

PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Outline application for student accommodation facility of up to 197 bed spaces, with parking and landscaping.

On behalf of Glyndwr University

**Land at Wrexham Village, Crispin Lane
Wrexham**

August 2018

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The application submitted on behalf of Glyndwr University seeks outline planning permission with access for a new student accommodation facility of up to 197 bedrooms. The specific land uses are identified in Section Four of this Planning Statement but the description of development is:

Outline application for student accommodation facility of up to 197 bed spaces, with parking and landscaping.

- 1.2 Prior to the submission of the application, the views of the local community were sought via a Pre-Application Consultation exercise. A Pre-Application Consultation Report is submitted as part of this planning application as a separate document. There were no changes to the proposals arising as a result of this exercise.

- 1.3 The application for the proposed development is in outline. All matters except access are reserved for subsequent approval. The application comprises the following documents:

- Planning Application Form including Ownership Certificate
- Design and Access Statement
- Drawing 531-17-AE-101-001 Existing Elevations
- Drawing 531-17-AE-101-102 Heights Parameter Drawing
- Drawing 531-17-AL-101-001 Site Location Plan
- Drawing 531-17-AL-101-002 Existing Site Plan
- Drawing 531-17-AL-101-003 Topographical Survey
- Drawing 531-17-AL-101-005 Ground Floor Plan
- Drawing 531-17-AL-101-005 Typical Floor Plan
- Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan (Plas Coch) produced by ITP
- Energy Statement produced by FutureServ
- LVIA produced by Axis
- Utility report produced by FutureServ
- BS5837 Tree Survey produced by Indigo
- Plas Coch Campus Transport Assessment, produced by ITP
- Flood Consequence Assessment and Drainage Strategy (REF: PCC-SHD-00-ZZ-RP-C-0001)
- Landscape Masterplan and Landscape Strategy produced by TPM
- Ecology Report produced by RPS
- Pre-Application Consultation Report

- 1.4 It is not the intention of this Planning Statement to substantially repeat the content of these documents, in particular the Design and Access Statement (DAS). Instead, this Planning Statement seeks to provide the planning context for the proposal.

2. Site Description and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site extends to 0.193 hectares (0.48 acres) and is situated within the urban area of Wrexham. The site is bounded to the north by the existing student accommodation blocks of Wrexham Village (discussed later within this statement), to the east by Crispin Lane and beyond this is Wrexham General Railway Station, to the south by an additional parcel of brownfield cleared land and to the west by the rear of the Racecourse Ground Stadium.
- 2.2 Topographically, the site is flat. There is an existing private right of way which crosses the site for the benefit of the adjacent Racecourse Ground. The land is currently unfenced and bare brownfield land, with hardstanding.
- 2.3 The surrounding area is a mix of different town centre uses, including Glyndwr University, the Racecourse Ground and Wrexham General Railway Station. There are residential properties further to the north on Crispin Lane and on the southern side of Mold Road. The site lies adjacent to Wrexham Town Centre and its range of facilities and services, all of which are readily accessible on foot.

3 Campus 2025

- 3.1 This planning application forms part of the overall Campus 2025 Estates and Learning Environment Strategy which is now being pursued by Glyndwr University (the University). Campus 2025 has assessed the University's existing estate and is based upon a recently undertaken extensive package of surveys of building condition, space utilisation, future academic requirements etc.
- 3.2 The conclusion of this exercise is that the University's Estate does not fulfil the principles and objectives of Glyndwr University and therefore needs a significant package of investment and redevelopment for the University to sustain a viable position within the higher education sector. The issue is not about expanding the overall size and academic capacity of the University Estate.
- 3.3 Indeed, the surveys show that the overall occupancy levels across the estate are low and that if the University needed to increase student numbers and/or the range of academic courses it offers, then there is sufficient capacity within the existing University Estate to accommodate such growth. The key requirement is to upgrade and modernise Glyndwr University's facilities to modern standards when compared to other Universities throughout the UK, so that the University can sustain a viable offering and student numbers across the range of academic courses which it provides.
- 3.4 Given this context, Campus 2025 is a package of planning applications, which enables the ambitions of Campus 2025 to be realised. The applications are all linked through the pressing economic, social and environmental case for Glyndwr University to improve its overall estate. Once the development identified within Campus 2025 is delivered, then this will bring substantial benefits:
- a) in the delivery of academic courses at Glyndwr University;
 - b) in the student accommodation offering within Wrexham and significant knock-on benefits to the town from a sustained and increased student population;
 - c) in the sale of land assets which are not required by Glyndwr University and can make a more positive contribution via residential development to meet Wrexham's housing need;
 - d) By enabling Glyndwr University to continue to attract new students and sustain a viable position in the higher education sector;
 - e) ultimately via the retention of Glyndwr University, with its significant contribution of jobs, investment and profile within the Wrexham economy.

- 3.5 The subject application will form part of Campus 2025 by providing 77 new homes within Wrexham and by providing funding back to Glyndwr University from an eventual land sale of consented development land to a housebuilder. Proceeds from the sale of the land sale will be invested back at the Plas Coch Campus and Regent Street Arts School.
- 3.6 It should also be noted that because this application is being brought forward direct by Glyndwr University themselves, there is not a developer taking an element of profit from the land sale, therefore this approach maximises the revenue available for the University.
- 3.7 The package of planning applications forming Campus 2025 is detailed on the table below. Whilst these are all individual planning applications and are submitted for determination as such, Campus 2025 is an overall project, whereby all of the individual sites make up the overall enabling package. It is therefore envisaged that the application will be determined by Wrexham CBC as part of a collective package of applications.

Site	Proposal
Plas Coch	Demolition of Student Union Building and reconfiguration of main campus to provide new Learning Gateway and Inner Gateway Buildings, new Engineering Building, new Sports Hall Extension. Campus 2025 also involves significant package of refurbishment of the existing social learning and academic tuition space, together with improved and reconfigured car parking and significant improvements to the overall public realm and campus environment.
Regent Street	Refurbishment and improvement of Arts College (which is a listed building) removal of redundant outbuildings (not listed) and construction of new 107-bed student accommodation facility.
Northern Quarter	Demolition of redundant student halls and construction of up to 420 apartments on surplus land within Plas Coch Campus.
Wrexham Village	Following demolition of the student halls on the Plas Coch Campus, it is proposed to build a new student accommodation facility of 197 bed spaces. This adjoins an existing 323 bed facility (Wrexham Village), which was constructed within the last ten years and is currently operated by a third party. Wrexham Village is being purchased by Glyndwr University and will create a combined facility of 520 bed spaces, adjacent to the Plas Coch Campus.
Holt Road	Outline planning application for 77 residential units. With planning in place, this site will be sold and 100% of the funds will be utilised in the improvements at Plas Coch and Regent Street
Gatewen Road	Outline planning application for 112 residential units. With planning in place, this site will be sold and 100% of the funds will be utilised in the improvements at Plas Coch and Regent Street

3.8 Due to the proposals involving both Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area, then the overall package of applications is as follows:

Site	Proposal	
Glyndwr University Plas Coch Campus	Detailed planning and Listed Building Application for Demolition of student union and other redundant buildings, and redevelopment of academic campus to provide new Learning Gateway and Inner Gateway Buildings, new Engineering Building, new Sports Hall Extension, redevelopment of multi-use games area, refurbishment of social learning and academic tuition space, together with new car parking, infrastructure, landscaping and public realm works.	Application One
Regent Street Arts College	Application for refurbishment and improvement of Arts College, demolition of ancillary buildings and construction of new 107-bed student accommodation facility	Application Two
	Demolition required within conservation area of ancillary outbuildings within Arts School to enable construction of 107 bed student accommodation facility.	Application Three
Land at north west of Plas Coch Campus	Demolition of redundant student halls and construction of up to 410 apartments with access from B5101, together with car parking, site landscaping and associated infrastructure on surplus land within the overall Plas Coch academic Campus.	Application Four
Land west of Crispin Lane	Outline application for student accommodation facility of up to 197 bed spaces, with parking and landscaping.	Application Five
Holt Road	Outline planning application for the erection of up to 77 dwellings together with vehicular/pedestrian access from Holt Road, open space which can be used with adjoining land to the west to create a formal sports pitch, site landscaping, sustainable drainage and other related infrastructure	Application Six
Gatewen Road	The erection of up to 112 dwellings together with vehicular/pedestrian access from Gatewen Road, open space, site landscaping, sustainable drainage and other related infrastructure	Application Seven

4 Application Proposals

4.1 The series of Parameter Plans submitted alongside this outline planning application demonstrates how the site can be laid out to provide:

- A new “T-shaped” building which complements the other two student buildings within Wrexham Village and provides a frontage onto Crispin Lane.
- Access is taken from the existing Wrexham Village complex.
- An additional 11 car parking spaces are included within the courtyard created by the proposed new buildings and existing student accommodation buildings.
- A dedicated walkway is proposed to the west of the application site, which provides pedestrian access from the rear of the Kop stand within the Racecourse Stadium to Crispin Lane. This walkway accords with an existing right of way through the site and will formalise the route.
- Building heights relate to the existing buildings

4.2 Previous planning applications (discussed later within the statement) on this land have sought to link the development of student accommodation with other development schemes within the wider area, namely the adjacent Racecourse Stadium. This proposal does not seek to make any linkages between this application and any aspect of potential redevelopment schemes at the Racecourse Ground. However, this scheme is part of Campus 2025 and is therefore part of the overall package being pursued by Glyndwr University to improve the academic and student accommodation facilities at Regent Street Arts School and the main Plas Coch Campus. Whilst this proposal is not part of the Plas Coch Campus, the Wrexham Village complex is directly adjacent to Plas Coch Campus and therefore relates well for students to live and study within a dedicated area of Wrexham.

4.3 The Design and Access Statement (DAS) contains more detailed information which establishes parameters for the scheme including the proposed height of buildings. It is therefore envisaged that any outline permission imposes conditions on a subsequent reserved matters approval seeking compliance with the DAS.

5 The Development Plan & Planning History

5.1 The starting point for the design team involved in the preparation of this planning application was to examine the planning history for the site. There are two planning applications which are relevant:

a) Planning Application Ref P/2008/1295

Outline application for 319 student bedroom development and access road, parking, landscaping and development of East stand/multi-function arena

This full application was approved 6 April 2009.

Reserved matters were never submitted to accord with this outline permission (which contained a condition requiring reserved matters to be submitted by 6 April 2012) and this permission has therefore lapsed.

b) Planning Application Ref P/2008/1296

Full Application. Erection of 521 student bedroom development / construction in two blocks, together with access road, parking and landscaping.

This full application was approved 6 April 2009.

The permission was therefore used as a basis to build the student accommodation which is now erected onsite. This now completed student accommodation is split into two blocks :

John Neal Block – this houses 156 student bedrooms

Erddig Block – this houses 167 student bedrooms

5.2 The construction of John Neal and Erddig Blocks therefore mean that the accommodation which is currently built is not the full 521 units originally envisaged within the original Planning Permission Ref P/2008/1296, but 323 units i.e. only a part of the original scheme envisaged.

5.3 The subject application contains an indicative building design which differs slightly from that approved under Planning Permission Ref P/2008/1296, to create more efficient buildings with more useable space. The 197 units proposed does however accord with the principle and quantum of development approved under Planning Permission Ref P/2008/1296, insofar as of the 521 units granted planning permission, 323 have been built, therefore the residual number of bed spaces to be delivered under this permission was 198 units. Clearly the subject application of up to 197 units enables the overall vision to be delivered.

- 5.4 It is highlighted that it is the same UDP and therefore the same local planning policies which assessed the previous planning application/s on the site. The impacts of the current proposal are identical to that previously approved. It is therefore envisaged that the same assessments against the same UDP policies will result in the same outcome.

Planning Policy

- 5.5 The development plan consists primarily of Planning Policy Wales (November 2016) and the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011. Also relevant to various specific topics are various Technical Advice Notes issued by the Welsh Government, together with Local Planning Guidance Notes issued by Wrexham CBC.

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan

- 5.6 The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011, whilst now out of date, does provide the policy basis for the land. The site does not benefit from any specific allocations within the UDP and is simply white land, within the settlement limit of Wrexham Town Centre.
- 5.7 Policy PS1 seeks to direct development to within defined settlement limits, which the proposal clearly accords with.
- 5.8 Policy PS2 ensures that development does not materially detrimentally affect townscape character. The proposals are designed to integrate with what has already been granted planning permission and already been built at the adjacent Wrexham Student Village.
- 5.9 Policy PS3 directs development toward previously developed brownfield land, comprising vacant, derelict or underused land. The proposal fully accords with this.
- 5.10 Policy PS4 seeks that development maintains the existing settlement pattern and be integrated with the existing transport network. The site is adjacent to Wrexham Central Railway Station and within convenient walking distance of the town centre, thus maximising the potential for trips which do not involve the private car.
- 5.11 Policy GDP1 seeks general development objectives including:
- Scale Design & Layout. Whilst these are reserved matters and the proposals are only indicative at this stage, the proposals do accord with the adjacent areas, by providing new student accommodation in the optimal place within Wrexham, namely on Crispin Lane, adjacent to Wrexham Village, which is the largest student accommodation facility within Wrexham.

- Safe and Convenient Pedestrian and Vehicular Access. The scheme utilises the existing access from the Wrexham Village scheme, which has been approved. Reserved matters applications can also provide safe access to the Kop stand of the racecourse ground. The location of Glyndwr University, Bus and Railway Stations and Wrexham Town Centre is such that occupiers can genuinely exist without cars and there is no better location within Wrexham CBC for occupiers to benefit from sustainable transport choices

5.12 Policy GDP2 relates to the capacity of infrastructure and states a requirement for the developer/landowner to enter into a planning agreement/obligation which is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development. Glyndwr University intend to fully consider any appropriate contributions in accordance with Article 122 of The Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 with the aim of producing a planning agreement for the subject land in due course.

5.13 Whilst student accommodation is not employment development, it is noteworthy that the supporting text to Policy E4 (which deals with unallocated employment sites) states that:

“consideration will be given to other employment proposals on land within settlements. Such development contributes to the economic use of land, avoids pressure on the countryside and serves to remove the detrimental effect of blight within settlements”

It is therefore clear that the plan supports the redevelopment of brownfield land within settlements and that this proposal accords with this long-established principle of brownfield first.

5.14 Student accommodation adjacent to Wrexham Town Centre is also beneficial to the overall economy of Wrexham, as it provides a student population which will be economically active in supporting retail, leisure and other town centre uses. This concept is recognised within Policy S3, which recognises that Wrexham Town Centre is the preferred location for “non-shopping uses”. Whilst the subject site is not within the town centre, it is adjacent to Wrexham Town Centre and sits between the boundary of the Town Centre and Glyndwr University. The explanatory text to Policy S3 also specifically supports education facilities (which covers accommodation for full-time students) in that

“land uses which need to be accessible to a large number of people, including retailing, major leisure uses (such as theatres, multi-screen cinemas, bingo halls and bowling alleys), offices of central and local government, commercial offices, hospitals and tertiary education facilities (Narvo’s emphasis) are preferably to be in town centres.

Local Planning Guidance Notes

- 5.15 In addition to the Wrexham UDP, a series of Local Planning Guidance Notes have been produced and approved by Wrexham CBC, which amplify development plan policy and are therefore material to the consideration and determination of the subject planning application. The key notes are as follows:
- 5.16 Local Planning Guidance Note 24 covers designing out crime. Whilst this is only an outline application, the parameters accord with the principles of this guidance.
- 5.17 Local Planning Guidance Note 7 deals with landscape and development. The DAS and landscaping proposals demonstrate compliance with this guidance.
- 5.18 Local Planning Guidance Note 16 looks at car parking. The DAS looks at this guidance and demonstrates how the guidance can be delivered at reserved matters stage.

Planning Policy Wales

- 5.19 The main source of national planning policy is Planning Policy Wales (PPW). There are not specific policies relating to student accommodation, although 4.6.1 is supportive in that it states that:
- “Recognising the strengths of urban communities, which are home to the majority of the population of Wales, the Welsh Government’s priorities for urban areas are, through integrated approaches to... secure environmentally-sound and socially inclusive regeneration in those urban areas which require it, so that they become more desirable places in which to live and work”*
- 5.20 PPW also recognises that higher density development can be delivered in locations such as the subject site and states that *“Higher density development including residential development, should be encouraged near public transport nodes or near corridors well served by public transport”*.

6 Delivery, Planning Obligations and Conditions

- 6.1 There are no known insurmountable technical or environmental constraints to bring the site forward for development. The application scheme is an appropriate use of a brownfield site, with an established planning history which supports the redevelopment of this land for modern student accommodation adjacent to Glyndwr University.
- 6.2 There is an agreement in place between Glyndwr University and the current owners of Wrexham Village for Glyndwr University to purchase the land. If outline planning permission is granted for residential development of the site, then the design team would be tasked with bringing forward a detailed scheme via reserved matters, so that the scheme could be constructed alongside other elements within the overall Campus 2025 Project.
- 6.3 The current assumption is that, following outline planning permission in Autumn 2018, the site would be sold and reserved matters submitted by a housing developer in Spring 2019. Following approval of reserved matters, a likely start date for construction on site would be late 2019, with the first dwellings available for occupation in Spring 2020. The expectation is that housing would be complete no later than mid-2020.
- 6.4 Accordingly, subject to securing reserved matters and other related approvals, the site is immediately available for development. Indeed, construction work could commence relatively quickly because there is already agricultural accesses to the site from Bransford Road for establishment and mobilisation purposes temporarily using the existing car park. This is an important issue because of the urgent need for additional dwellings to meet the shortfall in the supply of housing land within Wrexham CBC.

7 Benefits, Planning Balance and Conclusions

- 7.1 As outlined previously, there is a significant track-record of Wrexham CBC approving planning applications on this land for student accommodation. There has not been any change of local planning policy since the permissions were granted in 2009. The overall quantum of development remains the same (it decreases by one bed space from that consented in 2009) and the indicative material which is submitted for this outline application demonstrates that the blocks can be configured to accord both with the previous planning permissions which were granted and the 323 student bed spaces which have already been constructed.
- 7.2 A package of supporting information submitted as part of this outline planning application demonstrates that there are no environmental, highways, ecological, flooding and drainage or other issues which cannot adequately be addressed and appropriately mitigated as part of the development proposals.
- 7.3 Glyndwr University is keen through Campus 2025 to improve the University's overall offering to continue to attract and sustain a viable student population within Wrexham Town Centre, adjacent to the Plas Coch Campus. Glyndwr University is a significant contributor of jobs and investment to the overall Wrexham economy. Investment into modern student accommodation will only enhance and improve Glyndwr's position within the highly competitive student market. Comparable universities throughout the UK have developed significant new student accommodation facilities within recent years. Against this context, there is a genuine need for this development to happen quickly, so that Glyndwr can develop its own facilities, given that virtually every other University throughout the UK is doing likewise.
- 7.4 No significant or demonstrable adverse impacts have been identified which outweigh the clear benefits of the proposed development. Accordingly, the policies within the Wrexham UDP and PPW which support this application continue to be engaged. The Planning History of Wrexham CBC allowing this sustainable form of development is a material consideration which is clearly relevant to this outline application and it is requested that outline planning permission be granted, subject to conditions and any necessary planning obligation.

Narvo Asset Management
June 2018