
Planning Statement

Outline – Erection of electric vehicle service area to include drive thru coffee shop with parking and associated works at Land at Chirk Retail Park, Chirk Bypass, Wrexham, LL14 5AZ

Prepared for Mr A Woollam



land & property
professionals

Roger Parry & Partners LLP
www.rogerparry.net
oswestry@rogerparry.net
Tel: 01938 554499

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This statement has been undertaken on behalf of Mr A Woollam for erection of electric vehicle service area to include a drive thru coffee shop along with parking and associated works on land adjacent to Chirk Retail Park, Wrexham.
- 1.2. The application has been made in outline form to receive approval and support for the principle of the development, prior to the detailing the precise design, scale, landscaping and other elements that are associated with a reserved matters application.
- 1.3. The proposal is for an electric vehicle service area to include a drive thru coffee shop. The proposal is to be situated in close proximity of the Chirk Retail Park with existing access off the Halton Roundabout
- 1.4. This statement goes through different elements that have been considered in developing this proposal and mainly to discuss the policy context and acceptability of the proposal in line with national and local planning policies.

2. THE APPLICATION SITE

- 2.1 The application site is land at Chirk Retail Park to the south of the existing McDonalds site. The proposed site would be sited to the south of an existing retail business. There is an existing access onto the Halton Roundabout.

FIGURE 2 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH



- 2.2 The site is adjacent to the A5 and A483, the A5 is commonly known as the London-Holyhead Truck Road. The A483 is officially described as the Swansea to Manchester Trunk Road and is a major road in the UK.
- 2.3 The location the of proposed site has been carefully considered in that the nature of the proposal requires good transport connectivity.

3. PROPOSAL

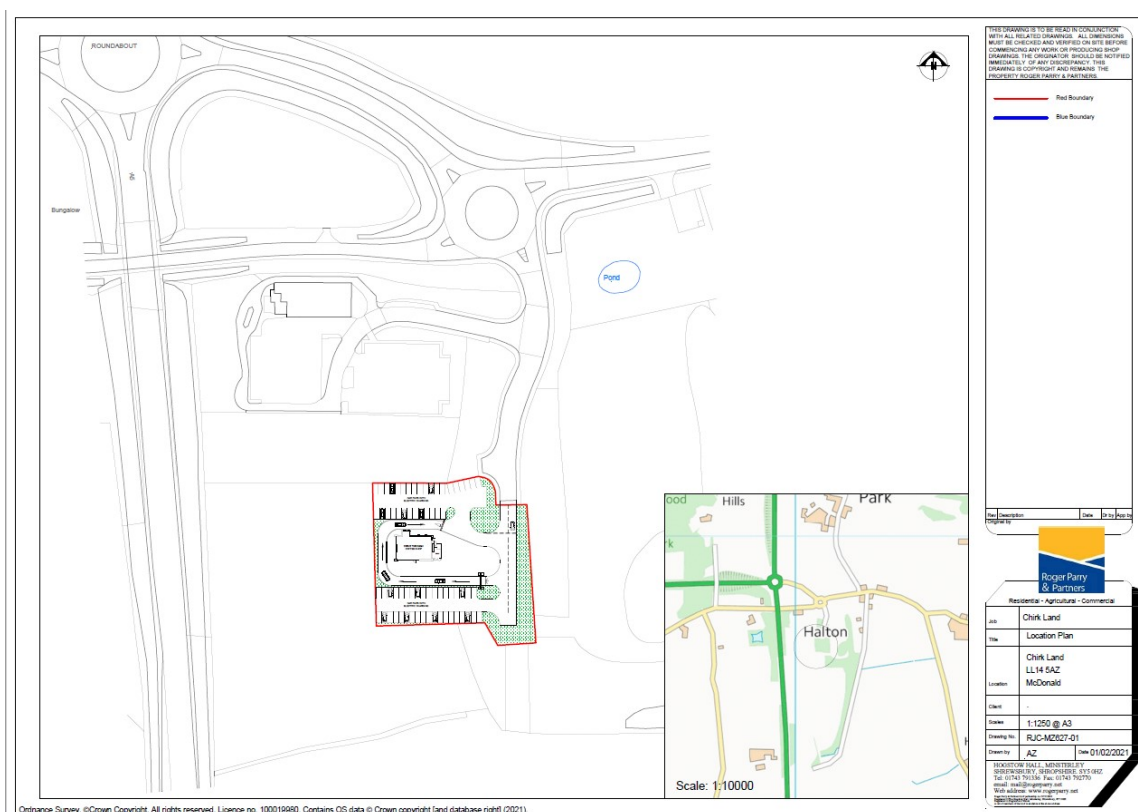
- 3.1 The proposal is for an electric vehicle service area to include a drive thru coffee é and is to be situated on land at Chirk Retail Park with excellent access onto the A5 and A483.
- 3.2 At this time, only the principle of a parking area along with a drive thru coffee shop is being sought after, hence the outline nature of the application. Full details will be required as part of a reserved matters application if this outline permission is approved.
- 3.3 This section seeks to explain and justify the design and access principle and concepts on which the development proposed is based and how these are reflected in the individual aspects of the scheme.

The Amount of Development

- 3.4 The scheme proposes a large electric car parking area to include a drive thru coffee shop where visitors can wait while their electric car are being charged. The site is currently a greenfield site adjacent Chirk Retail Park and McDonalds. It is estimated that the building will have an approximate footprint of 100sqm.

Layout of Development

- 3.5 The indicative development layout is shown in the submitted site plan. It is located in a way which will allow visitors use of electric charging parking space with the option of visiting a drive thru and sit in coffee shop to use as a workspace or relaxing area while cars are being charged. The nature of the proposal (service station) requires an 'off the road' location, which is easily accessible, with ample room for the parking areas.



Scale of Development

- 3.6 The specific scale of development is unknown, but it is envisaged that it will be single storey with only maybe loft storage upstairs and be within these dimension parameters:

- Length – 9m – 15m
- Width – 9m – 15m
- Ridge height – 5m – 7m.

Appearance of the Development

The building will be relatively low-lying, no different from local service stations and buildings. The specific appearance will be subject to a reserved matters application if this outline application is approved, but the design will be made to integrate with the surrounding environment as best as possible, without impacting too much on the visibility of it from a business sense.

- 3.7 Around the building there will be hardstanding areas for the access, road and parking which will again be designed in a way to reduce its visual impact.

Landscaping

- 3.8 Landscaping is a reserved matter, however we envisage for the site to be landscaped well, to integrate the unit well within the landscape.

Drainage

- 3.9 Full drainage details will support a reserved matters application if this outline application is permitted. Ample land is owned by the applicant which will allow a suitable SUDS system to be implemented with no concern.

Noise

- 3.10 The proposal is for an electric vehicle service area with limited noise emanating from the unit or its proposed use. The nearest dwellings are close by to the busy A483 and about 165m from the building. The noises associated with the roads and adjacent commercial activities will be much higher than the proposed noises from the unit.

Lighting

- 3.11 A lighting design scheme can be appropriately conditioned.

Ecology

- 3.12 An Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been completed on the site along with a Tree Survey and Arbricultural Impact assessment. Both Surveys concluded that there will be minimal impact on the proposed site.



Heritage

- 3.13 There are no historical sites in the surrounding area of the proposal.

4. THE FUTURE OF ELECTRIC DRIVING

- 4.1 With Boris Johnson rubber-stamping a ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars in 2030 there is already a surging demand for EVs and is set to sky-rocket on the next decade and beyond. However, among the major concerns with electric vehicle ownership is range anxiety and the lack of charging infrastructure. The country's aim is to provide reliable and comprehensive network of charging stations to supply the growing number of electrical vehicle drivers.
- 4.2 An electrical vehicle charging station differs from a regular gas station in a few keys ways. It takes longer to charge a car, so there needs to be space for more vehicles. Facilities also need to include a waiting lounge with wifi, washrooms and eateries, it will be a key factor for the development to allow users of the charging facilities a place to continue working on their laptops and mobile devices.
- 4.3 Research has shown that the UK's drivers lack confidence in electric cars due to the lack of charging facilities, people surveyed stated they would purchase an electric car if there were more charging points across the country and they were able to access wifi and refreshments while their cars charged.

- 4.4 In 2019, one EV charger per 7 cars was enough. However, in a report by Transport & Environment on 'How many charging points Europe will need in the 2020's' it is stated that one EV charger per 7 cars can't accommodate EV charging in the long run. They claim that around 1.3 million public charging points will be needed by 2025 and close to 3 million in 2030. This shows that an increase of EV charging stations is highly needed within public parking and along highways to ensure full coverage and increased appeal for the public. EV charging should be as simple as possible and should be included in parking facilities and near shops.

5. PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10) confirms that the planning system manages the development and use of land in the public interest, contributing towards achievement of sustainable development. Local Authorities are required to ensure that the economic benefits associated with a proposed development are understood and that these given equal consideration with social and environmental issues in the decision-making process.
- 5.2 PPW emphasises the need for the planning system to promote viable urban and rural retail and commercial centres as the most sustainable locations to live, work, shop and socialise.
- 5.3 The sequential test is used by the Welsh Government whereby they operate a 'town centre first' policy in relation to the location of new retail development. The first option for any new retail development should be town centre, and then work itself out of centre is justification leads to this.
- 5.4 If a use or building is not available within a retail centre of a Town, then consideration should be given to edge of centre sites and then if these are not available out of centre sites, that are accessible by a choice of travel modes. Out of centre sites should not be of a scale, type or location that is likely to undermine the vibrancy and viability of those retail centres within the town.
- 5.5 PPW goes onto say that some types of retail uses are not suitable for town centre locations because of their very nature, and therefore out of centre locations is the only option.
- 5.6 Technical Advice Note 4 (2016) is an advice note by Welsh Government that fully considers retail and commercial development. The tests of retail need is the first step in considering the actual need of that use in that location.
- 5.7 The sequential test is then emphasised again to choose the location and suitability of that use. Retail impact assessments are mentioned, but these are rarely required for developments of this nature, as the threshold is for retail applications with over 2500 sqm floor area.

6. HIGHWAY

- 6.1 The site is adjacent to the A5 and A483, the A5 is commonly known as the London-Holyhead Truck Road. The A483 is officially described as the Swansea to Manchester Trunk Road and is a major road in the UK.
- 6.2 There is an established access to the site.
- 6.3 The location the of proposed site has been carefully considered in that the nature of the proposal requires good transport connectivity.
- 6.4 A close to trunk road frontage site is key to the feasibility of a proposal like this, a road frontage position will ensure the site remains viable.

7. ACCESS

- 7.1 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) seeks to avoid discrimination against people with impairments and disabilities and for instance ensures that work premises do not disadvantage someone with a disability.
- 7.2 The access arrangements have adopted an inclusive approach and aims to ensure that all users will have equal and convenient access to the site and buildings. The design of the application will have full consideration for ease of access for disabled pedestrian use.
- 7.3 All of the measures detailed above will be maintained in such a way that will allow all people access to / from and around the building. Also, the facilities within the building will also be constructed and maintained in such a way to ensure people's access within the development.

8. TESTS OF RETAIL NEED

- 8.1 PPW (Edition 10) and TAN 4 stipulate that the starting point for planning for new retail development is the test of retail need. It explains that this needs to be a quantitative needs test and a qualitative needs test, and normally this is based on forecasting expenditure of a certain type of retail good over a period of time.
- 8.2 These tests refer to major retail proposals such as supermarkets and other A1 retail uses which would take trade from town centre retail markets. The proposal in front of you is for an electric vehicle service area to include a shop and cafe with a limited footprint. The type of use proposed, is not available within the Village or within miles of the site,

and therefore the need is quite plain to see without considering any statistical measurements.

- 8.3 There is only one other EV only service station in the UK, this opening in December 2020 in Essex. The closest electric vehicle charging point is Cefn Mawr (6 miles away) or Ellesmere (10 miles away) These sites only have a couple of charging points and no option of a café or work space to wait while users charge their cars. This clearly shows the lack of availability of this certain use within this area.
- 8.4 The closes drive thru coffee shop is Oswestry (8 miles).
- 8.5 It is acknowledged that this site is technically not within a development boundary, however this is considered further within the sequential test covered in the next section.

9. SEQUENTIAL TEST

- 9.1 Wherever The sequential test supports the Welsh Government's policy objective of promoting centres identified in the retail and commercial centre hierarchy, as the most sustainable locations to live, shop, socialise and conduct business.
- 9.2 The sequential location of planning applications should be considered in the following order:
- Firstly, within retail and commercial centres identified in the retail hierarchy where suitable sites, or buildings for conversion are available. Where this relates to a development plan allocation, they must be available for development within the plan period. Local planning authorities should ensure that any development plan allocation or planning application is of an appropriate scale in relation to the role and function of the centre.
 - If no suitable sites are available in retail and commercial centres then edge-of-centre locations should be considered, with preference given to brownfield sites that are or will be well connected to the existing centre and accessible by a variety of means of transport, particularly walking, cycling and public transport.
 - Only when retail and commercial centres and edge of centre locations have been considered and found to be unsuitable can out-of-centre options within, and then outside, a settlement area be considered. Where out of centre sites are concerned preference should be given to brownfield sites which are or will be well served by a choice of means of transport and are close to an established retail and commercial centre.

- 9.3 The sequential test and tests of retail need is more specifically based on major supermarket proposals, which can have a degree impact on existing shops within a town centre. This proposal is a minor EV service area with a drive thru coffee shop, the proposals will have minimal effect of nearby businesses.
- 9.4 The preferred option would be to have all retail developments within the settlement development boundary, however it is acknowledged that some retail uses are not suitable or cannot be accommodated within a town or village centres and therefore out of centre locations need to be considered.
- 9.5 The Local Planning Authority acknowledged that the siting of a coffee shop and electric charging points within a town or village centre is not practical or the most viable option.
- 9.6 The proposed site is located at Chirk Retail Park and is not considered totally out of centre. Towns are constrained for uses such as a service station given the space it requires in terms of traffic movements. The site requires a trunk road frontage to ensure additional traffic will be directed immediately into the site and not through a residential village.
- 9.7 As the Local Planning Authority would acknowledge, siting a new electric vehicle service area and coffee shop in a village or town centre is not practical, viable or safe. The building with a footprint would need a minimum of 1 acre of space for the building and parking arrangement.
- 9.8 It is clear from other authorities' decisions, that service stations are better situated at edge of centre locations and adjacent to existing use. This is no different, and the good accessibility of the site and the fact it's bounded by similar and larger development to the north.

9.9 *Economic Benefit*

In relation to economic benefits of development Planning Policy Wales 10, paragraph 5.4.4 states:

"Wherever possible, planning authorities should encourage and support developments which generate economic prosperity and regeneration. Sites identified for employment use in a development plan should be protected from inappropriate development."

TAN 23 states:

“Allocated sites should be given priority, but development on unallocated sites could be permitted if the resulting benefits outweigh any adverse impacts of the development.”

- 9.10 It is anticipated the proposed development would provide a significant economic benefit to the surrounding area once operational through the creation of new jobs associated with the shop, as well as during the construction phase of the development. The economic benefits of the development are a material consideration of significant weight to overcome the location of the development within the open countryside.

10. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposal is an economic development that is supported by both local and national policy; it amounts to sustainable development that will improve the economic resilience of this area.
- 9.5 The Retail Park location in with the overarching national and local retail planning policies, and will not have any detrimental impact on the immediate surroundings.
- 9.6 The proposal is of an appropriate location, scale and type so as not to be detrimental to the amenities of any nearby existing residential properties.
- 9.7 This proposal has significant merit, fits within the policies of the development plan and national planning guidance, and it is respectfully requested that the submitted planning application be approved.

