



Barns at Gamford Farm, Rossett **Planning, Design and Access Statement**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.0 PLANNING POLICY – LOCAL CONTEXT.....	5
3.0 PLANNING POLICY – NATIONAL CONTEXT	13
4.0 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS	16
5.0 DESIGN CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES	18
6.0 ACCESS	24
7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	25
8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	26
9.0 APPENDICES	27

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This planning, design and access statement has been prepared by Cassidy + Ashton on behalf of Mr. Ian Garden in support of the full planning application for *“change of use and conversion of barns to form 6 no. residential units. Construction of 2 no. semi detached dwelling houses (replacement of existing farm house). Demolition of remaining structures across the site”*.
- 1.2 This statement has been prepared in compliance with the guidance on Design and Access statements, contained within appendix 1 of Technical Advice Note 12.

SITE CONTEXT

- 1.3 Gamford Farm is located on the northern side of Gamford Lane, approximately 0.3 miles east of the village of Rossett. Rossett itself is 4 miles north of Wrexham and 6 miles south of Chester.
- 1.4 The site features a range of vacant, dilapidated farm buildings and a single dwelling house, also in a poor state of repair. Gamford Farm was originally a working pig farm but has now not been in use for approximately 10 years. The immediate landholding covers an area of 0.88 hectares. There are two main access points onto the site from Gamford Lane, one wider entrance to the west (accessing the barns) and one smaller entrance to the east (accessing the dwelling house).
- 1.5 The surrounding area is largely agricultural land and open countryside.



Satellite View

THE PROPOSAL

- 1.6 The proposed development revolves around the conversion of several barn buildings as part of a full planning application, principally involving:
- Retaining 4 no. barns through conversion, restoration and extension works.
 - Demolition of other barns / structures.
 - Demolition of existing dwelling house.
 - Construction of 2 no. new dwellings.
 - Associated landscaping works.
- 1.7 The overall objective for the scheme is the development of several existing buildings for residential use, whilst retaining their rural character as much as possible. The necessary alterations proposed as part of the scheme would be compatible with the character of the existing buildings (see proposed plans and elevations).
- 1.8 We believe a residential use for the buildings is the most viable and sustainable use, this being for the following reasons;
- An assessment of commercial floorspace availability in the locality highlights an extensive surplus, hence concluding that there would likely be little to no demand for the use of the buildings as commercial units;
 - Highways restrictions – whilst access to the main road and associated visibility is adequate, it is considered that the frequency of trips and associated vehicles with a commercial development would potentially be detrimental to highway safety. The same applies to a tourist accommodation option, where it is likely the unit numbers would far exceed the residential option.
 - The conversion of each unit incorporates a home office / study, therefore providing flexible accommodation for those interested in working from home.
 - The most recent Housing Land Availability Study shows a shortfall in the number of available housing development sites.
 - In its current condition the site is not maintained and hence could attract fly tipping and antisocial behaviour. Introducing a use for the buildings encourages natural surveillance and deters trespass. The condition of the site will further deteriorate if no action is taken.
 - The application site is not considered to be in an optimum location to provide tourist accommodation.

PLANNING HISTORY

- 1.9 The site has previously been the subject of an application in 1997 for “*redevelopment with 18 dwellings and associated garages, including conversion of existing buildings and alteration to existing vehicular and pedestrian access*”. (Application no. CB 01060).
- 1.10 This application was refused in May 1997, with a subsequent appeal dismissed in November 1997.

PLANNING PRECEDENT

- 1.11 There are several comparable developments in the surrounding area which can act as planning precedent when assessing this application. See appendix 1 for images.

Cornish Hall

- 1.12 This application represents a similar site with vacant, dilapidated barn buildings at a farm no longer used for agricultural purposes. The scheme involved the restoration and conversion of five barns with associated landscaping.

Application Reference: P/2012/0569

Proposal: Listed Building Consent For Change Of Use And Conversion Of Vacant Agricultural Buildings For Residential Development (5 No. Units)

Address: Cornish Hall, Wrexham Road, Holt, Wrexham. LL13 9SW

Decision: Granted

Moorside Farm

- 1.13 This application represents a similar redundant farm site which has been successfully converted to create four self-contained dwellings.

Application Reference: P/2004/0489

Proposal: Conversion of Redundant Farm To 4 No. Self-Contained Dwellings and Alteration To Existing Vehicular And Pedestrian Access.

Address: Moorside Farm. LL12 0BN.

Decision: Granted

The Darland

- 1.14 This site has been subject of a number of successful planning applications for conversion of agricultural buildings to residential units. The most recent of these was in 2013.

Application Reference: P/2013/0205

Proposal: Conversion Of Redundant Barns To Form 2 Dwellings (Amendments To P/2011/0838).

Address: The Darland, Darland Lane, Rossett, Wrexham. LL12 0BA

Decision: Granted

Previous applications for The Darland:

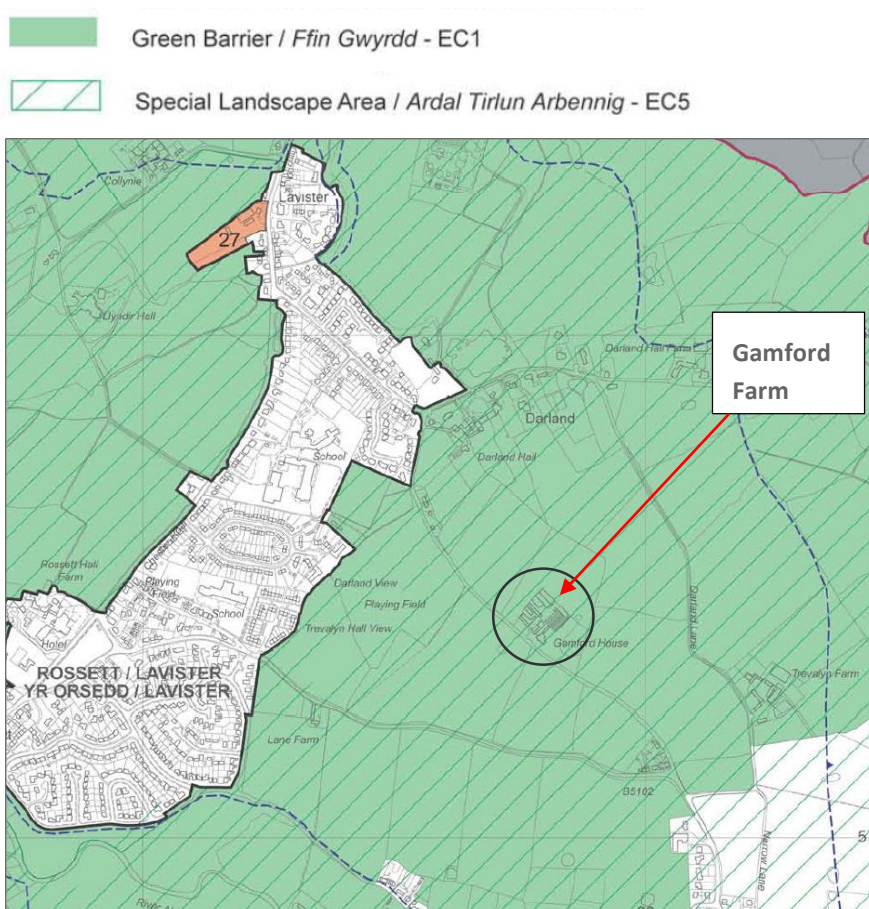
- P/2013/0722
- P/2011/0838
- P/2008/0810

Trevalyn Farm

- 1.15 It appears as though a range of buildings at this site have been converted for residential use with the construction of new sections and associated landscaping.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY – LOCAL CONTEXT

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the local planning policy relevant to the site.
- 2.2 The site falls within the administrative boundary of Wrexham County Borough Council.
- 2.3 Wrexham Council is currently in a transition stage between their existing adopted Unitary Development Plan (1996 – 2011) (adopted 2006) and the emerging Local Development Plan for the period 2013 to 2028. The emerging plan is expected to be adopted in March 2018.
- 2.4 Although the existing UDP has technically expired, until such time when it is superseded by the emerging Local Development Plan, it will continue to be used as the most current planning policy document. The formation of the emerging Wrexham Local Development Plan is still in progress. There is a preferred strategy document available which is the first formal publication in the new Local Development Plan preparation process.
- 2.5 The current Unitary Development Plan sets out the Council's existing policies and proposals for the way in which land, buildings and infrastructure should be developed. The plan is accompanied by detailed proposals maps which shows various allocations (linked to specific policies) for particular pieces of land with an aim of guiding future development.
- 2.6 Gamford Farm Falls within Proposals Map 3 (side 1) and is covered by the following policies:



2.7 Policy EC1 - Green Barriers, states that:

“Development will only be granted planning permission if it is for agriculture, forestry, essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries and other uses of land which maintain the openness of the Green Barrier and do not conflict with the purpose of including land within it”.

“In Wrexham, green barriers which possess the same characteristics and purposes of formal green belts, except in their long-term permanency, have coped with a wide variety of development pressures and successfully served their purposes. The designation of a green belt is therefore considered unnecessary”.

2.8 The proposed development complies with the purpose of the green belt. It is the conversion of existing buildings which will maintain and increase the openness of the Green Barrier and not conflict with the purpose of including land within the Green Barrier.

2.9 Policy EC5 – Special Landscape Areas, states that:

“Within Special Landscape Areas, priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape. Development, other than for agriculture, small-scale farm-based and other rural enterprises, and essential operational development by utility service providers, will be strictly controlled.

Development will be required to conform to a high standard of design and landscaping, and special attention will be paid to minimising its visual impact both from nearby and distant viewpoints”.

2.10 The proposed development will serve to improve the state of the buildings on their current form, will have consideration to the rural countryside context (see Design section) and as such will conserve and enhance the landscape. Visual impact will be minimised.

2.11 In addition to the above site specific policies, the following general policies within the existing Unitary Development Plan are each considered relevant.

Consideration	Compliance
GDP 1 – Development Objectives	✓
EC6 – Biodiversity Conservation	✓
EC15 – Small Scale Neglected Sites	✓
H3 – Conversion of Buildings Outside Settlement Limits	✓
H5 – Housing in the Countryside	✓

H10 – Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside	✓
E5 – Employment in the Countryside	✓
T8 – Parking	✓

Summary of Policies

2.12 **Policy GDP1 – Development Objectives**, states all new development should:

- 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”.*

2.13 **All of which the proposal seeks to achieve.**

Policy EC6 – Biodiversity Conservation states that:

“Development either within or close to sites of biodiversity interest will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the need for the development outweighs the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site. Where such development is permitted, damage should be kept to a minimum, and compensatory measures should be provided. Measures to improve the biodiversity value of sites and enhance their natural conservation interest and landscape quality including the establishment of local nature reserves, will be supported”.

2.14 **The site is considered to be of limited intrinsic nature conservation value and the need for development outweighs such value. However it is demonstrated in Chapter 4 of this statement that mitigation and compensatory measures will be included as part of the development to maintain the biodiversity of the site.**

2.15 **Policy EC15 - Small Scale Neglected Sites** is of particular importance to the proposed development and states that:

“Action will be taken to protect and enhance general amenity through the reclamation and restoration of derelict sites, and through the improvement of untidy sites, dilapidated buildings, and other eyesores, particularly those in sensitive locations”.

2.16 **The proposal to refurbish and re-use dilapidated existing buildings would comply with this policy and will enhance general amenity. The buildings are within a special landscape area and their restoration would improve the visual appearance of this sensitive area.**

2.17 **Policy H3 – Conversion of Buildings Outside Settlement Limits**

The change of use or conversion of a building to residential use outside settlement limits will only be permitted where:-

a) in the case of agricultural buildings, there is no longer an agricultural need and alternative non-residential uses have proved inappropriate; and

b) the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive rebuilding tantamount to the erection of a new dwelling; and

c) any inherent characteristics of merit in the building are retained; and

d) the proposed dwelling and the resulting curtilage does not constitute an undesirable intrusion into the landscape, create access problems, nor require the provision of services at public cost; and

e) the floor plan of the existing building is sufficient to create a habitable dwelling.

2.18 Paragraph 6.10 of the UDP as supporting text to Policy H3 states that new homes can be created from the conversion of redundant buildings and the sub-division of larger residences. The paragraph acknowledges that there are a significant number of vacant and underused properties in the County Borough. Conversion can provide much needed smaller accommodation more quickly than would the provision of new homes and, at the same time, ensure a satisfactory re-use of existing resources and supplement conservation policies.

- 2.19 ***“The sympathetic conversion of redundant non-residential buildings to housing accommodation should be encouraged, providing that basic design standards can be achieved and it can be proven that the agricultural use has ceased and alternative non-residential are identified as inappropriate. In this way buildings of historic or architectural interest, often set in landscaped grounds of considerable interest, can be saved thereby also helping to achieve the Plan's environmental strategy”.***
- 2.20 **The buildings proposed for conversion are of domestic scale and constructed of permanent materials, therefore meeting basic policy requirements.**
- 2.21 Criterion a) of policy H3 states that, where agricultural buildings are proposed for residential use, it must be demonstrated there is no longer an agricultural need for the buildings and alternative non-residential uses have proven inappropriate. The buildings have ceased to be used for their original purpose for a significant period of time and no longer represent appropriate accommodation for modern agricultural practices. This is illustrated by the absence of any significant materials or paraphernalia within and surrounding the buildings.
- 2.22 **Policy H5 – Housing in the Countryside** states that:
- “Outside defined settlement limits new dwellings will only be permitted where:-*
- a) proposals accord with Policies H3, H4, and H8; or*
 - b) proposals comprise infilling subject to Policy GDP1; or*
 - c) an essential need to house a full time agricultural or forestry key worker can be established and*
 - i) the long term financial viability and functional management of the enterprise is proven; and*
 - ii) the person, due to the nature of the work, has to live on the site rather than in a nearby settlement; and*
 - iii) there are no suitable buildings nearby which could be converted into a dwelling; and*
 - iv) the new dwelling is sited adjacent to an existing building, can be landscaped, and is of a form, bulk, design and materials which reflect the locality's rural character.*
- Any permission will be conditioned to limit residential occupancy to essential workers”.*
- 2.23 **The proposal accords with Policy H3. Policies H4 and H8 are not considered relevant. The proposal is the conversion of existing buildings and will be of a form, bulk, design and materials which reflect the locality's rural character.**
- 2.24 **Policy H10 – Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside**
- Replacement dwellings may be permitted in the countryside only where:-
- a) the existing dwelling is habitable or capable of being made habitable without substantial reconstruction or substantial increases in floor area.*
 - b) the existing dwelling is not of architectural or historic interest, or is a prefabricated or temporary structure.*
 - c) the proposed dwelling:*

- i) is located on the site of the original dwelling; or*
 - ii) is exceptionally, where a planning constraint can be overcome, located within the curtilage of the existing building; and*
 - iii) reflects the floor area, form, bulk, and character of the original dwelling; and*
 - iv) satisfies Policy GDP1.*
- 2.25 **It is acknowledged that the existing dwelling house is capable of being made habitable without substantial reconstruction. The existing dwelling is not of architectural or historic interest.**
- 2.26 **The replacement dwellings are not located on the exact footprint of the existing dwelling but are located within the curtilage, in the same orientation and facing the same aspect. The replacement dwellings reflect the form, bulk and character of the original dwelling and site in general and satisfy Policy GDP1.**
- 2.27 **Therefore the proposal satisfies the criteria of this policy.**
- 2.28 **Policy E5 – Employment in the Countryside**
- 2.29 This policy is relevant in that it has been considered the site may possibly have been suitable for other uses aside from residential.
- 2.30 *“Small-scale employment development in the countryside will only be permitted through the conversion of an existing building where:-*
- a) the proposal accords with Policy GDP1; and*
 - b) the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive rebuilding tantamount to the erection of a new building; and*
 - c) any inherent characteristics of merit in the building are retained; and*
 - d) the building and resulting curtilage does not constitute an undesirable intrusion into the landscape, create access problems, nor require the provision of services at public cost”.*
- 2.31 **The proposal complies with the criteria of this policy. However residential, not employment is the preferred use for reasons stated in the introduction and material considerations chapters.**
- 2.32 **Policy T8 - Parking**
- 2.33 States that *“Development granted planning permission will be required to provide vehicle parking spaces either on site or nearby, in accordance with the Council's current parking standards. Special regard will be paid to the following factors, as appropriate:-*
- a) the availability of public transport nearby,*
 - b) proximity to public car parking,*
 - c) proximity to local services and facilities,*

d) road safety hazards and amenity considerations arising from on-street parking in the vicinity of the site.

Where implementation difficulties arise in making parking provision on-site or nearby, the Council will require a developer to make financial contributions for measures to assist public transport, or walking and cycling as appropriate”.

- 2.34 **The development will comply with Local Planning Guidance Note No. 16. This is in providing 3 no. spaces for each 3 and 4 bed dwelling. The site is considered to be within reasonable proximity to the local services and facilities of Rossett.**

Local Planning Guidance Note 3: Converting Rural Buildings

- 2.35 LPG3 sets out in greater detail the type of rural buildings that can be converted. Limits are set to determine which buildings are suitable for conversion.
- 2.36 As a starting point the building must be structurally sound and substantially complete (i.e – not missing large sections of wall or roof). It must be a permanent building and not an eyesore. It must also be of a suitable size and construction and not at risk of flooding.
- 2.37 Should a building tick these boxes then the architectural merit of the building will be considered. In our opinion the guidance aims to restrict the conversion of buildings which are unattractive and of no architectural merit.
- 2.38 If the particular building is considered of sufficient architectural merit then in principle it will be considered acceptable for conversion subject to site specific design issues. There is a desire to make use of existing openings and retain as much architectural detail as possible.
- 2.39 The raising of roofs is discouraged as is the insertion of dormer windows. The raising of some of the barn ridgelines in this proposed development is necessary in order to provide two storeys and is considered acceptable following a pre – application discussion with the Council.
- 2.40 In addition to the general guidance set out in LPG3, specific guidance is set out in respect of the conversion of agricultural buildings to dwellings. Of particular relevance; it is stated that buildings located in very remote locations will be unsuitable for residential use. The site is not located in a remote location.
- 2.41 Conversions of agricultural buildings should seek to maintain the agricultural character and appearance of the existing structure. While this can normally be achieved by residential conversions, commercial uses may require the insertion of larger windows, delivery doors, air vents and the attachment of other external equipment. Therefore residential is the favoured option in order to minimise alteration works.
- 2.42 Developments should make use of existing access points which the proposal will do.
- 2.43 The proposed development is considered to comply with relevant information contained within this guidance note.

JOINT HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY STUDY (2014)

- 2.44 This report represents the most recent study on housing land supply in the Wrexham area over a five year period from the base date 1st April 2014. The five year land supply comprises sites with planning permission (outline or full) and sites allocated for housing in adopted development plans. The report concludes that Wrexham County borough has a **housing land supply of 3.1 years**. Against a five year requirement, this represents a **shortfall of 1.9 years**.
- 2.45 A development which would make a contribution towards the housing land supply whilst complying with planning policy should therefore be supported.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY – NATIONAL CONTEXT

PLANNING POLICY WALES (2016) EDITION 8

- 3.1 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets the context for sustainable land use planning policy in Wales, within which local planning authorities' statutory Unitary Development Plans and Local Development Plans are prepared and development control decisions on individual applications and appeals are taken. The following sections of PPW are considered relevant to the application. Key points have been highlighted in bold (our emphasis).
- 3.2 **Chapter 3: Making and Enforcing Planning Decisions**
- 3.3 **Paragraph 3.1.2** states that *"In line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development (see 4.2) applications for planning permission, or for the renewal of planning permission, should be determined in accordance with the approved or adopted development plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations could include current circumstances, policies in an emerging development plan, and planning policies of the Welsh Government. All applications should be considered in relation to up to date policies"*.
- 3.4 **The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the adopted development plan for the area, with further material considerations to support.**
- 3.5 **Chapter 4: Planning for Sustainability**
- 3.6 **Paragraph 4.2.2** states that *"the planning system provides for a presumption in favour of sustainable development"*.
- 3.7 **Paragraph 4.4.3** states that Planning Policies, Decisions and Proposals should: *"Promote resource-efficient and climate change resilient settlement patterns that minimise land-take (and especially extensions to the area of impermeable surfaces) and urban sprawl, especially through preference for the re-use of suitable previously developed land and buildings, wherever possible avoiding development on greenfield sites"*.
- 3.8 **The proposals represents the re-use of suitable previously developed land and buildings.**
- 3.9 **Paragraph 4.8.7** states that *"Development in the countryside should be located within and adjoining those settlements where it can be best be accommodated in terms of infrastructure, access and habitat and landscape conservation"*.
- 3.10 This paragraph proceeds to say that *"All new development should respect the character of the surrounding area and should be of appropriate scale and design"*.
- 3.11 The development whilst being in the countryside is located close to an existing settlement which has the infrastructure capacity. It will respect the character of the surrounding area and will be of appropriate scale and design.

- 3.12 **Paragraph 4.7.16** states that: *“The construction of new buildings in a Green Belt or in a locally designated green wedge is inappropriate development **unless** it is for the following purposes:*
- *limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings”.*
- 3.13 **Paragraph 4.8.17** is crucial to the proposed development and states that: *“The re-use of buildings in a Green Belt or green wedge is not inappropriate development provided that:*
- *the original building is substantial, permanent and capable of conversion without major reconstruction;*
 - *the new use will not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt or green wedge and the purposes of including land within it. Strict control will need to be exercised over the extension, alteration or any associated use of land for re-used buildings; and*
 - *the building is in keeping with its surroundings”.*
- 3.14 The re-use of the barn buildings at Gamford Farm would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The structural survey (see Chapter 4) has concluded that the original buildings forming the focus of the development are substantial and capable of conversion without major reconstruction. The development will not increase the footprint of existing buildings and will therefore not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt (Green Barrier). The buildings will be in keeping with their surroundings.
- 3.15 **Chapter 9. Housing**
- 3.16 **Paragraph 9.2.6** states that *“Maximising the use of suitable previously developed land for housing development can assist regeneration and at the same time relieve pressure for development on greenfield sites. In particular, local authorities should consider **the contribution to the overall provision of land for housing** that can be made by reclaimable or reclaimed urban land and by **disused or underused buildings**.*
- 3.17 The development is utilising disused buildings. **Whilst the site is not strictly previously developed land (being an agricultural holding), the scheme will assist in regeneration and relieve pressure to some extent on more valuable greenfield sites in the Borough.** The development will make a contribution towards overall housing land provision and constitutes sustainable development.
- 3.18 **Paragraph 9.2.22** states that *“In planning for housing in rural areas it is important to recognise that development in the countryside should embody sustainability principles, benefiting the rural economy and local communities while maintaining and enhancing the environment”.*
- 3.19 **Paragraph 9.3.4** states that *“In determining applications for new housing, local planning authorities should ensure that the proposed development does not damage an area’s character and amenity”.*
- 3.20 The proposed development will not damage the area’s character and amenity as it will use materials and be of a scale and mass to correspond with the existing structures.

TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTES (TAN)

- 3.21 Technical Advice Notes are comparable to Supplementary Planning Guidance and should be read in conjunction with Planning Policy Wales. These are again classed as material considerations to decisions on individual planning applications.
- 3.22 The following Technical Advice Notes are considered relevant:
- **TAN 1. Joint Housing Land Availability Studies (2015)**
 - **TAN 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)**
 - **TAN 12. Design (2014)**
 - **TAN 18. Transport (2007)**
- 3.23 Key sections within **TAN 6** with which the proposal complies include:
- 3.24 **Chapter 3.2** – Reuse / adaption of rural buildings.
- 3.25 **Paragraph 3.2.1** states that: *“When assessing planning applications for the re-use or adaptation of a rural building, the primary consideration should be whether the nature and extent of the new use proposed for the building is acceptable in planning terms. It should not normally be necessary to consider whether a building is no longer needed for its present agricultural or other purposes”.*
- 3.26 **Paragraph 3.2.3** states that: *“Conversion proposals should respect the landscape and local building styles and materials.”*

4.0 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 In addition to planning policy, there are material considerations which to be taken into account when considering the application, which serve to further support the application.

Social / Cultural Matters

- 4.2 The development would not have a detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbouring land users, principally because there are no neighbours.

Non – Residential Uses – Commercial

- 4.3 An assessment of commercial floorspace availability in the locality highlights an extensive surplus, hence concluding that there would likely be little to no demand for the use of the buildings as commercial units.

Non-Residential Uses – Tourist Accommodation

- 4.4 There is a well-established supply of tourist accommodation in the Wrexham Borough, offering a mixture of hotel rooms, bed & breakfast / guest rooms, self-catering and camping / caravanning. The location of Wrexham is such that it does not benefit from the coastal position as with a number of the North Wales boroughs and it is also faced with strict competition from key tourist destinations such as Chester, Shrewsbury, Ludlow etc., which are all in close proximity to this borderlands location. Accordingly, whilst Wrexham County Borough has a tourist related industry, the demand for accommodation is fairly specific in its locations, i.e. Ceiriog Valley, Wrexham town centre, Dee Valley, Llangollen etc.
- 4.5 It is submitted therefore that the application site is not considered to be in an optimum location to provide additional tourist accommodation.

Structural Condition

- 4.6 A structural inspection and subsequent report has been undertaken and produced by Woodbank Consulting Engineers Ltd, a copy of which is submitted in support of this planning application (see appendix). This survey concludes that the following barns **are suitable for conversion to residential usage without major structural work**:

Fair Condition	Fair to Good Condition	Good Condition
Barn 3	Barn 1	Barn 2
Barn 6	Barn 4	
Dwelling House	Barn 5	

- 4.7 The structural report recommends specific repairs and alteration work which would be required and adhered to, in order to ensure the buildings are habitable and of optimum structural condition. All recommendations have been considered in the design solution put forward for the application site.

Ecology

- 4.8 An independent Ecological Assessment has been undertaken by TEP (The Environmental Partnership), the aim of which was to establish which species (both flora and fauna) are present at the site including protected species. A daytime inspection was undertaken, the findings of which have been presented in an appropriate report – refer to Appendix 3. The assessment identifies opportunities for general Biodiversity enhancement at the site.
- 4.9 In terms of protected species, the site was assessed as having potential to support Great Crested Newts and Bats.
- 4.10 Two ponds within 250m of the site were assessed on their potential to support Great Crested Newts, however samples returned from the ponds produced **negative results on the presence of this species.**
- 4.11 A bat roost assessment was carried out which concludes that barns 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 9 and the house each have potential for bat roosting. The main house included evidence of bat droppings.
- 4.12 This assessment states that further survey work is required due to these findings on the potential for bat roosting, in order to confirm which bat species are present, discover species numbers and the status of the roosts.
- 4.13 Consequently, a further survey has been undertaken by Arbtech Consultants (see appendix 4). This report **confirms the presence of a bat roost in the house** (species Common Pipistrelle). In the barns, a sufficient survey has taken place which **confirms the likely absence of bats.** However, this does not preclude the barns from being a suitable habitat for bats in the future. A precautionary approach to demolition is still recommended. Further recommendations and mitigations measures are suggested.
- 4.14 It is considered that there is opportunity for mitigation measures to be incorporated in the design process and the applicant is willing to abide by the requirements / recommendations of Arbtech Consultants, the Council's Biodiversity Officer and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) accordingly.
- 4.15 Therefore it is submitted that whilst evidence of bats has been identified, this does not preclude the development of the barns.
- 4.16 Furthermore, there will be the submission and implementation of a post-development monitoring scheme, to ensure the mitigation measures are effective.

Highways

- 4.17 As part of the pre - application enquiry, correspondence was received from the Councils head of community well-being and development confirms that although there is poor current access visibility, the proposed access point would provide adequate visibility, subject to the removal of hedgerows and some trees. It is preferable that the site be served by a single shared access point in the interest of highway safety. The design of the scheme has incorporated the recommendations of the highways officer accordingly.

5.0 DESIGN CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES

EXISTING

- 5.1 The existing barn buildings comprise a mix of more traditional brick built structures with tiled roofs, brick pens and portal framed storage sheds with corrugated sheeting to the upper floors and roofs. The two storey dwelling house is brick built with tiled pitched roof and flat roof extensions to the rear.

Portal framed and corrugated sheeting structures:



Traditional brick barn structures:



Brick Pens:



Existing dwelling house:



PROPOSED

- 5.2 The proposed development is a sympathetic conversion of four existing barn structures, to undergo alteration and extension works in order to provide 6 no. habitable dwellings (plots/barns 1 – 6). There will be some structural alterations required with work principally including repointing of brick work, new floors, roofs, windows and doorways as required.
- 5.3 There will be the demolition of the various portal framed / corrugated sheeting structures and brick pens, all of which are unsuitable for conversion. This will enhance the appearance of the retained buildings considerably and improve the setting of the newly established plots. The positioning of the buildings within the site is dictated by the existing arrangement of buildings that are the subject of this conversion proposal.
- 5.4 Barns 3 and 4 will feature new build sections linking them together in order to provide access between and create single dwellings.
- 5.5 Two new build semi – detached dwellings (plots 7 and 8) will be constructed in place of the existing detached dwelling house.
- 5.6 There will be timber parking barns provided across the site (see proposed site layout plan). These structures compensate for the loss of the existing brick pens.

AMOUNT

- 5.7 The development will comprise of 8 no. plots with 8 no. dwelling houses.

Plot 1	4 bed	199 sqm
Plot 2	4 bed	200 sqm
Plot 3	4 bed	189 sqm
Plot 4	4 bed	169 sqm
Plot 5	4 bed	200 sqm
Plot 6	3 bed	172 sqm
Plot 7	4 bed	179 sqm
Plot 8	4 bed	177 sqm

- 5.8 **Crucially, the overall building footprint of the proposed development inclusive of converted barns, parking barn and semi-detached dwellings will be significantly less than the existing structures and dwelling house. This is predominantly due to the demolition of the larger portal framed barn structures. Therefore the development will improve the openness of the countryside.**

ELEVATION EXTRACTS

Barns 1 & 2



New dwellings (Plots 7 & 8)



SCALE

- 5.9 There will be minimal increase in terms of the scale of the retained structures. Principally the converted barn buildings by their nature will be of a smaller scale than standard residential dwellings, with particular regard to lower roof pitch heights.
- 5.10 Existing openings will be retained in order to retain the original character and minimise alteration works.
- 5.11 The new semi – detached dwellings will each be of two storeys and three bays across, with the single building they are to form much in keeping with the scale of the existing detached dwelling. The replacement dwellings are not located on the exact footprint of the existing dwelling but are located within the curtilage, in the same orientation, facing the same aspect and covering a similar footprint area. The replacement dwellings reflect the form, bulk and character of the original dwelling and site in general.

APPEARANCE

- 5.12 In relative terms, the barns as they stand do not feature as much architectural detailing when compared against other traditional barns in the area.
- 5.13 Nevertheless, as many of the existing features as possible will be retained where they contribute towards the buildings character, rural context and where they are in a suitable condition.

Barns 1 and 2

Roof	Natural slate roof tiles to match existing, approved sample agreed prior to commencement of construction.
Walls	Red-faced brickwork, to match existing brickwork, and to approved sample agreed prior to commencement of construction.
Entrance Doors	Siberian larch timber hardwood entrance door.
External Doors / Screens	Timber with double glazed units. Frames to have paint finish - colour of frames to be approved prior to commencement of construction.
Windows	Timber Casements with double glazed units. Frames to have paint finish - colour of frames to be approved prior to commencement of construction. New stone headers and cills included.
Roof Lights	New conservation type roof lights.
Rainwater Goods	New gutters and RWDP's to be aluminum with painted finish - colour to be approved prior to commencement of construction.

Barns 3 and 4

Roof	Natural slate roof tiles to match existing, approved sample agreed prior to commencement of construction.
Walls	Red-faced brickwork, to match existing brickwork, and to approved sample agreed prior to commencement of construction.
Entrance Doors	Siberian larch timber hardwood entrance door.
External Doors / Screens	Timber with double glazed units. Frames to have paint finish - colour of frames to be approved prior to commencement of construction.
Windows	Timber Casements with double glazed units. Frames to have paint finish - colour of frames to be approved prior to commencement of construction. New stone headers and cills included.
Roof Lights	New conservation type roof lights.
Rainwater Goods	New gutters and RWDP's to be aluminum with painted finish - colour to be approved prior to commencement of construction.

Barns 5 and 6

Roof	Natural slate roof tiles to match existing, approved sample agreed prior to commencement of construction.
Walls	Red-faced brickwork, to match existing brickwork, and to approved sample agreed prior to commencement of construction.
Entrance Doors	Siberian larch timber hardwood entrance door.
Entrance Doors / Screens	Timber with double glazed units. Frames to have paint finish - colour of frames to be approved prior to commencement of construction.
Windows	Timber Casements with double glazed units. Frames to have paint finish - colour of frames to be approved prior to commencement of construction. New stone headers and cills included.
Roof Lights	New conservation type roof lights.
Rainwater Goods	New gutters and RWDP's to be aluminum with painted finish – colour to be approved prior to commencement of construction.

New Build Dwellings (Plots 7 and 8)

Roof	Natural slate roof tiles to match existing, approved sample agreed prior to commencement of construction.
Walls	Red-faced brickwork, to match existing brickwork, and to approved sample agreed prior to commencement of construction.
Entrance Doors	Siberian larch timber hardwood entrance door.
Entrance Doors / Screens	Timber with double glazed units. Frames to have paint finish - colour of frames to be approved prior to commencement of construction.
Windows	Timber Casements with double glazed units. Frames to have paint finish - colour of frames to be approved prior to commencement of construction. New stone headers and cills included.
Roof Lights	New conservation type roof lights.
Rainwater Goods	New gutters and RWDP's to be aluminum with painted finish – colour to be approved prior to commencement of construction.

ECOLOGICAL MITIGATION

- 5.14 The report by Arbtech Consultants makes the following recommendations on bat mitigation:
- Replacement roosting provision will be installed in the new building, either bat access tiles or bat tubes.
 - The roofs and eaves are removed by hand under ecological supervision.
 - Bat boxes are installed on the retained buildings or trees. These should be a minimum of 3m above ground level and face south or south westerly.
 - A mitigation method statement detailing the design and execution of bat mitigation, as well as any precautionary measures e.g ecological supervision, is submitted to Natural England as part of an EPC application.
- 5.15 If required, specific locations of bat boxes on buildings and trees can be approved and adhered to by subsequent condition (s) – see Appendix 5.
- 5.16 However, as a minimum, the dwelling on plot 8 will incorporate a bat roosting box within the cavity wall gable end, which will be accessible only by bats (see drawing no L10). This is crucial to ensuring the habitat of this species is maintained.
- 5.17 Guidance produced by the Bat Conservation Trust outlines the specific features buildings must have to incorporate suitable space and access points for bat roosting.
- *“Crevice-dwelling bats (including common pipistrelle) can crawl into their roosts via small gaps in the range of 15 - 20mm high by 20 – 50mm wide. The roost area should maintain a crevice of this approximate size gap that the bats can roost between. The area this roost provision covers can be small but about 1m² would be useful for summer nursery roosts. The height of entry can be from 2 - 7m”.*
- 5.18 Ibstock brick manufacturers specify certain free access bat boxes and enclosed bat boxes. The enclosed bat box is stated to be designed specifically for the pipistrelle bat - the species which is known to have been roosting in the main house. Ibstock Bat Box Type C – 215mm x 290mm will be specified.

6.0 ACCESS

FROM THE HIGHWAY

- 6.1 As indicated on the accompanying plans, the wider western access point off the highway would remain and form the single point of access for the development. Following the removal of hedgerows and some trees, this access is acceptable in that it provides a safe entrance point to the site with adequate visibility splays of 2.4m x 56m in both directions. Reference back to pre app officer comments, included recommendations.
- 6.2 It is acknowledged Gamford Lane is narrow but there is generally adequate room for two cars to pass. It is acknowledged that whilst the national speed limit applies, in reality cars are not likely to be travelling more than 30mph due to the scale and nature of the road.
- 6.3 There is a pedestrian footpath to the West of the site from Gamford Lane which links up with the playing field, providing off road access for pedestrians to Rossett.

WITHIN THE SITE

- 6.4 An internal access road layout will provide access to 3 no. parking spaces for each property. The existing poor quality concrete hardstanding will be removed and resurfaced with an appropriate material to the local environment. There will be sufficient turning space for delivery and waste collection vehicles.
- 6.5 There will be the provision of resident cycling parking in an allocated store unit, the location of which is yet to be determined.

LOCATION

- 6.6 The location of the site is considered sustainable in that it is located close (0.3 miles) to the settlement of Rossett which features a good supply of services and facilities, inclusive of: a primary school, secondary school, local shops, several pubs, church, playing field, veterinary centre, hotel and car garage. The B5201 road runs through the village linking with the A483 dual carriageway which itself provides access to the wider transport network. There is good access to Chester Business Park, Llay Industrial Estate and Wrexham Industrial Estate providing employment opportunities.

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE SETTING

- 7.1 The group of traditional buildings commonplace to such a rural setting will be maintained.
- 7.2 Overall the scheme has been designed sympathetically to ensure minimal impact upon the scale and character of the surrounding environment. The development will be an improvement on the current state of the buildings.

SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

- 7.3 Natural Welsh slate will be used for the roofs and the use of locally sourced reclaimed materials will be encouraged.
- 7.4 Eco – friendly materials of the highest quality will be used during the construction process.
- 7.5 Crucially, existing materials will be retained and re-used wherever possible in order to minimise environmental impact.

ALLOTMENTS

- 7.6 The proposal includes allocated community allotments. **These will be an attractive landscape feature, contributing towards the rural setting and theme of this development, as well as providing valuable amenity space and some degree of self-sufficiency for residents.**

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- 7.7 Each property will have individual waste and recycling bins.
- 7.8 An adequately sized bin store and recycling point will be positioned in a central location within the site, the location of which is yet to be determined. This will ensure efficient collection by the waste services.

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 In conclusion, this Statement has identified that the proposal is considered an appropriate re-use of redundant farm buildings, in accordance with Development Plan policy. It is considered that the following are the key issues that weigh in favour of the development:
- No agricultural need for the buildings;
 - Expectation of no commercial, industrial or tourism demand for the buildings;
 - Need for housing and housing land supply within the County Borough;
 - Design in keeping with the rural context of the site
- 8.2 Importantly, the conversion of the buildings constitutes sustainable development. In their current condition, the barns are not fit for any real purpose and any development scheme to improve their condition and bring the buildings back into use should be supported.
- 8.3 In light this submitted statement, it is considered that the proposed development complies with all relevant planning policy and planning permission should therefore be granted.

9.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Local Precedence

Appendix 2 – Woodbank Structural Survey

Appendix 3 – TEP Ecological Assessment

Appendix 4 – Arbtech Bat Presence / Likely Absence Survey

Appendix 5 – Bat Conditions

Appendix 6 – Existing Site Plan

Appendix 7 – Existing Barns 1 & 2

Appendix 8 – Existing Barns 3 & 4

Appendix 9 – Existing Barns 5 & 6

Appendix 10 – Proposed Barns 1 & 2

Appendix 11 – Proposed Barns 3 & 4

Appendix 12 – Proposed Barns 5 & 6

Appendix 13 – Proposed plots 7 & 8

Appendix 14 – Proposed Site Layout

Appendix 15 – Proposed Parking Barn

Appendix 16 – Location Plan

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