



Change of Use Application C3 Dwelling House to D1 Non-residential Institution Plot 80, Oakley Grange Supporting Planning Statement

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	3
2.0 SITE AND CONTEXT	4
3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	6
4.0 PROPOSED USE / JUSTIFICATION.....	9
5.0 CONCLUSIONS	11

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cassidy + Ashton have been instructed by Wrexham Glyndwr University to prepare and submit this application for the change of use of an existing dwellinghouse to accommodate educational use.
- 1.2 The application is for the following:
Change of use of an existing dwellinghouse (C3) to Non-residential institution (D1) to facilitate educational use in association with Wrexham Glyndwr University.
- 1.3 This statement is therefore submitted in support of a change of use application to enable the property to enter into the ownership of Wrexham Glyndwr University and be utilised as a specialist 'lived home' learning environment.
- 1.4 The acquisition of the property for educational use would facilitate lived home environment learning opportunities, enhancing the academic curriculum at Glyndwr and thus the student experience.
- 1.5 This application relates to Plot 80 of the Edwards Homes development *Oakley Grange*, originally granted outline permission for residential development under application Ref. **P/2018/0671**, with the reserved matters approved under **P/2021/0094**.
- 1.6 This supporting planning statement sets out the context of the application site and thus the perspective in which this change of use application should be considered. As such, the statement defines the proposed use and the associated 'value added' to both the Glyndwr academic experience and its competitiveness. The statement concludes that the proposed use is acceptable in principle and will not impact surrounding residential amenity.

2.0 SITE AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 The application site concerns *80 Oakley Grange, Plas Coch Road, Wrexham, LL11 2BZ*.

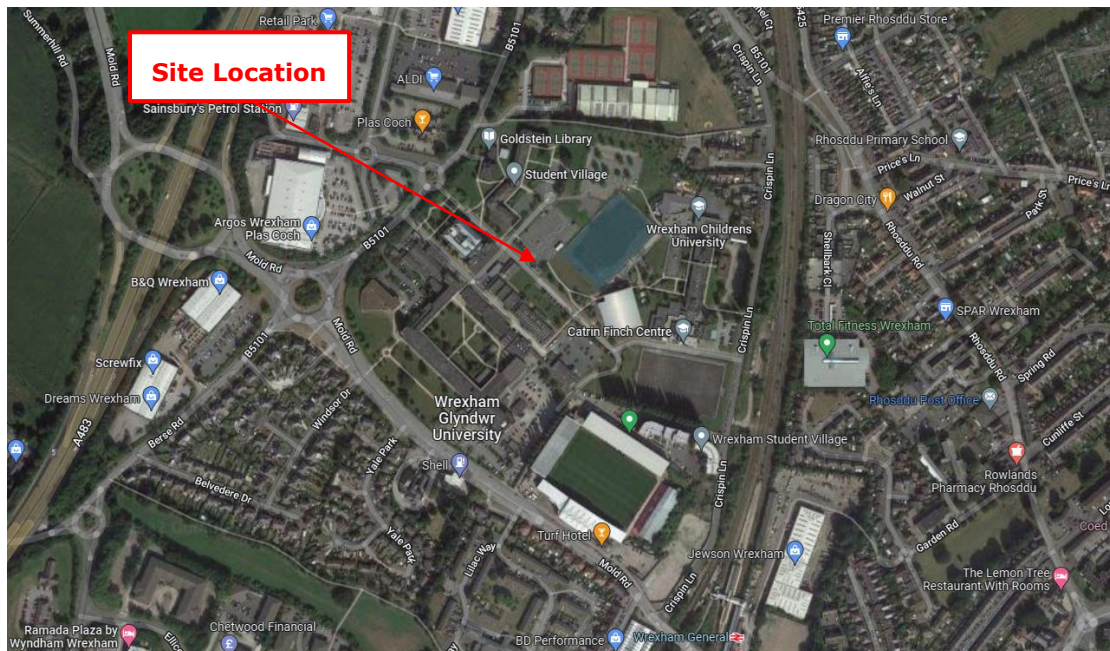


Fig. 1 Site Location [Source: Google Maps]

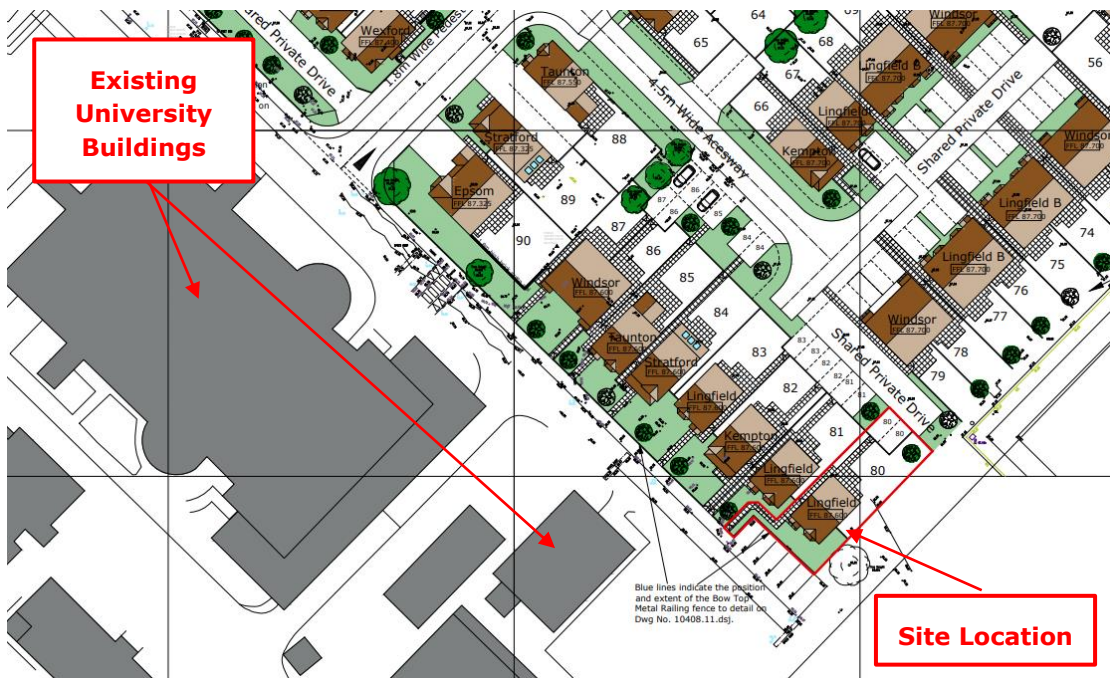


Fig. 2 Site Location Plan

- 2.2 As demonstrated by Figures 1 and 2, the site is located immediately adjacent to the Glyndwr University Main Academic Campus.

- 2.3 The wider Oakley Grange site was formally within the ownership of Wrexham Glyndwr University and comprised of student accommodation.
- 2.4 Edwards Homes purchased the complete site from Wrexham Glyndwr University following the receipt of planning permission ref. **P/2018/0671**:
Demolition of redundant student halls and outline application for up to 410 residential units with access off B5101 together with car parking, landscaping and associated infrastructure on surplus land within the overall Plas Coch academic campus.
- 2.5 Following submission of the reserved matters under P/2021/0094, permission was granted for the development of 90 no. houses.
- 2.6 The application site therefore has a connected history with the University Campus.

WREXHAM GLYNDWR UNIVERSITY – FUTURE STRATEGY

- 2.7 Wrexham Glyndwr University is a public research University with charitable status, which was established in 2008 from the former North East Wales Institute of Higher Education.
- 2.8 'Campus 2025' is the universities future strategy, which seeks to sustain its position in the higher education sector, delivering a 21st century appropriate learning environment.
- 2.9 Campus 2025 therefore presents the primary objective to provide a modern, flexible campus, with spaces which are able to adapt as teaching and learning styles evolve.
- 2.10 Glyndwr are committed to investing in the campus to develop an environment where students want to stay, building a student centred, vibrant and sustainable campus. Aligned with this are examples such as the sale of the land to Edwards Homes and subsequent reinvestment in the University campus and facilities being integral to the University's strategy.
- 2.11 The proposed use of this property for educational purposes aligns with this 'Campus 2025' strategy, supporting curriculum enhancements and thus the reputation of Glyndwr, in turn improving student recruitment.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

PLANNING POLICY WALES

- 3.1 Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (PPW) was published in February 2021. PPW sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's planning policies for Wales and how these should be applied. This provides local government with the guidance to prepare their own local development frameworks and guidance in decision making.
- 3.2 The primary objective of PPW 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, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015.
- 3.3 There is a general presumption in favour of sustainable development and accordingly, Planning Policy Wales supports economic competitiveness and opportunities for business' to achieve socially and environmentally desirable ways of working.
- 3.4 **Paragraph 3.6.1** highlights that adequate and efficient infrastructure and services – such as education - are crucial for economic, social and environmental sustainability.
- 3.5 ***This application concerns the change of use of an existing dwellinghouse to educational use, to broaden the learning environments available, in turn enhancing the academic curriculum. On this basis, the proposed development supports the objective of PPW, enhancing Glyndwr University's competitiveness as a public research University. Accordingly, the use of the property for education supports the principle of Paragraph 3.6.1.***

FUTURE WALES TO 2040

- 3.6 **Policy 1 – Where Wales will grow** identifies 'Wrexham and Deeside' as a National Growth Area. It is acknowledged that these areas are economically distinctive, supporting a range of businesses, enterprises and universities. The Strategy promotes their continued growth.
- 3.7 **Policy 20 – National Growth Area - Wrexham and Deeside** is identified as the main focus for strategic economic growth in the North region.

- 3.8 Future Wales proceeds to state that the Universities in Bangor and Wrexham are an important presence in the region, providing further education, undertaking research and supporting innovation, providing employment, attracting students, and supporting the local businesses and communities around them. Strategic and Local Development Plans should consider their role in the region and how they can play a bigger role in supporting the regional economy, innovation and their communities.

This application concerns the change of use of an existing dwellinghouse to educational use. This would facilitate an enhancement to the Universities curriculum and thus help grow its student base and reputation, in turn, contributing to the wider Wrexham economy. On this basis, the proposed development supports the principles of Future Wales set out above.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

- 3.9 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations of which PPW, together with emerging development plans, indicate otherwise.
- 3.10 The current Development Plan relevant to this application site is comprised of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 (adopted February 2005).
- 3.11 The emerging Wrexham Deposit Local Development Plan 2013-2028 is also a material consideration, which was submitted for Inspector Examination in April 2019.

WREXHAM UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 3.12 **Policy GDP2** supports improvements to the capacity of community infrastructure and facilities, including through the continued development of higher education. The intention of the policy is to facilitate a modern robust economy across all sectors.

This application concerns the change of use of an existing dwellinghouse to educational use. This would facilitate an enhancement to the Universities learning environments, curriculum and thus its student recruitment. In turn facilitating wider economic growth. On this basis, the proposed development is in accordance with Policy GDP2.

WREXHAM LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (EMERGING POLICY)

- 3.13 The emerging Local Development Plan acknowledges the importance of preserving Wrexham as a location that provides an environment in which business' can prosper, flourish and expand.
- 3.14 Although the emerging LDP is silent with regard to the continued development of educational facilities, Glyndwr University is identified as a key destination in the town within **Policy T4**.

This application concerns the change of use of an existing dwellinghouse to educational use. This would facilitate the growth of Glyndwr University and is therefore in accordance with the general principles of the LDP on the basis of supporting the expansion of the local economy.

4.0 PROPOSED USE / JUSTIFICATION

- 4.1 This section sets out the justification for this change of use, on the basis of the proximity and existing relationship of the property to the University Campus, concluding that the proposed use is appropriate in this location.
- 4.2 The proposed educational use of the site is to be in conjunction with the current operation of the University and will take the form of 'lived environment' teaching experiences led and supervised by academic staff.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

- 4.3 The wider Oakley Grange site was formally within the ownership of Wrexham Glydwnr University and is immediately adjacent to the academic campus.
- 4.4 With this in mind, it is acknowledged that the property subject to this application – Plot 80 – being the adjoining corner, is related to the campus, where there is an existing educational use.
- 4.5 It is the intention that access to the application site will be gained from the University Campus rather than through the residential development and as such interaction with the wider residential site will be minimal.
- 4.6 The educational use of this property will not negatively impact on surrounding residential amenity, with its educational use taking shape of 'lived environment' situations.
- 4.7 The academic use of the property will be firmly managed by the University to prevent any such impact upon surrounding amenity.
- 4.8 The property is to be used in line with the Universities current hours of operation and therefore will not extend the presence of the University, and will protect neighbouring residential amenity.
- 4.9 With this in mind, it is concluded that the educational use of the property will not infringe upon neighbouring residential amenity and will instead operate as a natural extension to the University campus, which is an existing immediate neighbour to the Oakley Grange development.

ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES

- 4.10 The use of the house for educational purposes would provide considerable academic opportunities, thus facilitating curriculum enhancement for a variety of courses.
- 4.11 A range of discipline areas would benefit from the property to facilitate 'lived environment' simulated activities, simulating the home environment and thus providing added context and authenticity to learning experiences.
- 4.12 Particular courses to make use of the 'lived home environment' for different and complementary activities include Forensic Science, together with health, care, education and public service programmes.
- 4.13 Notably, with regard to Forensic Science courses, the opportunity for Crime Scene Training using a real home environment would provide an authentic and realistic experience. This facility would be used as a safe environment for the development of these complex practical skills including crime scene preservation, recording, documentation, photography or examination.
- 4.14 Gaining Chartered Society for Forensic Science (CSFS) accreditation is a key goal for the University and this 'lived home environment' would have a positive influence, assisting this accreditation whilst boosting the profile of the University.
- 4.15 In turn, boosting the profile of the University will facilitate economic growth of the wider Wrexham area as a place to live, work and visit.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The above evidence highlights how the proposed educational use of this property would act as a natural extension to the existing academic campus, whilst enhancing the learning opportunities through the lived home environment.
- 5.2 The educational use of this property will operate in line with the existing campus and will therefore suitably respect neighbouring residential amenity.
- 5.3 It is highlighted within Chapter 4 how the academic opportunities associated with this proposal would help to boost the profile of the University, in turn contributing towards its growth and the wider economic growth of Wrexham. On this basis, the proposed developed is in accordance with both National and Local Planning Policy.

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