
Design and Access Statement

Change of use of building and land from
caravan storage to B1/B8 commercial use and
all associated works

Stryt Yr Hwch Farm,

Sontley,

Wrexham,

LL13 0YA

On behalf of Mr R Williams

April 2022

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1.0 Introduction

This report has been commissioned by Mr R Williams, the purpose of which is to provide additional information and design details regarding the agricultural enterprise making a planning application for the change of use of building and land currently used for caravan storage to B1/B8 commercial storage and all associated works on land at Stryt Yr Hwch, Sontley, Wrexham.

The report provides an objective evaluation of the agricultural business operated by Mr R Williams in order to justify the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework when considering development in the open countryside.

2.0 Planning Policy

From March 2012 the National Planning Policy Framework has governed the planning policies and their application for England and Wales. Under this legislation paragraph 28 highlights planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas:

Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
- promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and
- promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

Under Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011:

Subject to the further controls over development that apply to the Green Belt, development proposals on appropriate sites which maintain and enhance countryside vitality and character will be permitted where they improve the sustainability of rural communities by bringing local economic and community benefits, particularly where they relate to:

- Small-scale new economic development diversifying the rural economy, including farm diversification schemes;
- The retention and appropriate expansion of an existing established business, unless relocation to a suitable site within a settlement would be more appropriate.

Policy PS2:

Development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.

Policy PS3

Development should use previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to the use of greenfield land, wherever possible, particularly so where

greenfield land is of ecological, landscape or amenity value, or comprises agricultural land of grades 1, 2 or 3a quality.

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.
- b) Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public / private spaces.
- c) Make the best use of design techniques, siting and orientation in order to conserve energy and water resources.
- d) Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and in the nearby locality.
- 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.
- 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.
- g) Secure public services (e.g. gas, water, electricity) to development at minimum public cost.
- 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.
- i) Ensure that development does not result in, or is subject to, flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination, either on or off the site.
- 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.
- k) Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area

Policy E6

Small on-farm operations such as food processing and packing, together with services to other farms, such as workshop facilities and equipment hire and maintenance, should be located within existing farm buildings. Where it can be shown that no suitable buildings are available for such operations.

3.0 Business Overview

The business trading name is Mr R Williams, is a farm unit based in Sontley, Wrexham and the farming enterprise was formerly a dairy farm along with heifer rearing. The applicant, like many other farmers on the country, have found it necessary to diversify on order to survive commercially.

The applicants have been farming at Stryt Yr Hwch for generations and would now like to diversify their existing building. This change of use will allow Mr R Williams to retain and manage the already existing traditional farm buildings, using several for the continuing heifer rearing farm business and one for the proposed B1/B8 commercial use.

This considerable investment demonstrates a long term commitment to the business and sustainability of the farming unit and community.

4.0 The Proposal

Mr R Williams proposes to change the use of the existing caravan storage building and land to be used for B1/B8 commercial storage and distribution at Stryt Yr Hwch.

The building proposed for change of use is a former dairy building used to house cattle. The building measures 54.60m by 12.42m. The building has previously been granted planning to change the use from agriculture to caravan storage, this was approved 4/11/19 under P/2019/0645. The client would like to open the facility up to a wider range of uses hence the request for a B1/B8 use class.

The building will be used for as commercial units for private rent. This will allow Mr Williams to improve the current commercial unit available for rent while supporting small start up rural businesses, the change of use will provide sustainable workspace and storage. Approval of this application has the potential to create jobs through small businesses as their business will be able to grow once a workplace and storage site has been acquired. The proposal will improve the resilience and diversity of income within the site to stabilise its future. The work shops will also be the catalyst in the growth of the occupier's businesses providing them with flexible workspace they demand to operate their business. The workshops in the building will be rented individually to allow small rural businesses to start up and become established. After much research the client has found in the local vicinity and the surrounding areas commercial property to let is largely only available on long terms agreements, combined with the urban setting leading to high rents and rates making it difficult for small and start up businesses. The units at Stryt y Hwch will fill this gap in the market and provide flexible workplaces on flexible terms to suits small businesses.

The proposed change of use will include:

- Perimeter protection
- Access control
- CCTV
- Security/amenity lighting
- Fire prevention measures
- Vermin control

On the approved application for caravan storage the highway authority has confirmed that the site is located off a rural classified highway with a 60 mph speed limit. The Welsh Government recommended

visibility splays (2.4 x 43 metres) are achievable from the access in both directions. There are a number of different routes to / from the application site which are typically rural and sometimes narrow however there are adequate passing places along these routes. Traffic movements are likely to be staggered and will not have a detrimental impact upon the local highway network.

The ground is relatively level and presents no problems for vehicles or pedestrians entering or leaving the site.

There will be no WC facilities available within or adjacent to the building.

5.0 Conclusion

The purpose of this report is to outline the scale and type of diversification. The need for an alternative income is vital to sustain the remaining agricultural at Stryt Yr Hwch. It is felt that the proposed diversification accords with planning policy in encouraging farm diversifications into non-agricultural projects.

The proposal is in accordance with UDP Policies PS2 and GDP1 and the development of the site will not be detrimental to the visual amenities of the area. The development will not adversely impact upon highway safety or residential amenity and I recommend accordingly.