



PEACOCK+
SMITH

Happy Days Coaches Retirement Benefit Scheme
Happy Days Coaches,
Little Green,
Bronington
SY13 3HQ

Appeal Statement

June 2021

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Appeal Statement (hereafter referred to as 'this Statement') has been prepared by Peacock + Smith on behalf of our client Happy Days Coaches Retirement Benefit Scheme (hereafter referred to as 'the appellant'), in support of an Outline application for the demolition of existing surplus buildings and erection of up to 9 Class C3 residential properties, to include matters of access only, on land at Happy Days Coaches Depot, Little Green, Bronington, SY13 3HQ.
- 1.2. The application pursuant to this appeal was afforded the Local Planning Authority (LPA) Reference P/2021/0137. It was submitted in March 2021 following, which following the requisite consultation period, the application was decided under delegated powers on 15th April 2021.
- 1.3. The application was refused with a single reason for refusal which stated:

"The site is located outside of a settlement limit in a location remote from services and amenities, where there is a presumption against new residential development. The development does not accord with policies PS1 PS2 PS4 and H5 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan."

Structure of this Statement

- 1.4. This Statement seeks to address all relevant planning considerations prior to drawing conclusions as to the merits of the application.
- 1.5. The remainder of this Statement is structured as follows:
- Section 2: Site Description and Planning History
 - Section 3: Proposed Development
 - Section 4: Planning Policy Context
 - Section 5: Planning Assessment
 - Section 6: Benefits of the Proposed Development
 - Section 7: Summary and Conclusions
- 1.6. This application was supported by a range of documents which it should be read in conjunction with:

- Planning Drawing Pack
- Planning Statement
- Tree Report Statement prepared by Evolution Arbtech;

1.7. Furthermore, various updated elements of information were submitted in support of the application during the course of the application. This information is outlined in Section 2 below.

2. Site Description and Planning History

2.1. This Section provides details of the application site and its surroundings. It also provides details of the relevant planning history of the site.

Application Site

2.2. The appeal site is semi-rectangular in shape and is located off Mill Road, in the rural settlement of Little Green and approximately 1km north-west of Bronington, 7km west of Whitchurch and 18.5km north-west of Wrexham. Figure 1 below highlights the application site in red, which measures approximately 0.385ha in total

Figure 1: The Application Site



2.3. The site abuts the Mill Road at its eastern boundary, while a residential private drive lies immediately to the south-west of the site. Parcels of open land form the north western boundary, which lies largely open save a post and rail fence, and north eastern boundaries, which is delineated by a hedgerow and tree line. Beyond this, residential neighbouring development lie in all directions along Mill Road, with those closest neighbouring properties being:

- The Copey and Eastleton to the south – approx. 16m and 32m respectively
- The Cottages to the north – approx. 50m

- Meadow View to the east – approx. 20m
- Ingleside to the west – approx. 130m

2.4. The site has a current lawful use as a coach depot, comprising of a large laid hardstanding, with a small number of buildings, some of which are more temporary in nature, but nonetheless of permanent construction. There is a large central metal framed and clad building which provides secure coach storage and then small group of buildings along the south-western boundary which provide ancillary storage and office and reception areas.

Surrounding Context

- 2.5. The local vernacular comprises a varied mix of dwellings, ranging from bungalows, traditional cottages to farm houses, all typically built of red brick under tiled roofs; however, there are exceptions to this with a rendered property in the vicinity. All dwellings are modest in scale, set within large plots and well-spaced along Mill Road, some with long private drives.
- 2.6. In terms of public transport, Whitchurch train station is located approximately 7.5km to the east. Whitchurch station includes a number of facilities including 31 car parking spaces and 4 cycle spaces. Regular services from the station run to and from Crewe, Manchester, Shrewsbury and Cardiff
- 2.7. Two bus stops are located immediately adjacent the site on Mill Road, providing services to Bronington, Whitchurch and Wrexham.

Local Community Facilities

- 2.8. The application site is located in a semi-rural area within a cluster of predominantly residential properties, supported by a number of nearby towns and villages.
- 2.9. Bronington is located approximately 1 Km south east of the application site and provides a number of local services and shops including:
- Bronington Village Store
 - Places of Worship
 - Post Office Mail Box

- Primary School

2.10. Whitchurch is located approximately 7km due east of the appeal site. Whitchurch offers a large range of local shops and services including:

- Post Office
- Public Houses and Bars
- Train Station
- Whitchurch Community Hospital
- Supermarket, Convenience and Retail Shops
- Restaurants, Cafes and Takeaway
- Barbers
- Places of Worship
- Primary, Secondary and Sixth Form Schools and Colleges.
- Rugby and Cricket Club
- Vehicle Repairs and MOT Garages

Planning History

2.11. The planning history for the site largely reflects the current coach-depot use including the following applications:

- Ref. No: P/2014/0916 - Erection of building for the storage of Coaches - GRANTED - January 30th 2015.
- Ref. No: P/2014/0750 - Erection of replacement Bus Depot building - GRANTED - 1st December 2014
- Ref. No: ENQ/2017/0079 - Residential development following demolition of existing commercial premises.

Key Summary

- 2.12. The application site comprises previously developed land with no significant landscape or ecological features currently. It is a historic and purpose built coach depot.
- 2.13. The vernacular is completely varied with no single predominant form, type or scale of dwellings with sizable plots, front and rear gardens and well-spaced along Mill Road through Little Green. Mature trees and vegetation are also a key feature in the local character of the area.
- 2.14. The site is located in an accessible and sustainable location, benefitting from a number of local services and facilities within reasonable walking and cycling distances. Furthermore, public transport facilities are also available directly adjacent the appeal site and within reasonable cycling distances.

3. Description of Development

- 3.1. The proposal is seeking outline consent to establish the principle of residential development, to include matters of access only.
- 3.2. Happy Days Coaches has operated successfully from the appeal site for a significant period of time. It is a family owned business and they have recently purchased a new premises in Whitchurch, with all operations relocating to this site in September 2021.
- 3.3. The proposed development is for the demolition of all buildings and the erection of up to nine Class C3 detached dwellings. With the application being made in Outline, with only access matters, the exact layout is yet to be determined; however, the accompanying Indicative Site Plan is able to demonstrate the site capable of providing the proposed amount, as illustrated in Figure 2.
- 3.4. The appeal site is currently served via two existing access points on either end of the western boundary, the proposed development will look to permanently close up the northern access point, with the proposed development being served by only a single access point, utilising the existing southern access point on the western boundary.
- 3.5. Overall, the scheme is designed to reflect the existing built pattern through reflecting the local vernacular in plot size, house type and semi-rural character. Those highway fronting properties have been shown to reinforce the linear development pattern, whilst the plots to the rear (west) are contained upon the previously developed land, but ensuring an efficient use of land is made, without encroaching into the previously undeveloped countryside.

Figure 2: Proposed Site Layout



3.6. The proposed houses are envisioned as a combination of 1.5 and 2 storeys, designed to respect and reflect the semi-rural nature of the surroundings and minimiser impact on the street scene and countryside. However, detailed proposals for the scale and appearance will be dealt with at reserved matters stage.

3.7. Both vehicular and pedestrian access will be taken from Mill Road via the existing southern access.

Key Summary

3.8. The proposed development outlined above, seeks to create an attractive and sensitively designed residential development in-keeping with the density and semi-rural nature of the surrounding area.

4.10 Up to nine residential units are proposed, alongside associated access utilising an existing access point off Mill Road.

4. Planning Policy Context

- 4.1. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires that planning decisions be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan

- 4.2. The Development Plan in respect of the application proposal is formed of the following documents:

- Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996 0 2911 – adopted by the Council on 14th February 2005.

- 4.3. Material policy considerations include the Planning Policy Wales which is supported by the Technical Advice Notes (as updated) and the National Design Guide (October 2019).

- 4.4. Local material considerations include:

- Housing in the Countryside Local Planning Guidance Note 13

The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan, adopted 14th February 2005

- 4.5. The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (hereafter referred to as the 'UDP') forms part of the Statutory Development Plan for Wrexham. It was formally adopted by the Council on 14th February 2005 and is the plan against which all planning applications and development proposals are assessed.

- 4.6. The UDP comprises two parts:

- Part 1 – 'The Strategy' which outlines the LPAs broad intention for development in the area and provides a framework for the more specific policies and proposals; and
- Part 2 – 'Specific Policies' which expand on the strategic vision for the county and provide detailed guidance for the development and other use of land.

PART 1: Strategic Policies

The Broad Location of Development

- 4.7. Policy **PS1** provides that new development for (inter alia) housing will be directed to within defined settlement limits.
- 4.8. Policy **PS2** states that development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.
- 4.9. Policy **PS3** stipulates that development should use previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to the use of greenfield land, wherever possible, particularly so where greenfield land is of ecological, landscape or amenity value, or comprises agricultural land of grades 1, 2 or 3a quality.
- 4.10. Policy **PS4** provides that development should maintain the existing settlement pattern and character and be integrated with the existing transport network to help reduce the overall need to travel and encourage the use of alternatives to the car.

The Broad Location of Development

Housing

- 4.11. Policy **PS5** sets out the councils housing target for the plan period and that provision will be made for the development of 5,775 dwelling between 1996 and 2011.

PART 2: General Development Principles

- 4.12. Policy **GDP1** provides that in addition to the specific land use or locational policies, all development proposals must satisfy certain general requirements, specifically:
- Ensure that built development in its scale, design and layout, and in its use of materials, accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality;
 - Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

Housing Allocations

- 4.13. Policy **H1** states that sufficient land will be allocated for housing development between 2001 and 2011.

Residential Development (of unannotated land) within settlements

- 4.14. Policy **H2** provides that residential development on unannotated land within settlement limits will be permitted subject to compliance with Policy GDP1.

Material Considerations

Planning Policy Wales

- 4.15. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and related Technical Advice Notes (TAN) set out national planning guidance for local authorities in relation to land use planning policies, with its primary objective of contributing towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

- 4.16. PPW Edition 11 was issued in February 2021 and is the most up-to-date version of PPW.

- 4.17. Figure 4 of PPW sets out the Key Planning Principles. These are:

- Growing our economy in a sustainable manner;
- Making best use of resources;
- Facilitating accessible and healthy environments;
- Creating & sustaining communities;
- Maximising environmental protection and limiting environmental impact;

- 4.18. Paragraph 2.20 explains that not every development proposal will be able to demonstrate they can meet all of these outcomes, neither can it necessarily be proved that at application that an attribute of a proposal will necessarily lead to a specific outcome. However, this does not mean that they should not be considered in the development management process to see if a proposal can be improved and enhanced to promote wider well-being.

- 4.19. In addressing the sustainable benefits of a proposal Paragraph 2.27 provides that Planning authorities should ensure that social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits are considered in the decision-making process and assessed in accordance with the five ways of working to ensure a balanced assessment is carried out to implement the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Sustainable Development Principle. There may be occasions when one benefit of a development proposal or site allocation outweighs others, and in such cases robust

evidence should be presented to support these decisions, whilst seeking to maximise contributions against all the well-being goals.

4.20. The key factors in the assessment process include:

Social

- Who are the interested and affected people and communities;
- How does the proposal change a persons way of life, which can include:
 - how people live, for example how they get around and access services;
 - how people work, for example access to adequate employment;
 - how people socialise, for example access to recreation activities; and
 - how people interact with one another on a daily basis
- Who will benefit and suffer any impacts from the proposal;
- What are the short and long-term consequences of the proposal on a community, including its composition, cohesion, character, how it functions and its sense of place; and
- How does the proposal support development of more equal and more cohesive communities.

Economic

- The numbers and types of long term jobs expected to be created or retained;
- Whether, and how far, the development will help redress economic disadvantage or support regeneration priorities, for example by enhancing local employment opportunities or upgrading the environment;
- The contribution the development would make to achieving wider strategies, for example the growth or regeneration of certain areas;
- The contribution this economic activity will have to wider policy goals; and

- How the proposal would support the achievement of a more prosperous, low carbon, innovative and resource efficient Wales.

Cultural

- How far the proposal supports the conditions that allow for the use of the Welsh language;
- Whether or not the development protects areas and assets of cultural and historic significance;
- Have cultural considerations and their relationships with the tourism industry been appropriately maximised;
- If the proposal protects areas known for their cultural value in terms of music, literature, sport and the arts; and
- Vibrant cultural experiences.

Environmental

- Will important features of the natural and built environment be protected and enhanced;
- Are the environmental impacts of development on health and amenity limited to acceptable levels and the resilience of ecosystems improved;
- Is environmental protection for people and natural resources, property and infrastructure maximised and environmental risks prevented or appropriately managed;
- Will high standards of restoration, remediation, decommissioning and beneficial after uses be achieved;
- Will the depletion of non-renewable resources be minimised, waste prevented and the efficient and most appropriate use of materials made and re-use and recycling promoted;
- Will the causes and impacts of climate change be fully taken into account through location, design, build, operation, decommissioning and restoration; and •

- Does it support decarbonisation and the transition to a low carbon economy.

- 4.21. Paragraph 3.39 recognises that for most rural areas the opportunities for reducing car use and increasing walking, cycling and use of public transport are more limited than in urban areas. In rural areas most new development should be located in settlements which have relatively good accessibility by non-car modes when compared to the rural area as a whole. Development in these areas should embrace the national sustainable placemaking outcomes and, where possible, offer good active travel connections to the centres of settlements to reduce the need to travel by car for local journeys.
- 4.22. Paragraph 3.43 provides further that in development spatial strategies, planning authorities must prioritise the use of suitable and sustainable previously developed land and/or underutilised sites for all types of development. When identifying sites in their development plans planning authorities should consider previously developed land and/or underutilised sites located within existing settlements in the first instance with sites on the edge of settlements considered at the next stage.
- 4.23. The definition of Previously Developed Land is found on Page 37 and confirms that it is land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The curtilage of the development is included.
- 4.24. In terms of housing delivery Paragraph 4.2.10 provides that the supply of land to meet the housing requirement proposed in a development plan must be deliverable. To achieve this, development plans must include a supply of land which delivers the identified housing requirement figure and makes a locally appropriate additional flexibility allowance for sites not coming forward during the plan period. The ability to deliver requirements must be demonstrated through a housing trajectory. The trajectory should be prepared as part of the development plan process and form part of the plan. The trajectory will illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery for both market and affordable housing for the plan period. To be 'deliverable', sites must be free, or readily freed, from planning, physical and ownership constraints and be economically viable at the point in the trajectory when they are due to come forward for development, in order to support the creation of sustainable communities.
- 4.25. Furthermore, Paragraph 4.2.23 confirms that Development plans must include clear policy criteria against which applications for housing development on unallocated sites will be considered. Infill and windfall sites can make a useful contribution to the delivery of housing. Proposals for housing on infill and windfall sites within settlements should be supported where they accord with the national sustainable placemaking outcomes.

5 Year Housing Land Supply Position

- 4.26. In the absence of an up-to-date UDP and any adopted LPD, in accordance with the latest Welsh Government Guidance on Joint Housing Land Availability Studies (Tan 1 – Jan 2015), there is no requirement for the Local Authority to produce a JHLAS and the authority is considered to have a zero land supply.
- 4.27. The council are in acknowledgment that they lack a 5 year housing land supply and have been actively discussing potential development with landowners and developers to assist the successful delivery of further housing sites to ensure there is a sufficient supply of housing land supply.

5. Planning Assessment

5.1. The planning policy review at Section 4 has established the local and national planning policy considerations which are key in the consideration of the aspects of this application. The issues required to be considered are those as provided on the councils 'Delegated Tick Sheet', provided on the first page of their Report:

- The principle of development and accordance with the Development Plan including:
 - The sites location outside of a settlement; and
 - The use of previously developed land.

Principle of Development

- 5.2. The key policies in the determination of the planning application are considered to be Policy PS3 and H5 of the Wrexham UDP. Policy PS3 emphasises that development should use previously developed land in preference to the use of greenfield land. Policy H5 relates to proposals for residential development in the countryside, outside of defined settlements. It outlines that development will only be supported for one of a list of certain criteria.
- 5.3. The primary purpose of Policy H5 is to prevent new housing in the form of isolated dwellings, the consolidation of sporadic groups or the extension of ribbon development, in the countryside. This is due to the above mentioned development's resultant loss of visual quality and landscape character and adversely affecting agriculture.
- 5.4. It is therefore taken that if a development is neither: isolated, sporadic or ribbon development, then the associated harms are not a resultant factor. These development patterns will now be considered in turn:
- 5.5. Isolated – as it is well established case law that the meaning of 'isolated' is given its plain meaning, it is widely agreed that a development in the rural area should not be considered to be isolated, if there are other dwellings nearby. The appeal site lies within an existing settlement, with dwellings in most directions and only a short distance away. The appeal sites does not lie in an isolated location.
- 5.6. Sporadic – the appeal site occupies a position within a recognised settlement, of which follows a linear pattern with good spacing between dwellings and largely consisting of detached properties within large plots spread out at irregular intervals along the highway. The appeal site has direct highway frontage, is opposite residential properties, albeit set back properties and forms part of

the street scene through Little Green. By virtue of the existing development pattern, the re-development of this site cannot be seen as sporadic. It neither would result in the consolidation of sporadic development by virtue of being within the existing development pattern and constituting previously developed land.

- 5.7. Ribbon Development – by virtue of Little Green occupying a linear pattern of development, it also constitutes a form of ribbon development; however, the settlement is clearly distinct from the nearby Bronington and there is no appearance of agglomeration. Furthermore, Policy H5 is explicit in that it is the extension of ribbon development which is harmful. As above, this appeal site lies within the village confines, bookended by development in both directions. This appeal would therefore not result in the extension of ribbon development.
- 5.8. Whilst the Case Officers Report is brief, it does not raise any concern over the proposed development as being harmful in regard to the exhaustive list of attributable harms contained within Policy H5. Instead, it is put simply down to the site lying outside of any “*recognised settlement*”, that the site is therefore unsustainable. On this note, concern is had over the use of ‘recognised’, for Little Green is clearly a recognised settlement. Little Green is sign-posted off the A525 (Figure 3), is clearly marked on Ordnance Survey mapping (Figure 4), is used on all postal addresses for the settlement (e.g. Happy Days Coaches, **Little Green**, SY13 3HQ) and is a clear settlement of which has a social connection and physical relationship.

Figure 3 Road sign showing Little Green as recognised settlement



Figure 4 OS Mapping to show Little Green



- 5.9. It is accepted that this appeal site lies in the countryside for the purposes of planning policy, but in terms of built form and pattern, it is not agreed that the redevelopment of this previously developed land will be harmful to the countryside and landscape character. Indeed it can be seen that removal of large scale buildings and large areas of laid hardstanding will provide a betterment to the countryside and landscape character, whereby the presence of modest dwellings and their maintained gardens will visually enhance the street scene. It is also not possible for this development to have any impact on agriculture as the site is entirely laid in hardstanding. Returning the land to agriculture is not a reasonable alternative as it would be costly to remove all the hardstanding and buildings and take many, many years for the land to become active and deliver any meaningful yields.

Previously developed land (Brownfield)

- 5.10. As has been mentioned above and confirmed by the council, the appeal site represents previously developed land (PDL) in that it is occupied now and historically by a coach depot. The appeal site fully complies with the definition as provided within PPW.
- 5.11. There is clear and strong local and national support for the re-use of PDL over greenfield sites. UDP Policy PS3 makes no spatial requirements for the provision of brownfield land, only that it comprises vacant, derelict or underutilised land. PPW does impose a locational element, in that

sites which are “*in settlements*” should generally be considered acceptable. The PPW does not provide that these settlements must be defined settlements, or recognised settlements for this matter. As established above, Little Green is a recognised settlement and therefore the appeal site is considered as an acceptable location for its reuse and redevelopment.

- 5.12. PPW goes on further to say, at Paragraph 3.55, that not all sites may be suitable for development, due to being either in a unsustainable location, the presence of protected species or valuable habitats or industrial heritage or the because the site is highly contaminated.
- 5.13. As above the council have regarded the site as unsustainable by virtue of being outside of any identified settlement only; however, the PPW makes clear that this is not the correct test to be applied for the redevelopment of previously developed land. Instead, a sites sustainability needs to be considered in regard to improving, or contributing to, the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.
- 5.14. In terms of economic improvements and contributions, whilst the site is in active use, the business is in the process of winding down operations that occur on this site due to the relocation to Whitchurch in September 2021, whereby upon this cessation, the site will become inactive, vacant and offering no economic gains or benefits. There will be no job loss through relocation, whereby the new premises offers the business to expand and grown, in-turn leading to possible job creation. The erection of new build dwellings will contribute to the local economy through construction phase and occupation. The Indicative Site Plan and proposed scale of dwellings are likely to attract those people in active employment, whilst offering the opportunity of home working - made more apparent through the recent COVID 19 pandemic and all its restrictions and lockdowns. It is a common blight of rural businesses (particularly convenience retail) that they simply cannot compete with the town-centre locations and districts, whereby the presence of increased population can lead to sustaining these local community assets.
- 5.15. The social contributions and improvements include the proposed development contributing to the local housing stock, to provide a mix of dwelling types and offering a range of dwelling sizes to suit all. Another fall-out from the pandemic is that those rural properties have seen their sale values exponentially increase and are more often than not purchased by those who have no connection to the local area and therefore driving out the local population. The proposed development will retain a balanced housing stock. The removal of the coach depot will improve the way of life for nearby residents by removing large vehicles from the highway network, aiding highway safety and improving amenities for the area. The council in their Report have confirmed that the current Coach Depot use is non-conforming, so its removal can only be seen as a betterment to the locality and visual appearance of the immediate environs. Through providing

new housing on this site, it will reinforce the social and physical connection amongst residents and create a greater sense of place, where residents can live in harmony amongst one another, instead of having to compete with frequent large vehicle movements and a visually unappealing street scene.

- 5.16. Those environmental contributions and improvements stem from the confirmed non-conforming use of the Coach Depot, as it will remove large vehicles and their harmful emissions off site, improving air quality and local biodiversity. The proposed development will see the removal of a large area of hardstanding, of which has no environmental or biodiversity gain, to be replaced by modest dwellings and their private amenity spaces, which will be grassed and through the provision of increased soft landscaping and tree planting will attract a greater degree of flora and fauna to the site. Following the relocation of the business in September 2021, the site will become vacant and deteriorate into a bad of state of disrepair, thereby representing a visual detriment to the character and setting of the landscape, whilst constituting health and safety concerns.
- 5.17. Finally, the cultural well-being improvement and contributions relate to providing well-connected and cohesive communities, whilst contributing to the seven goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- 5.18. In terms of sensitive or protected sites, the appeal site is not on any site of local, national or international significance, there are no landscape designations, no heritage assets or any Tree Preservation Orders.
- 5.19. As to the site being unsuitable due to high contamination levels, the councils Contaminated Land Officer has confirmed that they have no objections to the proposed development subject to those standard explorative conditions that are placed on any site having mild potential. Furthermore, there is clear support for the full and effective re-use of land and sites which have been previously developed and where there is only a suspicion that the site might be contaminated or where the evidence suggests there is only slight contamination, planning permissions should be granted but with conditions attached.

Accessibility

- 5.20. The council deem the site as 'remote' – remote from any recognised settlement and remote from services and facilities alike. However, remote is more closely aligned with isolated which has already been proven to be not the case due to its location within a recognised settlement and proximity of neighbouring dwellings.

5.21. The council's judgement on accessibility is flawed also in that they state there are no bus stops along Mill Road. This is fundamentally incorrect. For Mill Road bus stop lies directly adjacent the site and connects the site with Whitchurch and Wrexham, with regular routes inbound and outbound, including peak times – bus route 146, operated by Pat's Coaches. Furthermore, the councils own Highways Authority have confirmed in their consultee comment that there are two informal bus stops along the site frontage that are serviced by a Council funded 2 hourly bus service.

5.22. This same bus route provides a regular service to:

- Bronington, arriving within 3 minutes
- Whitchurch, arriving within 9 minutes; and
- Wrexham, arriving within 45 minutes

5.23. The highway network to Bronington, Mill Road, does not have any dedicated pedestrian provisions; however, there is an extensive public Rights of Way network surrounding the site and nearby Bronington, Figure 5.

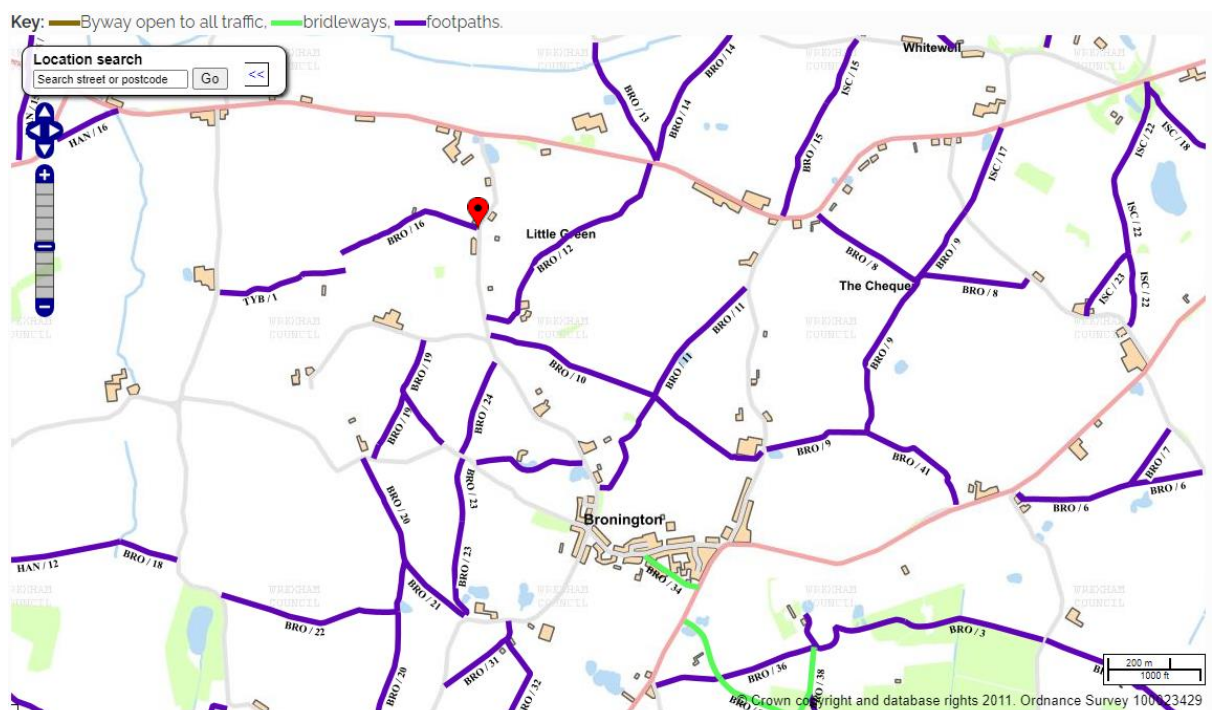
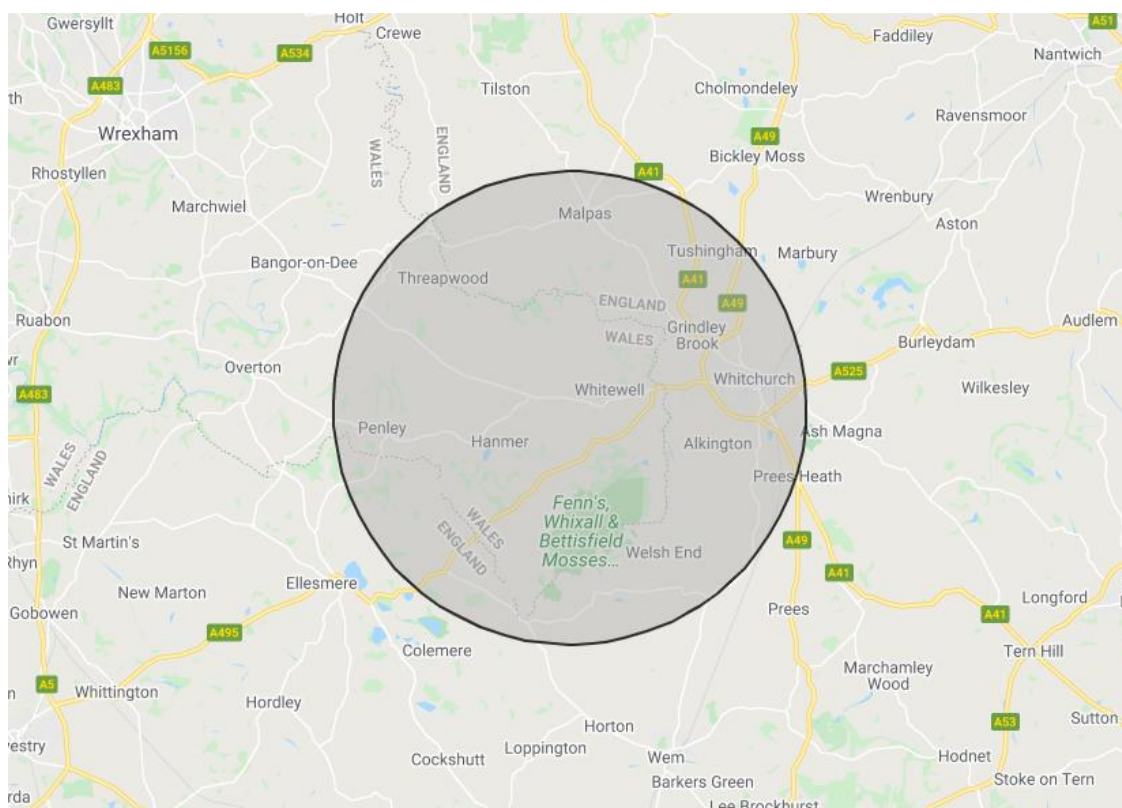


Figure 5: Definitive Map to show Rights of Way

- 5.24. Furthermore, the lack of pedestrian provisions does not make the appeal site inaccessible as other modes of transport can be utilised, before reliance on private motor vehicle – such as the above mentioned bus routes and cycling.
- 5.25. The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation’s publication “Planning for Cycling”, October 2014, states that cycling is regarded as having the potential to substitute short car trips, in particular those under 8km and to form part of a longer journeys by public transport.

Figure 6 8km buffer from appeal site



- 5.26. Figure 6 illustrates a radius of 8Km from the approximate centre of the application site, which encompasses a large area of land including Whitchurch, Ellesmere and Malpas. The appeal site is clearly accessible to alternative modes of public transport within a reasonable cycling distance
- 5.27. Additionally, another result of the pandemic has been a sudden rise in online grocery shopping, where more than three quarters of the population are now using the service. This has a direct correlation on the use of motor vehicles for short convenience trips.

Train

- 5.28. In regard to accessibility by train, the site is within a short distance of Whitchurch station.

- 5.29. Whitchurch train station is located approximately 7.5 km east of the site (along the highway network). It has step free access to some platforms to enable access to able bodied people as well as those less mobile. The station also offers 4 secure cycle stands.
- 5.30. Whitchurch train station is situated on the Welsh Marches Line, operated by Transport for Wales, which provides trains between the North West and South Wales.

Housing Land Supply

- 5.31. The PPW requires the council to ensure that sufficient land is available, or will become available, for a five year supply of land for housing. This is demonstrated through a Joint Housing Land Availability (JHLA) Study that is to be prepared each year and whose purpose is to: monitor the provision of market and affordable housing, provide an agreed statement of residential land availability and set out the need for action in situations where an insufficient supply is identified.
- 5.32. Wrexham last published their JHLA Statement in April 2017, in which they provide that in the absence of an up-to-date UDP and any adopted Local Development Plan, there is no requirement for a Local Authority to produce a JHLA, as the authority is considered has having a zero land supply. Their stated actions for boosting this supply is through discussions with landowners and developers on potential sites, whilst taking a pro-active stand in supporting appropriate growth in the County Borough where it meets policy objectives and identified local needs.
- 5.33. The council under their own admission in their Report accept that due to their current housing supply position, the need to increase supply should be given considerable weight when dealing with applications.
- 5.34. Having worked through the above Sections, it is considered that the site accords with the development plan and national planning policy, in that the site is not unsustainable by virtue of being isolated, sporadic or extending ribbon development and will contribute to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and will see the re-use and redevelopment of previously developed land that will have no adverse impacts on the visual or landscape character and quality. The considerable weight given to the lack of housing land supply if therefore applicable to this appeal.

Highways

- 5.35. The proposed development seeks to utilise an existing access point off the classified highway which is in use for the arrival and exit of multiple coaches and buses in connection with its lawful use. The existing use is a material fall-back position, to which is considered adequate and satisfactory by virtue of being operational.
- 5.36. The northern access will be permanently closed up, with the southern access being retained to serve the site, with adequate junction visibility, splays and apron with an appropriate width both at the junction and once within the site.
- 5.37. Furthermore, the councils Highways authority have raised no objection to the access arrangements or layout, in their consultee comments.

Residential Amenity

- 5.38. In terms of Residential Amenity, it should be noted that the existing use is a bad neighbour development located in close proximity to numerous residential properties and impacting upon highway safety across the highway network. Although the site is considered to be well managed to limit any potential residential amenity issues, by the very nature of the operation, occasionally there can be incidences of disturbance and impacts on highway safety.
- 5.39. However, the proposed development would remove any disturbance during the day and night time phase. It is considered that there will be a significant positive impact on neighbours in terms of residential amenity.

Rights of Way

- 5.40. There is an existing Public Footpath ROW that runs through the site, Ref: BRO/16, to the south, and connects Mill Road with the countryside to the west. The Footpath is accessed through the existing southern access point and exits onto the private drive.
- 5.41. The proposed development would look to relocate this access point, as shown on the supporting site plan. The Councils Rights of Way officer has confirmed this is an acceptable arrangement; however, would be subject to a separate application made upon any grant of planning permission.

Other Matters

- 5.42. The Council in their Report have confirmed that all other matters of ecology, trees, layout, drainage and amenity could be addressed by suitable conditions if permission were

contemplated. As a result, these other matters do not form a contentious part of this appeal and the appellant is acceptable to suitably worded conditions to be imposed by the Inspector.

Key Summary

- 5.43. In light of the preceding assessment, it is considered that that the proposed development performs well when reviewed against the local and national planning policies which are set out within Section 4 of this Planning Statement.
- 5.44. It is our view that the proposed development constitutes sustainable development. Accordingly, there is a strong presumption in favour of the development and no material considerations have been identified to outweigh this presumption.
- 5.45. In this regard, and in line with advice contained within the PPW, it is considered that the appeal should be allowed.

6. Benefits of the Proposed Development

6.1. The purpose of this section is to consider the benefits arising from the development were the scheme to be approved planning permission.

6.2. It is considered that there are a range of benefits including:

- Provides up to nine detached dwellings of varying form and scale;
- The development would remove a non-conforming use in the countryside which has been positively received by neighbours;
- The permanent removal of a lawful use which represents a bad neighbour development;
- Improvements to residential amenity of local residents by permanently removing a source of noise disturbance and adverse highway safety impacts through the removal of frequent and large coaches and buses;
- High quality hard and soft landscaping throughout;
- Improvements to biodiversity through the removal of extensive areas of laid hardstanding and metal portal framed buildings, all of which have low to none ecological potential;
- The delivery of construction jobs; and
- The delivery of a well-designed scheme, respecting and enhancing the local vernacular in an accessible and sustainable location.

7. Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1. This Statement has been prepared by Peacock + Smith on behalf of our client for the demolition of existing surplus buildings and erection of up to 9 detached Class C3 residential properties on land at Happy Days Coaches, Little Green, Wrexham, SY13 3HQ.
- 7.2. The application site comprises previously developed land with no significant landscape or ecological features currently. It is a purpose built coach depot within the rural settlement of Little Green, a short distance from the identified settlement of Bronington and accessible to the towns of Whitchurch, Wrexham, Ellesmere and Malpas.
- 7.3. The site is located in an accessible and sustainable location, benefitting from a number of local services and facilities within reasonable walking and cycling distances. Furthermore, public transport facilities are also available immediately adjacent the site and within reasonable cycling distances.
- 7.4. The proposed development seeks to create nine residential properties in an attractive and sensitively designed residential development in keeping with the density and semi-rural nature of the surrounding area alongside retaining an existing suitable and adequate access and associated landscaping.
- 7.5. Section 5 considers all matters in detail. It considers that the scheme fully complies to all relevant parts of the UDP providing empirical evidence of the scheme being well designed and of rural character, being a safe and reasonable distance of local services, and not having a greater impact on the locality than the existing development.
- 7.6. There are a series of wider material benefits. It is anticipated that there will be no formal objections to the planning appeal when it is lodged.
- 7.7. It is considered that the proposed development accords with the Development Plan and national Planning Policy. There are no reasons for the appeal to be dismissed. It is therefore respectfully requested that the Inspector allows this appeal.