



Conversion of Existing Garage – Planning, Design & Access Statement

The Ridings, Caelica Farm, Mulsford Lane, Sarn, Wrexham SY14 7LW



ARH Architectural Design is the trading name of Saxty Hewitt & Associates
Company registered in England & Wales No. 12336458

1.0 Introduction

The Proposal



This design proposal has been prepared by ARH Architectural Design on behalf of Mr and Mrs Marsland to assist the Council in their decision making.

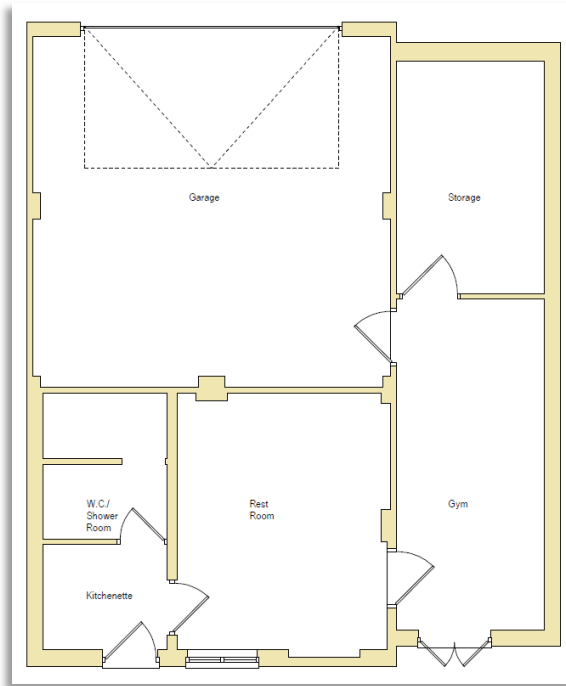
The proposal seeks full planning permission to convert a single storey garage within the curtilage of the existing dwelling into a self-contained two bedroomed holiday let.

By collating key information, demonstrating and communicating a logical design process, and by reflecting the objectives of good design, this report sets out to define how the application has been designed in accordance with both National and Local Planning Policy; how it is sympathetic within the site and its wider context; and how the final layout and appearance of the conversion allows for the creation of this holiday letting unit.

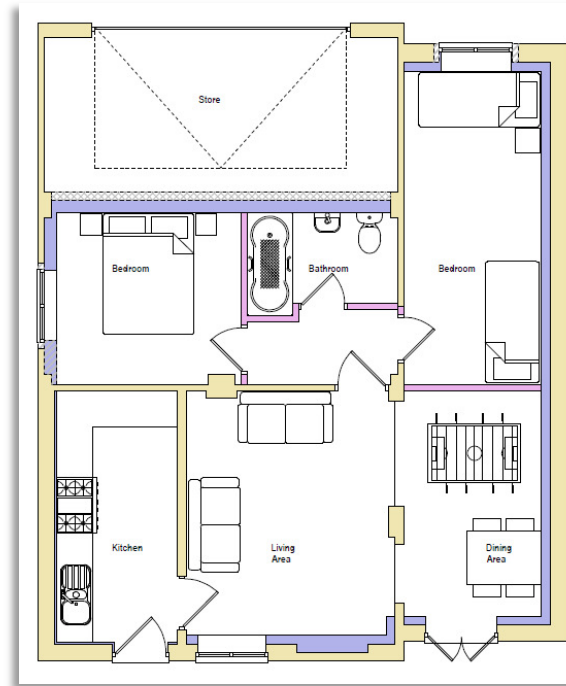
This statement has been guided by The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, and Design Technical Advice Note 12 (Design and Access Statement) 2014.

2.0 The Principle of the Development

The principle of the proposal is to allow our clients the opportunity to diversify having re-evaluated their working lives following the recent height of the Covid-19 pandemic and to create a holiday letting business to further support themselves financially in a new and changing world.



Existing Floor Plan



Proposed Floor Plan

Mr and Mrs Marsland have both been in gainful employment all their working lives thereby both positively contributing to the local economy.

Their property is in a great location for the proposed holiday accommodation venture that they are proposing and it will have beneficial impact on the immediate area as a whole by encouraging visitors and boosting spending in the local shops and pubs. There is also the potential of benefitting other local businesses such as the Iscody Park wedding venue just 6 miles away, as well as supporting the various local visitor attractions and riding events, for example, as there is already stabling on site.

We have ensured that this proposal is not incongruous with the character of the existing building or the surrounding area as is further detailed later in this document.

3.0 Site Assessment

3.1 Location

The application site in its entirety relates to a smallholding of approximately 12.5 acres (5.0585ha) being part of an irregular shaped plot located in an area of open countryside. Malpas is the main service village which has a good range of local facilities serving a number of surrounding smaller settlements.

The site itself is shown in the context of the surrounding area in the aerial photographs below being indicated by the yellow location pin. (Courtesy of Google Earth).



3.2 Site Analysis

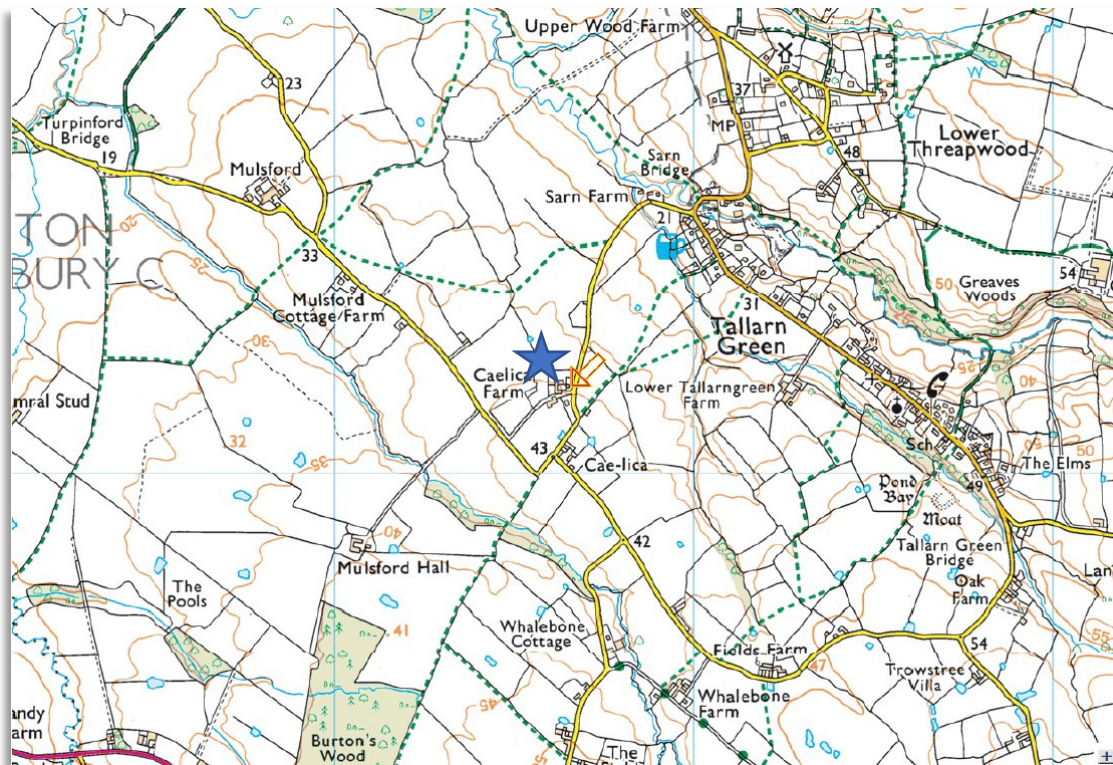
3.2.1 Existing Site

The site is currently occupied by the property known as 'The Ridings' and its existing associated outbuildings. This statement supports a Planning Application for a change of use of the existing domestic garage into holiday letting accommodation.

The proposal site benefits from an existing dedicated access and off-road parking together with a substantial material construction.

3.2.2 Topography

The site itself is relatively level, with the land lying approximately 43m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), and constitutes level land with no undulation.



3.3 Residential Amenity

The site is currently bounded by the main service road to the front with a neighbouring residential property to each side and agricultural land to all aspects.



The residential amenity of these neighbouring property owners is well protected and there is no overshadowing/loss of light, dominance or loss of privacy associated with the scheme as the garage building already exists and no extensions are involved with the conversion scheme.

Once converted, it will remain well screened by the existing landscaping around the site with off road access and parking also being existing.

As well as being sheltered by existing hedgerow, the site benefits from a substantial separation distance from the neighbouring buildings thereby making it very flexible in terms of accommodating the proposed conversion.

There are no immediate neighbours (apart from the applicants themselves) so the proposal would not cause any negative visual impact upon in this respect either. Overall, any potential impact will be to an acceptable level.

3.4 Character Area

The neighbouring properties vary widely from large period houses to cottages; and materials vary from red brick, to stone and render although mainly under slate.

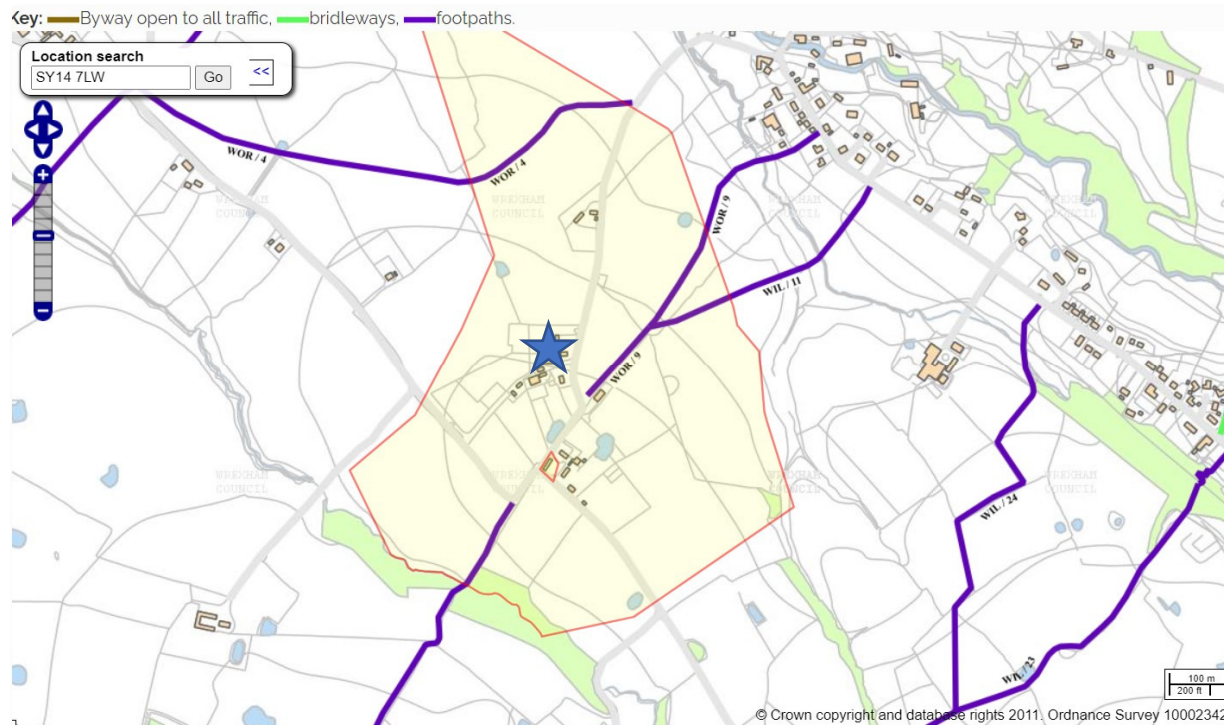
3.5 Environmental Impact

There are no statutory designations that affect the site.

None of the existing buildings on the site are listed by Cof Cymru's National Historic Assets of Wales, (the online service developed by Welsh Government's Historic Environment Service, Cadw), and the site is not in the Conservation Area.

3.5.1 Rights of Way

The Definitive Map and Statement is the Council's legal record of Public Rights of Way in Wrexham and was prepared under the provisions of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. It shows public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic (BOATs).



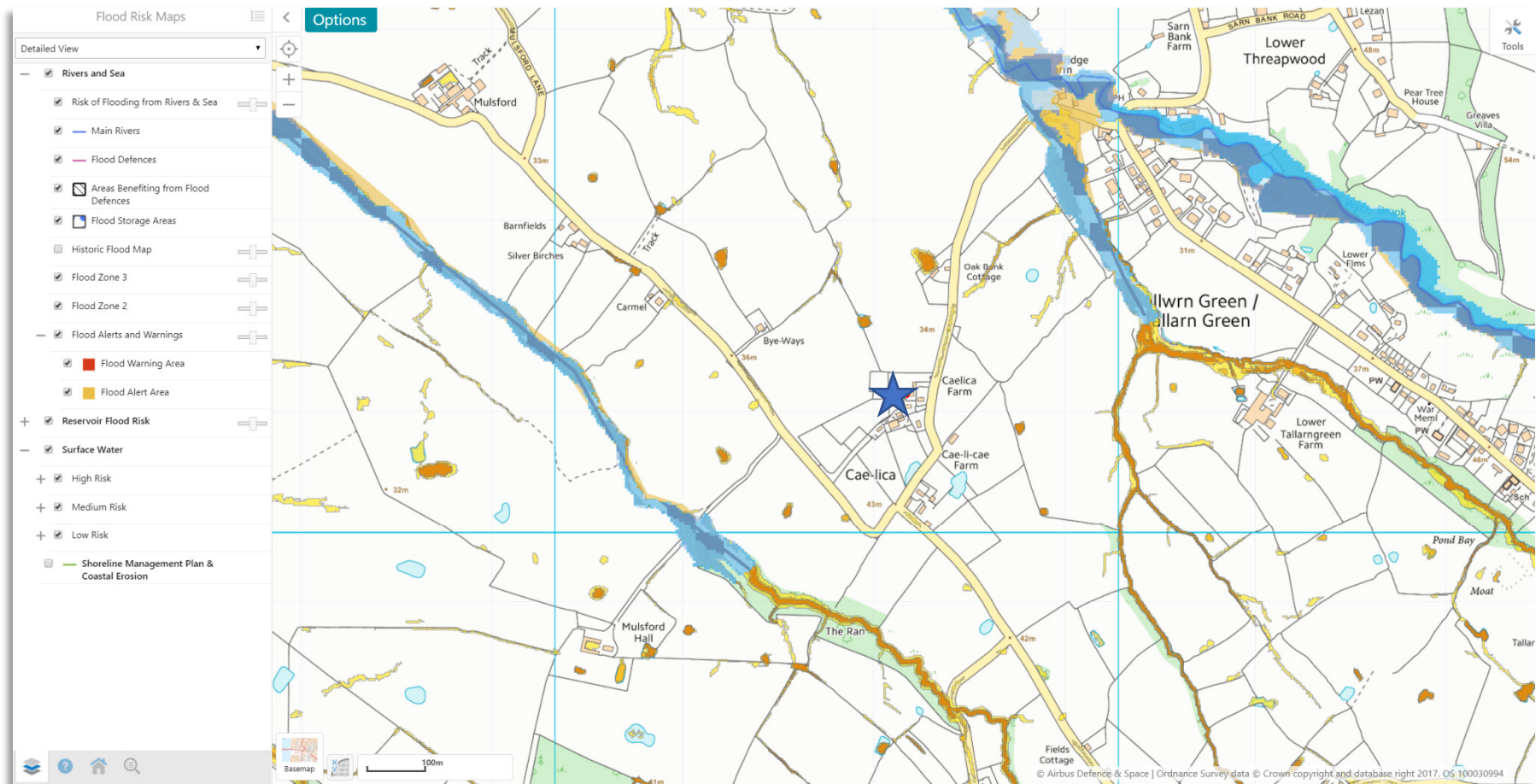
There are no concerns over boundary ownership/encroachment onto land owned by others and it is proposed to utilise an existing access.

3.5.2 Flood Risk

The Development Advice Map is for land use planning purposes. It is used alongside Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15 to direct new development in respect to flood risk. Together, they form a precautionary framework to guide planning applications.

The map is based on Natural Resource Wales' extreme flood outlines (Zone C) and the British Geological Survey drift data (Zone B).

The search results indicate that the location is in Zone 1 and not in a flood risk area as illustrated in the extract below:



4.0 Design & Access

4.1 Use

The scheme proposes reutilising the existing garage and its underutilised ancillary spaces, to create new holiday letting accommodation.

Visitors will have the opportunity to enjoy the surrounding countryside and peaceful breaks from town and city life.

The existing dwelling which adjoins the garage is a two storey brick under slate property which is their family home.

There are stables and a steel framed storage unit to the rear of this property which are accessed via a separate gravelled track from the rear of the site.

4.2 Amount

The application is for the conversion of 61m² of the existing single storey garage and lean to having a combined internal floor area of 81m².

The building is 10m approx. in length by 8.3m approx. (inclusive of the lean to) with an eaves height of 2.6m approx. and a ridge height of just over 5m (to the main garage).

4.3 Layout

The layout of the converted unit has been determined by a need to suit current day family lifestyles with a large open plan kitchen/living/dining area together with 2 bedrooms.

The layout of the development site itself is as shown on the planning drawings with submitted Drawing SHA105/01 showing the location of the proposed unit in relation to the surrounding buildings and existing landscaping.

4.4 Scale

The proposal is not considered to impose any negative impact on the open countryside or the natural environment owing to its existing setting within the curtilage of the existing property; and separation distances in relation to neighbouring buildings.

The scale is determined by the building as it currently exists, and no structural additions are proposed.

4.5 Appearance

The existing structure was built around 2015, has been well maintained and is solid in its construction.

The building to be converted is already very agreeable in its appearance being brick under slate to match the existing main house, and it is intended to thermally upgrade its construction by lining the walls internally to make it suitable for habitation.

In particular, the existing side lean-to will need the polycarbonate roof replacing with a more substantial slate to match the rest of the garage.

Two new openings are proposed in the proposed bedrooms for natural light, ventilation, and most importantly, a means of fire escape.

4.6 Landscaping

The site boundary to all aspects consists of well-established trees and hedges which are well maintained and will not be affected by the development, and beyond these boundaries there are open fields.

The existing building is heavily obscured from any public vantage point due to the height of the existing boundary fence, together with the extent of the existing hedgerows and trees, therefore, the visual impact of the proposed change of use on the wider character of the area will be limited.

The existing driveway will remain unaltered and a small area of existing yard to the rear of the garage will provide an outdoor seating area to serve the holiday unit.

Refuse and recycling will be in line with the Council's requirements and is assumed that the proposed holiday let will align with the current waste and recyclable waste collections in place for the existing property.

4.7 Drainage

Mains water is available at the site and appropriate drainage measures in accordance with the relevant regulations will be provided but it is requested at this stage that the design of the drainage be conditioned as part of the consent.

The existing main dwelling utilises a septic tank and the rear of the garage has a WC that has been functional for some years.

Surface water run-off remains unaltered by the change of use as there is no increase in the amount of non-permeable areas.

Roof water could be taken to water butts to assist in water recycling, and any overflow is already taken to existing surface water soakaways.

5.0 Access

5.1 Vehicular Access

The garage is accessed via the existing private driveway to the front and as such, there will be no disruption to the existing highways provision.

The proposal seeks to convert the rear of the existing garage into one 2 bedroomed holiday let unit and, therefore, the likely traffic pattern and type associated with the change of use to holiday accommodation should not raise any undue highway safety concerns.

Adequate parking and turning area facilities already exist with there being ample space on the site to allow at least 2 further vehicles to park and exit the site comfortably in accordance with Council standards.

An additional access from the rear of the site which is used primarily to access the outbuildings and keep the domestic driveway clean, also exists.

5.2 Personnel Access

The interior layout has been designed to be accessible to all so as to afford full participation in the building. All of the requirements of the Building Regulations Part M (access to and use of buildings) for new dwellings will be applied to the property including approach, access into and around the unit.

Internally,

- The internal spaces have been configured to achieve flexibility and it has been designed to consider the needs of a variety of potential occupants;
- The spaces are clear and well defined;
- As the converted garage is a single storey, all rooms are accessible to all.

Externally,

- There will be level threshold hard surfaced access for a disabled person to approach and gain access into the holiday let from the point of alighting from a vehicle;
- Areas will be clearly defined and well lit;
- Access to and from the building will avoid sloping areas, with a level approach (gradient less than 1:20) and firm and even surface; and
- An accessible threshold is provided into the holiday let, and the entrance door includes an appropriate opening width (min clear opening width of 775mm) to enable a wheelchair user to manoeuvre into the holiday let.

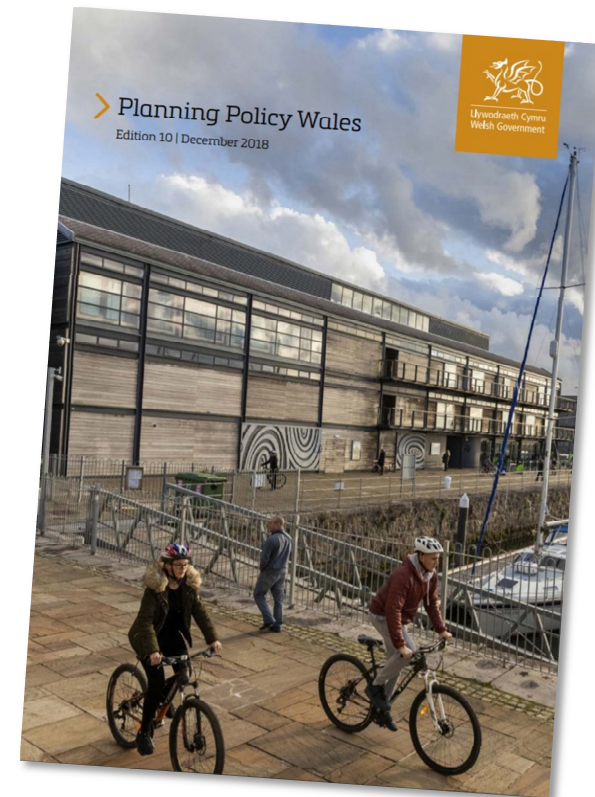
6.0 Planning Statement – Current Development Plan & Policy Context

We are mindful that Planning Policy is responsible for shaping development within an area, and sets out the plans and policies against which planning applications are determined, being set out at both national and local levels. **This proposal has, therefore, been guided by, and as such is supported by, Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as demonstrated below.**

6.1 Planning Policy – National

We have sought guidance from Planning Policy Wales (PPW) first published in 2002 and most recently revised in December 2018 (PPW10) as this document contains current land use planning policy for Wales.

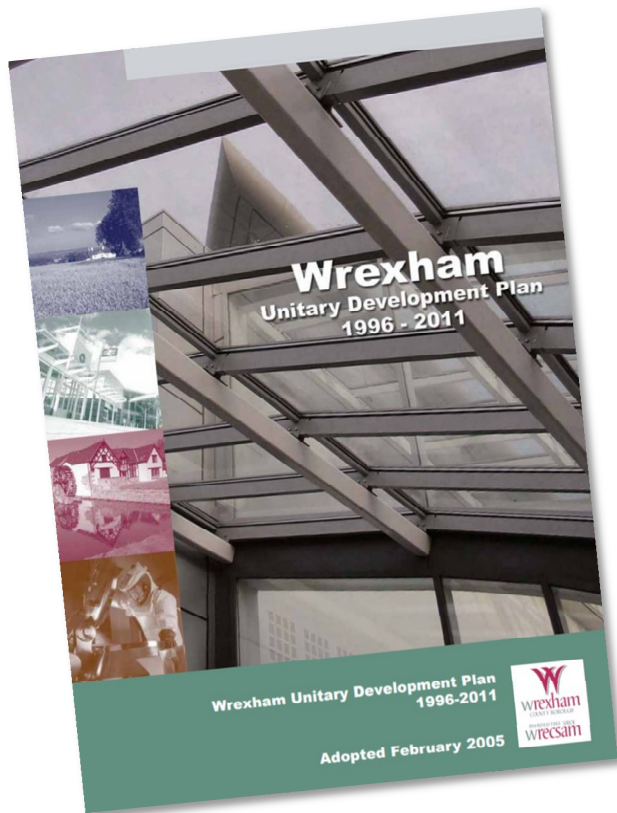
PPW has been referenced as it provides the policy framework for the effective preparation of local planning authorities' development plans. This is supplemented by 21 topic based **Technical Advice Notes (TANs)** and procedural guidance is given in Welsh Office / National Assembly for Wales / **Welsh Government circulars which have also been addressed.**



PPW, the TANs and the circulars being material considerations in determining planning decisions on individual applications have been carefully considered in preparing this application.

6.2 Planning Policy - Local

At a local level, the **Unitary Development Plan (UDP)** 1996 - 2011 was first adopted by Wrexham County Borough Council on the 14th February 2005. **The Plan covers the administrative area of the Wrexham County Borough Council which is relevant to this application.** It is to be replaced with the Local Development Plan which is currently under consultation for review.



6.3 Planning Policy – Review

This section of our statement sets out the order of planning policy that is considered relevant to the determination of this application.

They are examined separately in detail by assessing and interpreting the merits of our proposals against them, with a view to demonstrating the case in support of the proposed scheme.

As the legal test for all planning decisions is to determine the application in accordance with the statutory development plan (unless material considerations indicate otherwise), **we have reviewed the key principles of PPW and the Local Development Plan, and feel there is no conflict with policies saved under these documents.**

It is recognised that in August 2019, the Welsh Government published a consultation of its National Development Framework (NDF) which is currently under consultation. **With this in mind, this document has been prepared under currently published legislation and guidance.**

Both national and local planning policy / guidance require the proposed **conversion to respect the surrounding area in terms of landscape and local building styles and the use of materials and this has been detailed in the Design and Access details above.**

The need to consider these issues is also expanded upon in the **Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.** In consideration of the proposed development scheme the following policies and guidance have been taken into account:

PS2 Development and the Environment
GDP1 Development Objectives
CLF9 Visitor Accommodation outside Settlement Limits
EC1 Green Barriers
T8 Parking

- **Policy PS2** *“Development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment”.*
 - **The garage already exists and its conversion does not entail and additional building works externally.**
 - **The site itself is located within a larger area of land all under the ownership of the applicant;** it takes advantage of the existing natural screening, being protected by existing fencing, native species hedges and trees so, therefore, **it will not be visible to any other existing dwellings, meaning that there is no adverse impact upon landscape interests** associated with this proposal.
 - All proposals are subject to **UDP Policy GDP1** (Development Principles) and ensuring that the important characteristics of the site and surrounding area are not compromised.
- ✓ As the building is for change of use, there is **no effect on its immediate setting** as there are only very minor alterations proposed and no extensions.
 - ✓ With regard to security, the building is adjacent to Mr and Mrs Marsland’s main dwelling **situated off a private courtyard and accessed from a private driveway.**
 - ✓ As shown in section 3.5 above, the property has **access to local footpaths.**
 - ✓ **No hedges or trees are to be disturbed,** there should be **no impact on wildlife** habitats, and being garden land, there are **no contamination concerns.**
 - ✓ With regard to sustainability, re-using an existing structure is generally accepted as a **sustainable form of development.**
 - ✓ **The work will be undertaken by local contractors and materials purchased locally** where feasible, thereby reducing potential environmental impacts from transport.

- **CLF9**

Chapter 9.9 of the UDP recognises the shortfall in good quality overnight visitor accommodation in rural areas.

“Good quality overnight visitor accommodation can provide opportunities for local jobs and benefits for local service suppliers and, in rural areas aid economic diversification. There is a general shortfall in accommodation locally.”

- ✓ The building is brick under slate with attractive corbelled detail so it **lends itself comfortably to provide suitable holiday accommodation in its appearance.**
- ✓ It is **structurally sound and capable of conversion.**
- ✓ The development and resulting amenity space **does not extend past the domestic curtilage of the main house and will share the existing access.**
- ✓ The floor plan **creates a comfortable habitable unit** without the need for any extensions.

- **Policy EC1 Green Barriers**

The site is not identified as being in a Green barrier/wedge location.

- ✓ **The proposal does not involve any substantial built development as the building already exists.**
- ✓ **Any additional night time lighting will be kept to a minimum.** Lighting around the site will be on a short timed PIR and down lighting will be used to avoid disturbance, with hoods, cowls, louvres or shields being utilised to direct light only to where it is needed. The height of any lighting columns would be kept as low as possible to reduce the impact of light spill.

- **Policy T8 – Parking**

- ✓ The Ridings benefits from an extensive entrance courtyard area for parking and turning of vehicles and there will be no compromise to the existing situation.

7.0 Conclusions

- The proposal respects the character of the countryside with minimal changes to the existing external appearance.
- The change of use planned is at an appropriate location.
- As the detached garage is already part of the current dwelling, there will be no impact visually to the surrounding area.
- The proposal has carefully considered the context of the site and its surroundings as well as reflecting any existing planning policies in order to form the final design.
- The proposed conversion is already screened by the existing hedgerow and trees to mitigate any impact upon the landscape.
- It is hoped that the proposal will deliver benefits which will facilitate and support the formation of this new rural enterprise to enable further sustainable development through the provision of quality accommodation to potential visitors whilst not causing an adverse effect on the area or the existing neighbours.
- The proposal is compliant with Wrexham's planning policies as it will provide new guest facilities thereby enabling a new initiative to take off. It is anticipated that the proposal will enable the owners to expand their earning potential owing to the quality of accommodation to be provided.
- The proposal is relatively small in scale and is appropriate in terms of scale and character for its immediate surroundings.
- The location is easily accessible to visitors and will appeal to a wide range of visitors with a wealth of places and events on offer that they can enjoy all year round, including National Cycle Routes and Local Bridle Paths; mountain biking and walking opportunities; fishing lakes and shooting venues; and local pubs and restaurants.
- The property is also located within a short commuting distance of Llangollen and Wrexham, which in turn would be financially supported by this venture
- The final proposal has evolved out of many discussions to form a thoughtfully planned conversion scheme that offers a positive contribution to the rural economy.
- There is also adequate provision for amenity, parking, access and drainage, therefore, it is respectfully requested that the submitted planning application be positively determined.

This report has been compiled using information given to us by the applicants in order to present an application to the Council on their behalf, acting as their agents.