



**Bob Dewey
PLANNING**

**DESIGN & ACCESS
STATEMENT**
PROPOSED ERECTION OF SCHOOL
HAFOD Y WERN, DEVA WAY, CAIA PARK,
WREXHAM

Background: The proposal is to erect a new school on land behind the existing junior school. The infant school on the same site is to be retained. This application is part of a longer term project to enhance the two existing schools in Caia Park (Hafod y Wern and Gwenfro schools) to bring them up to modern standards to serve the needs of the community which is one of the most deprived in Wales. On completion of this new building, the original intention was to decant pupils from Gwenfro to this site to facilitate remodelling there. However this would have created certain logistical issues and it has now been decided to deal with each school separately. Thus, on completion of the new Hafod y Wern school, the old junior school block will be demolished and the site laid out for vehicle parking and turning and playing fields.

The site is within the settlement limit as defined in the adopted Wrexham UDP.

Supporting information:

Hafod y Wern Junior School was built in the 1950s and despite maintenance is now predicted only to have about 4.5 years of useful life. The school at present has 259 children on the roll and there is already demand for additional places. The proposed new school will have a capacity of 315 pupils.

Whilst the site is currently part of the open space area to serve the school, there would appear to be more than sufficient to cater for the needs of pupils. On completion of the project, parts of the site of the demolished school will be laid out for replacement playing fields which will be to an enhanced standard.

(This would accord with policy CLF 4 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.)

Accessibility: The site is located fairly centrally within a large predominantly residential area. Vehicular and pedestrian access will be easily gained from the Deva Way, a public highway immediately in front of the site. This will serve people walking from the northern part of the community. Pedestrian access is also available from Prince Charles Road more suitable for access from the south. There are bus services on Prince Charles Road but it is expected that most pupils will be able to walk to the site. Clearly there should be very limited need for on-site car parking as the majority of people accessing the site are expected to live locally. Indeed the provision of a large number of parking spaces is likely to encourage vehicular use and the Council wishes to actively discourage access by motor vehicles. Nevertheless there is more than adequate space within the site to provide additional spaces if they prove to be necessary. Parking spaces for use by people with restricted mobility will be

provided. The detailed design for the building provides for restricted mobility access in accordance with the Building Regulations part M.

The scheme has been designed to minimise disturbance to the education of the pupils but inevitably there will be some inconvenience. The proposed temporary construction access from Prince Charles Road should ensure minimal disruption. It may be necessary to make temporary arrangements to facilitate safe and convenient access to the new school for deliveries and disabled access during the period before the old school is demolished (although this should be only for very short period and hopefully can be achieved outside term time). If necessary this will be achieved by a Project Plan developed by the Head teacher and Governors under the guidance of the Local Education Authority.

(This would accord with policy GDP1 (d) and (e) of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.)

Environmental Sustainability: The building will replace a building described by the Education Authority as “nowhere near current guidelines” for lighting/ventilation and acoustic standards. Sustainability has been assessed as “bad or non-existent” and the new building will be designed to achieve the highest practical standard of insulation. BREAM “excellent”. The original design brief suggested the use of a biomass boiler but it may prove more practicable to use gas for heating. The target is to reduce CO₂ emissions by 50%. Lower emissions will reduce running costs will permit improved resources for education of the pupils.

In preparing the detailed design, careful investigation will be given to including measures for renewable energy and the reuse of water. Wherever possible, contractors will be asked to source building materials locally.

A long-closed waste disposal site (“The Dunks”) was situated within the community and in the past issues related to the site may have arisen. The application site is some 0.5 km from the site and there are many closer buildings which are, to the best of our knowledge, not affected by emissions from the former landfill site. The existing school is immediately adjacent to the proposed school site and, again, we are unaware of any issues relating to emissions from the landfill. If required, investigations can be undertaken as part of the construction process and advice from the Council’s regulatory officers will be taken into account.

The land is currently managed as school grounds and no evidence of protected species has been noted. Every effort will be made to retain all existing trees even during the construction phase. It may prove necessary to remove a single tree for the temporary construction access but it appears to be of no particular merit (confirmed by the Council’s tree officer). The School will consider additional planting as part of the on-going environmental agenda.

(This would accord with policy GDP1 (c) and (h) of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.)

Character:

The area is a large residential estate with community facilities within it. The dwellings are a mixture of one and two storey and traditional in style. They are almost entirely constructed of red/brown bricks with flat profile red /brown roof tiles. The school is constructed of similar bricks with flat roofs. The design is a very characteristic of educational buildings of its time but cannot be considered of any architectural merit.

The proposal is to create a landmark building which will be externally faced by a variety of materials of differing colours and textures. As it stands surrounded by open playing fields and away from other properties the choice of design and materials can be reasonably flexible. The proposed building will be a building of quality and should enhance the character of the area.

(This would accord with policy GDP1 (a) of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.)

Community Safety: The site has dwellings overlooking it - albeit at some distance. These will give a degree of surveillance. The presence of people in the building during daytime hours gives security to the area. However at night time and weekends, the buildings will generally not be occupied although Council policy is to facilitate dual usage when this is possible. The more compact nature of the building should assist security. It is understood that there may have been incidents of crime and vandalism in the past and the scheme will include the provision of CCTV to enhance security.

(This would accord with policies GDP1 (b) and CLF 3 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.)

Movement to from and within the development: This is dealt with under "accessibility" above. The site is generally flat and ground levels will make disabled access very easy. The location within the community will provide a facility which will minimise the need for pupils/residents to travel.

(This would accord with policy GDP1 (d) of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.)

Conclusion: The creation of a new school will improve the appearance of the area and enable the site to provide enhanced educational facilities for the local community without any adverse impacts on the area.

(This would accord with policy GDP1 (k) of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.)

WREHAM UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (adopted 14 Feb 2005)

Policy GDP1 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.
- 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
- k)** Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

Policy CLF3 The extension of dual community and school use of existing leisure facilities will be favoured/ encouraged.

Policy CLF 4 The redevelopment of sports grounds, playing fields, children's play areas and informal open spaces and allotment gardens for uses other than sport and recreation will not be permitted unless:-

- a)** redevelopment of only a small part of the site would allow the retention and enhancement of that existing facility; or
- b)** the long term requirement for the facility has ceased and it would not lead to, or increase an existing shortfall of that facility in the immediate locality; or
- c)** the loss can be replaced with an equivalent or greater provision in the immediate locality. Alternative sites should be within settlement limits or, in exceptional circumstances, adjacent to settlement limits provided that associated buildings, lighting, and parking facilities are not intrusive in the landscape and user accessibility is not reduced.

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