

Peter
Richards
& Co.



DESIGN AND ACCESS AND PLANNING REPORT

CHANGE OF USE OF TRADITIONAL RANGE OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO FORM 4NO.
RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

MIDDLEWOOD FARM, THREAPWOOD, MALPAS, SY14 7AW

OVERVIEW

DETAILS

APPLICANT Mark & Samantha Andrews and ADA Property Investments Limited

DATE March 2022

SITE Middlewood Farm near Malpas (Wrexham Borough)

PROJECT Proposed conversion of building to residential use

PREPARED BY Holly Walker (MRICS) at Peter Richards & Co.

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I. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THIS STATEMENT

Peter Richards and Co. have been instructed by Mark and Samantha Andrews and ADA Property Investments Limited to submit a planning application on their behalf to convert and adapt a traditional range of agricultural buildings into 4no. dwellings.

This statement provides background information on the applicant's proposal, and how the proposal is in accordance with both national and local planning policies. This document should be read in conjunction with the detailed plans prepared which illustrate the location, scale and appearance of the development.

The applicant has instructed a team of specialist consultants to assist in assembling a robust proposal which also addresses the pre-application advice request.

BACKGROUND

Middlewood Farm, at Threapwood nr Malpas is on the Welsh borders, with the subject barns located in Wrexham Borough.

This traditional agricultural holding has a range of commercial, equine and agricultural uses. The subject traditional buildings are not in efficient use due to the style and form, thus the proposal to allow an functional use.

Effective commercial use of the barns is proving challenging with competing industrial / commercial sites offering suitable flexible spaces for businesses; Nearby Hampton Heath Industrial Estate, located circa 5 miles (by road) from the site, has a number of units of varying sizes and located close to the A41 which is suitable for all business types and Wrexham Industrial Estate is 8 miles away (by road) caters for small, regional and national businesses.

The traditional range of barns at Middlewood Farm are of historic merit and thus worthy of retention for the most appropriate use, which is considered to be residential use.

I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Currently, Middlewood Farm holding extends to 16 acres which is used for a combination of agricultural purposes and equine with a livery business (Flying Changes Equine) managing 15no. Horses. Some of the buildings are utilised by small scale business including a VW repair / modification business (VW Camperhaus) and storage of imported furniture (Grosvenor Furniture – who have been on site since 2017).

A search of the Valuation Office Agency Register confirms that some of equine uses are still rateable whilst some have ceased, however, it does confirm large areas previously in commercial use are now not rateable and are utilised as part of the wider holding.

A summary of the historic uses on site are detailed below;

- Timberlike Limited managed the site until 2012 when they went into insolvency and the applicants purchased the site in August 2013
- Between 2013 and 2020 the wider holding was let out to a number of equine businesses (Kim Belton Equine (2014 – 2017); Otis Eventing (2017 – 2018) and CJC Eventing (2018 – 2020) with current tenants being Grosvenor Furniture being on site since 2017
- A workshop and premises was rented out to a mechanic until 2018 when VW Camperhaus took over.

Timberlike Limited utilised the subject building as offices which included a kitchenette and 3no. toilets and 3no. urinals for a site employing up to 40 people at its peak.

Following Timberlike Limited leaving the site, the applicants had no potential tenants for the office building. The building was not suitable for agricultural use given that the openings are not suitable for agricultural machinery or stock and would require significant and costly modifications to remove domestic style interiors.

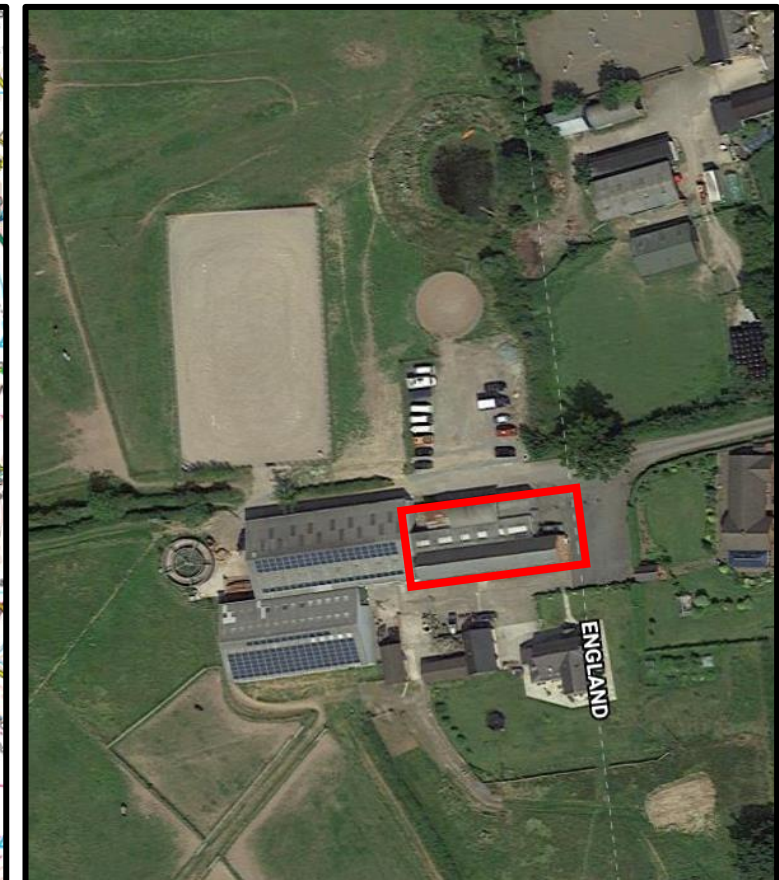
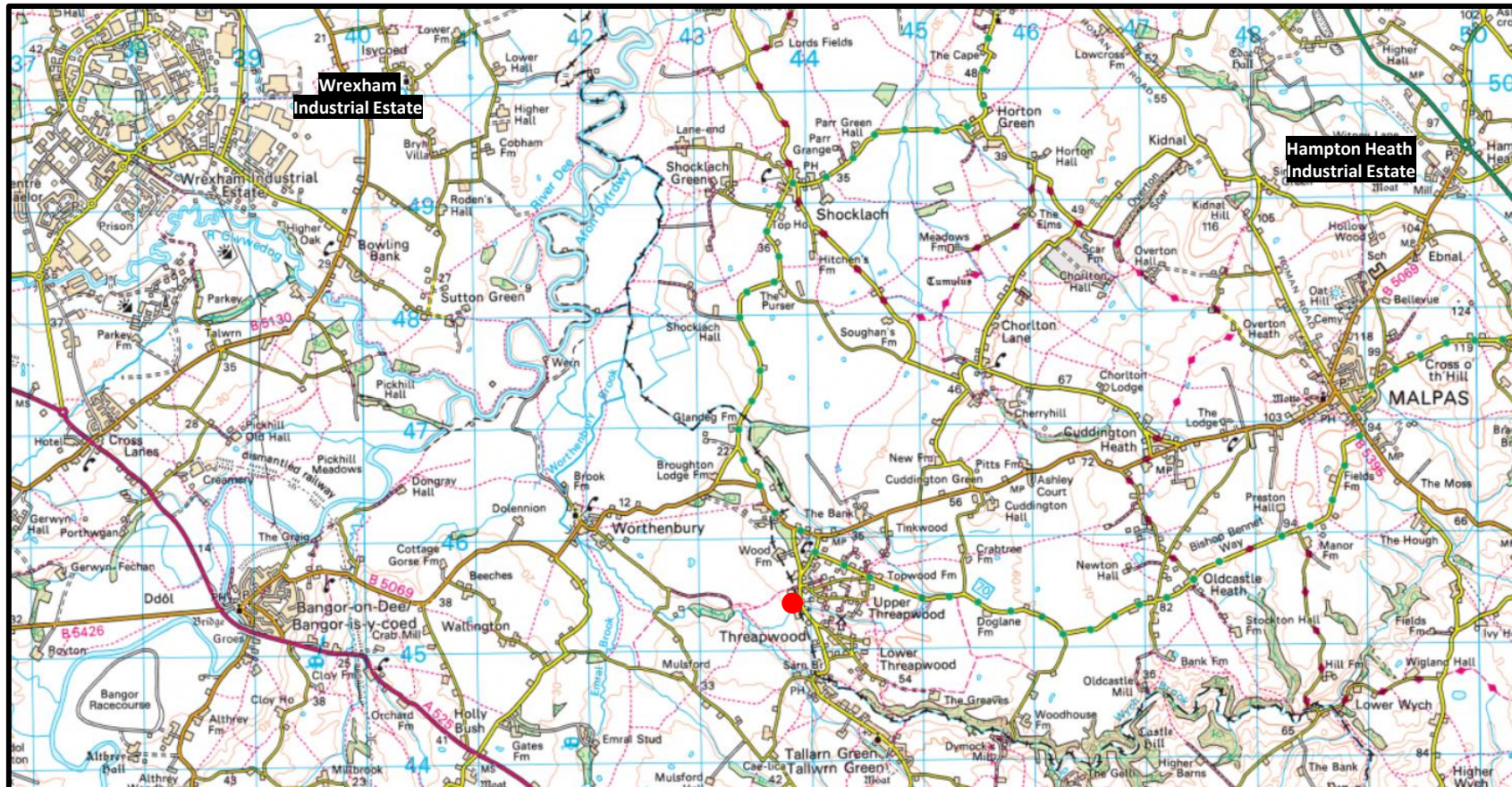
The Valuation Office confirmed that the building could have been removed from the listing and it has subsequently been used as domestic and garden storage.

The applicants have had to gain permission for a new agricultural building to ensure modern equipment can be secured safely.

2.THE SITE & CONTEXT

SITE LOCATION

Middlewood Farm is located on the edge of Threapwood and is only 3.9 miles from Bangor on Dee and 4.1 miles by road from Malpas, both of which are regional centres with a range of facilities, shops, services and schools.



2.THE SITE & CONTEXT

SITE LOCATION

It is acknowledged that the access, parking and a very small part of the subject building for the application would straddle the English - Welsh border. As the main body of the development site is in Wrexham and previous applications have been determined by Wrexham it is appropriate to continue to submit this application to Wrexham Borough Council. It is acknowledged however that Chester and Cheshire West Council will be consulted on this application.



3.THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development will see limited changes to the form of the buildings. The openings, materials and roof coverings (although the roof will have photovoltaic panels on the southern elevation) will be consistent with the traditional form.

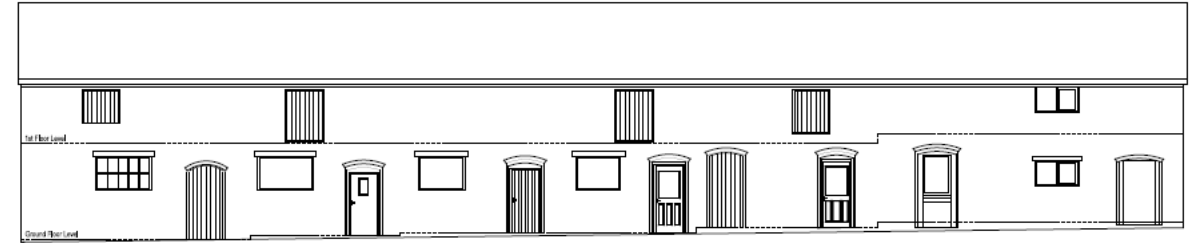
The division of the units will largely be in line with the original divisions within the barn and it is proposed to see a subtle reinstatement of part of the historic building to allow an modest garden room on the largest barn.

The historic assessment considers to the age and historic context of the barns.

The division of the units are as follows;

- Unit 1 – 2no. bedrooms, 70sqm garden space and 2no. parking spaces
- Unit 2 – 2no. bedrooms, 70sqm garden space and 2no. parking spaces
- Unit 3 – 2no. bedrooms, 70sqm garden space and 2no. parking spaces
- Unit 4 – 3no. bedrooms, 90sqm garden space and 3no. parking spaces

The garden space and parking spaces is considered to meet the criteria set out in Wrexham's Local Planning Guidance Notes 16 and 21 related to parking standards and spaces around dwellings.



EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

CONTEXT

National Planning Policy for Wales is determined by Planning Policy Wales (edition 11) dated February 2021.

LOCAL PLAN

The Development Plan for the application site, which is the Wrexham County Council jurisdiction is Wrexham Unitary Development plan 1996 – 2011.

The new development plan (2013 – 2028) is still under consideration.

OTHER GUIDANCE

Other material considerations would include the Welsh Governments Technical Advice Notes

5. PLANNING APPRAISAL

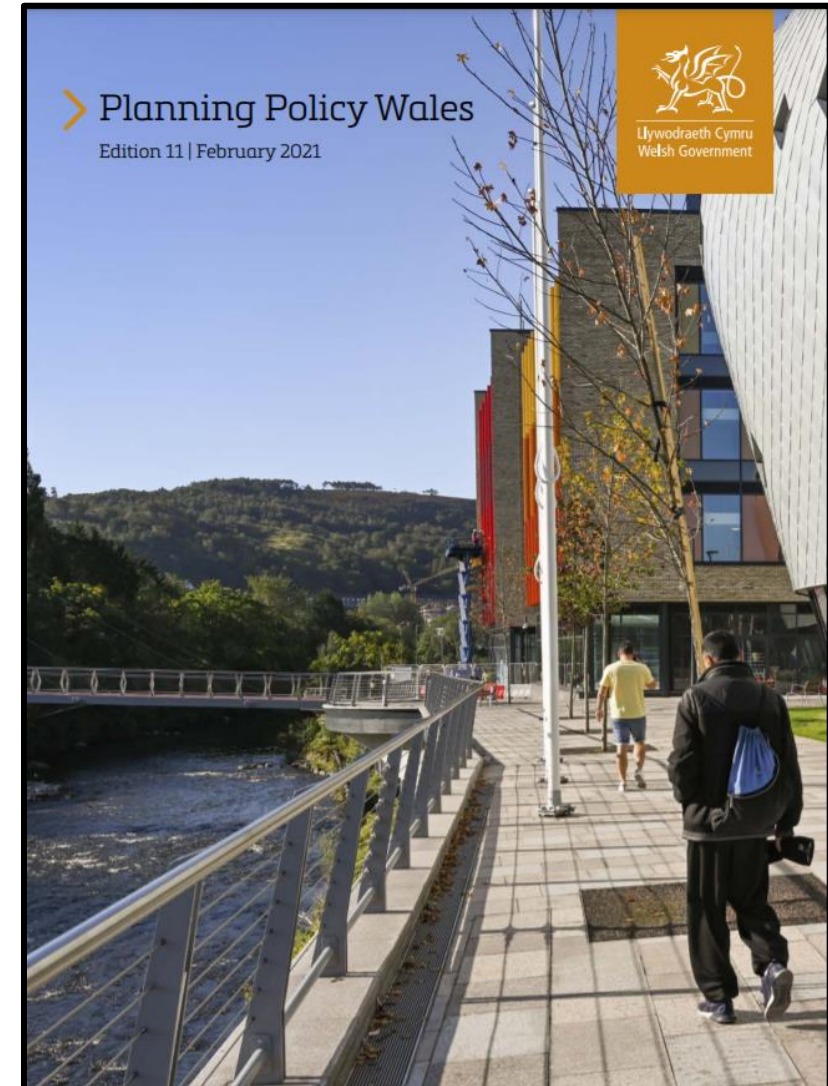
NATIONAL GUIDANCE

Paragraph 3.60 of Planning Policy Wales states that *“All new development should be of a scale and design that respects the character of the surrounding area”*.

Paragraph 6.17 states that *“It is important that the planning system looks to protect, conserve and enhance the significance of historic assets.”*

Thus the proposed conversion of traditional barn will respect the character of the area and protect these heritage assets.

National policy also places an emphasis of ensuring that the development will not have any adverse impact on technical materials considerations such as ecology, water quality, landscape impact and access provision.



5. PLANNING APPRAISAL

LOCAL POLICY – WREXHAM LOCAL PLAN

- **POLICY PS2:** *Development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.*
- **POLICY PS12 RENEWABLE ENERGY:** *Proposals for the generation of energy from renewable sources will be supported provided that the wider environmental benefits are not outweighed by any detrimental impacts of the proposed development (including any electricity transmission facilities needed) on the landscape, public safety, and the local environment.* It is not considered the solar panels would be detrimental to the wider area.
- **POLICY GDP1 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE**
- **POLICY EC6 BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION**
- **POLICY EC12 DEVELOPMENT AND FLOOD RISK**
- **POLICY H3 CONVERSION OF BUILDINGS OUTSIDE OF SETTLEMENT LIMITS:**
Items to be considered and addressed, confirm no other viable use, structurally capable of conversion, characteristics are to be retained, development does not constitute intrusive development into the countryside and there is sufficient floor space to create a dwelling
- **LOCAL PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTE 21: SPACE AROUND DWELLINGS:** For dwellings for three or more people then gardens should be sized at 50sqm or more, the proposed dwellings with two or three bedrooms would meet these standards with the three bed dwelling having slightly more space. Car parking spaces should be 5.5m long. Where habitable rooms face each other the minimum distance should be 22m; it is acknowledged in this case that proposed conversion would be 19m away from Middlewood Farmhouse, but as the physical relationship between the buildings can not be altered, suitable screening will maintain privacy to windows on the southern elevation.
- **LOCAL PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTE 21: SPACE AROUND DWELLINGS:** For dwellings of two bedrooms two parking spaces are required and three or four bedrooms, three parking spaces are required. This is alongside spaces for bicycles. The proposed development allows compliant amount of parking with secure bicycle stores will be within the amenity space.

5. PLANNING APPRAISAL

TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTE – NATIONAL GUIDANCE

TAN 6: PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES: Conversions should not have an adverse material impact upon the local economy.

TAN 11: NOISE: A Noise Report has been commissioned in line with this guidance.

TAN 12: DESIGN: There is a range of items to be considered when appraising and designing a scheme, this should include, environmentally sustainable design, appraising character and landscape, innovative design, movement and access and relationship between public and private space.

TAN 24: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT: The property is not listed or is subject to any designation but as a historic traditional barn it is evident that planning authorities should balance the design and character of developments with the current fire and building regulations.

RECENT PLANNING HISTORY

P/2021/0208 – Erection of building for workshop and storage of agricultural vehicles and equipment – Granted.

P/2014/0659 – Two Storey rear extension to form garden room with master bedroom and ensuite over – Granted

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE REQUEST

Pre-application advice request ENQ/2021/0010 confirmed that the “...due to the scale and layout of the existing buildings they would potentially lend themselves to being converted in future.” However, it required further information to be considered acceptable. All relevant information has been provided within this application.

6. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

BIODIVERSITY

Please refer to the enclosed report by Turnstone Ecology, referenced *TT3042-Middlewood Farm Threapwood-R01-Ecological Appraisal-Rev01*.

The applicants are willing to adhere to the proposed enhancements, including the provision of a bat box on the wider site and working to relevant method statements.

NOISE

Please refer to the enclosed report by Clover Acoustics, referenced *Report 4625-R1 - Middlewood Farm - Noise Assessment*.

The applicants are willing to adhere to the proposed mitigation measures related to glazing and ventilation.

STRUCTURAL SURVEY

Under Planning Policy, it is evident that should traditional buildings be proposed for conversion that they are structurally capable of being so.

The enclosed structural report, confirms that there are no major issues with the main structure and most of the proposed works are related to thermal upgrades and cosmetic works. It is acknowledged that some isolated rebuilding is required.

Policy looks to ensure that the character of the development is not inhibited by the modern standards required for residential developments. It is evident the majority of works are thermal upgrades which can be achieved with insulation and glazing.

6. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

LANDSCAPING

The proposed development will see the introduction of modest landscaping which would not only help increase biodiversity but help soften the appearance of the development and ensuring privacy; this would include;

- Introduction of lawns and only modest areas of hardstanding
- Hedging to grow to 6ft high to ensure privacy and potential noise mitigation, especially to the southern elevation
- Existing hardstanding to be retained for parking areas



6. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

HIGHWAYS

Middlewood Farm is accessed by a private drive within Threapwood village itself.

The access is circa 4.5m wide straight drive which widens into a yard area, thus it is considered that there is suitable places for vehicles to wait and let each other pass.

It is anticipated that circa. 9no. private cars will be used by residents of the proposed dwellings. It is not considered however that the increase in vehicles would have a detrimental impact on the local traffic network, particularly when considered against the historic intensive commercial use of the site.

The visibility splay is considered to be suitable in either direction.



PARKING PROVISION

As per Local Planning Guidance Notes the parking designated for each plot will be;

- Unit 1: 2no. Spaces
- Unit 2: 2no. spaces
- Unit 3: 2no. spaces
- Unit 4: 3no. Spaces

Two additional visitors spaces are provided which can be utilised by the development.

OTHER

A suitable bin store will be located adjacent the parking area, it has been sized to store bins and recycling stores for the proposed 4no. dwellings.

The gardens of the units will have suitable secure and private cycle locking points.

6. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

DRAINAGE & FLOOD RISK

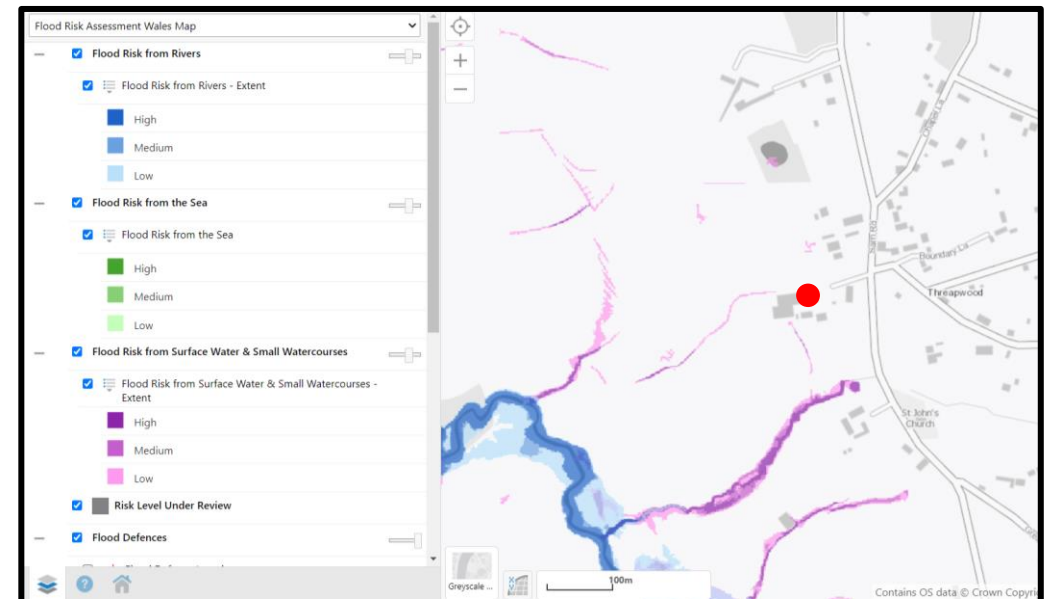
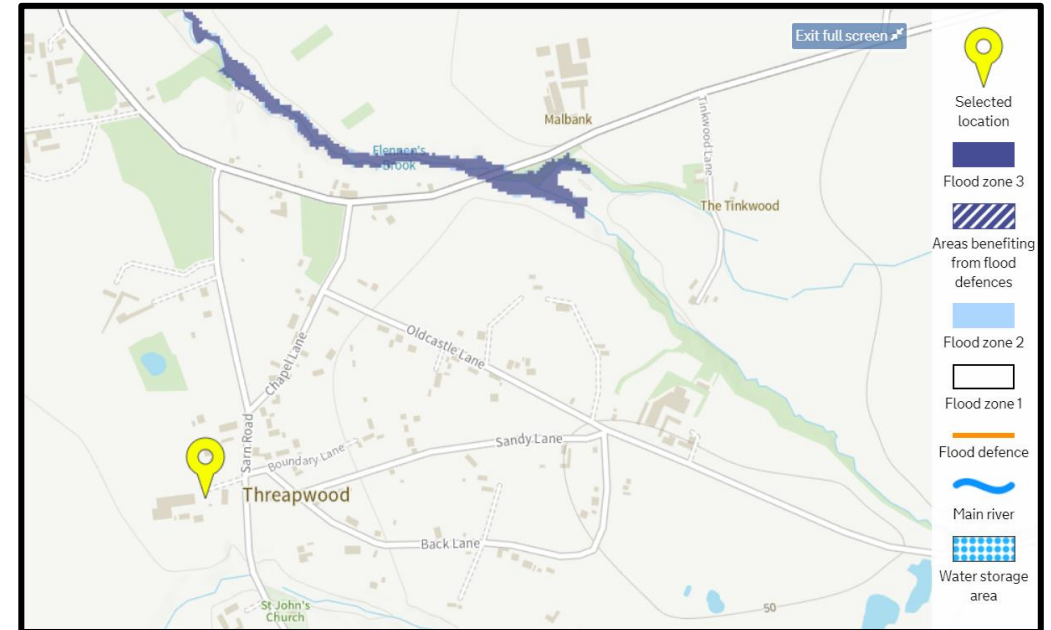
The site will be in the Wrexham Borough, but given its proximity to the English Border, both the Environment Agency and Natural Resource Wales flood risk assessments have been considered. It is evident that the site is not in an area of high Flood Risk area which could adversely affect the development.

The Environment Agency Flood Map (top) shows that there is no Flood Risk 2 or Flood 3 in the immediate vicinity to the site. The Natural Resource Wales Plan (bottom) confirms there is no obvious flood risk.

As the proposal will see a net reduction in hard standing due to an existing building being replaced with garden it is not considered that the development will cause any adverse flooding issues.

The development will see a large net reduction in people based at the site compared to the historic commercial uses and so it is considered that the cumulative impact of the development would be better compared to historic uses.

The surface water drainage will be dealt with via suitably sized soakaways and foul drainage dealt with by suitably sized package treatment plants.



7. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The site appeared to be known as Wood Farm until the start of the 20th Century when it became Middlewood Farm.

The subject building is clearly evidence on plans 150 years old and so is considered a non-designated heritage asset. The subject building is highlighted red.

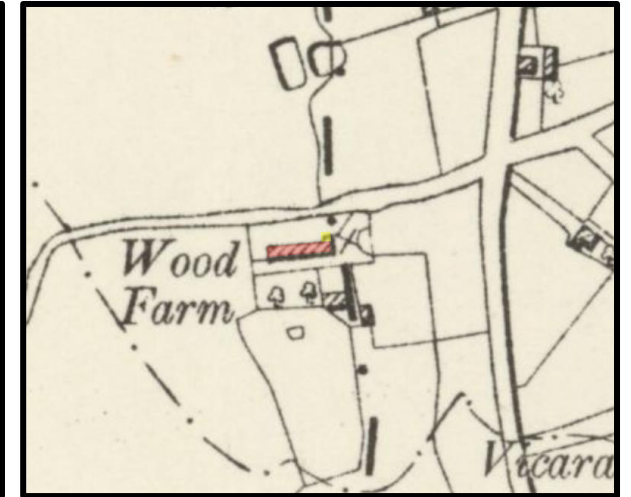
The small extension to be reinstated is visible, although not clearly on the plan from 1900 but is much more clear on the plan from 1914, hence it is also considered part of the original form of the building and so is appropriate to be reinstated, highlighted yellow on the plans.

The Threapwood History Group has some interesting anecdotes that confirm that the site was a functional working farm. A Mr John Cotton who resided at Middlewood Farm from circa 1946 provided details of the powered pump between the farm and Upperwood Farm and detailed the stock held on site.

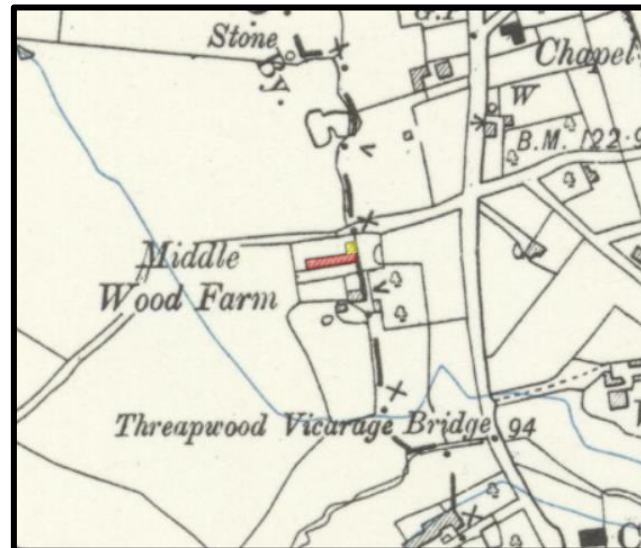
The group also details *“Sometime, probably in the 19th century, the overflow from this spring [by the brickworks site] was diverted into an enclosed gully/culvert which then ran down the right hand side of Oldcastle Lane to supply water for the horses and livestock at Broughton Hall and Middlewood Farm”*



OS Plan: 1879 (surveyed 1872)



OS Plan: 1900 (surveyed 1897) - Cheshire



OS Plan: 1914 (surveyed 1909)



OS Plan: 1954 (surveyed pre-1930 to 1953)

7. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

POLICY AND REVIEW

The relevant current policies are detailed with Section 5 and are relisted below;

- **POLICY GDP1 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE**
- **TAN 12: DESIGN**
- **TAN 24: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT**

The summary of the changes proposed to the building are detailed below and outlined in yellow. This is beyond the reinstatement of the building to the north;

NORTH

- High Level windows to be extended to form doors
- Insertion of rooflights

EAST

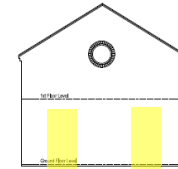
- Installation of 2no. doors

SOUTH

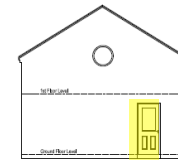
- Window to be closed up and amended to replicate a door opening
- Insertion of rooflights

WEST

- Door opening to be closed up with brick



EAST



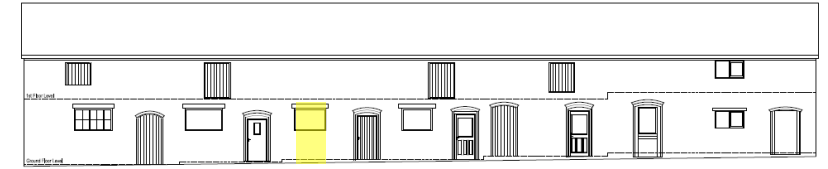
WEST



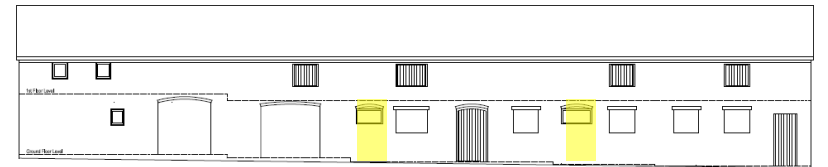
EAST



WEST



SOUTH



NORTH



SOUTH



NORTH

8. CONCLUSION

The proposal to site convert the subject traditional barn to form four dwellings is deemed to be policy compliant and would be acceptable in terms of material considerations.

The building not being viable for other uses, it is structurally sound and the intended use would not have no adverse impact on highways. The development can achieve all relevant local guidance on sizing amenity space and providing sufficient parking.

Given the positive pre-application advice, which this application builds upon, it is hoped that this application is viewed positively by the Local Authority.

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