

**Proposed Extension
Animal Trust Vets CIC
5 Caia Road
Wrexham**

Supporting Statement comprising:

-) Planning Statement
-) Transport Statement.

April 2023



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Statement has been prepared by Plan A (North West) Limited in support of a planning application made on behalf of Animal Trust Vets CIC (the Applicant) with regard to a proposal to extend the existing veterinary practice located on Caia Road in Wrexham.
 - 1.2. It is proposed to erect a 235m² gross single storey extension on the eastern elevation of the existing building and to re-arrange the external areas to provide for appropriate car parking provision and ancillary facilities.
 - 1.3. The Supporting Statement draws together the following individual reports that are required to be submitted in support of the proposal:
 - Planning Statement; and
 - Transport Statement.
 - 1.4. Being a minor development proposal located outside a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site, a Design & Access Statement is not required, However, design matters are taken into account the Planning Statement and access matters in the Transport Statement.
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2. Development Proposals

Application Site

- 2.1. The application site comprises the existing Animal Trust practice on Caia Road in Wrexham. The site currently accommodates a part 2-storey, part single storey building that provides approximately 265m² gross floorspace. The overall site area extends to approximately 0.25ha and accommodates 21 parking spaces, ancillary external and amenity areas.
- 2.2. Access to the site is taken directly from Caia Road, which provides direct links to arterial and circulatory highway routes into and around Wrexham Town Centre. Frequent bus services operate around the Town Centre, with the closest bus stops being located less than 200m walking distance from the application site. The site is also accessible on foot and by bicycle from the surrounding areas.
- 2.3. Neighbouring uses include Eagles Meadow Shopping Centre to the north, and Wrexham Town Centre as a whole, to the north and west. Residential dwellings are located to the immediate east and west of the site and across Caia Road to the south.

Planning History

- 2.4. The application site, including the existing building, formerly comprised a public house until 2009/2010, when planning permission was granted to change its use to a veterinary practice and to deliver an extension. This consent was implemented, and a veterinary practice began operating.
- 2.5. Planning permission was subsequently granted in 2011 to deliver a single storey 136m² extension along the Caia Road frontage to provide a physiotherapy room and two separate retail units (ref: P/2011/0067). However, this consent has not been implemented.
- 2.6. The Applicant acquired the site in August 2019 and has operated from it since.

Proposed Development

- 2.7. It is proposed to erect a 235m² gross single storey extension on the eastern elevation of the existing building. The extension will occupy land that currently comprises part of the car park, and will require the partial demolition of an existing single storey extension. The external areas will be rearranged to provide a refuse compound, patient exercise areas and replacement parking.
- 2.8. The extension will accommodate a new reception area and waiting room together with eight consulting rooms. The extension will be single storey in height with a flat roof. A solar panel array will be installed on the roof to generate renewable energy to contribute towards meeting the energy needs of the practice.
- 2.9. The proposals also include the rearrangement of the external areas, to include the provision of a row of 16 car parking spaces positioned within part of an existing grassed area to the north of the building. The points of vehicular and pedestrian access to the site will remain as existing.

Animal Trust

- 2.10. Animal Trust is a not-for-profit veterinary practice that offers a high-quality service catering primarily for dogs, cats, rabbits and some other small mammals. The company vision is to develop a veterinary practice focused on providing the highest standards of veterinary care,
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and to make this affordable, so that as many animals as possible could access this standard.

- 2.11. The extended practice will continue to open on seven days per week, with the core opening hours being 8:30am to 6:30pm on each day, as existing. In accordance with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons code of conduct, an out of hours service will continue to be offered.
 - 2.12. All consultations at the practice will continue to be undertaken by appointment, with all clients having registered their pet with the practice beforehand. The extended practice will continue to offer a wide range of services with veterinary surgeons and nurses undertaking thousands of surgical, diagnostic and medical procedures every year, that range from routine neutering to the repair of complex fractures and chemotherapy.
 - 2.13. Clinical waste will be stored internally for collection by a specialist contractor twice a week, as existing, with general waste stored in bins located within the proposed waste compound.
 - 2.14. The practice currently employs 17 members of staff in a range of roles from vets, nurses and support staff. The proposed extension is expected to create a further 16 job opportunities across all roles. Staff will work in shifts and, therefore, not all will be on site at any single time.
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3. Planning Policy

- 3.1. This section of the Statement sets out the key planning policy context and other guidance relevant to determination of this application. These include national and local planning policies, alongside supplementary guidance.

National Guidance

- 3.2. **Planning Policy Wales 11th Edition** (PPW) forms the overarching national planning policy document for Wales and sets out the planning policies of the Welsh Government on a range of land use planning matters. Relevant aspects of PPW to the proposed development are summarised below.
- 3.3. PPW places an emphasis on place-making, with paragraph 2.8 confirming that '*planning policies, proposals and decisions must seek to promote sustainable development and support the well-being of people and communities across Wales*'.
- 3.4. Figure 4 identifies the key planning principles that support the objectives for sustainable development, these being:
-) Growing the economy in a sustainable manner;
 -) Making best use of resources;
 -) Facilitating accessible and healthy environments;
 -) Creating and sustaining sustainable communities; and
 -) Maximising environmental protection and minimising environmental impact.
- 3.5. Paragraph 4.4.1 recognises that community facilities perform a broad range of functions, activities and services, and can contribute to a sense of place which is important to the health, well-being and amenity of local communities. The provision of community facilities also forms a significant component in creating viable and sustainable places.
- 3.6. Design policies indicate how good design can directly meet the place-making objectives. Figure 7 identifies the objectives of good design as making a positive contribution towards access, character, community safety, environmental sustainability and movement, with the recommended approach being to appraise design proposals in their context. Design and Access Statements are identified as an appropriate tool for such assessment.

Development Plan Policy

- 3.7. **Wrexham Unitary Development Plan** (UDP) was adopted in February 2005 and currently continues to form the statutory basis of determining planning applications.
- 3.8. The Proposals Map identifies the application site as being unallocated land outside the boundary of Wrexham Town Centre but within the settlement boundary.
- 3.9. Policy PS1 encourages the development of new community services within defined settlements.
- 3.10. Policy PS2 requires development to not materially detrimentally affect landscape or townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.
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- 3.11. Policy PS3 requires development to use previously developed land in preference to greenfield land.
 - 3.12. Policy PS4 confirms that development should maintain the existing settlement pattern and character and be integrated with the existing transport network to help reduce the overall need to travel and encourage the use of alternatives to the car.
 - 3.13. Policy PS12 Proposals for the generation of energy from renewable sources will be supported provided that the wider environmental benefits are not outweighed by any detrimental impacts of the proposed development on the landscape, public safety, and the local environment.
 - 3.14. Policy GDP1 sets out a range of general development principles that new development is expected to take into account. These principles include ensuring that development:
 -) accords with the local character;
 -) is accessible, including by non-car modes;
 -) does not result in unacceptable amenity impacts; and
 -) does not have an adverse effect on flooding.
 - 3.15. The Council has commenced the preparation of the **Wrexham Local Development Plan** (LDP), which will replace the UDP. The LDP has now reached an advanced stage, whereby the Inspector issued a post-examination report in February 2023 and the Council is currently preparing the final copy of the Plan for adoption by the end of April 2023. Accordingly, it is anticipated that the Local Development Plan will be adopted prior to the determination of this planning application.
 - 3.16. Draft Policy SP2 confirms that new development should be delivered within the defined settlement limits, with the supporting text confirming that Wrexham sits at the top of the settlement hierarchy.
 - 3.17. Draft Policy SP8 states that Wrexham will be the focus for new development in order to strengthen the Town's regional function as a settlement of national importance.
 - 3.18. Draft Policy SP12 has regard to the transport network and confirms that development causing unacceptable impacts on the network will be restricted. New development proposals are also required to provide adequate levels of parking taking in to consideration accessibility by other modes.
 - 3.19. Draft Policy SP13 requires all development to deliver high quality, sustainable design that contributes to local distinctiveness.
 - 3.20. Draft Policy SP19 encourages new development to respond to the effects of climate change.
 - 3.21. Draft Policy DM1 sets out a range of criteria that new development proposals should respond to, which include requirements to respond to the character of the area, be compatible with the amenity of neighbours, be accessible by a choice of modes of travel and to mitigate environmental risks.
 - 3.22. Draft Policy NE3 supports development that seeks to avoid detrimental impact to existing trees.
 - 3.23. Draft Policy NE3 encourages new development to facilitate journeys by non-car modes, whilst also providing appropriate levels of car parking and mitigating any impacts upon the highway network that might arise for the proposal.
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- 3.24. The Council has prepared a number of **local planning guidance notes** that provide supplementary advice on how adopted UDP policies will be applied. The topics of these guidance notes include parking standards, access to buildings, trees and landscaping.

4. Planning Statement

- 4.1. The proposed development is considered below against the requirements of PPW, the adopted UDP, the soon to be adopted the LDP and other guidance set out in the previous section. Highways and transport matters are, however, assessed in detail at Section 5.

Principle of Development

- 4.2. The application site comprises the existing Animal Trust practice and its associated external areas. The site represents previously-developed land that is located within the defined settlement of Wrexham and close to the Town Centre. The site is, therefore, a location where both adopted and emerging policies prioritise the delivery of new development. The principle of extending the existing building is, therefore, policy compliant.

Sustainable Development

- 4.3. The development proposals seek to make best use of the existing building, which occupies a sustainable location. The proposed extension will facilitate the re-arrangement of existing accommodation to enhance the efficiency of the veterinary practice so that it can better meet the needs of its clients.
- 4.4. The proposals will also deliver an array of photovoltaic panels on the roof of the extension, which will generate electricity to help meet the power demand generated by the practice.
- 4.5. The extension to the practice is expected to enable the creation of 16 new jobs in a range of roles to include vets, nurses to supporting roles. The proposal will, therefore, make a valid contribution towards the local economy and job creation.
- 4.6. It can, therefore, be concluded that the proposals will contribute towards the economic, environmental and social objectives for sustainable development.

Design

- 4.7. The proposals will comprise a 254m² single storey extension to an existing predominantly 2-storey building. The design of the extension has been driven by its function and operational requirements.
- 4.8. The extension will deliver a spacious reception and waiting room, with multiple windows positioned in its three external elevations in order to maximise the amount of natural light entering the building and enhance the quality of the internal environment. The extension will also have a flat roof to enable the installation of a solar panel array, which will generate electricity to support the function of the practice. The external elevations will be finished to match the existing building. As a whole, the extension will deliver practical space to support and enhance efficiency in the function of the practice whilst also creating a quality environment and taking opportunities to respond to climate change.
- 4.9. In terms of visual impact, the application site is generally located on the brow of a hill and at a higher ground level than neighbouring uses. The site is also enclosed by retaining walls and a mature hedge on its only street-facing frontage to Caia Road. As a result, the proposed extension is unlikely to be visible from any publicly accessible position. With the existing building screening views of the extension from the west, the extension is only likely to be seen from the rear of residential dwellings beyond the eastern site boundary and, then, only above the existing boundary fence. The proposal is, therefore, unlikely to have an adverse impact upon the character of the local area.
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Compatibility with Neighbouring Uses

- 4.10. The application site has been in use as a veterinary practice for a period of approximately 13 years, with the use of the site, therefore, being well-established. There is no known history of neighbour complaints against the existing use of the site and, therefore, it is deemed to be compatible with neighbouring uses.
 - 4.11. Neighbouring uses comprise residential uses to the immediate east and west, with more distant residential uses to the north east and south, across Caia Road. The compatibility of the proposal with these neighbouring uses has been assessed in terms of highway movements and potential noise disturbance. The proposal will not generate any smells, fumes or other such potential nuisance.
 - 4.12. The proposed extension will be delivered within part of the existing car park and will comprise a new reception and waiting room and consultation rooms. The internal use of the extension is highly unlikely to have any impact on the amenity of neighbours.
 - 4.13. The re-arrangement of the internal accommodation within the existing building will include the provision of a '*noisy kennel*'. This will be located in the north western corner of the building, which is the furthest part of the building from the neighbouring dwellings. The potential residents to be disturbed by a dog barking within the noisy kennel is, therefore, low.
 - 4.14. Notwithstanding this, excess animal noise is rare in a practice environment since most hospitalised animals are ill or are recovering from a procedure and are, therefore, less likely to make noise. Furthermore, should an animal become distressed and bark, pharmaceuticals can be administered to relax it and alleviate the issue. A nurse will be present on site at all times to check on patient welfare, so will be on hand to immediately respond to any issues that might arise.
 - 4.15. The extension will result in the external entrance to the waiting room being located closer to the residential neighbours to the east. However, car parking spaces are currently located along the shared boundary with the residential neighbours, and it is considered that the existing coming and going of vehicles is more likely to have an adverse effect upon residential amenity than the use of the proposed pedestrian entrance. Accordingly, the proposals are expected to deliver betterment to the neighbours to the east.
 - 4.16. Notwithstanding this, such activity will be only generated during the practice's opening times, so is highly unlikely to disturb residents overnight.
 - 4.17. The existing building will screen neighbours to the west from the proposed extension, so it is unlikely to have any material effect upon their amenity. Whilst the proposed extension may enable the practice to offer more appointments to clients, and, therefore, may generate more vehicle movements, the coming and going of clients is highly unlikely to create any greater disturbance than the existing function of the practice and the general flow of traffic along Caia Road.
 - 4.18. Furthermore, as set out in the Transport Statement, all clients visiting the veterinary practice will be attending a pre-arranged appointment, which allows the volume of clients to be managed throughout the day. This procedure results in a steady flow of client arrivals and departures, with it being demonstrated that the difference between the existing and proposed function of the practice will be negligible.
 - 4.19. There is, therefore, a low propensity for noise and activity generated by the extended practice to cause disturbance. As a result, the proposal can be deemed to be compatible with neighbouring uses.
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Trees and Landscaping

- 4.20. The proposed extension will be delivered on land that currently accommodates car parking and will, not, therefore, have any effect upon existing trees and landscaping. However, it is proposed to deliver a row of replacement parking spaces to the north of the extended building, which will be located on land that currently comprises a grass slope.
- 4.21. Whilst there are existing trees located within the land to the north of the proposed row of car parking spaces, the trees are positioned down slope and approximately 20m away from the proposed car parking. The trees will, therefore, be unaffected by the proposed works.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 4.22. Natural Resources Wales flood mapping confirms that the application site is not at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea, or from surface water or small watercourses.
- 4.23. The proposed extension will be delivered on land that is currently hard surfaced, with the erection of the proposed building, therefore, not resulting in any increase in surface water discharge over and above existing rates. Whilst the extent of the hard surfaced area will be increased to deliver the row of parking spaces to the north of the building, the parking spaces can have a permeable finish to ensure that there is no increase in the current discharge rate.

Transport and Accessibility

- 4.24. The applicable policies relating to transport and accessibility are addressed in the Transport Statement at Section 5.

Conclusion

- 4.25. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.26. It has been demonstrated that the proposed development represents sustainable economic development that will be delivered on previously-developed land located on the edge of Wrexham Town Centre that is accessible by a choice of modes of travel. The proposal will deliver investment by an existing business and will create new job opportunities for local people.
- 4.27. It has also been demonstrated that the extension will achieve quality and sustainable design, whilst also meeting the needs of the practice in a manner that will enhance its operational efficiency. The design approach also seeks to ensure that the proposed use is highly unlikely to give rise to any adverse impacts on neighbouring occupiers and will not have any adverse impact upon the environment.
- 4.28. The proposed development, therefore, represents sustainable economic development. Accordingly, PPW, the adopted UDP and soon to be adopted Local Development Plan all offer full support to the proposal.
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5. Transport Statement

- 5.1. The scale of the proposed development falls significantly below the floorspace thresholds for Transport Assessment that are set out in TAN 18. Nevertheless, an appropriate assessment is provided below in order to present a comprehensive case in support of the proposal.

Existing Situation

- 5.2. The application site is within walking distance from Wrexham Town Centre, the closest boundary of which is located at the western end of Caia Road, less than 200m walking distance from the application site. An existing pedestrian refuge, dropped kerbs and tactile paving assist pedestrian movements across the A525, which is the only road crossing between the application site and the Town Centre.
- 5.3. Existing bus stops are on the A525 within 200m walking distance from the veterinary practice, with frequent services providing direct linkages between the Town Centre, the surrounding urban areas and Whitchurch, and enabling wider connections to other local and regional services.
- 5.4. In terms of access by car, the site is directly accessible from Caia Road, with onward links to the A525, which forms a main north-south arterial route through Wrexham. The application site currently accommodates 21 car parking spaces, to include 2 accessible spaces.
- 5.5. It is, therefore, evident that the application site is highly accessible by a choice of modes of travel from the surrounding communities and beyond. Further, by virtue of the sites close proximity to Wrexham Town Centre, the application site is particularly accessible by non-car modes of travel.

The Proposal

- 5.6. The proposed development comprises an extension to an existing building occupied by a veterinary practice. All clients visiting the practice currently attending a pre-arranged appointment, which allows the volume of clients to be managed throughout the day. Clients cannot simply arrive and wait to see a vet. This practice will continue.
- 5.7. Given the nature of the use and the need to transport a sick or injured animal, the majority of clients travel to the practice by car.
- 5.8. The scope of proposed works includes the provision of ramped pedestrian access to the new reception, waiting room and consultation rooms. The extension will displace a number of existing parking spaces, which will be re-provided, primarily in a row of spaces to the north of the building. The proposals will provide 22 parking spaces in total, to include 2 accessible spaces and 3 staff only spaces. Cycle parking spaces, comprising 3 Sheffield-type cycle stands, will also be provided.

Traffic Generation

- 5.9. In order to assess the potential impact of traffic generated by the extended Wrexham practice, a survey has been undertaken of clients travel patterns at Animal Trust's Bolton practice, which is the largest practice operated by Animal Trust. The findings of this survey are summarised below:
- 87% of clients travelled to the practice by private car;
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- 46% of visits lasted 15 minutes or less;
 - 85% of visits lasted 30 minutes or less;
 - There is a morning peak in arrivals between 0901 and 1000 hours and an evening peak between 1701 and 1730 hours;
 - The highest peak period (evening) equates to a vehicle arriving every 3 minutes and 20 seconds;
 - On average throughout the working day, a vehicle arrives every 8 minutes and departs every 9 minutes. This equates to an average of one vehicle movement every 4 minutes and 30 seconds.
- 5.10. The above findings reflect the working practice of clients attending a pre-arranged appointment, with staff being able to assess how long each appointment may take and manage the daily diary accordingly.
- 5.11. In addition to the above, a number of service vehicles will visit the practice. The following traffic generation figures are based on the Bolton practice:
- Two courier pick-up/drop offs of laboratory samples per day made by car or small van outside peak hours;
 - One pharmaceutical delivery per day received by transit van outside peak hours;
 - A twice weekly clinical waste collection by transit van; and
 - Routine general waste and recycling collections by contractor on fortnightly basis.
- 5.12. The Bolton practice is the largest operated by Animal Trust and has been established for several years and, therefore, it is expected that the extended Wrexham practice will generate a lower level of client and service vehicle movements.
- 5.13. Nevertheless, at a worst-case of an average of one vehicle movement every 4 minutes and 30 seconds, there is likely to be more than sufficient capacity in the immediate highway network to accommodate the vehicle movements generated by the proposal. Indeed, such a low level of traffic generation is relatively insignificant. Even at peak times, it is unlikely that the function of the extended veterinary practice will bring about a perceptible increase in vehicle movements on the local network, cause congestion or queuing in the highway. Indeed, there is likely to be no discernible difference between the traffic generated by the existing practice and the extended practice, as proposed.

Parking Demand

- 5.14. The Council's Local Planning Guidance Note 16 on Parking Standards sets out the level of parking that the proposal is expected to deliver. The standards required for Class D1 uses, which is most representative of a veterinary practice, are set out in the table below.

Use Class	Car Parking	Accessible Provision	Cycle Parking
Class D1	2 spaces + 1 space per 25sqm	10%	1 space per 250sqm

- 5.15. The proposed extension will result in the veterinary practice extending to 499m² gross. The Parking Standards, therefore, require the provision of 22 parking spaces in total, of which 2
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should be accessible, and 2 cycle parking spaces. These standards will be directly satisfied, or exceeded for cycle parking, by the proposal and, therefore, it is policy compliant in this regard.

Conclusion

- 5.16. The proposed development has been assessed against the requirements of policy and accompanying guidance. It is clear that the extended veterinary practice will not generate '*significant*' amounts of vehicle movement, and will not result in a '*severe*' highway impact. The actual highway impact is highly likely to be neutral, with the additional traffic generated by the proposed extension having a negligible impact upon the local highway network. The proposed parking provision directly satisfies the Council's Parking Standards. Accordingly, a positive and constructive approach should be adopted towards the proposal in highway and accessibility terms.
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6. Conclusions

- 6.1. It is proposed to deliver an extension to the existing Animal Trust veterinary practice located on Caia Road on the edge of Wrexham Town Centre. The extension will be located on the eastern elevation of the building, occupying land currently used as car parking. The extension will be single storey in height and will have a flat roof that will accommodate an array of solar panels. The proposals also include the provision of replacement car parking, which will be positioned in a row to the north of the extended building.
 - 6.2. It has been demonstrated that the proposed development represents sustainable economic development that will be delivered on previously-developed land located on the edge of Wrexham Town Centre that is accessible by a choice of modes of travel. The proposal will deliver investment by an existing business and is expected to create 16 new job opportunities for local people in a range of roles, including vets, nurses and support staff.
 - 6.3. It has also been demonstrated that the extension will achieve quality and sustainable design, whilst also meeting the needs of the practice in a manner that will enhance its operational efficiency. The design approach also seeks to ensure that the proposed use is highly unlikely to give rise to any adverse impacts on neighbouring occupiers and will not have any adverse impact upon the environment.
 - 6.4. The Transport Statement demonstrates that the proposal will not have a material highway impact. Indeed, the increase in traffic generated by the extended practice will be negligible, and appropriate levels of parking will be provided to achieve, or exceed, the Council's standards.
 - 6.5. In terms of the other credentials of the proposal, and in accordance with PPW, the proposed development will deliver sustainable economic development by making best use of an existing resource in an accessible location, create high value employment opportunities and a valuable community resource. The not-for-profit ethos of Animal Trust will also deliver economic advantages to local pet owners, who will have access to highly skilled veterinary services on a 24-hour basis at modest cost.
 - 6.6. The proposed development is fully compliant with the relevant policies of the adopted UDP and the soon to be adopted Local Development Plan, and receives full support from PPW. It is, therefore, the case that a positive and constructive approach should be adopted towards approving planning consent without delay.
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