

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT:

Land at Glebe Farm, Horseman's Green, Whitchurch, SY13 3DY

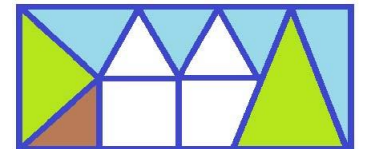


PLANNING / DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

September 2022

Application submitted on behalf of Mr. S. Huxley

David Parker Planning Associates



Planning & Property Development

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1 Introduction

This Planning and Design & Access Statement is submitted in support of an outline planning application for residential development on land at Glebe Farm, Horseman's Green, Whitchurch. David Parker Planning Associates have prepared the application, on behalf of the landowner, Mr. Stuart Huxley.

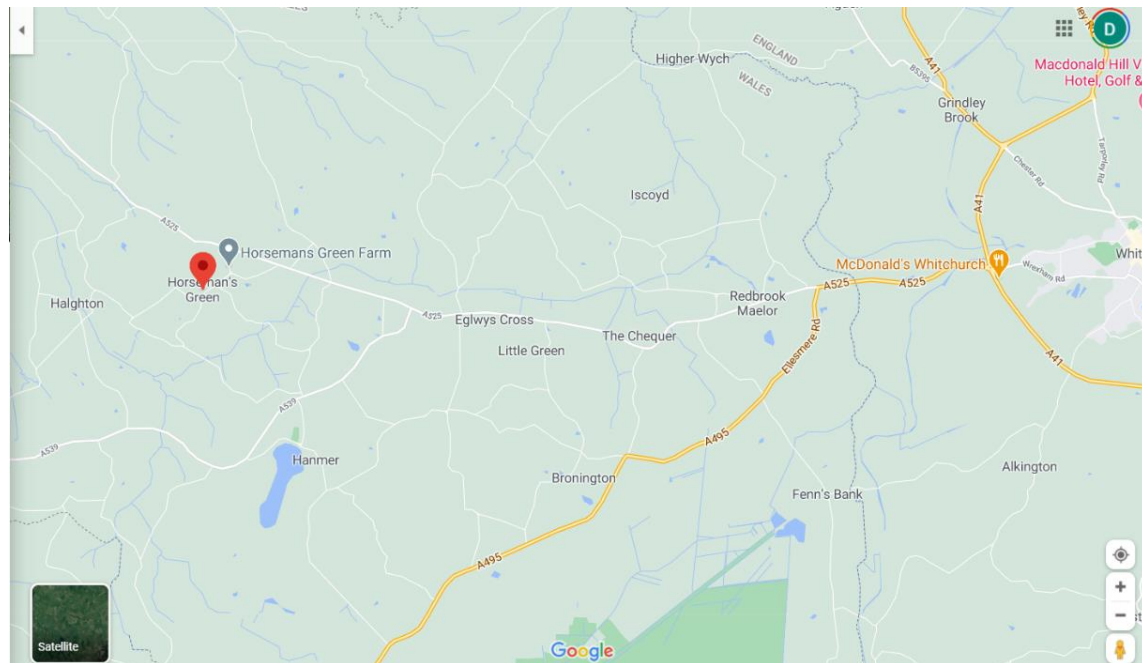
The application is for outline planning permission and seeks to establish the principle of development and means of access. It is a re-submission of an earlier outline application, which was refused under reference P/2021/0234 on 7th September 2021. In support of the application, an indicative site layout has been prepared, which shows how the site could be developed to provide three dwellings

This Planning and Design & Access Statement describes the application site and its location and the outline proposals for residential development. It serves to demonstrate that the site is both suitable and capable of being developed for housing. The site is considered and assessed against the policy context set by the Development Plan and National Planning Policy in Planning Policy Wales (PPW).

Finally, the Statement addresses the sustainability of the site as a location for residential development, and its compliance with the more detailed Development Plan policies and guidance controlling new housing development in the area.

2. Site Location, Description & Surroundings

Horseman's Green is situated approximately 9 kilometres due west of Whitchurch, as shown on the extract from Google Maps below.



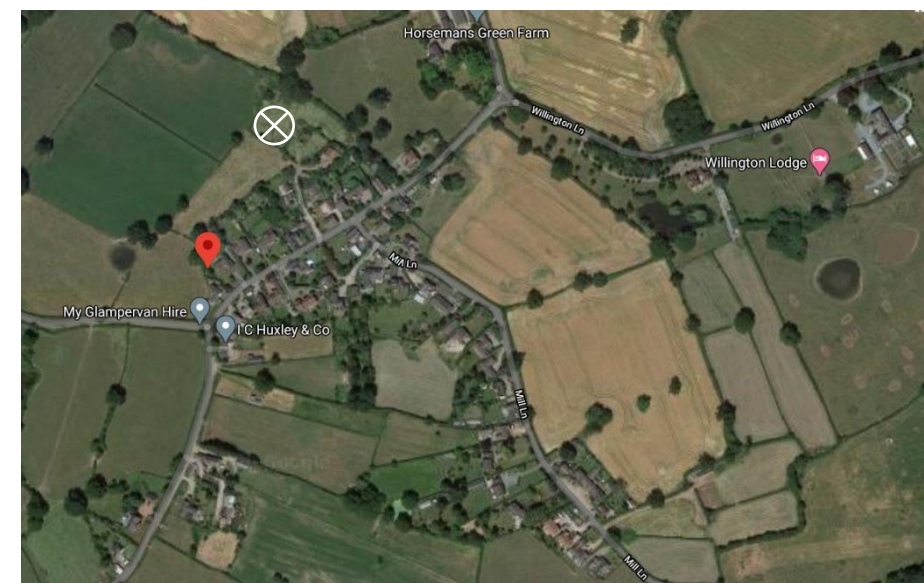
The application site itself is located on the northern edge of the village. The site is immediately adjoining the existing built up area of the village, with existing residential properties to the south.

The Application Site & Surroundings



Site Plan shows area bounded by: 344503.91, 341199.61 344703.91, 341399.61 (at a scale of 1:1250). OSGridRef: SJ44604129. The representation of a road, track or path is no evidence of a right of way. The representation of features as lines is no evidence of a property boundary.
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The site is a former farmstead with an associated derelict farmhouse, a Dutch Barn (still in use), and a former livestock building. The site extends to 0.23 ha (0.57 acres) in area. The main part of the village is quite tightly defined, but with additional farmsteads and clusters of development scattered along the roadways radiating out from the centre of the village.



The application site is approached along a private roadway serving 3 dwellings. The roadway narrows as you approach the site.



Glebe Cottage



Coniston



Immediately to the south-west of the site, to the left of the roadway, is a small traditional cottage (Glebe Cottage) and to the immediate south (to the right) is a more modern bungalow (Coniston), both shown below.



After Glebe Cottage, the access road narrows to a single lane stone track, serving the site.

Site Access



Entering the site, the derelict cottage is visible in the centre of the plot, with the first of the existing farm buildings to the right.



Former Livestock Building



Dutch Barn



Derelict Cottage

The site itself comprises semi-improved grassland with poor quality hedgerows and trees, many of which are covered in ivy.



3. The Earlier Refusal

Planning application reference P/2021/0234 was refused permission for the following reasons :-

1. There is restricted visibility at the junction of the un-adopted road with the classified highway, which would result in unsafe means of vehicular access onto the highway. The proposal would fail to accord with UDP Policy GDP1(d).
2. The un-adopted road leading to the application site does not allow for the simultaneous passage of vehicles along its entire length, nor is it surfaced. The proposal has not demonstrated a safe and convenient vehicular access to the application site, failing to comply with UDP Policy GDP1(d).
3. Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the proposal would not result in an increase in phosphate levels to the River Dee and Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation. The proposal is contrary to paragraph 6.4.18 Planning Policy Wales and Wrexham UDP Policy EC6.

These issues are dealt with later in this report.

4. The Development Proposal

Accessibility

Although the application is in outline, with all matters apart from highway access reserved for subsequent approval, an indicative site layout has been submitted. This shows how the site could be developed for three dwellings, as shown below.

Indicative Layout Sketch – 3 Dwellings



The properties will be well spaced within the site, with a shared access onto the main road through the village. The type and position of the properties can be varied to include two-storey houses and or a bungalow.

The layouts show detached houses with ample gardens and parking, which are envisaged to be designed in a simple and traditional manner. The aim of the proposed development is to deliver houses with either 3 or 4 bedrooms and possibly a detached 3-bedroom bungalow.

Environmental Sustainability

The proposed layout and positioning of the dwellings will allow for the investigation of energy saving through the installation of solar roof panels. Water saving measures including water butts and low-flush toilets will be included as part of the development, and rainwater harvesting systems may also be achievable.

The proposed dwellings will be built in accordance with national planning policy requirements and TAN 12 – Design. The Code for Sustainable Homes will be used to assess the environmental impact of the proposed dwellings.

The submitted ecological report (see later) explains how the development will take account of and/or enhance the local natural habitats.

The proposed development is of a small scale and considered to be appropriate in scale for the village of Horseman’s Green, taking into account its role and function, and the more limited facilities available within the settlement.

Community Safety

The proposal can deliver a satisfactory layout in terms of urban design and residential amenity. The sketch layouts afford good natural surveillance within the site. Full consideration will be given to the design, layout and appearance of the development at the detailed planning stage, as part of any reserved matters submission, and the Applicant remains open to discussions over the design aspects of the proposal.

Character

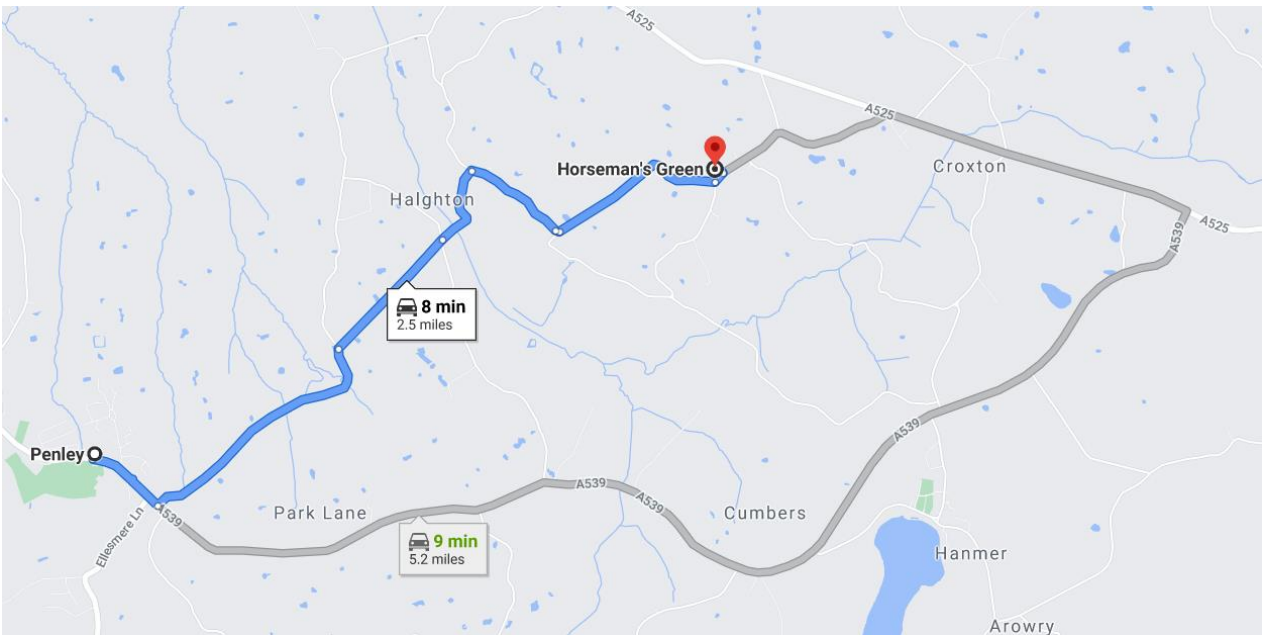
The scale, design, and materials of existing properties on this part of Horseman’s Green are generally mixed and reflect the period of their construction. There are no particularly strong design references to guide and influence the proposed development.

The neighbouring properties to the south are both either sufficient distance away (Glebe Cottage) or are screened by substantial hedges (Coniston). Although the proposals will result in additional traffic past these properties, the levels of vehicle movements will be intermittent. Their amenity and privacy will therefore not be adversely affected. The orientation and screening of the proposal is such that there will be no inter-visibility between existing and proposed properties.

Movement to, from and within the development

Although the village does not have a regular bus service, the village of Hanmer is just under 3 miles by car. The larger village of Penley - with its more extensive facilities, including primary and secondary schools, shop, and employment - is 2.5 miles (or 8 minutes) by car, as shown below.

Horseman’s Green to Penley



Parking requirements can be very well catered for within the site. All dwellings can have at sufficient parking spaces. The layout of the site allows for the safe access, turning and egress of vehicles.

Highway Access

The Access Road



Visibility to the Right (traffic Side)



Visibility to the Left (non-traffic side)



Existing Highway Conditions

The site is served by a private drive off the Class III road known locally as Horsemans Green Road. The road has no strategic significance and can more properly be described as a lightly trafficked access road. The road at this point is some 5.5 m wide with a kerbed footway varying in width between 1.0 m and 1.5 m opposite the private drive entrance. To the south west of the private drive entrance, the

carriageway is bounded by a narrow grass verge backed by a live hedge. To the north east of the entrance the carriageway is bounded by a grass verge and backed by a brick pier and wooden picket fence.

Horsemans Green Road is not subject to a local speed restriction but the highway authority has previously estimated typical traffic speeds to be of the order of

25 m.p.h. This estimate is not contested. Street lighting is not provided through the village, there are no carriageway markings along the centre of the road and waiting restrictions are not in force.

The private drive forms a bell mouth junction about 9.0 m wide with the Class III road and is typically around 4.6 m in width for a distance of 50 m or so from its junction with Horsemans Green Road. It is therefore wide enough to enable the simultaneous entry and exit of vehicles without the need for vehicles to stand on the highway carriageway whilst vehicles exit the private drive. The surface of the private drive is hardened for around the first 25m and there is no evidence of mud or other deleterious material being carried onto Horsemans Green Road by vehicles exiting the private drive.

It should be noted that roads with a similar width to that of the private drive are typically accepted by local highway authorities to serve low density developments. Whilst the private drive narrows towards the application site there is scope to either widen the drive or provide passing places. In terms of its width the private drive is therefore considered to be suitable to serve as a means of access to the proposed development.

Appraisal of Visibility and Proposed Highway Improvements

Visibility from the private drive is severely restricted to around 7.0 m in a south westerly direction by the highway boundary hedge. In a north easterly direction, visibility of some 31 m is available although this is obtained over third-party land. In a north easterly direction, when looking over the boundary fence of Croft House, which appears to have been erected at a low level specifically to aid visibility from the access to that property, visibility of some 31 m is available. This distance is compliant with the Stopping Sight Distance, Table 7.1 in Manual for Streets which, again, the local highway authority has previously recognised as appropriate in this location. It is also noteworthy that the measure of forward visibility, the Stopping Sight Distance, available to the drivers of vehicles approaching the site access from both directions along Horsemans Green Road is more than double the distance required based upon the MfS parameters for a vehicle speed of 25mph.

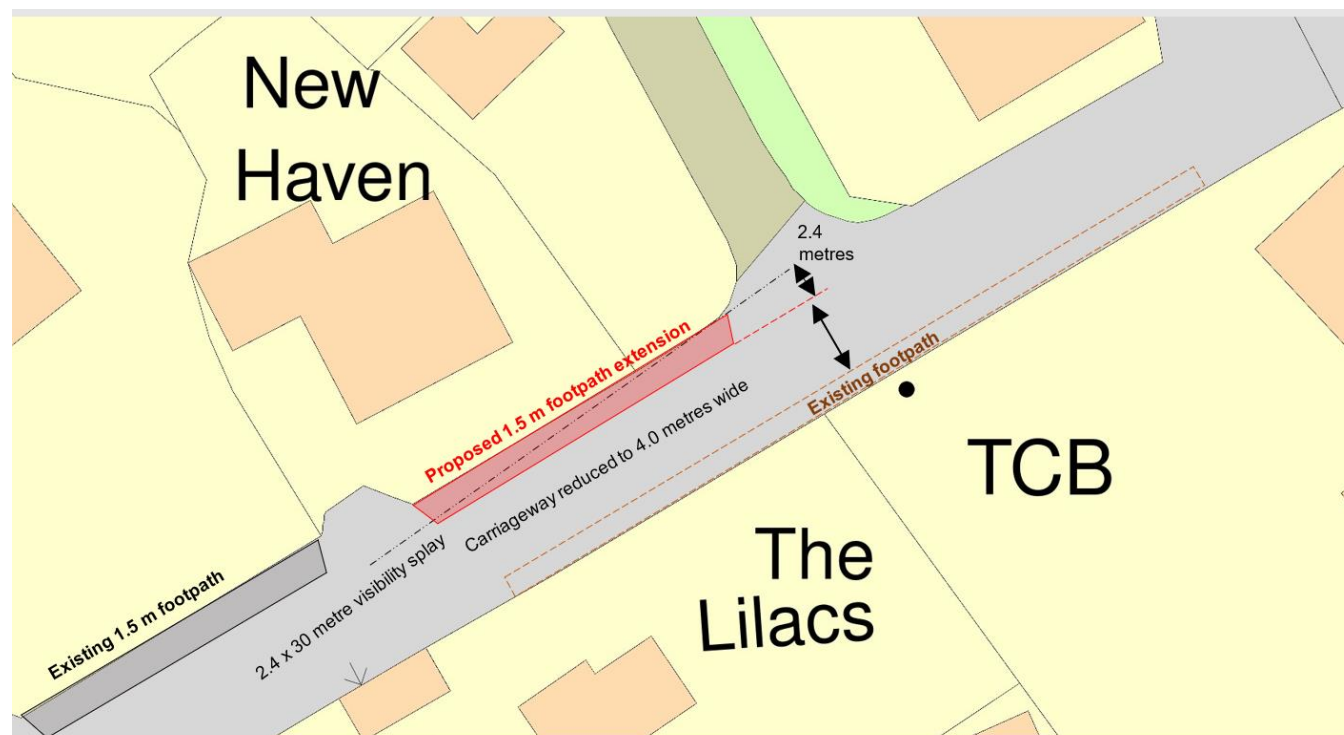
There are numerous direct accesses onto the highway within Horsemans Green that have visibility for emerging drivers restricted by the proximity of boundaries to the carriageway. It is therefore apparent that the restrictions to visibility at the access serving the site are not unusual in the local context. It was also apparent from the measurements undertaken at the site access that in some respects it benefits from superior visibility than some of its neighbours. In order to review the safety performance of Horsemans Green Road and the wider local highway network, the Crashmap database was accessed. This revealed there had been only one recorded personal injury accident recorded in the most recent 5 year period (2016-2021 inclusive) within Horsemans Green and none within the vicinity of the site access itself. As previously stated, there are accesses that have below desirable levels of visibility and in various instances, comparably worse visibility than is provided at the site access. In this case, the

extremely low level of recorded injury accidents provides empirical evidence that road users travelling along Horsemans Green Road and turning to/from the various accesses/junctions along it, are able to interact with each other safely.

Based on the excellent safety record along Horsemans Green Road, and the wider area of Horsemans Green, where there are numerous accesses with sub-standard lateral visibility, which in many cases is worse than is provided at the site access, it is apparent that the findings of the MfS2 research with respect to the lack of a relationship between restricted lateral visibility and collisions is robust and directly applicable to the local context of this particular case. In the case of the application in question, the scale of the development will not generate significant movements as the existing use as an agricultural holding will cease and the type and volume of traffic associated with that use will therefore no longer use the site access.

Notwithstanding the above, the applicant recognises that there is no continuous footway system along Horsemans Green Road and in particular across the site road frontage. It is proposed therefore, as part of the proposed development, that the footway to the south west of the site access be extended as shown generally on the submitted illustrative 1:500 Junction Plan, reproduced below. This will resolve the earlier concerns regarding access visibility to the south-west.

Illustrative Access Improvements



The works would be funded by the development and subject to a Grampian Condition. Whilst the provision of a footway would reduce the width of the carriageway it would be entirely consistent with the advice in MfS which states “In lightly trafficked streets, carriageways may be narrowed over short lengths to a single lane as a traffic calming measure”. This would also improve visibility from the site access especially if visibility was measured to the centre of the carriageway. This approach has previously been agreed by the highway authority in Horsemans Green in regard to P/2014/0687.

Conclusion – Highway Access

Given the continued delay in the adoption of the LDP, the weight given to the policies in the UDP have, it is argued, been diminished. Instead weight should be given to more recent policies and guidance. In particular, TAN 18 states, inter alia, “Where planning applications are submitted within an existing development site and served by an existing substandard access, there should be scope for a limited redevelopment that incorporates a substantial access improvement, even though the improved access would still be below standard”.

The proposed provision of a footway will not only improve pedestrian facilities in the vicinity of the site it will also enable a satisfactory measure of visibility to be achieved from the existing site access whilst also adding a traffic calming feature to Horsemans Green Road. On that basis there would appear to be no sustainable highway objection to the proposed development.

Code for Sustainable Homes

The dwellings proposed will be designed in accordance with national planning policy requirements and Technical Advice Note 12 (TAN 12) – Design. The environmental impact will be assessed using Code for Sustainable Homes which measures the sustainability of a home against nine design categories, rating the ‘whole home’ as a complete package.

The design categories are:

1. Energy and CO2 Emissions
2. Pollution
3. Water
4. Health and Wellbeing
5. Materials
6. Management
7. Surface Water Run-off
8. Ecology
9. Waste

All dwellings will meet Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 and 5 credits under issue Ene1 Dwelling Emission Rate. The proposal will meet Part L of the current Building Regulations and be assessed by SAP calculation. The detailed design issues will be dealt by way of the reserved matters at a later stage by a registered code assessor.

Ecology

Greenscape Environmental were commissioned to carry out an ecological assessment of the site. Their report is included in the application documents. The appraisal of the site included a desktop study of the area and a phase 1 ecological appraisal undertaken at the site, carried out on 12th March 2020 by C Sheil. The findings of the report are summarized below :-

- A precautionary phase 2 bat activity survey were conducted on the 28th May 2020 by C Sheil with the assistance of B Jones, L Maggs and M Hoggs.

- A desktop data search including a search for nearby designated sites, EPS licenses and previously recorded protected species was conducted. Of significant for this site is bats, nesting birds, and great crested newts.
- The site extends to 0.2ha and is comprised of three buildings, a field of semi-improved grassland, hedges, trees and an access track. The buildings on site have low to negligible roost potential for bats.
- A precautionary activity survey was conducted on buildings 1 and 3. No bats were seen roosting in any of the buildings, and so no further surveys are necessary. These buildings will be demolished under a method statement.
- Potential habitat for nesting birds was found in the buildings, trees and hedgerows and evidence was found in building 1. The removal of these is to be done outside the bird nesting season (February to August inclusive) or an ecologist will conduct a check within the 24 hours prior to work commencement to ensure no nesting birds will be affected.
- There are seven ponds within 250m of the site. The nearest is pond 3 which is 50m away and scored 0.57 – Below average on the HSI assessment. However, this pond is separated from the site by poor terrestrial habitat.
- The site comprises mostly negligible value habitat to newts in their terrestrial phase. The works are to be done under a method statement and an ecologist is to be employed as the Ecological Clerk of Works.
- Conclusion - It is recommended that the biodiversity value of the site will be enhanced post-construction with the inclusion of bat and bird boxes. The landscaping will also be improved by planting new native species hedgerows and trees in the new gardens. Method statements outlined in this report are to be followed during works. There are no other ecological constraints to the development as currently proposed.

Drainage and Flood Risk

Surface Water Drainage

It is anticipated that surface water drainage will be dealt with via soakaways (following completion of detailed porosity tests). Should outline planning permission be forthcoming, and soakaways prove to be unsuitable, an appropriate sustainable drainage scheme will be designed.

Foul Drainage

Foul drainage will be dealt with via a new package treatment plant serving all three properties. Firstly, this will discharge to a reed bed to provide tertiary treatment, which will also reduce phosphate levels. This will then feed into another pond and then on to a nearby watercourse. The Applicant owns all of the surrounding land.

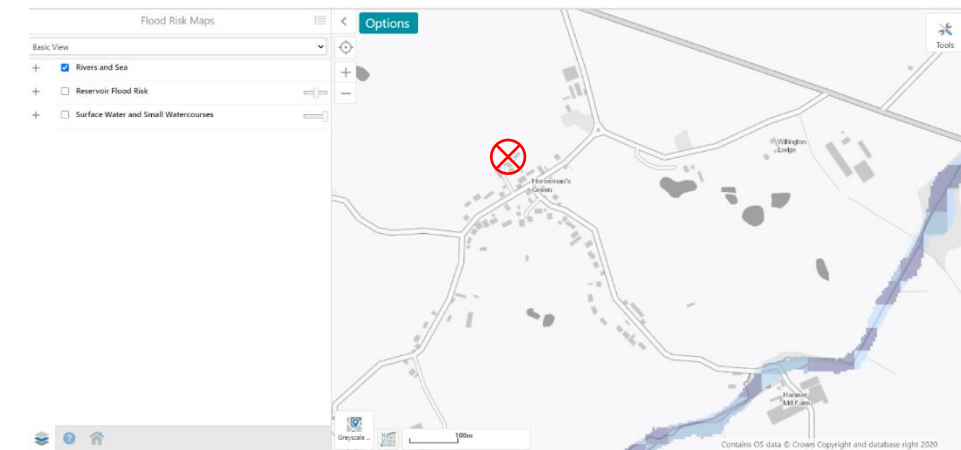
The package treatment plant will be suitably designed to accommodate the likely number of persons

occupying the properties, and would be constructed to British Standards. The proposed dwellings will include 2 x 3b (5 person) houses and 1 x 4 bed (6 person) house. The total waste water generated will be in the region of 3000 litres per day.

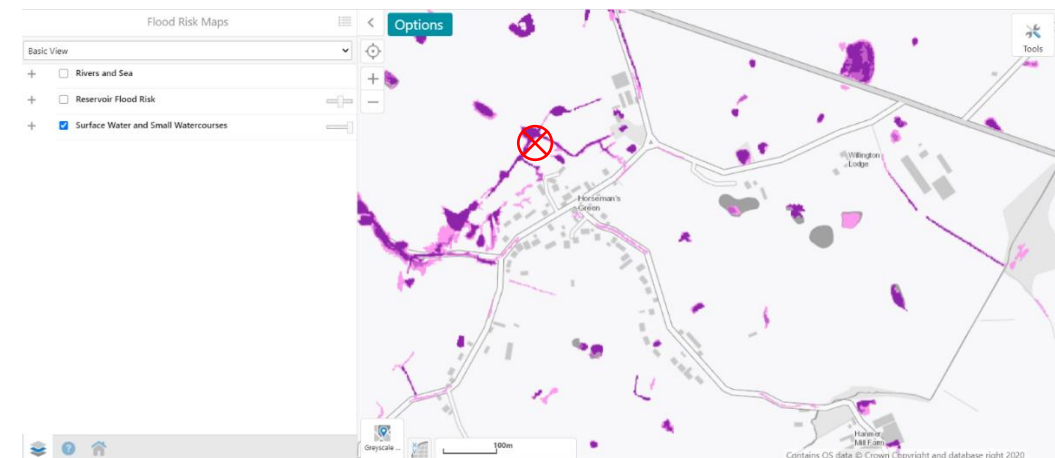
Flood Risk

The site is not at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea. A very small area of the site is vulnerable to surface water flooding. The flood risk maps are reproduced opposite.

Natural Resources Wales - Flood Risk Map for Horseman's Green – Rivers & Sea



Natural Resources Wales - Flood Risk Map for Horseman's Green – Surface Water



Deliverability

Preliminary work undertaken in preparing the planning application has established that there are no known constraints to preclude the development of the site.

5. The Development Plan

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

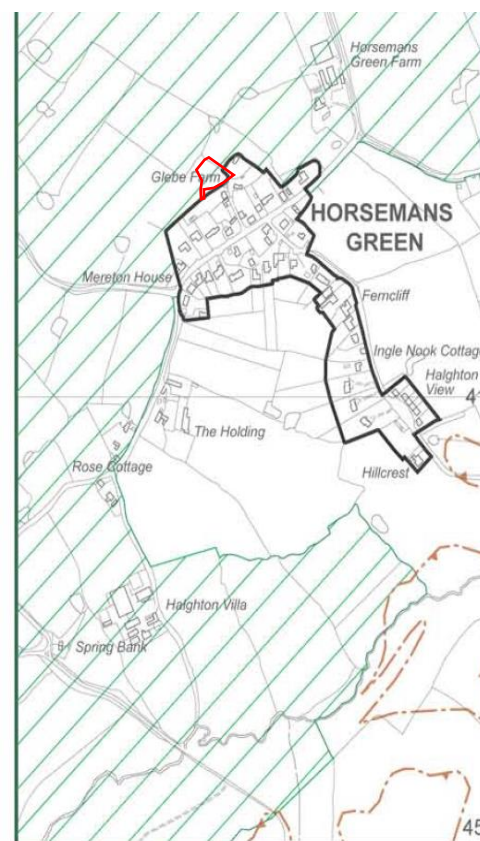
The current Development Plan for Wrexham therefore comprises the Council's adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted in February 2005, and covering the period 1996 to 2011.

The UDP Planning Strategy for housing development is to allocate most new development within or adjoining Wrexham and the urban villages to the west of the Borough. In the 'Rural Villages', the range of services available is generally confined to those meeting purely local needs. The settlements themselves are surrounded by attractive countryside and some are not conveniently accessible by public transport. New development is therefore restricted to small sites.

With the exception of the smallest hamlets, development boundaries have been defined for all settlements. These boundaries establish a clear limit beyond which new development will not be allowed. Inside settlement boundaries, development will normally be acceptable provided it accords with the built environment policies in Part 2 of the Plan and complies with the Council's supplementary planning guidance and adopted standards.

Horseman's Green is classified as a rural village, and has a development boundary. The UDP inset map is shown below, with the application site identified (red boundary).

UDP Inset Map – Horseman's Green



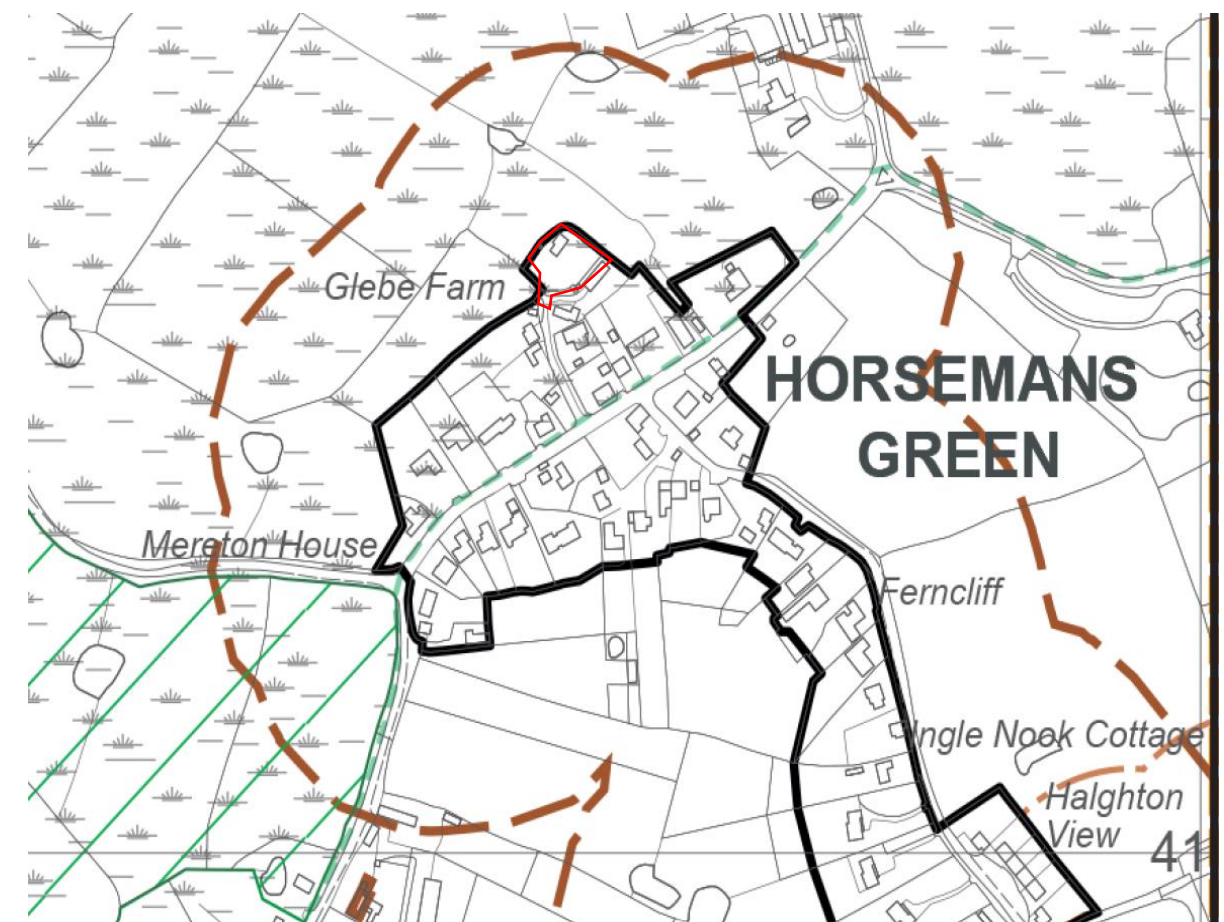
27. Horseman's Green

UDP Inset Map – Horseman's Green (zoomed in showing application site)



The adoption of the Council's new Local Development Plan (LDP) has been the subject of long delays, but the plan is now progressing following examination in public. The LDP proposes no change to the status of Horseman's Green, or to the development boundary, as shown below.

Emerging LDP Inset Map – Horseman's Green



The principle of development has been established within the development boundary, and the application site is therefore regarded by the development plan as an acceptable location for housing development.

6. Other Material Considerations

Consideration must be given to the “presumption in favour of sustainable development”, set out in Planning Policy Wales, and discussed further in the following section.

Paragraph 1.2 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10 December 2018) states that its primary objective is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The sustainability of the application proposals is discussed further below.

Section 2 above (site description & surroundings) has demonstrated that, in physical terms, the application site lies immediately adjacent to the existing built up area of the village. Although the application site is largely greenfield, it is well enclosed and not prominent in the wider landscape. It also contains 3 significant buildings (one of which is derelict) and therefore it is partially ‘previously developed’.

The site will therefore assimilate easily within the physical confines of the village, rather than extending it into the larger tracts of open and undeveloped countryside, which form an important part of the rural landscape and the village setting.

The level of services available in the village is very limited, but as stated earlier, the site is within a reasonably short drive of the larger villages of Hanmer and Penley, which together have a very good range of services, facilities and employment.

7. Compliance with other Development Plan Policies & Guidance

The only issues remaining to be considered are whether the application proposals comply with the aims and requirements of the relevant policies within the adopted UDP, and with the Council’s adopted supplementary policies in its Local Planning Guidance Notes.

The key policy here is UDP Policy GDP 1. This is reproduced below, along with a commentary on how the application proposals comply with its requirements.

Policy GDP1 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 – this statement has demonstrated already that the proposed development accords with this criterion, as far as is possible with an outline application.

b) Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public / private spaces – this is a more detailed matter which can be adequately dealt with at reserved matters stage.

c) Make the best use of design techniques, siting and orientation in order to conserve energy and water resources – at the reserved matters stage, more detailed proposals will be presented to demonstrate compliance with this criterion.

d) Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and in the nearby locality – the statement has demonstrated that highway access into and out of the site can be achieved safely. Whilst the surrounding road network is typically ‘rural’, the UDP acknowledges that Horseman’s Green is an appropriate location for new development.

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 – It is acknowledged that the village has no bus service. However, it is a short drive from other villages with facilities, and with bus services to the larger towns of Wrexham and Whitchurch.

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 – this criterion does not apply to the application proposals.

g) Secure public services (e.g. gas, water, electricity) to development at minimum public cost – water and electricity services are available close by.

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 – the submitted Environmental Appraisal demonstrates there will be no adverse effect on habitat, or on protected species, and that further environmental enhancements can be designed in to the proposed development.

i) Ensure that development does not result in, or is subject to, flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination, either on or off the site – the site does not lie within an area vulnerable to flooding. It is a greenfield site with no contamination issues.

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 – the proposed development would have no adverse impact on Welsh cultural or linguistic identity.

k) Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area – the statement has demonstrated that the proposals are socially and environmentally sustainable.

UDP Policy H7 requires that an element of affordable housing is included within developments of 25 dwellings or more, which clearly does not apply to the application site.

Wrexham Council also has a number of adopted Local Planning Guidance Notes (LPGN) which are relevant to the application, as discussed below :-

- **LGP 10 – Public Open Space – this applies only to developments of 10 or more dwellings. The**

properties will have adequate private rear garden space, and very good access to surrounding countryside, via the established footpath network.

- **LPGN 16 – Parking** – *at least 3 parking spaces per dwelling are shown on the sketch plan.*
- **LPGN 17 – Trees** – *No significant trees on the application site are adversely affected.*
- **LPGN 21 – Space around Dwellings** – *No windows to habitable rooms will overlook each other, and sufficient space is provided around and between the proposed dwellings.*

8. Conclusions

This statement has demonstrated that the application proposals are appropriate and sustainable, and are compliant with the relevant policies and guidance in the Development Plan, National planning policy, and relevant local supplementary planning guidance.

It is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted for the proposed development.

David Parker Planning Associates on behalf of Mr. Stuart Huxley

September 2022