

Design and Access Statement

Proposal: Change of use of former retail site to B1 Business and B8 Storage

Location: Land at Former Co-Op Supermarket, Well Street, Cefn Mawr, Wrexham LL14 3YD

1.0 General

- 1.1 The Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the change of use of the former retail site to B1 Business and B8 Storage. This Statement should be read alongside the submitted plans and refers to the relevant adopted planning policies. The current Development Plan is the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2005.

The Site

- 1.2 The site is located within the settlement boundary as shown on the Map 4, Inset 6 on the proposals map of the adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan. The relevant planning policies are GDP1 - General Development Principles Development Objectives and Policy E4 - Employment Development (of Unannotated Land) within Settlements and are referred to in detail below.
- 1.3 The application relates to a currently vacant retail site, the former Co-Op on Well Street, Cefn Mawr. There is existing vehicular access from Well Street with forecourt parking at the front and side of the existing building. The site is at a lower level than the road and there is a low stone wall along the front boundary that will remain. There is extensive landscaping along the rear boundary adjacent to the railway line and this will also be retained. The site has been vacant for some time and the building is visually in a poor state of repair, which detracts from the character of the area.
- 1.4 There are a mix of uses in the immediate area along Well Street and High Street including commercial, retail, workshops/offices, hot food take way, hairdressers, public house interspersed with houses. There is a Tesco Superstore immediately to the south, community enterprise centre immediately adjacent on the northern boundary and the railway line to the east and two houses on the opposite side of the road to the west. There is a large industrial/business park known as Advance Park on the other side of the railway line and this comprises a wide range of commercial and industrial premises.

2.0 Planning Policy

GPD1 - General Development Principles Development Objectives

- 2.1 Policy GPD1 states that all new development should: -

a) 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.

- b) Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public / private spaces.
- c) Make the best use of design techniques, siting and orientation in order to conserve energy and water resources.
- d) Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and in the nearby locality.
- e) 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.
- f) Ensure the safety and amenity of the public and safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land or air, hazards from industry and quarrying, and associated noise, odour or vibration arising from development.
- g) Secure public services (e.g. gas, water, electricity) to development at minimum public cost.
- h) 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.
- i) Ensure that development does not result in, or is subject to, flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination, either on or off the site.
- j) Have regard to the need to safeguard those areas that possess a strong Welsh cultural and/or linguistic identity from development that could harm this identity.
- k) Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

Policy E4 - Employment Development (of Unannotated Land) within Settlements

- 2.2 Policy E4 states that employment development on unannotated land within settlement limits will be permitted subject to Policy GDP1. The policy states that consideration will be given to employment proposals on unannotated land within settlements. Importantly it notes that such development contributes to the economic use of land, avoids pressure on the countryside, and serves to remove the detrimental effect of blight within settlements. It states that proposals must not prejudice existing amenities through noise, vibration, smell, safety, health or excessive traffic generation. Where there are planning objections, it may be possible to meet them satisfactorily by attaching conditions to the permission.

3.0 Proposed Use

- 3.1 The proposed use for business and storage use will bring a vacant site into a beneficial economic use, especially as it has been vacant for a number of years and does not contribute to the area both economically or visually. The reuse of the site will regenerate and support the local economy by providing commercial benefits and

choice that will make an important contribution to local economic diversification. This is in accordance with Policy E4 as it is noted that development contributes to the economic use of land and serves to remove the detrimental effect of blight within settlements.

4.0 Accessibility

- 4.1 The vehicular access will remain as existing, from the frontage of Well Street and has previously served the retail site. The traffic movements are likely to be less than that attracted by a retail use. The land levels within the site will remain as existing with no plan to change these in the future and the site provides for adequate parking. There is pedestrian access from the pavement on Well Street with no other point of access due to the enclosed boundary treatments at the side and rear of the site.

5.0 Character

- 5.1 The area is characterised by a variety of uses as set out in paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 above. The building on the site is set back from the road and is in a poor state of repair externally, which detracts from the character of the area. Despite its appearance, the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion for the proposed use. The proposal seeks to improve the appearance of the building by renovating the exterior using white render and the introduction of access doors and roller shutters. The doors and roller shutters will be painted, the colour of which can be agreed by the imposition of a suitable planning condition. The proposed alterations to the exterior of the of the building reflect a simple design and is functional in nature whilst the appearance does not detract from the character of the area.
- 5.2 The rear of the site and the southern boundary is enclosed by existing trees and landscaping. Further landscaping can be provided which can be the subject of a planning condition. The front boundary stone wall will remain as this is a typical feature in the area.
- 5.3 The proposal is considered to visually improve the appearance of the existing building and will be appropriate in the area given the different types of surrounding development. As such, the proposal accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality in line with Policy GPD1. In addition, the proposed reuse of the site promotes efficient use of land with no detrimental impact on the character or amenity of the area.

5.0 Community safety

- 5.1 Access to the site will remain via the existing access from Well Street. The site cannot be publicly accessed at the rear due to the extensive landscaping on the boundary with the railway and as such is secure.

6.0 Environmental sustainability

- 6.1 The proposal promotes the efficient use of land, which is an important factor in achieving sustainable development. This is in accordance with GPD1 which seeks to secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.
- 6.2 The development of the vacant site offers an opportunity to enhance the visual quality of the area. In line with Policy E4, an appropriate planning condition could be imposed requesting details of further landscaping of the site.
- 6.3 The proposal will have no detrimental impact on habitats or wildlife.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposal is considered to be an appropriate development in this area. The external alterations to the elevations whilst minimal, will significantly improve the appearance of the building. The proposed reuse of the site reflects sustainable development and is appropriate to site and surroundings given the existing mix of uses. The proposal promotes the efficient use of land with no detrimental impact on the character or amenity of the area. Accordingly, there is no conflict with policies GPD1 and E4, therefore taking into account the provisions of the development plan and all other material planning considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.