
Planning and Design Statement

Proposed change of use of land from agricultural to tourism use for the siting of two lodges formation of associated access track and all associated works

Prepared for: RW & JL Edwards

Tyn Twll
Llanarmon
Powys
LL20 7LH

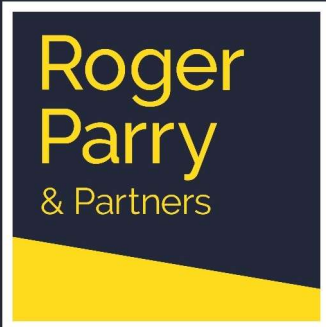
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1.0 Introduction

This supporting statement considers the planning issues relating to the application proposals for the proposed change of use of land from agricultural to tourism use for the change of use of land from agricultural to tourism use for the siting of two lodges, formation associated access track and all associated works on land at Tyn Twll, Llanarmon.

Mr and Mrs Edwards want to offer a unique holiday experience alongside the Ceiriog Valley. The proposed development is on land under the ownership of Mr and Mrs Edwards.

The proposal will provide additional tourist accommodation in Wrexham, contributing to the local economy.

2.0 Description of the Site and Surroundings

Tyn Twll extends to approximately 1000 acres of land and is a mixed stock farming enterprise. Mr and Mrs Edwards are the owners of the holding known as Tyn Twll and as such are the applicants for the proposed development.

Mr and Mrs Edwards are interested in diversification to generate more income and profit to reduce their independence on core primary agriculture.

Tourism within Wrexham has continued to grow with the likes of National Trust sites, the World Heritage Site at Trevor Basin and local events attracting thousands each year to the area.

Planning Policy Wales encourages the diversification of farm enterprises and other parts of the rural economy for appropriate tourism uses subject to adequate safeguards for the character and appearance of the countryside, particularly its landscape, biodiversity and local amenity value.

The proposed development is on the edge of an established wooded area and is set away from the farm.

The proposed development can be sited and developed without detrimental effect on the surrounding landscape and the existing trees.

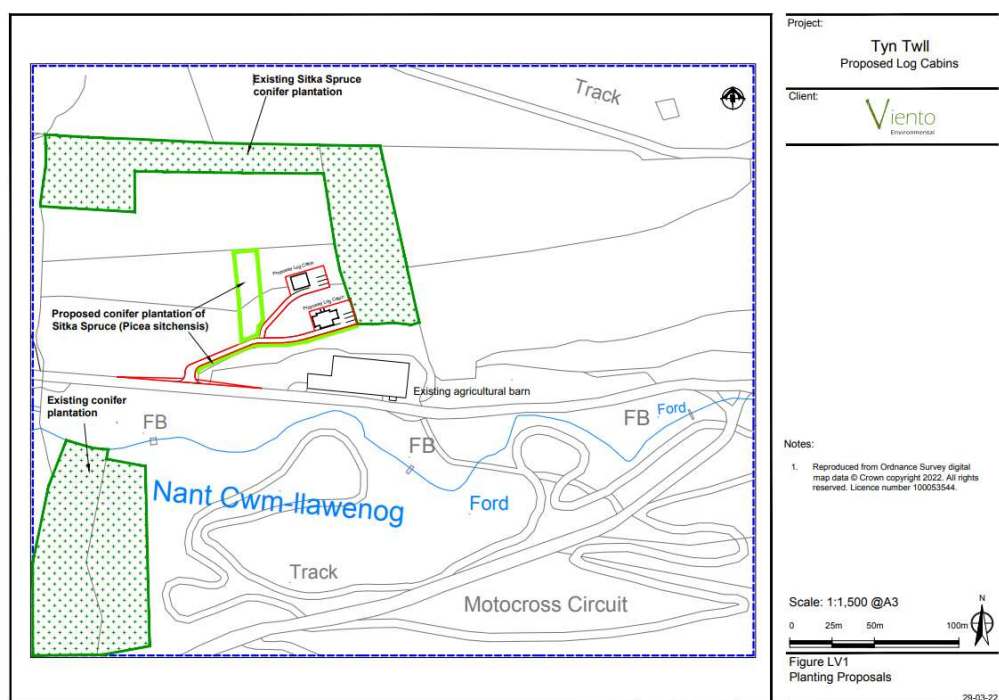
The site will be accessed off the minor road utilising the existing field access with some improvements. Forty-three meters of visibility can be achieved in both directions. Car parking spaces will be provided adjacent to the cabins.

The site is within the ownership of Mr and Mrs Edwards and can provide an opportunity for the family to gain an additional income. Mr and Mrs Edwards realise the need to diversify to improve the sustainability of the farm and provide an additional income. Farm diversification is of increasing importance to those with an interest in agriculture and rural communities as

a whole. With rising uncertainty in farming, diversification offers a way of supplementing incomes and improving the economic viability of a farm business.

3.0 Landscape and Visual Impact

Fran Iribar of Viento Environmental was commissioned as part of this application to review the potential harm the application will have on the surrounding landscape. The report concluded the site is particularly well screened from easterly and northerly aspects and suggested additional planting to be located to the west and south of the proposal to aid a successful integration of the proposal into the local landscape.



4.0 The Planning Application Proposal

Mr and Mrs Edwards want to offer a unique holiday experience, allowing visitors to relax and escape in this rural setting. The site in Ceiriog Valley offering visitors a unique and tranquil holiday experience.

The proposed development site includes the area of land to incorporate the two lodges proposed access and car-parking spaces. The small site can be developed without detrimental effect on the surrounding landscape.

The proposal includes alterations to an existing access and the creation of an internal access track.

5.0 Tourism in Powys

Tourism is increasingly important to the economy in Wrexham. Since 2010 tourism has grown by 37 per cent and today contributes £115m annually to the local economy with accommodation providers generally having 80% occupancy each week. Tourism also supports around 1,600 full time jobs across the county borough.

Planning Policy Wales encourages the diversification of farm enterprises and other parts of the rural economy for appropriate tourism uses subject to adequate safeguards for the character and appearance of the countryside, particularly its landscape, biodiversity and local amenity value. Tourism is a substantial sector of the region's economy, spreading employment and income throughout Wrexham.

North Wales has been named among the top places in the world to visit in 2017 according to Lonely Planet's annual Best in Travel list. Placed fourth on the list of regions to visit, north Wales is the only UK destination to be featured in the rankings, which are compiled by a panel of the travel publisher's writers and experts.

Tourism in Wrexham helps to support other industries such as agriculture, crafts and local services. These in turn support the tourism industry, transport and local services. The current situation presents a platform of opportunity to target growth sectors of the market and this provides a sound foundation for further development and niche marketing activity. The landscape and environmental resources of the area are, in tourism terms, attractive and capable of competing with other destinations.

Although only a small site, it will contribute to the local economy from the construction stage through to bringing visitors to the area.

6.0 Farm Diversification

The DEFRA and Welsh Government definition of a diversified enterprise is:

'The entrepreneurial use of farm resources for a non-agricultural purpose for commercial gain'

Under this definition, activities such as non-agricultural contracting, the letting of buildings for non-agricultural purposes, processing and retailing of farm produce, using farm resources for tourism, sport and recreational activities would be included as diversification. On-site energy generation which either offsets on-site use or is exported to the grid is also considered to be a diversification activity.

The following activities would not be included as diversification: other gainful activity (for example, a second job or investing in stocks and shares), agricultural contracting, activities

inseparable from agriculture (for example packing mushrooms if there is no market for unpacked mushrooms), agri-environment payments, the letting of land (it is assumed the farmer does not have an entrepreneurial role in letting the land), and the hiring of assets (again unlikely to involve the farmer in an entrepreneurial role). (Statistics for Wales – Farm Diversification in Wales 2011-12 ref: SB125/2012).

Farm diversification is of increasing importance to those with an interest in agriculture and rural communities as a whole. With rising uncertainty in farming, diversification offers a way of supplementing incomes and improving the economic viability of a farm business. Diversification reflects the reduced dependence of farmers on agriculture as a source of income. Diversification also implies some kind of entrepreneurial activity on behalf of the farmer (DEFRA – Farm Diversification in England: 27/01/11).

Farm resources are defined as land or capital that was previously used for agricultural purposes. Where a farmer/spouse takes up external employment, this will be classified as other gainful activity. However, any activities that the farmer/spouse spends their time doing will still be classified as diversified activities whenever any land or capital previously used for agricultural purposes is also employed (for example a farmer running a shop selling produce from the farm).

Whether an activity is defined as diversified or as other gainful activity would depend on a combination of factors. For example whether the farm resource previously used for agricultural purposes could be switched back to agricultural use, whether the accounts of the activity are separate from those of the farm, and how long it has been a diversified activity. It is useful to think of diversification as a transition rather than an end-state (Statistics for Wales – Farm Diversification in Wales 2011-12 ref: SB125/2012).

The proposal is a farm diversification scheme.

7.0 Design and Access

The proposed layout of the site has been designed to fit into the surroundings and to be unobtrusive into the countryside. The lodges have been chosen to blend into the surroundings and together with additional landscaping should not be seen within the wider context.

The proposed development complies with local planning policy; the proposed development is appropriate to the rural Wrexham landscape and is not obtrusive into the character of the surroundings. The design aims to keep a balance between the two aims of the planning system – efficient economic development and protection of the landscape.

The lodges were chosen for their natural look, the timber frame makes it the perfect choice for its natural setting. The frames are of high quality and extremely durable. The lodges are finished with natural roofing tiles to sit unobtrusively within the landscape.

Access to the site is proposed from the adjoining road with appropriate visibility achievable in both directions. The local road network can accommodate the negligible amount of traffic generated by the proposal. Parking is proposed adjacent to each cabin.

8.0 Environment

It is judged that the localised ecological impact could be mitigated for by sensitive design and with the adoption of a management plan including some mitigation measures.

Arbor Vitae were commissioned by Roger Parry and Partners to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in order to assess the impact of the development on habitats and protected species.

There is an existing field access point at the south-west corner of the field, from the lane.

The proposal will result in the loss of 0.09ha of improved grassland.

The loss of this type of habitat on such a small scale will have a negligible impact upon the ecology of the landscape.

The survey revealed no signs of use by badger and there are no historic records of badger at the site. The proposals will have no impact on this species and no further survey work or mitigation is required.

The proposals will have no impact upon roosting sites or bats directly.

The site is unsuitable for nesting and the proposals will have no impact upon breeding birds.

A new species rich native hedgerow will be planted along the south boundary of the field site to following the existing sheep netting. The hedge will include: hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, holly, dog rose, wild privet and guelder rose. In order to improve opportunities on site for bats and breeding birds, the following wildlife features will be installed into the adjacent woodland:

- 1x 2F Schwegler bat box (or similar approved). This must be placed at least 3m from the ground.
- 1x 1B Schwegler bird box (or similar approved). This must be placed at least 2.5m from the ground.

9.0 Assessment of Access and Inclusive Design against Planning Policies

One of the key requirements of inclusive design is the need to ensure that development is accessible to all users. This relates not only to its detailed design but also to its locational characteristics. All users of the development would have equal and convenient access to the development itself and also to the local community and service.

Access by Disabled Persons. Applications will be permitted for the development of new buildings, public amenities, recreational spaces and, where practicable and reasonable, the changes of use or alterations to existing buildings, where suitable access is made to and within the building or amenity and adequate facilities are provided for people with disabilities.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) seeks to avoid discrimination against people with impairments and disabilities and for instance ensures that work premises do not disadvantage someone with a disability.

The access arrangements have adopted an inclusive approach and aims to ensure that all users will have equal and convenient access.

The design of the application will have full consideration for ease of access for disabled pedestrian use. Our full application submitted incorporates the following points:-

1. The car parking area will be located near to the principal entrance and is at the same level as the principal entrance.
2. Access from the car parking area to the principal entrance is by way of hard landscaping, which is suitable for a disabled wheel chair.
3. The principal entrance is at a level threshold.
4. Easy access is obtained around the circumference of the house by way of hard landscaping.
5. All construction work to comply (where relevant) to Part M of the Building Regulations Act 2000, and also subsequent amendments.
6. All doors to be of disabled criteria.
7. All external doors to be 930mm minimum width.
8. All sockets and light switches to be in compliance with Part M with regard to the height from floor level.
9. All washing facilities are located on the same level (ground level).

All of the measures detailed above will be maintained in such a way that will allow all people access to and from the house. Also the facilities within the house will also be constructed and maintained in such a way to ensure people's access to the development.

10.0 Planning Policy

The Policies that have been taken into account when preparing this application are:

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Wales Edition 9 was adopted in November 2016 and is the key national land use planning policy document for Wales.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)

3.1.2 Planning authorities should support the diversification of the rural economy as a way to provide local employment opportunities, increase local economic prosperity and minimise the need to travel for employment.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 13 – Tourism (1997)

This TAN provides guidance on tourism related issues in planning including matters relating to hotel development, holiday and touring caravans and seasonal and holiday occupancy conditions.

Local Planning Policy

Policy GDP1 –

- 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 EC4

Development proposals should provide for the conservation and management of hedgerows, trees, orchards, woodland, wildlife and other natural landscape and water features, and include new planting in order to enhance the character of the landscape and townscape. Development which results in the loss or significant damage to valuable trees, important hedgerows or ancient woodland sites will not be permitted.

Policy EC12

Development (including the raising of land) within defined flood plains will only be permitted if it:-

- a) would not be subject to an unacceptable risk of flooding on-site; and/or
- b) does not result in an unacceptable risk of flooding on or off-site; and/or
- c) does not adversely affect flood management or maintenance schemes

Policy CLF10

New touring caravan and camping sites, and extensions to existing sites, will only be permitted where:-

- a) the site is unobtrusive and well screened without the need for additional strategic landscaping; and
- b) the site is not located within a green barrier or Special Landscape Area; and
- c) the site is used for touring purposes only and is not used for the storage of caravans which are not in use.

The proposal is a part of a farm diversification scheme to secure an additional income for the Edwards family improving the stability of the farm. The proposal has been sensitively designed and located to blend into the landscape. No existing trees will be felled and additional landscaping is proposed as shown on the site plan and the clients wish to work with the authority.

11.0 Flood Risk – Flood Consequence Assessment

Part of the site is located within the NRW's Indicative Flood Plan area which shows the 0.1% annual probability of extreme flood. The development fulfils the criteria and there will be no detrimental impact upon the development through flood risk and no loss of flood storage capacity.

All accommodation has been placed outside of the flood zone.

12.0 Conclusion

The site is within the ownership of Mr and Mrs Edwards and can provide an opportunity for the family to gain an additional income. The applicants realise the need to diversify to improve the sustainability of the farm and provide an additional income. Farm diversification is of increasing importance to those with an interest in agriculture and rural communities as a whole. With rising uncertainty in farming, diversification offers a way of supplementing incomes and improving the economic viability of a farm business.

The proposed development can be sited and developed without detrimental effect on the surrounding landscape and the existing trees.

The local road network is capable of accommodating the negligible amount of traffic generated by the proposal.

The development is intelligently and sympathetically designed and strikes a balance between practical and economic efficiency and minimal landscape impact.

The proposal is of an appropriate location, scale and type so as not to be detrimental to the amenities of any nearby existing residential properties. This development will support both the local economy and local tourism. The proposal also meets the need for holiday accommodation within Powys. New tourist development is encouraged because of its contribution to the economy in terms of visitor spending, supporting local business and employment generation.

This proposal has significant merit, fits within the policies of the core strategy and national planning guidance, and it is respectfully requested that the submitted planning application be approved.