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Transport Assessment

V3 Real Planning May 2022

Proposal: Erection of new stable block, provision of access, associated earthworks and landscaping to provide animal physiotherapy business
Location: Land adjacent to Bryer, Trevor Hall Road, Garth, Wrexham

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1. Revised Proposed Site Plan [see Drawing No PD218/02 May 2022]

Introduction

A planning application P/2021/0888 was submitted to Wrexham County Borough Council in September 2021. This report provides information to address concerns raised by the highway department in their response dated 12 November 2021

Development Proposals

The application proposes the erection of a new stable block for use by an animal physiotherapy business.

The Planning Statement submitted with the original application may not have made it entirely clear what level of vehicular activity the proposed business would generate. To clarify:

“The application is for the erection of 4 stables within a single unit. Two of these stables are for the applicants privately owned horses. The other two will be for use by the business for stabling of horses that require physiotherapy. The physiotherapy requires a minimum of 3 days per horse but can sometimes take months. In an average week there is likely to be no more than two horses being brought to the site by horse box. Even in the most extreme circumstances it equates to 4 incoming horseboxes per week.”

A revised Proposed Site Plan [see Drawing No PD218/02 May 2022] has been submitted which shows a reduced application site area - 70% of the original - to help reduce the impact of the proposal upon the landscape. It is now 820 square metres compared to the original 1160.

Traffic generation

The traffic generated by the stabling of horses is therefore negligible and will have no detrimental impact on the highway.

The physiotherapy business also extends to dogs. The physiotherapist will go to client's residence to treat dogs but will occasionally transport the dogs back to the application site if they cannot be treated at the owner's property. There will be no reason for dog owners to visit the site as the dogs will be transported to and from their owner's residence by the physiotherapist. At its very busiest there will be no more than one dog on site at any one time as most of them will be treated away from the application site. Traffic generation will be limited to the physio leaving and returning to site – occasionally with a dog in the boot of the car.

The traffic generated by the proposal is therefore negligible.

A horse box will enter the site on average just twice a week, even in the busiest periods this will be just 4 per week. This site is in an agricultural setting where the presence of horseboxes on the road is not unusual. The land on which the stable block is proposed is agricultural and could easily be used for horses and therefore generate movement of horseboxes at any time.

Similarly, the treatment of dogs on site generates no real increase in traffic. Any traffic movements will be in a standard motor vehicle and are movements which could happen at the site on a daily basis regardless of the planning application.

Site access

The site is located on road subject to the national speed limit where vehicular speeds have been accepted as being typically no more than 30 mph. Welsh Government Guidance recommends splays of 43m in both directions at the site access and the highway department have accepted that these splays already exist.

The highway officer stated that the access road was only 4.3m wide at a point 5m behind the highway boundary and surfaced only in loose stone.

It was suggested that to ensure the access was suitable, it needed to be 4.8m wide and hard surfaced with an aco-drain to prevent private water from the site entering the highway.

Whilst acknowledging that there will be a minor increase in traffic it seems that the highway response is somewhat onerous given the nominal increase in traffic generation.

Planning Circular WGC 016/2014 recommends that planning conditions are only imposed if they are strictly necessary for the application to be permitted and should not be too onerous. An increase in traffic of just two horse boxes per week in an agricultural setting should not require road widening, road surfacing and drainage improvements for such a negligible increase in traffic.

Parking and Turning

The highway officer has stated that the area is appropriately sized for the proposed development but expressed some concerns about the turning of vehicles within the site and at the access on to the highway.

Firstly, it is important to state that the car parking shown on the original plan did give the wrong impression of the proposals. There is to be very limited access to the site by visitors- as already explained **a maximum of four horse boxes per week**. Importantly there is only

one animal physiotherapist working on site so any movement of horse boxes will occur at totally different times, which will ensure there is no vehicular conflict either at the access or in the car park.

The revised parking plan demonstrates the worst possible scenario at the site. i.e., one horse box on site and two vehicles belonging to the site owner.

From the size of the parking area, it is obvious that there is more than enough room for the parking and turning of a horse box within the site.

The car park will be accessed via a double 5 bar gate resulting in an access width of 8m - giving plentiful manoeuvring space for horseboxes to enter and egress the car park.

It should also be noted that there is no realistic proposition that the horse box will reverse back down the access to the site access with Trevor Hall Road – no horse box owner will ever be tempted to reverse 70m down a single-track hill when vehicle turning is available within the car park.

Response from the council's Highway section

A Highway consultation response to the application was sent to planning under Memorandum dated 12th November, 2022 and is very confusing as it clearly has a number of conflicting statements.

In relation to the site access, it states the visibility splays to the egress onto the main road **'are considered acceptable'**. This positive assessment is clearly at odds with the Highway Officer's conclusion that **'we would not normally support an application which increases traffic movements using a substandard access arrangement'** and then also asking for **'vehicular tracking analysis to confirm the feasibility of the access arrangements for both the internal site layout and access onto the public highway'**.

Again, why is the Highway Officer asking, in bold in the response, for a site plan detailing the parking arrangements / layout, when it is stated earlier, that **'there appears to be an appropriate sized area to accommodate vehicular parking arrangement'**, particularly, when the parking area will not result in any issue of highway danger, being 110m from a highway.

Conclusion

The proposed use of the site will generate a nominal increase in traffic - just four horse boxes per week in the very worst scenario.

The site is in an agricultural setting where horseboxes are regularly seen on the highway. The site access itself is capable of accommodating horsebox manoeuvres in its current format and given its agricultural usage there is nothing to prevent its use by horse boxes / tractors /trailers at the present time.

There is therefore reason for the site access to require upgrading to the extent requested by the highway department as it does not meet the criteria set out in planning circular WGC 016/2014. The revised plans indicate that there is more than enough space for the parking and turning of a horsebox within the proposed car parking area.

It is, therefore, considered that the additional information submitted in support of the application should resolve any queries from the highway department. It is suggested that conditions, relating to the:

- *construction and maintenance of the proposed parking / turning area*
- *surfacing of the immediate site access with hard bound materials for a minimum distance of 10m behind the highway boundary, we would require a minimum width of 4.8m to allow the simultaneous passing of vehicles.*
- *Provision of an aco-drain.*

is all that this proposal warrants as any road improvements are not deemed necessary to support the application.