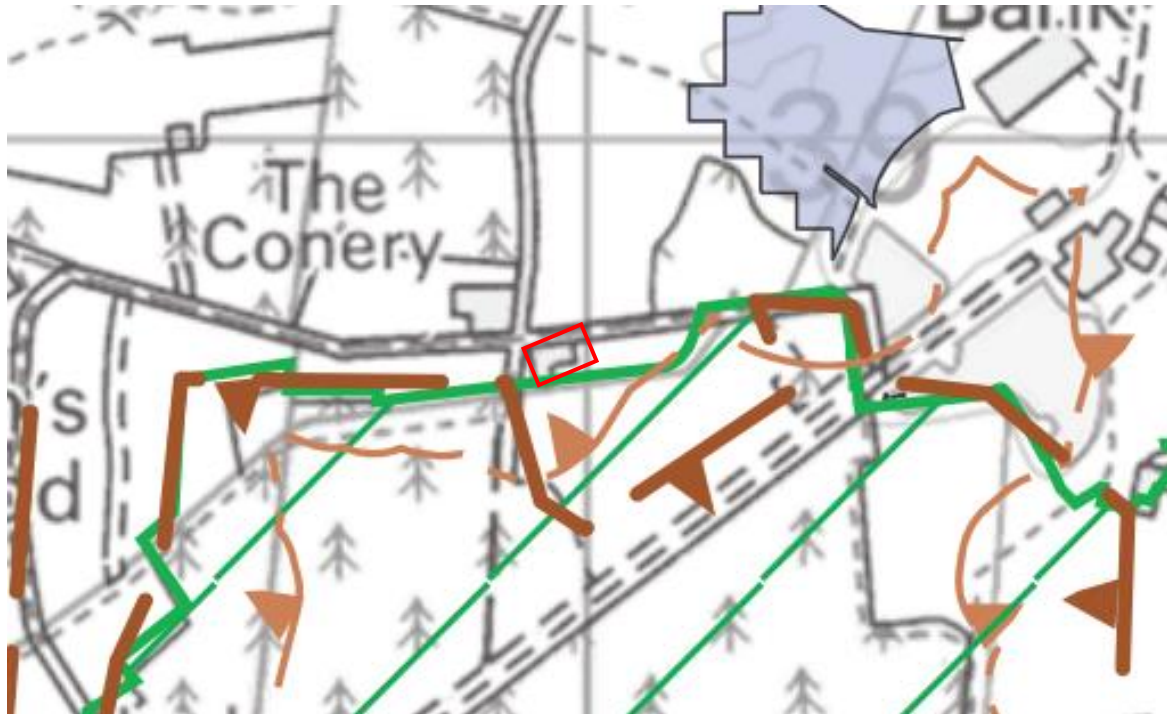


Figure 3. Site in the context of the designated policies from the Wrexham Local Development Plan, Wrexham Council, 2023.

- 5.4 Policy SP16 – Minerals Supply and Safeguarding. This site is located on the edge of the Mineral Extraction Exclusion Zone, outlined on figure 4 in dark brown and the Sand and Gravel Safeguarding Area. This policy states that minerals will be sustainably managed through:
- i. The protection of minerals from unnecessary sterilisation by directing new development away from areas underlain by mineral of importance or where this is not possible, through the requirement to extract mineral prior to the non-mineral development in accordance with the requirements of Policy MW1; and
 - ii. Avoiding conflict between mineral working and sensitive development through the use of buffer zones; and
 - iii. Contributing towards meeting the regional need for aggregate minerals in collaboration with Flintshire County Council; and

- iv. Supporting proposals for mineral extraction within the County Borough which contribute towards maintaining an adequate supply of minerals in sustainable locations including the delivery of high quality restoration and aftercare programmes which enhance and provide linkages with the natural environment.

5.5 Policy SP8 – Economic Growth, Employment and Enterprise. The Local Development Plan has a target to 'support a vibrant, diverse and competitive local economy that provides a range of job opportunities to enable new and existing businesses to grow in Wrexham.' The policy goes on to say that it is therefore imperative that the County has adequate employment land to accommodate the projected growth.

5.6 Policy EM2 – Provision of Supporting Facilities for Employees in Business, Industrial and Warehousing Developments. While this building is not located within the designated employment area, the change of use from Agricultural to B8 Storage does accord with the policy requirements which are as follows:

- i. The facility is of an appropriate size and scale and is subordinate in its nature to meet the needs of the workers in the vicinity and does not result in an over concentration of such facilities in one area;
- ii. The proposal does not impact on the status and character of the employment area for B1, B2 or B8 facilities in one area;
- iii. The operation of other industrial and employment uses in the vicinity of the site would not be adversely affected; and
- iv. The proposal would not result in significant levels of visitor traffic into the area or exacerbate existing traffic conditions.

The change of use from agricultural to B8 Storage in this location does accord with all of the above requirements.

5.7 Policy EM4 – Employment Development Outside of Settlement Limits. This policy states that new employment development outside of settlement limits will only be permitted through:

- i. The conversion of the building where:
 - a) The building is suitable for the proposed use and is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive alteration, rebuilding or extension; and
 - b) Conversion does not result in unacceptable impact on the structure, form, character or setting of a building of historic or architectural merit; and
 - c) The proposed use(s) and the curtilage of the development, either individually or cumulatively with other similar developments, do not result in

a harmful effect on the character of the site, infrastructure the wider countryside and is appropriate in scale for its location in terms of traffic regeneration.

The policy goes on to say 'the re-use and adaption of existing buildings can provide opportunities to support new employment development, including home based working, whilst minimising the impact of development upon the countryside.'

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 2024

- 5.8 Paragraph 5.4.2 of the document defines Warehousing as an economic land use. Paragraph 5.2.1 states that 'for planning purposes the Welsh Government defines economic development as the development of land and buildings for activities that generate sustainable long term prosperity , jobs and incomes. The planning system should ensure that the growth of output and employment in Wales as a whole is not constrained by a shortage of land for economic purposes.'
- 5.9 Paragraph 5.4.4 of PPW states 'wherever possible, planning authorities should encourage and support developments which generate economic prosperity and regeneration.'
- 5.10 Paragraph 5.4.12 of the PPW document states that planning authorities should promote the re-use of previously developed vacant, underused land.
- 5.11 Paragraph 5.6.8 states 'planning authorities should adopt a constructive approach towards agricultural development proposals, especially those which are designed to meet the needs of changing farming practices or are necessary to achieve compliance with new environmental, hygiene or welfare legislation. They should adopt a positive approach to the conversion of rural buildings for business re-use.'
- 5.12 Paragraph 5.6.10 of PPW states 'planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to diversification projects in rural areas. Additional small business activities can often be sustainably located on farms and provide additional income streams. Diversification can strengthen the rural economy and bring additional employment and prosperity to communities.'

6.0 ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This application is seeking retrospective consent for the change of use from an agricultural building to a storage unit within the B8 use class.
- 6.2 The storage use of the building is not causing an increase in traffic flow along Conery Lane, as the building is not open to the public. The building is only opened when required, where a small van/car arrives on site to drop furniture off or to pick it up. This is therefore considered appropriate along Conery Lane.
- 6.3 There have been no changes to the internal or external fabric through the B8 use. Nor are any proposed as part of this application. This application is to keep the building exactly as it has always been, but with a retrospective element for the use class that the building is in.
- 6.4 There are no adverse noise impacts from the development on surrounding dwellings with operation hours being in the day, although not every day, with a small number of trips each week.
- 6.5 There is little surrounding development in the immediate vicinity of the site. The Conery stables is across the junction, however this can not be seen from the property as there is thick screening vegetation around the building, preventing any overlooking occurring from surrounding development.
- 6.6 The site offers parking facilities immediately in front of the property, meaning there is no need for on road parking along Conery Lane. As mentioned previously, Wrexham County Council make decisions on the number of car parking space available for change of uses of existing buildings on a case by case basis. However, there is ample space available for the required number of vehicles on site.
- 6.7 In accordance with the Local Development Plan and Planning Policy the appearance of the building as an agricultural building.

Conclusion

- 6.8 This proposal is policy compliant and in a sustainable location. There is no harm to the existing building or the surrounding area and therefore we respectfully await a positive result.

