
Justification Statement

**Land Adjacent to B5445
Lavister
Rossett
Wrexham
LL12 0DF**

Change of use of agricultural land
to dog walking paddock and all
associated works

GM & DA Woollam

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The logo for Roger Parry & Partners is located in the bottom left corner. It consists of a white square containing the text "Roger Parry & Partners" in a yellow sans-serif font. The text is arranged with "Roger" on the first line, "Parry" on the second line, and "& Partners" on the third line. A yellow diagonal shape is visible at the bottom right of the white square.

**Roger
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1. The Proposal

The proposal is for a change of use of agricultural land that will provide a secure paddock, that will allow local people and visitors to the area access to a safe and secure area to exercise their dogs. The proposal is on land adjacent to the B5445, Lavister, Rossett.

The proposed dog walking area will cover 0.62 hectares and will have a single secure paddock with a small car parking area.

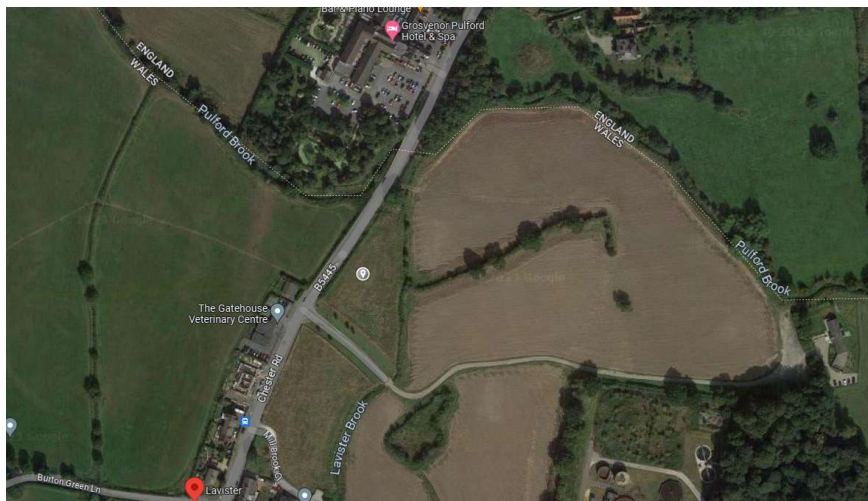
The proposed site will be accessed through an existing established access off the B5445 with appropriate visibility splays in both directions. The change of use will have no detrimental effect of the surrounding areas.

The design aims to keep a balance between the two aims of the planning system – efficient economic development and protection of the landscape.

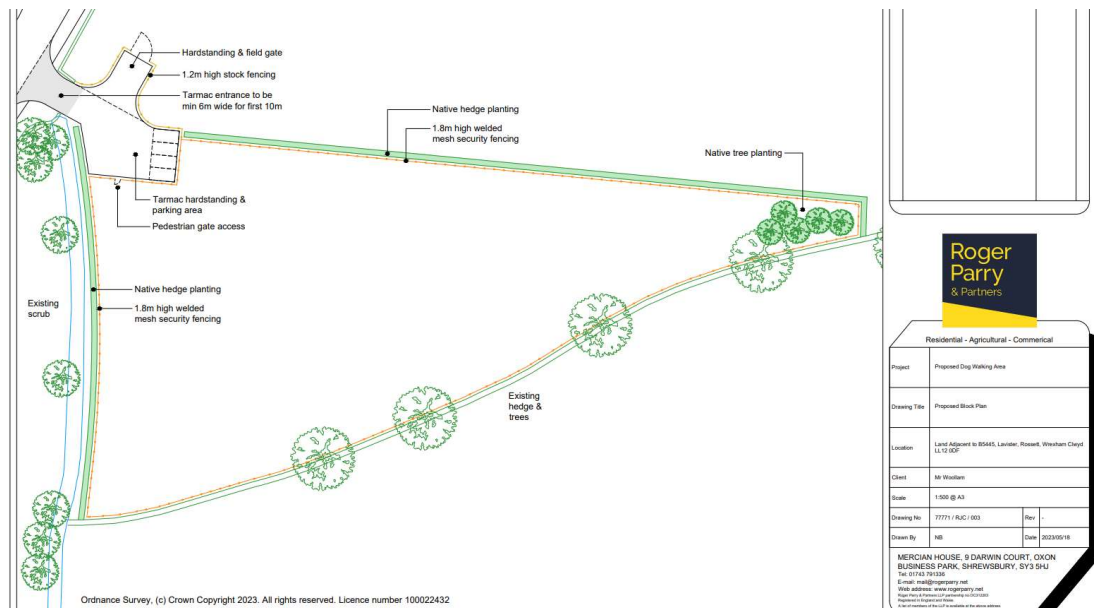
The use of the paddock is to allow people living locally and visitors to the area a safe place so they can walk their dog off the lead. The paddock will have appropriate specialised fencing to ensure that the loose dogs are secure and safe. The site will have a small parking area for visitors and will utilise the existing access.

2. Assessment of the proposal

2.1 The Site



The site is located to the south of Lavister and adjacent to the B5445. The site is partially screened off the road by an existing hedgerow and trees.



The proposal will not have any adverse effect on the site or surrounding area due to the nature of the use. The clients propose to erect specialised fencing around the site allowing for a single secure paddock. There will be a small hardcore parking area leading off the access, otherwise the site will remain in its existing state.

The proposed planting will allow for significant biodiversity net gain on the site will also providing screening from the road.

2.2 Ecology

The proposed development will have no detrimental effect to wildlife or the surrounding ecology as the area is already a highly intensive agricultural piece of land which receives a large amount of fertiliser and is heavily grazed. Due to the intensive agricultural use of the land, the ecological and biodiversity benefit of this ground would be minimal and as such we do not feel a phase 1 habitat survey should be required.

The application will have no adverse effect on the sites ecology as the proposed paddocks will have specialist dog fencing that will be of similar nature to stock fencing. The site will also have a small hardcore parking area.

2.3 Highways

The proposal will have minimal impact on highways as the site will be accessed by an existing farm access, appropriate visibility can be achieved in both directions. The proposed change of use will allow for a single dog walking paddock, this will have to be pre booked and will be available for up to 55-minute slots.

2.4 Outdoor Control/Waste

Dog waste will be picked up immediately and bagged into individual dog waste bags and transferred to a specific dog waste bin. The sealed bin will be double bagged before transferring to a waste bin which will be left out on the appropriate morning of waste collection by a specialist licensed waste collector.

In terms of phosphorus levels the application will not increase the amount of phosphorus entering the catchment as waste will be collected and disposed of efficiently. It is also noted dogs walked on the proposed site will be dogs that would already be walked in the surrounding area. The proposal will be a betterment as there will be a controlled waste collection system.

3.0 Farm Diversification

The proposal is a Farm Diversification scheme for the Woollam family.

The Woollam family have spent many hours looking into different ways to diversify their income and found this change of use would be the most sustainable and suit their location. The Woollam family have visited a range of similar ventures and had lengthy conversations with the operators and discovered their levels of use overall are very high. They have noticed there are very few sites similar to the proposal within the local area.

3.9 The DEFRA and Welsh Government definition of a diversified enterprise is:

‘The entrepreneurial use of farm resources for a non-agricultural purpose for commercial gain’

Under this definition, activities such as non-agricultural contracting, the letting of buildings for non-agricultural purposes, processing and retailing of farm produce, using farm resources for tourism, sport and recreational activities would be included as diversification. On-site energy generation which either offsets on-site use or is exported to the grid is also considered to be a diversification activity.

Rural diversification is of increasing importance to those with an interest in agriculture and rural communities as a whole. With rising uncertainty in farming, diversification offers a way of supplementing incomes and improving the economic viability of a farm business. Diversification reflects the reduced dependence of farmers on agriculture as a source of income. Diversification also implies some kind of entrepreneurial activity on behalf of the farmer (DEFRA – Farm Diversification in England: 27/01/11).

Farm resources are defined as land or capital that was previously used for agricultural purposes. Where a farmer/spouse takes up external employment, this will be classified as other gainful activity. However, any activities that the farmer/spouse spends their time doing will still be classified as diversified activities whenever any land or capital previously used for agricultural purposes is also employed (for example a farmer running a shop selling produce from the farm).

Whether an activity is defined as diversified or as other gainful activity would depend on a combination of factors. For example whether the farm resource previously used for

agricultural purposes could be switched back to agricultural use, whether the accounts of the activity are separate from those of the farm, and how long it has been a diversified activity. It is useful to think of diversification as a transition rather than an end-state (Statistics for Wales – Farm Diversification in Wales 2011-12 ref: SB125/2012).

4.0 Planning Justification for the proposal

All dog walking sessions are to be pre booked for up to 55 minute slots. Dog walkers will not be able to just turn up speculatively. The paddock will be booked exclusively for the dog or dogs and their owners. We would expect an average of 1.5 dogs per paddock per session.

The number of dog owners are increasing every year and one of the most important parts of owning a dog is to ensure they have regular walks and get the exercise they require to stay healthy. Off leash walking has proven benefits to a dogs mental and physical health, there are very few secure locations available where dog owners can allow their dogs to run without being on a lead. The majority of public areas and beaches that allow dogs have a strict 'on lead' policy.

Training is a huge part of dog management and ownership, recall being one of the most fundamental commands of all. It is incredibly difficult to train this important command if you do not have access to a secure location to allow your dog to be unleashed. The proposal will provide a secure environment where owners can train their dogs, thus ensuring a better and healthier life for the dogs

There are several dogs and owners that suffer with anxiety when out in public places due to dogs having behaviour issues and poor training. These dogs and owners often stay within their own house and garden to ensure they do not cause harm to others while out walking. The proposal will give these owners and dogs a safe area to exercise.

Dog theft has dramatically soared during the pandemic, as the nation's lockdowns resulted in a growing demand for puppies. Between March and August 2020, The Kennel Club saw a 161% rise in puppy searches via its website, compared with the same period in 2019 and the price for sought after breeds has skyrocketed. With targeted dogs stolen to be sold on, bred from or held for ransom, DogLost witnessed dog theft increase by 250% last year. The proposal will be a secure paddock where the owners can always see their dog, there will also be a booking system and unauthorised visitors will not be allowed on site.

The site is surrounded by large towns and built-up areas. Local walks are becoming increasingly busy thus increasing livestock worrying.

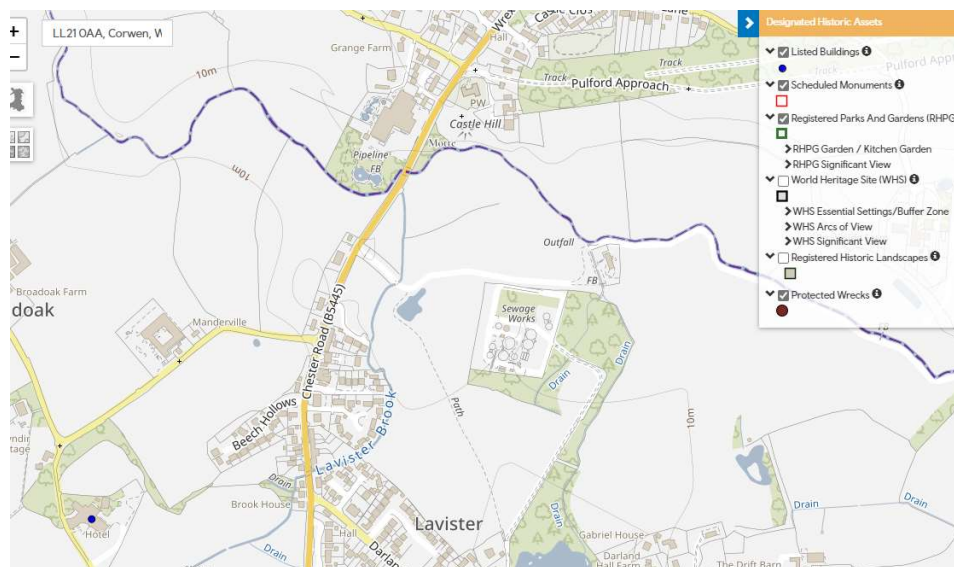
There have been increasing numbers of incidents recently involving 'livestock worrying' from dogs. This can be extremely detrimental to livestock owners. The clients have experienced this first-hand. The majority of footpaths in the area crossover farmland and unfortunately many dogs are not trained and have an instinct to chase livestock.

The surrounding area is popular for dog walkers, therefore dog walking on the land will not be uncommon and it is felt a noise survey of this site wouldn't be required.

The clients will provide dog waste bins and will ensure these are emptied on a regular basis. There will be a strict policy on site to ensure all users pick up and dispose of the dog foul in the provided bins.

5.0 Cultural Heritage Assessment

There are no listed buildings or scheduled monuments within close proximity of the site.



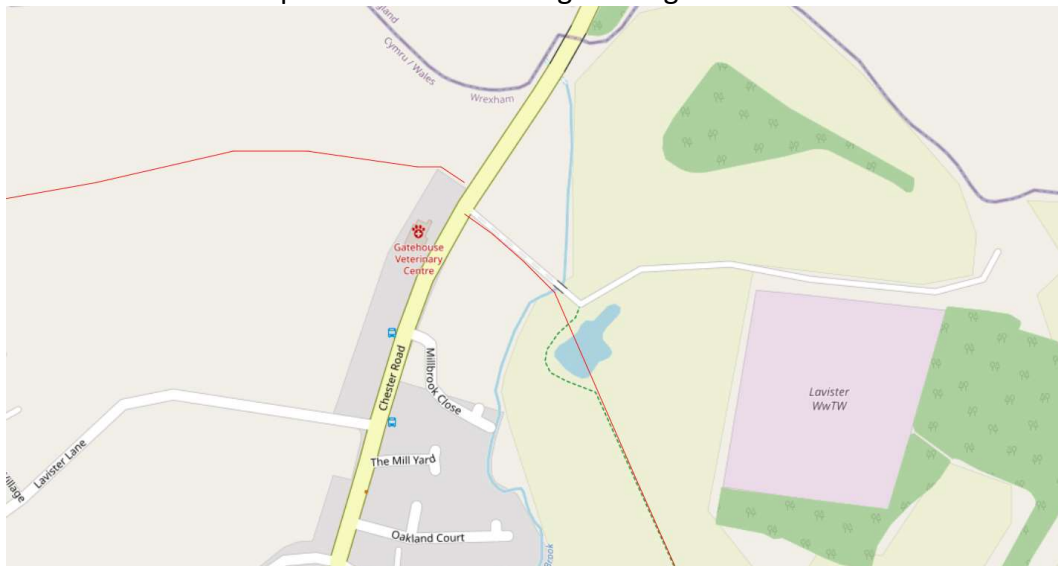
6.0 Flood Risk

The site is located within the NRW's Flood Plain area, however as the application is none highly vulnerable development and there will be no infrastructure to effect floor levels its deemed there will be no harm. The application is supporting by an FCA.



7.0 Footpaths

There is a public right of way adjacent to the site. The proposed site will not effect the right of way and the clients will ensure it remains clear at all times. Dog owners within the locality will be able to use the footpath to access the dog walking field.



8.0 Policy Context

Analysis of Planning Policy

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of how the proposed change of use of land at Lavister 'fits' with the National, Regional and Local agricultural policy and legislative framework.

This section is structured around the hierarchical policy framework of:

- National agricultural strategy and planning policy guidance
- Local development plans.

This section concludes with an overview of the proposed development in the context of the key policy messages.

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11 February 2021) – Chapter 7 Supporting the Economy

7.1.1 For planning purposes the Welsh Government defines economic development as development of land and buildings for activities that generate wealth, jobs and incomes. Economic land uses include the traditional employment land uses (offices, research and development, industry and warehousing), as well as uses such as retail, tourism, and public services. The construction and energy sectors are also important to the economy and are sensitive to planning policies.

7.1.2 It is essential that the planning system considers, and makes provision for, the needs of the entire economy and not just those uses defined under parts B1-B8 of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order. Particular policies on other economic sectors are also found elsewhere in Planning Policy Wales: in relation to Retail and Town Centres (Chapter 10); Tourism, Sport and Recreation (Chapter 11) and Infrastructure and Services (Chapter 12).

7.1.3 The planning system should support economic and employment growth alongside social and environmental considerations within the context of sustainable development. To this end, the planning system, including planning policies, should aim to ensure that the growth of output and employment in Wales as a whole is not constrained by a shortage of land for economic uses. Local planning authorities should aim to facilitate the provision of sufficient land required by the market, except where there are good reasons to the contrary. In addition, wherever possible local planning authorities should seek to guide and control economic development to facilitate regeneration and promote social and environmental sustainability. In so doing, they should aim to:

- co-ordinate development with infrastructure provision;
- support national, regional, and local economic policies and strategies;
- align jobs and services with housing, wherever possible, so as to reduce the need for travel, especially by car;
- promote the re-use of previously developed, vacant and underused land; and

- deliver physical regeneration and employment opportunities to disadvantaged communities.

7.3.3 Local planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to development associated with farm diversification in rural areas, irrespective of whether farms are served by public transport. While initial consideration should be given to adapting existing farm buildings⁹, the provision of a sensitively designed new building on a working farm within existing farm complexes may be appropriate where a conversion opportunity does not exist.

Local 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. In addition they should adopt a positive approach to the conversion of rural buildings for business re-use.

7.5 Development Plans and the economy should:

- Include policies encouraging farm diversification and new rural development opportunities.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)

3.1.2 Planning authorities should support the diversification of the rural economy as a way to provide local employment opportunities, increase local economic prosperity and minimise the need to travel for employment.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 6

Paragraph 25 under Development Related to Farm Diversification states the following:
'Small on-farm operations such as food and timber processing and food packing, together with services (e.g. workshop facilities, equipment hire and maintenance) to other farms, sports and recreation services, and the production of non-food crops and renewable energy, should be encouraged. Local planning authorities should, however consider the nature and scale of activity that would be appropriate.'

9.0 Conclusion

The proposal is for a change of use of agricultural land that will provide a secure paddock allowing local people and visitors to the area a safe and secure paddock to exercise their dogs, on land at South of Lavister.

There would be no adverse impact on neighbouring properties as a result of the proposal and satisfactory parking will be provided on site. The access to the development would not compromise highway safety. The design and form of the development would be in character with the area which is open and rural in appearance.

The proposed change of use will not effect any footpaths, ancient monuments, landscape or flood zones.

The proposal is a Farm Diversification scheme what will allow the family to gain additional income from the change of use of their land.

The proposal will have benefits to the local community by providing a safe place for dog owners to walk and train their dogs.

The proposal is in line with the Wrexham UDP Policy E5 & E6, as there is no building structure to provide this employment opportunity in the rural area.

This proposal meets criteria as set out under paragraph 83 of the NPPF, in that it is a sustainable growth of the existing farm business and is subtly enhancing the land rather than adding to it unnecessarily.

It also is a sustainable source for rural leisure developments, focusing on the need for safe, outdoor exercise areas for dog owners and walkers, while simultaneously respecting the character of the surrounding countryside.

This farm diversification project will also develop local community facilities by offering this open green space for local residents and members of the public to utilise the safe and secure setting for their dog walking.