

Maple House
2 The Stables
Cadney Lane
Bettisfield
WHITCHURCH
Shropshire
SY13 2LW

12th September 2023

Planning and Environment Decisions Wales
Crown Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Dear Sir/Madam

Reference Planning Application P 2022 0869 Section 78 Appeal

CAS-02639-F8F7J9

**Land East of Cadney Lane, Bettisfield
Outline Application for erection of 9 dwelling.**

I wish to strongly **REJECT** the applicants appeal. I have examined the plans in detail and know the site well as I live at The Stables (Old Stable Yard).

Herein I set out my objections and observations in detail:

SUMMARY:

The site is located **OUTSIDE** of the Development Boundary of the village.

The site does **NOT MEET THE CRITERIA** for being 'infill' development due to the number of units and size of the site.

The application do not accord with policies PS1, PS2, PS3, PS4, GDP1, EC2, EC5, and H5 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan, as well as paragraphs 3.39, 3.59 and 3.60 of PPW11.

Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the development would not increase levels in the water environment and subsequently the statutorily protected nature conservation sites. The proposals therefore do not accord with polies GDP1 and EC6 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.

The application will result in the loss of Best and Most versatile agricultural land.

In more detail:

1 Land & Drainage.

The development plot shows 4 properties or their gardens as being at high risk of surface water flooding, despite the applicant stating the land is not at risk of flooding. This can clearly be seen on the Environment Agency Flood Risk map for Surface Water. This corner of the field is waterlogged during winter months or rainy weather due to its topography in relation to the rest of the field which is situated on higher ground. The drainage problems within the village are well known to Wrexham County Borough Council.

If the ground is built upon the excess water that accumulates in this area of the field will flood adjoining homes, Cadney Lane and the community further afield. The village has a high water table.

The proposal is in contravention of Policy EC12 as it will unacceptably raise the risk of flooding off site and affect flood management schemes e.g. the main village drainage ditch.

The proposal is also in contravention of Policy EC14 Development as it will have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the capacity, flow, quality or availability of controlled waters (ground water) and associated land.

It is also in contravention of the Welsh Government TAN15 document as the development does not meet the justification criteria e.g. to be a part of a local authority regeneration initiative and nor does it contribute to key employment objectives.

Ditch levels will be affected throughout the village, and they drain towards the Fenn's and Whixall Mosses (RAMSAR, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas), areas of high ecological value. Any change to ditch flow level or village flooding will impact upon the delicate balance of hydrological processes on the Mosses. Please refer to: www.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/planning/lowland_en.pdf

The proposal is also in contravention of Policy EC13 as it would result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the water environment due to additional surface water run-off, to both properties close to the site and further afield, including the delicate water levels of the Mosses where the village drainage ditch eventually discharges.

2. Foul and surface water disposal.

The application states that foul water drainage will be pumped to a biodisc treatment plant and discharged into a nearby water source. The closest water source is the village drainage ditch which is usually in winter saturated beyond capacity. This is not a sustainable solution.

Surface water drainage is not addressed sufficiently.

The Environment Agency have stated on previous occasions where planning has been sought in the village ..."that there should be no further development in Bettisfield due to lack of mains sewerage infrastructure ... There are no suitable watercourses to accept discharges from private treatment works and cesspools are not considered a sustainable option.

This breaches Council Policy GDP1 (k) as it is not sustainable and does not promote the environmental well-being of this area.

Previous refusals for development within the village state “no other method other than to the main sewers would be suitable”.

3 Sustainability.

The proposed development is not sustainable in terms of the drainage proposals or the foul water/sewerage disposal. Continually fighting against nature with disposal of surface water into inadequate resources is not sustainable.

The application does not include any renewable or low carbon energy options.

This breaches Council Policy GDP1 (k) as it is not sustainable and does not promote the environmental well-being of this area.

The village has asked the Highways Department to repair the badly maintained road and yet the village is classed as low priority as we have no shop, school, doctor, pharmacy or post office.

Access to the field is shown through the middle of the development. During busy periods of harvest and sowing the number of tractor and trailer movements would be very inconvenient, noisy and extremely muddy to the residents sharing the access drive. This would be a concern to the highway safety of any children living on the development.

4 Lack of supporting infrastructure.

The proposal is in contravention of Wrexham Unitary Development Plan Policy GDP1 point (e) as it goes against the aim of reducing car usage.

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan GDP1 states that all new development should:

Ensure that built development is located where it has convenient access to public transport facilities, and is well related to pedestrian and cycle routes wherever possible.

The proposal clearly does not meet this point in any respect.

The proposal is a substantial incremental expansion of housing in a rural settlement and should be avoided as this will result in an unacceptable expansion of travel demand to urban centres where travel needs are not served by public transport.

Bettisfield has 1 bus per week – to Wrexham on a Monday morning, returning after lunch. There is no other service available for commuters or residents. Therefore residents are 100% dependent on the use of their own cars. We are some distance from the nearest railway stations with no way of getting there without a car. This application does not meet the aims of new developments to be sustainable and close to existing public transport provision to reduce the use of vehicles. There are no other options or means of transport available. Wrexham County Borough Council have stated that it is their priority to reduce carbon and become environmentally responsible. Therefore any new development should be close to existing public transport provision.

5 Design of development

The proposal is in contravention of Wrexham Unitary Development Plan Policy GDP1 point (a).

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan GDP1 states that all new development should:

Ensure that built development in its scale, design and layout and in its use of materials and landscaping, accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality.

The proposed development would in no way enhance the appearance of the nearby locality. The loss of this area of 'greenfield' space would be a disaster to the environment, wildlife habitats and locality.

Bettisfield is a small linear village with aspects over open landscape and fields, and it is this character that has attracted people to its charms. Building on this Greenfield space would completely ruin the character of the village.

6 Great Crested Newt, Water Vole and wildlife habitat.

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan GDP1 states that all new development should:

Safeguard sites and areas of nature conservation and wildlife interest, and to provide new habitats where there is an unavoidable loss of existing habitats and areas of wildlife interest and;

Policy EC6 states that Development either within or close to sites of biodiversity interest will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the need for the development outweighs the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site. Where such development is permitted, damage should be kept to a minimum, and compensatory measures should be provided. Measures to improve the biodiversity value of sites and enhance their natural conservation interest and landscape quality including the establishment of local nature reserves will be supported.

Great Crested Newts are known to exist in the near area and the Ecology Department at Wrexham Council is aware of the existence of Great Crested Newt in the locality only meters from the development site. A development on this site would be a great loss to wildlife as the green space connecting areas of open land would be lost. Great Crested Newt and Water Vole populate this local area and we have sightings of both close by. The fields are rich in wildlife and birdlife and provide a continuation of Greenfield space in the village, which has been a field ever since the village came into existence. The ecological and conservation value of this land will be irreplaceable if lost.

The proposal is in contravention of Policy EC6, as it cannot be demonstrated that the 'need' for the development outweighs the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site as it is close to sites of national importance; Fenn's, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses National Nature Reserve, SAC Special Area of Conservation, SPA Special Protection Area, RAMSAR Wetland Site of international importance, given the likelihood of the presence of protected species (Great Crested Newt seen very close to the site).

7 Location.

Policy EC5 'Special Landscape Areas', states: *'Within Special Landscape Areas, priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape. Development, other than for agriculture, small-scale farm-based and other rural enterprises, and essential operational development by utility service providers, will be strictly controlled. Development will be*

required to conform to a high standard of design and landscaping, and special attention will be paid to minimising its visual impact both from nearby and distant viewpoints.'

Bettisfield is within LANDMAP Character area 13b English Maelor, please see:

<https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/planning/.../13b.pdf>

The aim of Character area 13b is to preserve local distinctiveness, to conserve landscape pattern to avoid a proliferation of structures and buildings which erode character. It also serves to enhance the ecological value of farmland, for example maintaining arable headlands and wide field margins, not to destroy them.

Cadney Lane is characteristic for its open landscape aspects with field views both on the approach and through the village and down the lanes. The open aspect of hedgerows and open green fields define the rural character of the village. The loss of these open outlooks would be irreversible.

See also planning minutes: www.wrexham.gov.uk/MinutesData/Planning/Reports/cplo6804.doc
point 4.3 states that Bettisfield has outstanding qualities.

Any references made in the applicants Design and Access Statement quoting appeals in other areas are not relevant to the nature and special character of Bettisfield.

Any development on this site would be completely out of keeping with the surrounding area and would destroy the character of the village and the loss of a Greenfield area which is rich in habitat for wildlife and fauna and has been host to species for as long as the village has been in existence. The proposed development would undoubtedly increase the risk of flooding surrounding properties and elsewhere in the village and beyond.

Thank you for your time in reading my comments and I value your consideration of these matters in the decision making process.

Yours sincerely

Nick Jones

Nicholas Jones