

Local Authority:
Wrexham

Development location:

Blaenau Uchaf,
Blaenau Rd,
Froncysyllte,
Wrexham
LL20 7RY

Date: 15/03/2022

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed outbuilding conversion into a dwelling, erection of a boundary fence.

Description of Application:

The application is for a conversion of an existing outbuilding into a dwelling, the outbuilding is relatively unused & has the potential to make an Eco-friendly 4 bedroom detached dwelling.

Type of Application:

Full Planning application

Site Designation:

The Site is located at the very top of Froncysyllte heading towards Chirk or Llangollen, the building is over the Froncysyllte hill & has no viewpoints to the world-renowned Aqueduct.

The historical use for the outbuilding was a cattle shelter, the property hasn't had any livestock since the 1960's therefore the outbuilding has been used for storage purposes since.

Roles of this Design & Access Statement:

Provides evidence to justify the proposals in terms of National & Local Planning Policies. Explanations relating to the objectives of good design have been applied & giving reasons where they may not have been applied. Set out the established vision & principles of the scheme. Demonstrates that the principles of sustainability have been addressed. Illustrates how conflicting demands have been considered & how these have influenced the proposal. Ensures that design issues have been considered & potential problems have been solved

Policies considered:

The policies considered relate to the Wrexham Local Development Plan

- Development Policy: General Development Principles.
- Strategic Policy: Natural Environment
- Development Policy: Development & Landscape.
- Development Policy: Sustainable Design & Materials.
- Strategic Policy: A sustainable Rural Economy.

Heritage:

Blaenau Uchaf is located on the outskirts of Froncysyllte, there are a number of Barn conversions in the surrounding areas, the subject outbuilding does not intend to replicate the surrounding houses & farm buildings, but consideration has been given to proportion, height, massing, bulk use of materials, alignment & treatment of setting.

Accessibility:

Requirements, were applicable, & with regard to The Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare Regulations 1992) will be applied. Building Regulation approval is required for the building, & approved document (Access to & use of buildings,) does not apply. The setting & design of the building is such that access to & from the building & circulation within the building by disabled persons may be considered acceptable under The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended 2005) as reasonably may be expected with consideration to the building use.

The proposed outbuilding is located off "Blaenau Rd", this road is used by the local farm (located East on the map) therefore is suitable for large vehicles delivering & materials whilst the outbuilding is being converted.



Access off "Blaenau Rd" is a private drive, finished with tarmacadam, there is no requirement for new access onto the public highway, the proposal includes using the existing access but creating a new entrance to the subject outbuilding (ref 1068). The proposed new entrance is also finished with tarmacadam, therefore suitable for wheelchair access.

Character & Design:

The design of the building considers the following:

- Existing buildings, infrastructure & rural landscape.
- Landscape, culture & biodiversity.
- Locally distinctive patterns & forms of development.
- Boundaries & building lines.
- Easily recognizable & understood features & landmarks.

Currently the building is suffering from a lack of character due to it being “pebble dashed” in the 1970’s, with the proposed conversion we aim to render the building white, incorporate a slate pitched roof & restore any of the architectural features found.



(Subject outbuilding)



(Existing pebbledash finish)

Some of the other character features that can be restored, should the proposed scheme be accepted are;



(existing supporting beam on the East elevation)



(timber roof structure)

The aim of the proposed scheme is to restore & celebrate all of the architectural features of the historic barn, once the “pebble dash” has been removed, we are hopeful to have discovered more character features, which we can then use to enhance the building further.

Building Location:

The location of the outbuilding is adjacent (west) to “Blaenau Uchaf”, reference “1066 site drawing”, the grounds historically were part of the “Chirk Castle Estate”. They were sold from the Estate in 1975.

Proximity to dwellings:

“Blaenau Uchaf” is a detached residential house, located adjacent the subject outbuilding, consideration has been made towards the privacy of “Blaenau Uchaf” from the subject outbuilding, there are no direct bedroom windows facing the outbuilding due to the existing orientation of “Blaenau Uchaf”, the only windows facing the East Elevation of the outbuilding are ground floor entrance porch windows.



(Orientation facing the East Elevation of the subject outbuilding)

The proposed building:

Structural survey

The structural integrity of the building is good (reference “structural Survey from Alpha Surveyor’s LTD”). The building is likely to have been built in the early 1900’s, considering its age & the impact of the demanding UK weather it has stood the test of time.

Aim

The aim with the design of the outbuilding is to only make subtle changes whilst restoring the original character of the building, ensuring the outbuilding remains in keeping with local architecture. Using some modern techniques will allow the outbuilding to perform friendly to the environment whilst being a comfortable & aesthetically pleasing.

Roof

The roof is structurally good, there are signs of wood worm in places, which will need treatment, the corrugated roof requires replacement but the proposed replacement method is to use slate which will allow the building to blend into the surrounding area & local architecture.

Structural changes

The structure of the “Main barn” & “garage 2” (ref 1054) will remain the same, including the roof pitch/style. Removal of the unnecessary “garage 1” will provide adequate parking & turning area (ref 1068). “Garage 3” is to be rebuilt on a smaller footprint to form the kitchen area on the proposed scheme, the roof pitch will replicate the “main barn”.

The existing outbuildings have an overall footprint of 301m², the new proposed plan reduces the footprint to 244m² a difference of 56.5m².

Windows / glazing

The building will incorporate glazed windows along most elevations, all glazing will be high efficiency argon filled double glazing, the “U” values will supersede what’s required from current building control requirements.

The proposed frame style is “RAL 7038 agate grey, wood effect flush sash” a high quality UPVC product. We realise not using wooden windows is unusual for a barn conversion but due to the adverse weather conditions at Blaenau Uchaf (the property is 340m above sea level), we believe that UPVC windows will be able to withstand the high winds & horizontal rainfall that is inevitable.

Rather than replacing the wooden windows every 5-8 years due to weather damage we believe in continuing with the goal of being Eco-friendly & not putting more than what's necessary into landfill, A UPVC window should last over 20 years rather than 5-8 years for its wooden alternative. We understand that the window material could be less favourable by planning local authority, therefore an alternative would be considered if necessary to obtain planning permission.

Roof material

Welsh Ffestiniog coloured grey roof slate used throughout the conversion, matching many of the surrounding local buildings.

Skylights

Skylights on the East (primary elevation) & West elevation will be conservation style, skylights within the “extension” area will be triple glazed units.

Drainage

The subject outbuilding is currently connected into “Blaenau Uchaf” septic tank (ref 1067), the proposal includes installing a separate water treatment plant which separates the dwellings existing drainage.

A water treatment plant is a much more Eco-Friendly method for treating waste water, but at a large cost which we are willing to undertake, as its the best method for treating waste water for the Environment.

High phosphorus levels in the river Dee have been considered but due to the site not being near a water course, already having existing drainage & all drainage fields are within the property boundary, we are optimistic that this will not be an issue.

Surface water

Rainwater harvesting will be incorporated into the build to enhance the buildings Eco-friendly credentials, five 1.5M2 tanks will be installed to harvest the rainwater. When strained through 5 micron filters & treated with UV light the water will become safe to use for most applications. When the tanks are full, the overflow water will be connected into existing surface water drainage.

Ecological survey

(ref survey from “Star Ecology LTD”), no Bat or bird evidence was found within the outbuilding some further recommendations were made but from an ecological point of view there is no reason that the project cannot commence, please reference the survey.

Solar panels

A 3.6Kw system has been incorporated into the design, the solar panels have been placed on the South Elevation to ensure maximum UV gain.

Community Safety

All access routes are fit for purpose considering the building use.

Energy

Energy use will be minimal. The use of high-performance double-glazed argon filled k-Glass window panels will meet & exceed the current building regulations requirement. The outbuilding will supersede current building control requirements for insulation to ensure it requires minimum heating.

Flooding

Consideration has been given to the potential for flooding & the location of the proposed site is “very low” risk of flooding, all existing guttering from the subject outbuilding are connected into existing surface water drains.

Materials & resources

The building materials used in the external wall construction, floor & roof are robust & long lasting.

Structural Frame: local stone with lime mortar

Roof: Slate

Walls: Local stone with lime mortar

Floor: concrete

Landscape & Biodiversity

The construction of the building will not have an impact on habitats, species & other features on the site. Damage to the natural environment will be kept to a bare minimum.

Movement

Movement to & from the site has been considered & found to be safe.

Social, Economic & Physical Contexts

Social:

The social context has been considered in relation to its design & location which will not have a negative impact on people living within the locality or to visitors of the area.

Economic:

Local builders & suppliers of materials will be used, inexpensive & sustainable construction methods used.

Physical:

This has been referred to earlier in the statement in relation to design & sitting.

Other information forming part of this Planning Application

1. Structural survey (Alpha Structural surveying services LTD)
2. Ecological report (Star Ecology LTD)
3. Existing elevation drawings (1050 to 1055)
4. Floor Plans (1056 & 1057)
5. Proposed elevation drawings (1058 to 1062)
6. OS map plan 1:1250 (ref 1063)
7. Full existing & proposed drawings (1064 & 1065)
8. Location Plan (ref 1066)
9. Water treatment plan (1067)

10. Parking plan (1068)
11. Driveway plan (1069)

Construction Traffic

Parking of vehicles for site personnel, operatives & visitors – Limited vehicular activity due to the size of the scheme. Existing onsite parking will be maintained. Loading & unloading of plant & materials - Limited activity due to the size of the scheme– see below. Contractor's parking provided within site. Construction phase traffic to be planned & managed on site by Main Contractor. Loading & unloading within the site curtilage.

Parking

Not applicable. The development has five allocated parking locations, which is sufficient for the property size.

Planning obligations

Not applicable. The development does not add additional burden on infrastructure.

Statement of Community involvement

The renovation of an unused outbuilding into a dwelling will aesthetically improve the local area, the increase in property size will increase accommodation in the local area, whilst reducing the local housing crisis problem. Whilst providing more local labour for the local area & increasing sales for local businesses.

Proposed alterations:

1. Externally insulate the building, render the building white.
2. Replace roof, retore timber where possible. Install slate tiles to weatherproof the building.
3. Install conservation rooflights on the primary elevation (East) & West elevation. Triple glazed units on the "extension" South elevation.
4. Install new high quality wood effect UPVC glazing throughout.
5. Install a water treatment plant & inspection chamber (ref 1067)
6. Install a rainwater harvesting system, connect overflow into existing surface water drains.
7. Replace existing concrete floor, replace with DPM & insulation to conform with current building regulations.
8. insulate the building to meet current building control regulations.
9. Install a 3.6Kw solar panel system onto the south elevation (ref 1061).
10. install new boundary fences (ref 1066)
11. Ensure adequate parking & turning is provided throughout.