

Design and Access Statement
In Relation to Site adjacent to
Graig Wen Farm
Off Brymbo Road
Bwlchgwn, Wrexham

The Planning Application
For the
'Change of Use' to include
Dayroom / utility buildings and the construction
Of hardstanding's, access road
And ancillary drainage

Applicant

Mr Billy Evans

Dated

August 2017

Introduction

The site is in Bwlchgwyn a village in Wrexham County Borough, 10 miles west of Wrexham on the A525.

The site covers approximately 0.36 Hectares of land adjacent to Graig Wen Farm on its Southern boundary, with an industrial unit on the Northern Boundary. To the East is the access land with a field leading to the residential area of Cefn Lane, which in turn leads to Brymbo Road. The land is generally flat and is made up of compacted reclaimed hard core and crushed stone.

The site access track runs along the eastern boundary, is a private un-adopted road used regularly by the adjoining business site. It is a single lane with access and egress at both ends and has sufficient width for a pick-up pulling a trailer / caravan.

Bwlchgwyn is part of the community of Brymbo with an approximate population of 1,000. It is 333m above sea level and is one of the highest villages in Wales. It has various businesses, shops, public house, primary school, chapel, community centre and local park. Secondary Education is located in Wrexham via a local school bus. There is also a local bowling and karate club. In all the site is very sustainable.

The application is a 'change of use' application to a gypsy and traveller caravan park. The applicant Mr. William Evans is an English Traveller who currently has a pitch at the Council's Ruthin Road site with his four children.

Ruthin Road Traveller Site is currently over-crowded and has mixed travellers. This is causing tension between families. Mr Evans is concerned about the health and welfare of his family and consequently purchased the site in an attempt to obtain planning permission for a gypsy and traveller site, primarily for his family with three additional pitches for local family or friends.

The Applicant

William Evans (42) lives on the Ruthin Road site with his wife Ruby. Ruby is of poor health with rheumatoid arthritis in both legs to such an extent she needs a wheel chair at times. William and Ruby have four children.

1. William Evans (22)
2. Clare Mari Evans (21) who is married to Isaac Lowther (24) and they have a son Isaac Lowther (7 months)
3. Asa Evans (17) who is married to Lisa Mari
4. Thomas Evans (14). Thomas has private tuition and is currently having treatment for ADHD under Dr. Tom Rotenco at Wrexham Hospital.

Mr Evans has lived in Wrexham all his life and travels for work as a tree surgeon. He is often away from home. William Junior has his own ground work business and Asa help out with his father's work.

William's parents have unfortunately passed away but Ruby's mother lives on a site at Rhyl and should planning be granted, she would move to live on the site with her daughter and grand-children.

It is intended, should approval be granted that the whole family move to the new site and occupy four of the seven pitches. It is understood that Ruthin Road site is shortly to be altered and pitch numbers reduced bringing the site more in line with current standards. By releasing the land of the current application will ease the burden of removing some tenants from Ruthin Road.

The additional pitches would be rented out.

It is recognised that the applicant and the family comprise of Gypsy's and Travellers as defined by Welsh Government Circular 30/2007.

The need for and availability of suitable sites

Whilst Policy PS1 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan, 2005 (UDP) requires new development to be directed to within defined settlement limits, in exceptional circumstances Policy H9 of the UDP allows consideration to be given to sites for caravans of individual families which cannot be accommodated within settlement limits subject to compliance with Policy GDP1.

According to the Wrexham Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment, 2013 there is an unmet need of 15 pitches across the authority's area. Confirmation is awaited from Welsh Government that the figure has increased to 28 pitches in the 2016 Assessment. The council have indicated that new sites would only come forward as part of the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP) or as private sites. The anticipated date for the adoption of the LDP is not until late 2018.

The applicant currently resides on the Council's only permanent site at Ruthin Road, Wrexham. Although resident there for some years the applicant finds it unsuitable as the site is overcrowded and the single width road makes access difficult. This is of particular concern given the health problems of Mrs Evans. The Council have confirmed that improvements are planned to the site which included a reduction in the number of pitches to nine and an overhaul of the accommodation blocks. Previously the site had accommodated 20 pitches but these had been reduced to 15. There is no dispute that there is an unmet need which potentially will only be met by small private sites.

The effect on the character of the area

Policy H9 of the UDP indicates that particular attention will be paid to the visual impact of the proposal on the surrounding landscape character. Policies PS2 and GDP1 (a) also seek development which would not detrimentally affect landscape character and which 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 locality.

It is accepted that the introduction of caravans and day rooms to the site will alter its appearance. However, the views into the site are severely restricted by the existing hedge planting and woodland and the siting of the caravans would not be in prominent positions within it. The hedging is native and consequently helps screen the appearance of the area. There is also the opportunity as part of

the development to supplement the boundary treatments to ensure appropriate species are planted to help break up views of the proposal in the interests of the visual amenity of the area.

In the absence of more suitable sites and given the limited effect the development would have on visual amenity, it is considered that the development would not be detrimental to the character of the site or the surrounding landscape, in accord with Policies PS2, H9 and GDP1 of the UDP.

Foul Drainage

Foul drainage will be to a Biodisc plant proposed to be sited in the corner of the site.

The effect on heritage assets

The proposal has no effect on any heritage assets within the area.

The effect on bio-diversity

The site has recently been completely covered with compacted hard core which forms a retrospective part of this application. It is however not anticipated that there are any protected species on the site.

There are hedges and trees outside the boundaries and it is considered that supplementary planting on the site would help reinforce the wildlife corridors already provided by the hedges outside the site.

In view of the limited potential for Great Crested Newts on the site it is considered the development would not be detrimental to any special ecological features of the area, in accord with Policy GDP 1 (h) of the UDP which seeks to safeguard sites and area's of nature conservation and wildlife interest.

The effect on highway safety

It is considered that traffic movement from both accesses from the un-adopted lane will be minimal and the majority of traffic generated by the proposed site would consist of cars and vans and in terms of volume would be limited. Larger vehicles would enter and leave the site but this would be very occasional.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed caravan site would not be detrimental to the character of the surrounding landscape nor would it harm the local setting, impinge on amenity of adjoining properties or be detrimental to any ecological features of the area. There is no surface water flooding. The volume and type of traffic it would generate would not significantly increase at either of the junctions, with little increased risk of highway safety.

There is an unmet and increasing need for Gypsy and Traveller sites within the Wrexham Council's area.

Whilst Policy PS1 of the UDP requires new development to be within defined settlement limits consideration is to be given to sites for caravans for gypsy families which cannot be accommodated within settlement limits provided by Policy H9 and compliant with Policy GDP1. With view of the overcrowding at Ruthin Road site and its future reduction in pitch numbers, the general shortage of pitches it is requested this application be deemed in favour of approval.