

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

December 2022



PROPOSED MEETING ROOM & SHOWER BLOCK

ROBINWOOD ACTIVITY CENTRE

CROSS LANES
BANGOR ROAD
MARCHWIEL
WREXHAM
LL13 OTF

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.01** This Design & Access Statement has been prepared to accompany a Planning Application for the proposed new Meeting Room (Whole School Room Building), Shower Block and Luggage Store at Robinwood Activity Centre, Cross Lanes.
- 1.02** Robinwood Activity Centres provide courses for 7 - 11-year-old school children. The former Maes-y-Nant hotel site has been converted to a Robinwood Activity Centre with the creation of additional buildings and structures to facilitate the activities. The change of use from hotel and lodge to a children's activity centre including the erection of buildings and equipment was undertaken under the previous Planning Application P/2016/0953.
- 1.03** The original planning consent included for the erection of a new shower block (Proposed Showers and Watersports Changing) however this was not completed in the first phase of the works.
- 1.04** The proposal for a new Shower Block and Meeting Room / Whole School Room Building are intended to complement their existing operations. There will be no change to the capacity at the centre as a consequence of the new development.
- 1.05** The shower block formed part of the original planning consent for the scheme would allow for shower and change facilities to be conveniently located in close proximity to the canoeing lake. The proposed Shower Block is smaller than the original proposal with the omission of the staff change area and storage facility.
- 1.06** Robinwood Activity Centre currently has limited indoor provision for whole school groups to gather together. Post covid there has been more demand for schools to have their own area for exclusive use for the duration of the course and the new development will enable this. The activity centre operates all year round and the increase in indoor provision will significantly improve the experience for schools who attend in the winter months. Whilst the capacity and visitor numbers will remain the same, the proposed development will enable the centre to operate more successfully throughout the seasons, post covid.
- 1.07** The proposed Meeting Room / Whole School Room Building is proposed to accommodate larger groups of children from the same school. The space will allow for the children to meet and dine together.
- 1.08** The planning application also includes a proposed Luggage Store which will be sited adjacent to the car park to facilitate change overs between school groups.
- 1.09** A pre-application enquiry was submitted for the proposed development – ENQ/2022/0278 Robinwood. The response was received 17.10.22

1.10 In addition, the following documents will be provided in support of the planning application:

- Ecological Appraisal
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Constraints Plan
- Drainage Strategy
- Pre-Application Consultation Report Wrexham Borough County Council, October 2022 - ENQ/2022/0278 Robinwood.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY & GUIDANCE

2.01 This design and access statement is prepared following guidance in the following documents:

NATIONAL POLICY

Planning Policy Wales 11

Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning

Technical Advice Note 12: Design

Technical Advice Note 18: Transport

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011

Strategic Policies

Policy PS1 Strategic Policy

Policy PS2 Strategic Policy

Specific Policies

Policy GDP1 Development Objectives

Policy EC4 Hedgerows, Trees and Woodlands

Policy EC5 Special Landscape Areas

Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028

Strategic Policies

Policy SP15 Natural Environment

Topic, Criteria and Area Based Policies

Policy DM1: Development Management Considerations

Policy NE3: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

Policy NE5: Special Landscape Areas

LOCAL PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTES (LPGN)

Local Planning Guidance Note 17: Trees and Development

Local Planning Guidance Note 32: Biodiversity and Development Local

Planning Guidance Note 16: Parking

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

P/2016/0953 – Change of use of Cross Lanes Country Hotel (Use Class C1) and The Lodge (Use Class C3) to Children's Activity Centre (Use Class C2) to include extension to existing hotel building, erection of buildings and equipment for children's activities with associated car parking, coach parking, landscaping and railings – Granted 11/04/2017.

3.0 SITE CONTEXT & CHARACTER

3.01 The application site consists of a former hotel site known as Maes-y-Nant in Marchwiel which has been converted into a children's activity centre under a previous planning application - P/2016/0953.

3.02 The application site sits in a rural location off Cross Lanes in Marchwiel, South of Wrexham. The site is bordered by the A525 and B5130 Kiln Lane. There are residential properties nearby on Kiln Lane. The Western boundary borders open countryside. The site is in a Special Landscape Area as identified in the Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028.



Figure 3.1

3.03 The proposed development consists of a new shower block (A) South of the existing lake, a meeting room building (B) and a luggage store (C) which is to be sited north of the existing high activities building.



Figure 3.2

3.03 An arboricultural survey was undertaken 28.11.22 by Tree Solutions Ltd. There are several large, mature trees within the application site. The full detailed Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been issued with this application, but in summary, recommends a tree root protection area (RPA) around trees to the rear of the Meeting Room building and the shower block. Trees 1 and 5 to the North of the proposed meeting room are particularly close. Care has been taken to set out the building away from the root protection areas of both trees ensuring that they are not negatively impacted by the development. The RPA for trees 1 and 4 occupy the area where the original shower block was set out – this has been re-located to avoid a clash.



3.04 Ecology – An Ecology Appraisal has also been undertaken on the site in December 2022. The survey has been included within this application, but in summary, concludes that the site is a known habitat for bats and great crested newts. The key ecology proposals are as follows, please refer to the ecology report for more detailed information:

Great Crested Newts

It is proposed that trapping and relocation of the newts from the works area is undertaken. The extent of the fencing and any additional barriers that will be required to trap newts in the first instance and consequently prevent them straying into the working area after trapping will form part of the licence method statement. Given that it is known that a population of

newts exists, it is proposed that a population survey not be undertaken. Opinion and agreement to this proposal is to be sought from NRW.

Badgers & Hedgehogs

Access for badgers around the site to be maintained. Any excavations to be covered at night, or an egress ramp installed to prevent animals from becoming trapped.

Bats

Any reasonable mature trees to be removed to be inspected by a bat worker.

Birds

Removal of any vegetation which supports nesting birds to be removed outside of the bird breeding season which is March to August.

3.05 Character - The site consists of the former hotel which has been extended and converted as the main building for Robinwood Activity Centre. This building dates back to the late Victorian era and was originally built as a private house named Maes-y-Nant. This was subsequently converted into The Cross Lanes Hotel before its use class was changed to C2 under application P/2016/0953. The white rendered building with prominent slate roofs, black window surrounds and detailing was extended in a similar style under the same application. A 2-storey red brick former lodge has been converted to provide additional staff areas. The remainder of the site has been developed by Robinwood to facilitate the activities they offer. These range from indoor activities which are housed in larch timber clad buildings, an aesthetic which suits the wooded surroundings and external structures such as swings and high ropes situated in the middle of the development. The proposed new buildings will be timber clad and of a similar scale to blend in with the existing environment.



Aerial photograph of existing Robinwood Activity Centre, Cross Lanes.



Former hotel lodge



Giant Swing & High Activities Building



View from High Activities Building

4.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

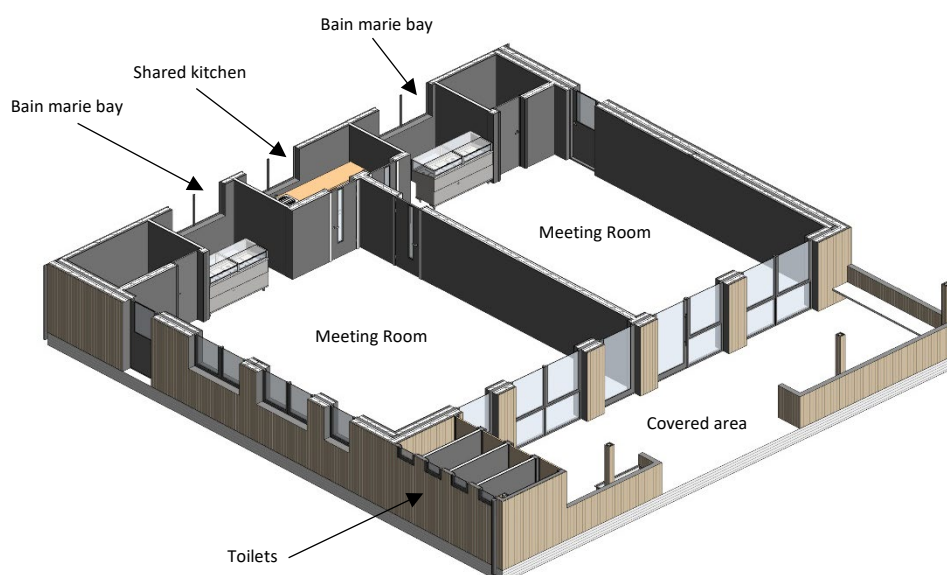
4.01 The proposed development relates to the construction of a Shower Block, a Meeting Room Building also referred to as a Whole School Room Building and a Luggage Store.

4.02 The proposed development of a new shower block, meeting room building, and luggage store is to complement the existing facility and enhance the user experience at Robinwood Activity Centre, Cross Lanes. Therefore, the capacity and visitor numbers will remain the same.

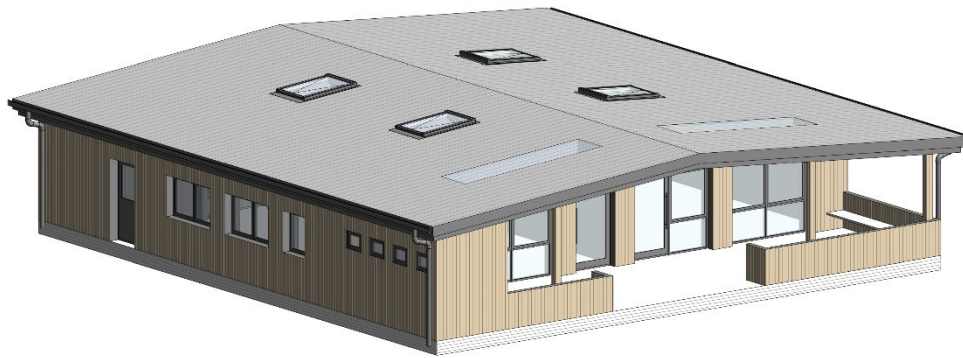
4.03 Vehicular access to the site will remain the same as will number of car parking spaces.

MEETING ROOM / WHOLE SCHOOL ROOM BUILDING

4.04 The Meeting Room / Whole School Room Building would provide a facility for larger school groups to meet and dine together. The proposed building has 2 no. meeting rooms with a store and a bain marie bay to the rear of each space. A bain marie trolley could be wheeled in from the main kitchen to provide hot food at mealtimes. There is also a small, shared kitchen for the use of staff and teachers proposed. The meeting rooms feature glazed entrance doors and large windows to maximise the views out to the central area where the external activities take place. The proposed meeting rooms open directly onto an external covered area which can be used for meetings and provide shelter in wet weather. Toilets are located off the external covered area with a shared wash hand facility.



3D cut view of Meeting Room / Whole School Room Building



3D View of Meeting Room / Whole School Room Building

- 4.05** The design of the meeting room building follows a similar aesthetic to the existing activity buildings on site. The materials are to match featuring profiled trapezoidal roof panels and larch timber wall cladding. The massing of the building has been developed in response to the pre-application enquiry feedback and features a pitched roof design which keeps the height of the building down and allows it to blend in with the surroundings and respect the Special Landscape Area. This follows the guidance received from the pre-application planning enquiry response to keep the proposed design to an appropriate scale in-keeping with the existing archery and caving, and high activities building.
- 4.06** The building is sited off the main footpath around the activities area. The footpath will be extended to the centre of the proposed covered area allowing for groups to congregate if need be.
- 4.07** The meeting room building is set out to avoid the tree root protection areas for trees 1 & 5 (please see extract of tree constraints plan under 4.12 below for locations) and is situated parallel with the adjacent high activities building.



Extract from the proposed site plan showing the location of the Meeting Room Building

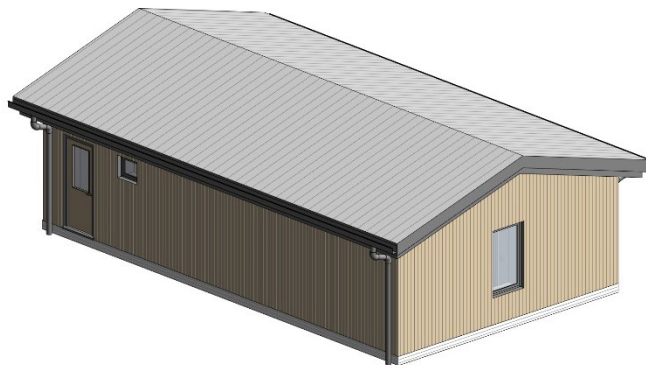
4.08 The building would provide level access from the external landscaping to the covered area and into the internal meeting rooms to allow for wheelchair access. The secondary doors will also provide level access for accessibility purposes and to assist in servicing the spaces.

4.09 The building would be sheltered from view by the mature trees and hedgerow to the rear. This will limit the visual impact on the nearby residential properties on Kiln Lane and limit its impact on the Special Landscape Area.

SHOWER BLOCK

4.10 The shower block would provide the facility to shower and change after taking part in watersports activities on the nearby lake. This was intended to be built as part of the original scheme (P/2016/0953) and a Showers and Watersports Changing building formed part of the approved scheme. The current proposal is for a smaller version with less toilets and showers overall, the staff change, and storage area have been omitted from the design. The proposal provides 15 no. showers and 2 no. toilets.

4.11 The proposed shower block would have a pitched roof and has been designed to follow a similar aesthetic to the existing activity buildings on site with matching materials.



3D View of Meeting Room / Whole School Room Building

4.12 The shower block would be sited South of the watersports lake with access from the existing footpath and decked area (please see an extract of the site plan under item 4.16). The previous location for the building under planning application P/2016/0953 was positioned South of the secondary road which leads East to Kiln Lane. This location was discounted in this application as the building footprint would encroach on the root protection area of Trees 1 & 4 as indicated on the tree constraints plan which are of moderate (Category B) and high (Category A) quality respectively. The middle tree from a group of low quality (Category C) trees identified as G2 on the tree constraints plan will need to be removed to accommodate the shower block in its proposed location.

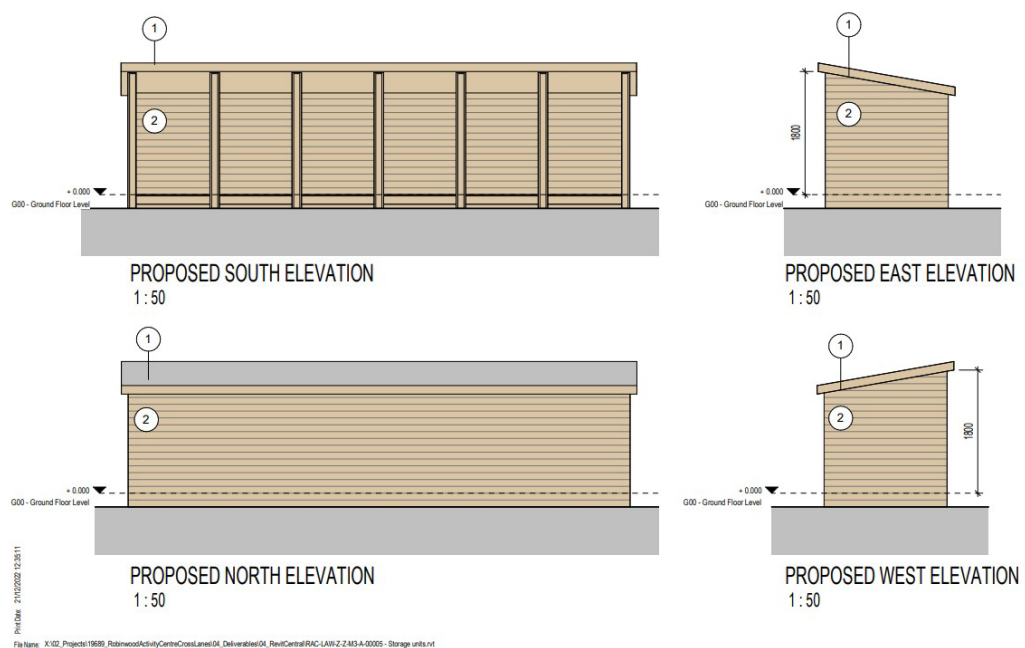


Extract of Tree Constraints Plan

- 4.13** The newly proposed location of the shower block assists with greater passive surveillance for staff from the lakeside which is better for the safeguarding of the children.

LUGGAGE STORE

- 4.14** A Luggage Store is proposed adjacent to the car park. This consists of a simple, low-level timber structure with open fronted bays for the storage of luggage.



4.15 The luggage store is intended to help facilitate smooth change-overs between school groups. The aesthetic of the storage building is intended to match the existing buildings on site and blend in with its natural surroundings. Due to the height, scale, and materiality of the structure it is considered that this would not have an impact on the Special Landscape Area.

4.16 The luggage store has been sited to the South East corner of the car park and will be set within a vegetated area which will allow the store to blend in and be screened from the road.



FOUL DRAINAGE

4.17 The foul drainage peak discharge will remain the same as existing as there will be no increase in intake of children as a result of the proposed development. Further to the guidance received in the pre-application planning enquiry response it is confirmed that this application will not result in an increased level of phosphates.

SUSTAINABILITY

4.18 The intent of the new design is to deliver new buildings that are as sustainable as possible within the limits of the project scope and available budget. At this stage of the project, we have developed the following key principles which will be driven through the delivery of the project:

- Passive Design
 - Maximise insulation to solid walls, floors, and roofs to minimise both heating and cooling requirements.
 - Using thermally efficient windows and doors to create high thermal efficiency, airtightness and reduce heat loss.

- Active Measures to Minimise Energy Consumption
 - Incorporate new energy efficient heating such as Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) and ventilation systems such as Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR).
 - Incorporate energy efficient lighting.
- Materials
 - Responsible sourcing of materials. We will avoid using irresponsibly sourced materials or materials which create large amounts of waste.
- Renewable Energy Sources
 - Solar PV will be researched as a possible source of energy generation for the scheme. The viability of this will be assessed taking into account the cost v's the potential gain (based on sun path and siting).

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.01 This Design and Access Statement, scheme drawings and supporting documents demonstrate how the pre-application planning enquiry response has been considered in the design of the new buildings for Robinwood Activity Centre, Cross Lanes. This also demonstrates how the proposals will not have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the site, Special Landscape Area and surrounding area.