



**Bob Dewey
PLANNING**

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
APPLICATION FOR SITING OF
CAMPING PODS at CROESHOWELL INN
STRAIGHT MILE, LLAY**

Background:

The site is in the grounds of the Croeshowell Inn which is located on the B 5102 approximately 1 mile east of the Crown Cross Road, Llay and a similar distance west of the intersection with the A483(T). The site is around 6 miles north of Wrexham and some 8 miles south of Chester.

Council Policy:

Planning policy is set out in the adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

The site is outside any settlement limit and is in an area with no designation and is not subject to any landscape designation.

Policy CLF10 permits “new touring caravan and camping sites and extension to existing sites where:

The site is unobtrusive and well screened without the need for additional strategic landscaping and the site is not located within a green barrier or Special Landscape Area.....

The supporting UDP text recognises that “holiday and camping sites are an important part of the self-catering holiday sector and can make a useful contribution to the rural economy. Ready access to the main road network is therefore important.”

The draft Local Development Plan which is expected to supersede the UDP during 2021 also shows the site as outside a settlement and again with no other designations.

EM5 Proposals for visitor accommodation outside settlement limits will only be permitted where: **c) New touring caravan and camping sites and extensions to existing sites** provided that:

The scale, form and location of the development does not have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside...

d) Exceptionally new development that forms an integral part of an established and viable tourism or recreation facility provided that:

The scale, form and location of the development does not have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside

Planning Policy Wales 10 (Dec 2018) says:

5.5.3 In rural areas, tourism-related development is an essential element in providing for a healthy and diverse economy. Here development should be sympathetic in nature and scale to the local environment.

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

The site is within countryside between Rossett and Llay which, whilst pleasant and open, does not appear to have any special characteristics. Hence, it was not designated in the UDP as of Special Landscape Value and that decision was carried forward in the draft LDP where it was not considered worthy of being in a special landscape area.

Furthermore, it was considered at length recently when development of the site on the opposite side of the road (for up to 365 houses) was considered at appeal. The site is very similar in terms of its topography and appearance. The inspector said:

Having regard to the relatively flat nature of the site, the retention of existing trees and hedgerows and the proposed planting scheme, the overall visual effects arising from the proposed development would be limited and localised and would not be significant. To my mind the proposed development would not be at odds with the LANDMAP visual characteristic for the area and would not have a significant harmful effect on the character and appearance of the landscape.

As such, the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area and I conclude that the proposal would not be in conflict with UDP Policy PS2.landscape qualities.

In terms of the current UDP policy, the issue is to determine whether the site is sufficiently well screened and unobtrusive. The development will be of very low impact with the pods clad in timber and dark coloured stain (colour can be agreed). The slope of the ground will allow some the units to be set slightly into the ground to further reduce the impacts. Good, well established screening is already present to screen view when passing the site in an easterly direction. There is plenty of space to allow further planting if that is thought necessary. Clearly, the scale of the existing buildings will inevitably further draw any attention away for the development. When travelling in a westerly direction the units will not be visible due to the topography, the adjoining houses and the inn itself.

The draft LDP provides guidance on the provision of tourism facilities in some detail Policy EM5 © and (d) both appear relevant and says:

6.106 New tourist accommodation is encouraged because of its contribution to the economy in terms of visitor spending, supporting local business and employment generation. However, the Council seeks to ensure that developments are sustainable and respect the character of the countryside.

6.107 Tourist accommodation development in the open countryside that supports an existing tourist facility, attraction or asset but is also sympathetic to the natural environment and rural landscape will that make a positive contribution to the rural landscape and sympathetically designed additions and alterations to existing accommodation. Touring caravan sites and camping will also generally be supported provided they are acceptably located and screened and provide adequate access and ,servicing.

The Croeshowell Inn was subject to a major renovation and expansion within the last decade and like all similar facilities has suffered from the enforced lock down. Development which will enhance its viability will help to meet the local policy requirement to retain wishing the protect pubs and other community facilities. (UDP S9) is It is in a superb location in terms of open views across the Cheshire plain and a small scale tourism development such as this proposal will provide an opportunity to strengthen the inn's viability. It will enable

guests to stay on site and not run the risk of drink driving. The accommodation will be attractive to visitors wishing to enjoy the rural location and the opportunities for rural walks on the extensive nearby footpath network. Also, it is within easy distance of the historic city of Chester with bus services to the city just a short distance away in Rossett. The long hoped for reopening of a station at Rossett could be of further benefit.

Road access is achieved from the A483 intersection only a short distance away and so is excellent for visitors from north west England and beyond.

In order to improve the development's "green credentials" it is intended to provide solar panels on the units. Also charging points for electric vehicles will be installed in the car parking area.

CONCLUSION:

The proposal would enhance the tourism offer in the northern part of the County Borough, it would enhance the viability of the Inn. No harm would result to the landscape

The Council is urged to grant planning permission.

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Robert A Dewey BA(Hons) MBA MRTPI.

The Gables, Llanfynydd WREXHAM. LL11 5HG

tel: 01978 761315 (m) 07947 186 777

e mail bobjdeweyplanning@gmail.com

LDP Policy EM5: Visitor Accommodation Outside Settlement Limits

Proposals for visitor accommodation outside settlement limits will only be permitted where:

a) It involves the conversion of an existing building provided that:

- i. The building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive alteration, rebuilding or extension, and
- ii. The building is worthy of retention due its appearance, historic, architectural or landscape value, and
- iii. The creation of a residential curtilage does not, have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside.

b) It involves an extension to existing visitor accommodation provided that:

- i. The existing accommodation is fully utilised and incapable of further adaptation, and
- ii. The scale, form and location of the development does not have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside.

c) New touring caravan and camping sites and extensions to existing sites provided that:

- i. The scale, form and location of the development does not have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside, and
- ii. The site is used for touring purposes only and not for the storage of caravans which are not in use.

d) Exceptionally new development that forms an integral part of an established and viable tourism or recreation facility provided that:

- i. The visitor accommodation development is clearly subsidiary in scale to the tourist/rural recreation site, and
- ii. The development is of a high standard of design and does not represent a significant or harmful intrusion into the rural landscape.