
Planning, Design and Access Statement in respect of
Demolition of dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling.

Land at:

Oak Mead, Golly, Wrexham, LL19 9LR



For: ***Dr and Mrs R Cliffe***
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Design and Access Statement: Summary Introduction

In preparing this statement, regard has been had to National and Local Planning Policy, including Planning Policy Wales, Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statements (particularly 01/2006 and 01/2009), Technical Advice Notes (principally TAN 6 and TAN 12 in particular) and the policies of the adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (including related Local Planning Guidance Notes on residential development in the countryside and Landscape Character Areas). Account has also been taken of in respect of proportionality at Annexe A4.2 of TAN12.

Contextual Summary

The flat site lies on the northern edge of a group of dwellings known as Golly, where, as set out in the body of the statement policies of strict control of development in the countryside apply. Bounded to the roadside by mixed hedgerows the site adjoins agricultural field separated by field hedgerows and trees. Views of the site are relatively well contained and localised, with tall roadside hedges offering mitigation from distant viewpoints.

The site is in residential use but is surrounded by agricultural land reflecting the rural character of the locality. The group of dwellings to the north-west comprise a mix of finishes – brick, render under slate – and comprise simple two-storey shapes under pitched slate roofs.

Policies recognise there may be circumstances where there is a visual and economic benefit can be brought about by replacing a dwellings that performs poorly visually and where sustainable construction techniques bring about reductions in carbon emissions generally, and make living environment more economic to run for the occupier thus creating attractive places to live

From the outset, prior to the publication of MIPPS01/2009 and Technical Advice Note the design and client brief has been driven by their desire to enhance the site visually and

create a sustainable living environment for the family. This is reflected in the type of materials and design chosen, the siting, planning of spaces and layout and the orientation of the dwelling, whilst recognising the need to provide a 'face' to the highway and reduce visible mass.

The physical context of the site has been appraised by visiting the site and the locality, photography and analysis of aerial photography and mapping, reference to public transportation information and the council's records. Professional judgement as to the relevance and materiality of the information has then been used to address them in this statement having regard to the individual design promoted.

Environmental sustainability

The replacement dwelling will provide for a new, fully energy efficient dwelling that not only complies with, but exceeds current building regulations standards using *inter alia*, renewable materials such as sustainably sourced oak in the frame. The dwelling will achieve a minimum of Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.. Its orientation secures solar gain and passive daylight lighting to assist in reducing water and power consumption to levels at or lower than those demanded under the building regulations. Local labour can be procured for many of the construction elements. Many of the materials from the existing dwelling can be recycled either on site for ground works or removed for re-use by specialists, timber and slate can be recycled.

A planning condition can be imposed to secure the final details

Movement

Vehicular access to the site is gained via the metalled adopted carriageway which serves the existing dwelling and others in the cluster. The site is not accessible directly by public transport. Rail and public transport services nearby settlements including the principle town of Wrexham. Cefn y Bedd and Hope provide the closet railways services (approximately 3 km east of the site). There are good regular public transport services serving Wrexham, Mold and Chester from these principle links.

The site is broadly level allowing ease of movement externally. This creates no specific issues with setting out or orientating the building. Level access can therefore be readily achieved. Future flexibility and accessibility is promoted through an additional bedroom at ground floor level.

The hardstanding for the shared surface and parking area will be finished in a suitable non-friable material allowing for free drainage and soakaways of rainwater and level access along with paved surfaces around the perimeter of the house.

Formal car parking spaces would not be provided as the curtilage is sufficiently large to allow parking. If appropriate spaces of 2.5m wide by 5 metres long could be provided.

Wide internal circulation spaces compliant with part M of the Building Regulation are provided and to ensure that the dwelling offers lifetime flexibility and inclusiveness for the occupiers and their family in the longterm.

Regard has been had to and the development is compliant with Policy GDP1 of the UDP. It will provide safe and convenient access for persons with disabilities, pedestrians, cyclists (if desired by occupiers), vehicles, and emergency vehicles and provides adequate parking, servicing and manoeuvring space in accordance with the council's standards

Character

Amount

One replacement two-storey dwelling with 322 sqm floorspace. Detached Garage and garden store of 61.75 sqm.

Layout and Design

Off-set cross shaped plan form, rotated 90 degrees on footprint of existing dwelling which would be demolished. Set back 7.6 metres from the highway. Detached garage and domestic store sited to the north.

Scale

Dwelling width maximum 18 metres, depth maximum 20 metres, maximum ridge height 7.5 metres.

Landscaping

To retain the rural character the existing hedgerow fronting the highway and all other existing boundary hedgerows are to be retained. No other formal landscaping information is presented at this stage although a suitable planning condition could be imposed to submitted. Hardstanding for car parking, existing boundary hedgerow to highway boundary to be retained.

Appearance

Timber framed building incorporating external timber framework, facing brick and render. Slate roof.

Community Safety

The development would provide an entirely private development which no direct public access or public realm implications. The applicant will implement measures to install secure doors and windows in the usual way.

Detailed Statement

1. The site comprises approximately 0.32ha of land and is currently occupied by a two-storey 4 bedroom detached house, with annexe and stabling. The application seeks full planning permission to demolish the existing house and replace it with a new two storey timber framed dwelling as set out on the attached drawings.
2. My clients have a growing family. They have 5 children all living at home which places considerable strain on the resources and facilities of the current home. The existing accommodation is dated, unsuited to the family's current and future needs due to its size, layout and condition. In particular, internal ceiling heights are low on both upper floor and ground floor causing constant stopping and do not suit modern standards. The dwelling has been previously extended, but the accommodation remains contrived and flawed for the family needs. It is energy inefficient, expensive to heat and run. Having considered all options, the most sustainable solution would be to demolish the existing dwelling and replace it as proposed.
3. Dr Cliffe is a local doctor serving the wider community and he wishes to remain in the locality. His loss to the community would be regrettable.
4. The choice of Welsh Oak Frame Company as designers for the dwelling reflects the applicants desire to provide a sustainable, high quality design his family that positively enhances the site and its setting. It is an innovative and bespoke timber framed solution that has been designed and would be manufactured in Wales using a renewable resource.
5. The site is located on the eastern edge of a hamlet known as Golly. The falls within a larger area of countryside identified in the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan as a Special Landscape Area.

National Planning Policy.

6. The key objectives for housing in national policy are set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) as principally amended by MIPPS 01/2006 and 01/2009 and TAN12 Design 2009. These seek to provide environmentally sustainable, well designed housing across all market sectors and to provide choice.
7. In the context of national policy, the key benefits of replacement dwelling are its high quality, contemporary design using traditional materials, its flexibility as a lifelong home, energy-efficiency. As a self-build project on the site of an existing outdated dwelling, the design meets the current and future needs of its occupiers. Furthermore the scheme would enhance the site and its setting.
8. The dwelling will be designed and constructed to a standard that achieves a minimum of level 3 on the Code for Sustainable Homes. The aspiration of my client from the outset is that the dwelling, both in construction, use and lifetime minimise use of carbon, being both environmentally sustainable and efficient to run. MIPPS01/2009 encourages development that meets this standard. This significant material consideration weighs in favour of replacing the dwelling.
9. Whilst Planning Policy Wales protects the countryside for its intrinsic value it advises that non statutory landscape designations such as Special Landscape Areas should be based on robust assessment such as LANDMAP. The LANDMAP for the County identifies this location as falling within a landscape of *moderate* landscape quality.

The Development Plan

10. S38(6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 sets out the legal basis for determining planning applications in accordance with the development plan policies, where relevant, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The principle relevant objective of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan is to protect the countryside from inappropriate development.

11. Location within countryside does not preclude a replacement dwelling in this location where it accords with policies GDP1 and H10 and having regard to other material considerations. The application also falls to be considered under policy EC5 which designates and imposes a design tests associated with Special Landscape Area designation. This policy designation does not proscribe the proposed development.

Main Issues

12. In my view, the application raises one main issue – the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the countryside.
13. One overarching strategic objective of the UDP is to ensure that development does not materially detrimentally affect countryside or landscape character. (Policy PS2). Any judgement under this policy requires balancing the negative impacts of the existing dwelling (its relatively poor visual quality and poor environmental performance) against the impacts of its replacement (significantly improved designed and visual quality, significantly enhanced environmental performance and any conflict with ***Supplementary Planning Guidance*** in terms of increased floor area). In the absence of material harm, there would be no conflict with this policy.
14. The key policy against which the proposed development should be assessed is policy H10. Initially I note that Oak Mead is an existing lawful dwelling of no architectural or historic merit that would warrant its retention. The proposal thus satisfies criteria a) and b). The replacement would be positioned directly on the footprint of the existing dwelling –requiring its prior demolition thus satisfying criteria c(i) and the final sentence part of the policy.
15. Criteria c(ii) requires that the replacement dwelling reflects the floor area, form, bulk and character of existing dwelling. The proposed dwelling reflects the two-storey, pitched roof and overall bulk of the existing dwelling. The new dwelling would be re-orientated 90 degrees and have a deeper footprint than the existing L shaped plan. Considerable care has been taken in the design to minimise apparent mass and bulk of the building by

using the roof to provide accommodation, varying ridge lines, providing gables and dormers.

16. I note that the neither the policy nor its supporting text offer further explanation on the application of criterion C(ii). It is necessary to refer to Local Planning Guidance Note 13 – Housing in the Countryside. However, LPGN13 does not refer to floor area at any point but instead states that the volume of the replacement dwelling should not be more than one-third larger than the existing dwelling with the objective of meeting resident's reasonable living aspirations whilst safeguarding the open countryside from unnecessary and out of scale development.
17. The table below compares the dimensions of the existing and proposed dwellings.

	Floor Area	Volume	Ridge	Eaves
Existing	199m ²	493m ³	5.9m	4.4m
Proposed	322.5m ²	1080 m ³	5.3m-7.1m	2.3-4.0m
Change	+62%	+119%		

18. In pre-application discussions, officers have drawn attention to the size of footprint of the replacement and potential conflict with LPGN13. This has been reflected in the design before you. The increased floor area and volume figure appear significant and this is recognised. However, the increased volume reflects the genuine accommodation needs of the applicant and the careful attention has been given to reducing the apparent mass and bulk of the building through of the use of roof space, dormers and gables. This is particularly noticeable in the reduction of the eaves heights throughout and a 600mm reduction in ridge height on significant parts of the building.
19. The replacement is comparable in height and size of footprint visible from the road.
20. That the dwelling volume is greater than the limit quoted in LPGN 13 does not mean it conflicts with Policy H10 (specifically as the policy makes no reference to volume) nor automatically would that harm be caused. It is considered that the replacement still

reflects the floor area, form, bulk and character of existing dwelling and that its greater overall impact is mitigated by the lower eaves and ridge heights and the use of the roof space for accommodation. Its larger mass is further mitigated through the use of the cross plan form with gables.

21. LPGN 13 is not part of the Development Plan, it does not carry the same weight afforded to Policy under S38 (6) as is made clear in Unitary Development Plans Wales. SPG can inform policy but that it is not the policy itself and as such is one of number of material consideration to be balanced in the determination.
22. Policy EC5 designates the Special Landscape Area (SLA). PPW advises that this type of non-statutory designation should be based on robust and scientific assessments of landscape character and quality. Landscape Character Area Note 13c – The Dee Terraces identifies this part of the SLA as a low-lying, flat, intensively farmed landscape, with (in this location) hedges and hedgerow trees forming boundaries and the group of dwellings is one of the dispersed groups of residential buildings that form its character. Proximity to major towns and commuter routes is, it is suggested, placing its rural character under pressure.
23. The design of the dwelling incorporates many of the details that typify parts of this and nearby areas including extensive use of timber, rendering, red brick under a slate roof assisting it to integrate with its locality providing local distinctiveness and legibility with its context along with the retention of existing roadside boundary highways.
24. LANDMAP itself indicates that landscape quality is moderate and in its justification of that classification states: ***‘Although attractive there is little which gives this area an element of rarity or importance as a valuable landscape type or area’***.¹ In my view there is a very strong argument that, taking account of PPW, and in the context of a moderate landscape quality the weight to be afforded special landscape area designation should be limited.

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<http://landmap.ccw.gov.uk/map/PrintExtendedResults.aspx?filter=VS|WRXHMV057&MapCollectionName=LandMap&Layer01=VS;WRXHMV057>

25. Nonetheless, the design quality of the building is evident which will enhance the character and appearance of the site.
26. Policy GDP1 sets out criteria aimed at protecting general amenity and visual character. The site benefits from all existing necessary services and infrastructure, The dwellings sited so as to create no harm to the living conditions of adjacent residents. For the reason set out above the proposed development would protect visual character.

Key Benefits and Conclusions.

27. The development offers the following key benefits;
- A design of the highest quality in the countryside.
 - Reinforcement of local building style and legibility.
 - Enhancement of the site and its setting using.
 - Flexible and suitable accommodation for the family needs.
 - Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 Rating.
28. That the replacement dwelling is larger than that stated as acceptable within the LPGN13 does not mean it is contrary to development plan policy but should be assessed in the context of the reasonable family accommodation needs, the undoubted high quality and environmental sustainability of the proposals which are clear material considerations.
29. There is some doubt in my mind that weight to be afforded to SPG that applies different test to policy (ie volume as opposed to floor area) should be less than the weight to SPG that applied the same approach. Likewise the weight to policy EC5 – notwithstanding the high quality of the design in itself which in my opinion complies with the higher requirement – should be less in the context of the LANDMAP analysis which does not find the overall character to be special.
30. Taking account the relevant development plan policies and all material considerations, I conclude that the benefits and quality of the development do not cause harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and that planning permission ought to be granted.