

The Drury Barn Conversion Design & Access Statement

The Drury, Drury Lane, Tybroughton, SY13 3BD



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1.0 Introduction

This statement has been prepared by ARH Architectural Design on behalf of Mr & Mrs Probin. It has been structured according to the **Design Commission for Wales' guidance document, 2017**, and it accompanies a planning application for the conversion of existing redundant outbuildings at Tybroughton, Nr. Whitchurch.

The application is a resubmission of a previously withdrawn scheme which was unable to address time sensitive Ecology matters which have since been dealt with.

This statement has been provided to assist the Council in their decision making by collating key information, demonstrating and communicating a logical design process, and by reflecting the objectives of good design as set out in **Planning Policy Wales (PPW)** and **Technical Advice Note 12: Design (TAN 12)**.

The DAS illustrates:

- The design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development; and
- How issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with.

The final proposal has emerged as a result of responses to the site and its surroundings, its wider context, the design brief and subsequent ideas; consideration of relevant policy and objectives of good design; and progressive discussions with the clients with resulting amendments.

Key: TAN 12 objectives of good design

A	Access
C	Character
CS	Community Safety
ES	Environmental Sustainability
M	Movement

3.0 The Brief and Vision

The principle of the proposal is to create a small scale development of converted barns each providing 2/3 bedroomed family accommodation in a secluded country setting. The application site is by no means remote but does offer the **opportunity for smaller families to integrate into the rural community** where there is a **recognised lack of such opportunities**.

The current owners have lived here, farmed the land, and raised their own family since 1982 and the main aim of the scheme is to create an **opening for newcomers to become a part of this countryside community, contribute to its longevity and support rural living principles**.

In order to promote **sustainable development**, government policies require local authorities to **make efficient use of land** and we feel that the proposed application meets this requirement. **These traditional buildings have become outdated for modern farming practices and have been redundant for a number of years**.



Looks Like

Simple, well proportioned, traditional, brick under slate barns with timeless rural character set in a communal courtyard grouping. The development will read as part of the existing settlement.



Feels Like

A welcoming 'green' space, suitably removed from the town as to feel rural while being close enough to local facilities as not to feel isolated. The proposal concentrates on providing younger families the chance of a beautiful location benefitting from improved health and wellbeing opportunities which would otherwise be out of their reach



Functions Like

Residents will be afforded the enjoyment of rural living, and the scheme promotes a strong sense of outdoor recreational opportunity with an appealing external environment. It is hoped that in this location, safe and enjoyable outdoor living will be desired over the use of the car (*Image courtesy of BBC1 The Family Farm 2018*)

4.0 Site and Context Analysis

This part of the document addresses that which currently exists and has been guided by PPW's advice note: Site & Context Analysis Guide (2016)

4.1 Location

The application site has been indicated on the Site Location Plan and Block Plans which form part of the planning application submission. It relates to an area of land of 3,142m² in the village of Tybroughton being located in an area of open countryside, with access off Drury Lane.

The site is a smaller rural settlement close to the main service villages of Malpas and Whitchurch both of which have a good range of local facilities. Malpas village is 4 miles to the North, the market town of Whitchurch lies 6 ½ miles to the East and the major town of Wrexham is situated 12 miles South-East of the site. Further afield is the city of Chester, 19 miles to the North. **It is shown in the context of the surrounding properties** in the © Google Earth aerial photograph below.



The site offers a high quality, distinctive and sustainable development in line with Welsh Government's Practice Guidance: Planning for Sustainable Buildings, which encourages early consideration of sustainability at the site analysis stage.

The site is well connected and accessible to local facilities and the layout of retained buildings within the site sits comfortably in its capacity. The conversion proposal obviates the need for unnecessary sprawl into the open countryside with the intent to provide much needed rural accommodation.

4.2 Existing Landscaping

The site boundary to the North of the site along the roadside is defined by the buildings themselves, while the remaining boundaries are established hedgerows which are well maintained and will not be affected by the development, beyond all these boundaries are open fields.

There are areas already laid to hardstanding to be re-utilised for parking, and existing areas of amenity grassland are also to be incorporated into the garden design guided by Local Planning Guidance Note 21: Space Around Dwellings.



4.3 Topography

The site itself is relatively level, with the land lying approximately 90m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The application site constitutes level land with no undulations.

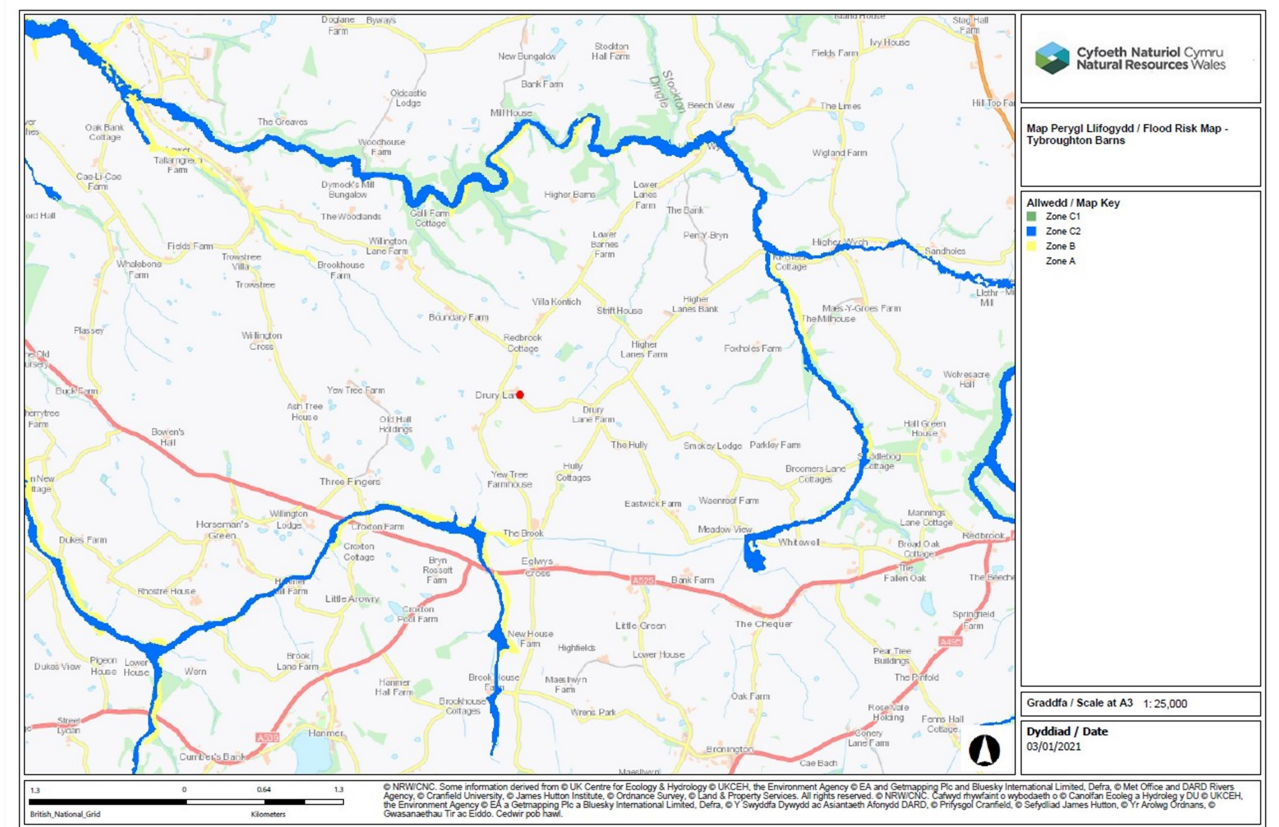
4.4 Rights of Way

A search of the relevant maps and data **does not identify any public rights of way affected by the proposals** but there are footpaths and bridleways in the vicinity of the application site. There are no concerns over boundary ownership / encroachment onto land owned by others and it is proposed to utilise the existing access.

4.5 Flood Risk

The Development Advice Map is for land use planning purposes. It is used alongside Planning Policy Wales and the relevant Technical Advice Notes to direct new development in respect to flood risk. Together, they form a precautionary framework to guide planning applications.

A search of **Natural Resource Wales' development advice maps**, read alongside **Technical Advice Note TAN 15** shows that the development site is considered to be at **little or no risk of fluvial or coastal/tidal flooding** as illustrated in the extract opposite:



5.0 Interpretation

The aspiration is to bring together the traditional benefits of a home, garden, privacy, and quiet offered by an out of town location, together with the benefits of a less rural settlement that still includes public infrastructure and resources.

The site is considered suitable because of its **sustainable location in relation to nearby facilities**; and the scale of the scheme has been carefully considered so as to **sit comfortably within the context of the existing clusters of properties in the immediate vicinity**. The applicants have ensured that the proposal is **not incongruous with the character of the surrounding area** as is detailed later in this document.



*Image 1 above: Barns 2 and 3 to the rear of the proposed development
(Image taken looking across the courtyard)*



Image 2 right: Barn 1 fronting the road (image taken looking across the courtyard)



6.0 Design Development

6.1 Amount

The existing outbuildings comprise a redundant shippon, redundant stables, and general agricultural storage building. It is proposed to convert these buildings into small scale dwellings **guided by the recommended approach outlined in LPG Note 3: Converting Rural Buildings.**

Additionally, there is a **steel framed open sided Dutch barn** under profile metal sheeting which is to **be removed as part of this application as it does not provide a permanent structure worthy of conversion** and its appearance is considered incongruous within the scope of the proposed development. As this Dutch barn currently has a concrete base, it is proposed to **reutilise this area for garaging and parking to support the conversion** but with significant improvements as discussed later, **to comply with LPG Note 16: Parking Standards.**

6.2 Layout

The layout of the units has been determined by a need for the accommodation to suit current day family lifestyles with large open plan kitchen/living/dining areas together with 2/3 bedrooms.

All of the principal elevations face towards the existing central courtyard.

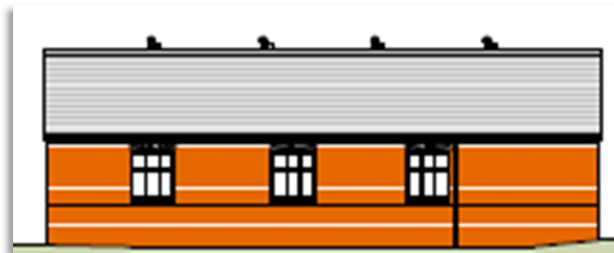


6.3 Scale

The proposal is not considered to impose any negative impact on the open countryside or the natural environment owing to its setting within the curtilage of the estate; and in relation to the neighbouring farmhouse.

6.4 Appearance

The proposals reutilise the existing structures on the site.



Above: Proposed elevation after conversion

Left: Picture illustrating the barn 1 with the farmhouse in the background

Externally, their appearance remains mostly unchanged with **minimal alterations to the existing openings to facilitate their new use.**

The conversion will be undertaken to a high standard with materials being **sympathetic to the existing fabric of the buildings and the neighbouring farmhouse.**

6.5 Residential Amenity

The residential amenity of the neighbouring occupants of the existing farmhouse will be well protected as there is no overshadowing/loss of light, dominance or loss of privacy associated with the scheme as the buildings are existing; and the orientation of habitable spaces within the converted units has been considered at an early stage in the design process so as to protect the privacy of the existing occupants as well as any future residents.

The site itself is well protected by existing hedgerow to all aspects with reasonable separation distances between neighbouring buildings thereby making it very flexible in terms of accommodating the proposed conversion into residential units. **There are no immediate neighbours** aside from the existing farmhouse so this proposal would not cause any negative visual impact upon in this respect. Overall any potential impact will be to an acceptable level and thus in accordance with Local Planning Guidance Note 22: Sustainability (Superseded by **Local Planning Guidance Note 30: Design** in June 2009).

7.0 The Proposal

The proposed design has been guided by Local Planning Guidance Note 3 (Converting Rural Buildings) which supports and amplifies policies GDP1, H3, and H5 of the Wrexham UDP. Specifically, the principles of inclusive design have been taken on board to create a development proposal that aims to make a positive contribution both to the local community and to the residential environment.

7.1 Character

The barns are linear in form, consisting of brick under slate construction with stone floors internally, and the existing property adjoining the proposal site is a three storey, brick under slate, traditional farmhouse.

There are some vernacular architectural characteristics and details, with the majority of permanent buildings being of traditional agricultural design in their nature. Overall, however, there is no overriding pattern of visual appearance along the lane as the properties vary in age, size and style.

The current external fabric will be repaired externally where necessary with some repointing of brickwork and replacement of roof slates being required to bring the buildings up to a habitable standard. The existing roof structure will remain intact with timbers being replaced/ upgraded as needed. The slates will be removed to facilitate these works, retained and then replaced.

Where new rooflights are to be introduced, they will be low profile Conservation style rooflights, and new windows in existing openings are proposed to be chosen from the Residence collection. It is common with barn conversions, owing to the thickness of the lined walls, to be notoriously dark inside, therefore, it is intended to maximise the provision of natural light so as to minimise dependence on artificial lighting and also to facilitate the supply of natural ventilation within these proposals.

To ensure the works reflect the character and appearance of the original building, all openings will be set back from the face of the building to create an emphasis. The doors are proposed to be match boarded to further reflect the original character of the barns and the principle of Secured by Design will be considered when specifying these elements. Finally, cast iron rainwater goods are to be introduced so as to be aesthetically pleasing to the scheme.



7.2 Access

The existing vehicular access is to be maintained with new gates to keep the area clear from vehicles and to provide security.

The site is accessed off Drury Lane in Tybroughton (*see below*) being **relatively straight, wide and clear of visual obstructions.**



Whilst the rural nature of the approach roads to the site is acknowledged, it is considered that the likely traffic pattern, type and increase associated with the proposed accommodation would only be likely to result in a marginal increase in movements and consequently should not raise any undue highway safety concerns.

Adequate parking and turning area facilities have been provided. The vehicular approach to the site will be via the existing access and there is ample space on the site to allow at least **1 vehicle per bedroom** to park and exit the site comfortably in accordance with Council standards. **Care has been taken to ensure the parking area and 'domestic' curtilage are restricted and located close to the proposed units to ensure minimal impacts occur.**

7.3 Movement to, from and within the building

It is the aim of the scheme to ensure that **all users of the buildings will have equal and convenient access into and within the structures and the spaces around them**. All of the requirements of the Building Regulations Part M (access to and use of buildings) will be applied including approach, access into, and around the barns. This will be achieved by level threshold hard surfaced access.

In accordance with current best practice in relation to pedestrian access the scheme will also fully comply with BS 8300:2009+A1:2010 Design of Buildings and their Approaches to Meet the Needs of Disabled People – Code of Practice.

The site will be carefully designed to offer the maximum possible accessibility for its users, including the **provision for a disabled person to approach and gain access into the property** from the point of alighting from a vehicle. **A level approach** will be provided (gradient less than 1:20) and its surface would be firm and even. **An accessible threshold** will be provided into each unit, and the entrance door will include an appropriate opening width (min clear opening width of 775mm) to enable a wheelchair user to manoeuvre into the building with internal circulation spaces designed to be sufficiently wide enough to allow **comfortable circulation**.

Finally, all accommodation is on the ground floor with **low profile shower rooms** or the provision of wet rooms in the ensembles. **Large open plan living spaces allow for easy movement and large openings allow easy access to the outdoor areas**.

7.4 Environmental Sustainability

Considering the development from a social and economic point of view, although it is only on a small scale, it will have a **positive impact on the local community** providing additional small units of residential accommodation in a rural location which will **support and help maintain local services**.

Additionally, once the site has been refurbished, this will be maintained for a long period of time thus **creating a sustainable future**.

The proposals will **enhance the visual amenity of the site** through a carefully designed and executed scheme which has a low visual impact on both the natural and built environment; and **will promote the habitat and environmental parameters of the existing site** through a conditioned landscaping scheme in line with **Local Planning Guidance Note 7: Landscape and Development**.

7.4.1 Code for Sustainable Homes

This scheme was launched in 2006 to **help reduce UK carbon emissions**. While it remains operational, it is now generally voluntary; however, it does provide a backbone of a package of measures which have been considered here. These include: energy and emissions, water consumption, use of materials, surface water run-off, waste and emissions.

7.4.2 Services

There is an existing supply of electricity to the site, and **mains water is available.**

Surface water run-off from the areas of impermeable surfaces will be directed into **soakaways**. Percolation tests will be carried out on site to determine the size of soakaways required and these soakaways will be designed in accordance with BRE Digest 365 to cater for a 1 in 10-year storm event. It is requested at this stage that the design of the soakaway drainage layout be conditioned as part of the consent.

Roof water could be taken to **water butts** to assist in **water recycling within the garden areas**, and any overflow would be taken to existing or suitable surface water soakaways. Permeable surface treatments will be provided in areas where heavy use is to be applied (e.g. vehicle movements) to assist further.

For **foul drainage**, we propose utilising **a package treatment plant**.

7.4.3 Conservation of Fuel and Power

The scheme proposes to incorporate **high levels of thermal efficiency** that exceed the minimum requirements of **Part L of the Welsh Technical Guidance**.

Although classed as a material change of use under the guidelines, specific detailing will be integrated into the scheme that assists in **minimising air leakage, and low energy lighting** will be specified to further **assist in reducing energy use**.

7.4.4 Materials

The proposals require the **repair and thermal upgrading of the existing fabric** together with the provision of new internal partitions. All **external materials are to be sourced locally** to match the existing and all new materials are to offer the **best possible thermal properties** in line with modern Building Regulations standards.

The visual impact of the proposal on the wider character of the area will be limited as the buildings exist, but appropriate mitigation measures could be conditioned as part of the approval if deemed necessary.

7.5 Ecological Appraisal

A preliminary ecological appraisal of the site included a desk study of the area which was carried out by Greenscape Environmental Ltd. in October 2019. This was followed up by Phase 1 environmental appraisal and Phase 2 bat and newt surveys later in 2020 as it was necessary to wait for the next appropriate survey seasons. The full assessments are included in the attached reports which support this resubmission.

Bats: Initially, evidence of bats was found in buildings 1 and 3, and low roost potential was found in building 2. Building 4 and the Dutch barns were found to have negligible roost potential for bats such that work on these could commence without bat activity surveys being done. Phase 2 surveys for bats found day roosts in the southern gable end of building 2 and in building 1. No bats were found roosting in building 3. **Bat boxes, as illustrated below, will be put up around the site.**

Birds: Evidence of nesting birds was found in buildings 1, 2 and 3, and building 4 and the Dutch barns were thought to offer potential habitat for nesting birds. It is, therefore, recommended that works on the buildings commence outside of the bird nesting season (February to August inclusive). Evidence of tawny owl was found in buildings 1 and 2. **A tawny owl box will be erected on a nearby tree, and further bird boxes will be erected around the site to provide an enhancement.**



Example woodcrete
maternity bat box:
Schwegler 3FF



Example integral bat box



Cedar wood Sparrow Terrace



Schwegler 1b
Bird Box



Swallow Nest Cup



Swift Box

Newts: Ponds within 250m were also assessed. Phase 2 surveys for newts found a small population in pond 1. Recommendations are that work is to be done under a mitigation licence from NRW and RAMMS to be followed prior to and during the development. Natural Resources Wales advised that given the low value of the site for newts in their terrestrial phase that presence/absence, surveys would be sufficient for a licence to be granted.

To conclude, it is recommended that the biodiversity is enhanced post-construction with the inclusion of bat and bird boxes as illustrated above. Work will be conducted under licence from Natural Resources Wales where required, with suitable enhancements installed and works being done at a suitable time of year there were no further ecological constraints to the development.

7.6 Landscaping

The proposal takes advantage of existing topography and vegetation, being screened by native species hedges and trees which **will be retained in order to allow the development to be assimilated in to the surrounding area.**

These boundaries are long established and form a natural barrier between the site and the nearest neighbour (more than 250m away) and will not be affected by the proposals. **Attention has been given to the integration of the new elements of the proposal with its surroundings** with newly planted areas **to match the existing 'soft edge'.**

As part of the Ecology Report recommendations, the landscaping around the new buildings will include some hedging and tree planting to enhance the area for biodiversity. Plants to use for landscaping will include locally sourced native species and these will be planted in accordance with BS3936 (part 1, 1992, Nursery Stock, Specifications for trees and shrubs). Planting will occur between November and April of the following year depending on timing of development.

Local Planning Guidance Note 07 has been referenced and to ensure there is no suburbanisation of the site, the treatment of the ancillary external spaces will **maintain the simple rural character of the area.**

Access areas are suggested to be dense gravel (or other permeable surfacing) as approved by the Local Authority with paved areas to provide **safe wheelchair access** to and from the units.

7.7 Community Safety

Rural buildings by their nature are usually isolated and located in areas which are not well overlooked by other dwellings and buildings, as a result such developments can often be more vulnerable to crime. **The conversions will remove the farmhouse from its current isolated situation.**

The principles of Secured by Design have been applied to this design to reduce potential crime risk including window and door locks, and alarm systems.

Internally, the occupants will be protected by the installation of fire protection and carbon dioxide monitors in line with current Building Regulations.

Boundary treatments will be appropriate to the site's setting and will be chosen to **provide clear delineation of residential curtilages** whilst **ensuring sufficient natural surveillance** across the site.

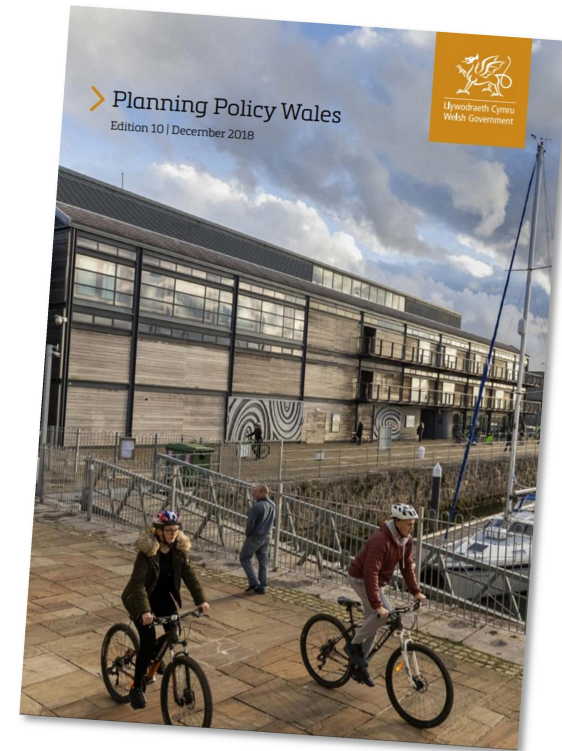
8.0 Response to Planning Policy

We are mindful that Planning Policy is responsible for shaping development within an area, and sets out the plans and policies against which planning applications are determined, being set out at both national and local levels. **This proposal has, therefore, been guided by, and as such is supported by, Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as demonstrated below.**

8.1 Planning Policy – National

We have sought guidance from Planning Policy Wales (PPW) first published in 2002 and most recently revised in December 2018 (**PPW10**) as this document contains current land use planning policy for Wales.

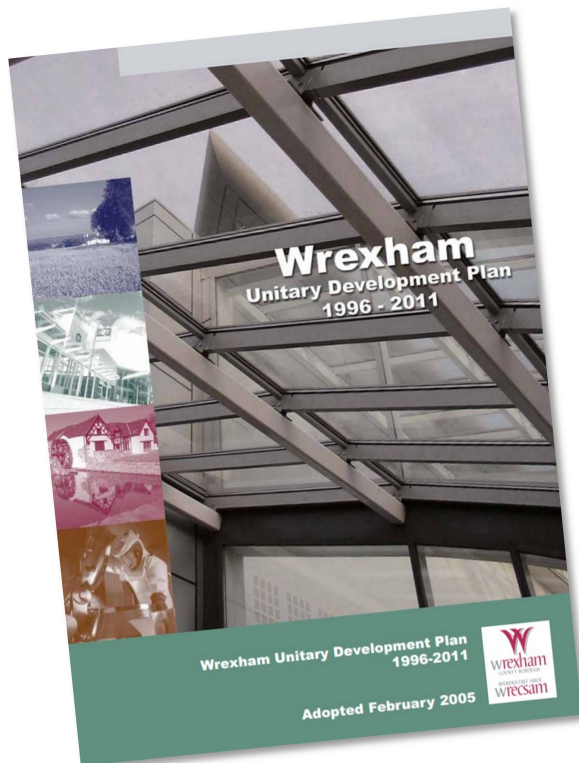
PPW has been referenced as it provides the policy framework for the effective preparation of local planning authorities' development plans. This is supplemented by 21 topic based **Technical Advice Notes (TANs)** and procedural guidance is given in Welsh Office / National Assembly for Wales / **Welsh Government circulars which have also been addressed.**



PPW, the TANs and the circulars being material considerations in determining planning decisions on individual applications **have been carefully considered here.**

8.2 Planning Policy - Local

At a local level, the **Unitary Development Plan (UDP)** 1996 - 2011 was first adopted by Wrexham County Borough Council on the 14th February 2005. **The Plan covers the administrative area of the Wrexham County Borough Council which is relevant to this application.** It is to be replaced with the Local Development Plan which is currently under consultation for review.



8.3 Planning Policy – Review

This section of our statement sets out the order of planning policy that is considered relevant to the determination of this application; they are examined separately in detail by assessing and interpreting the merits of our proposals against them, with a view to demonstrating the case **in support of the proposed scheme.**

As the legal test for all planning decisions is to determine the application in accordance with the statutory development plan (unless material considerations indicate otherwise), **we have reviewed the key principles of PPW and the Local Development Plan, and feel there is no conflict with policies saved under these documents.**

It is recognised that in August 2019, the Welsh Government published a consultation of its National Development Framework (NDF) which is currently under consultation. **With this in mind, this document has been prepared under currently published legislation and guidance.**

In consideration of the proposed development scheme the following local and national planning policies and guidance have been taken into account: **Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 2: Policies PS2, PS3, PS4, EC1, EC3, EC4, EC6, GDP1, H3, H5 and T8.**

- **Policy PS2** *“Development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment”.*

The site is located within a larger area of land all under the ownership of the applicant; it takes advantage of the existing natural screening, being protected by native species hedges and trees so, therefore, **it will not be visible to any other existing dwellings, meaning that there is no adverse impact upon landscape interests** associated with this proposal.

The whole development will form a neatly laid out courtyard arrangement with each unit facing towards the existing central lawned area, and with parking provision replacing the existing Dutch barns to the rear. This parking will be made up of surface designated spaces and **allocated covered provision of an appropriate design and construction** e.g. oak frame under slate roof.



Left: Barns to be replaced with new parking provision

- **Policy PS3** *“Development should use previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to the use of greenfield land, wherever possible”.*

The proposed development seeks to reuse the existing farm buildings which are currently used for storage and are superfluous to modern farming requirements.

- **Policy PS4** *“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”.*

As outlined earlier in section 3 of this document, residents will be afforded the enjoyment of rural living, and the scheme promotes a strong sense of outdoor recreational opportunity with an appealing external environment. It is hoped that in this location, safe and enjoyable outdoor living will be desired over the use of the car.

- **Policy EC1 Green Barriers**

The site is not identified as being in a Green barrier/wedge location, the proposal does not involve any substantial built development as the buildings are existing, and any night time lighting will be kept to a minimum. Lighting around the site will be on a short timed PIR and down lighting will be used to avoid disturbance, with hoods, cowls, louvres or shields being utilised to direct light only to where it is needed. The height of any lighting columns would be kept as low as possible to reduce the impact of light spill.

As this application is for the re-use/adaptation of a rural building, the primary consideration should be whether the nature and extent for the building is acceptable in planning terms. **It should not normally be necessary to consider whether a building is no longer needed for its present agricultural or other purposes (TAN 6 Para 3.2.1 Re-use/adaptation of rural buildings).**

Both national and local planning policy / guidance require **conversion to respect the surrounding area in terms of landscape and local building styles and use of materials and this has been detailed in sections 6 and 7 above.**

The need to consider these issues is also expanded upon in the **Wrexham Unitary Development Plan** with reference in **Policy EC3** (Agricultural Buildings), **Policy H3** (Conversion of Buildings outside Settlement Limits), and **Policy H5** (Housing in the Countryside). All proposals are subject to **UDP Policy GDP1** (Development Objectives) and ensuring that the important characteristics of the site and surrounding area are not compromised as follows:

- **Policy EC3** *“The construction of new agricultural buildings will be permitted unless the development is materially detrimental in terms of its impact on the environment or surrounding landscape. The development should form part of an existing farm complex and take advantage of topography and other landscape features for screening”.*

As detailed in **section 7.4.6, “Landscaping”**, the proposal takes advantage of existing topography and vegetation and also accords with **Policy EC4** in this respect.

- **Policy H3 Residential conversion of buildings outside settlement limits**

“New homes can be created from the conversion of redundant buildings – the sympathetic conversion of redundant non-residential buildings to housing accommodation will be encouraged, providing the basic standards can be achieved. Conversion may provide much needed smaller accommodation more quickly and cheaply than would the provision of new homes and, at the same time, ensure a satisfactory re-use of existing resources and supplement conservation policies. Similarly, the sympathetic conversion of redundant non-residential buildings to housing accommodation will be encouraged, providing that basic design standards can be achieved.”

Policy H3 is supported as it satisfies all of the following criteria that the change of use or conversion of a building to residential use outside settlement limits will be permitted where in the case of agricultural buildings:

- a) *There is no longer an agricultural need and alternative non-residential uses have proved inappropriate;*
 - b) *The building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive rebuilding tantamount to the erection of a new dwelling;*
 - c) *Any inherent characteristics of merit in the building are retained;*
 - d) *The proposed dwelling and the resulting curtilage do not constitute an undesirable intrusion into the landscape, create access problems, nor require the provision of services at public cost; and*
 - e) *The floor plan of the existing building is sufficient to create a habitable dwelling.*
- a) The barns are no longer suitable for modern agricultural usage and despite our client’s previous enquiries; non-residential uses have not proved to be of any desirable use.**

The following potential reuses were considered and later ruled out as explained:

- Traditional buildings of this nature conflict with the requirements of potential modern commercial occupants. Local estate agents offered the opinion that in order to be suitable for any type of industrial or commercial use; a much larger, level, uninterrupted floor plan would be desired.
- A generous eaves height is also considered important for potential industrial properties, needing to be at least 4.5m - 4.8m clear span. This is not feasible using the existing openings hence their redundancy for any modern farming machinery. To form new openings to this height to take roller shutter doors for trade/ modern farm vehicles would be out of character with the existing buildings.
- As the existing farmhouse is to be retained as a dwelling, the close proximity of the buildings would cause conflict between the industrial and residential uses.
- The increased volume of traffic associated with industrial use is also in direct conflict with the farmhouse as well as with the neighbouring properties.
- As identified in Section 7.7 of this document, and with regard to Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and Technical Advice Note 12: Design (TAN 12), the remote location of the buildings also has implications in respect of security as the lack of neighbours reduces the level of natural surveillance. This often results in occupiers installing high wattage security lighting that are out of context with the rural landscape.
- Research of other applications identifies that potential business occupiers tend to prefer purpose built Business Parks as they provide more secure facilities often with entrance restrictions and enhanced security measures. Again, these are out of context with the rural location and would be prohibitively costly to install.
- Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic, there is a great deal of uncertainty in the small business market, such that the conversion costs would most likely make such a project unviable.
- Consultations with local commercial rural lettings agents has divulged that a high percentage of rural businesses are usually in their early fruition, thereby resulting in an above average turnover of tenants, either because they are successful and expanding or have failed. Taking this into account, we have been advised that the premises' layouts and designs would need to be flexible enough for different use types, if lengthy rental gaps are to be avoided. That flexibility is lacking in this instance.
- There is little demand for office use in this area and our research identified a general preference to be part of a larger more structured commercial site such as on an industrial estate or designated development site, and while some people may be attracted to a rural location instead, this preference is limited. Again, this has been reduced even further by Covid-19 with improved technology making home working much more necessary, if not preferred.
- Finally, under current Building Regulations, if the barns were to be converted to commercial use, they would fall under scrutiny of the requirements of disabled access to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. Buildings of this nature do not easily lend themselves to access for disabled owing to their layout and the restrictions imposed by an existing structure. Whilst comfortable domestic level access is achievable, the higher commercial provisions are less attainable.

- b) A Structural Survey has been carried out by Carroll & Williams, Consulting Structural Engineers, to confirm the feasibility of conversion and their report is attached to this submission.

The structural report concluded that: *“The existing buildings are generally of robust construction and remain free of significant structural defects. Subject to the foregoing, the buildings are considered suitable for the proposed conversion to residential use without the need for major reconstruction, ensuring the long term viability of the buildings”.*

Conversion into dwellings will make use of the barns before they become derelict, thereby creating a much more aesthetically pleasing appearance to the existing street scene.

- c) The barns were originally used to house animals and equipment associated with the farm and their appearance is to remain as existing, with minimal changes proposed.

The conversion will visually enhance the buildings but more importantly, the conversions will ensure they are overhauled and are in a better structural condition.

- d) As identified earlier in this document, the residential amenity of the neighbouring occupants of the existing farmhouse will be well protected as there is no overshadowing/loss of light, dominance or loss of privacy associated with the scheme.

The buildings exist so there is no undesirable intrusion into the landscape, and the access and services currently exist.

- e) The floor plans are easily adaptable into comfortable habitable accommodation.

In principle, therefore, both Planning Policy Wales and Wrexham Unitary Development Plan policies both allow for the possibility of conversion of rural buildings to residential use in the countryside.

- **Policy H5** *“Outside defined settlement limits new dwellings will only be permitted where: a) proposals accord with **Policies H3, H4, and H8**”.*

Policy H4 relates to sub-division and Policy H8 relates to affordable housing proposals on the edge of settlements so neither is relevant in this case. We feel that the proposed conversion scheme meets the criteria relating to the requirements concerning the provision of housing in the countryside, in this instance, through the conversion of buildings outside settlement limits. The proposal is in accord with the above UDP Policies together with the more detailed considerations contained in the relevant Council's local planning policy, **H3: Converting Rural Buildings** (see above).

8.4 Planning History

A search of the Wrexham Council Planning portal identifies the following planning applications within close proximity to the application site.

CASE NUMBER	RECEIVED DATE	LOCATION	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
P/2017/1047	21/12/2017	Bron Haul Farm Drury Lane Tybroughton Wrexham	Garden Room Extension
P/2017/1030	15/12/2017	Bron Haul Farm Drury Lane Tybroughton Wrexham	Removal Of Condition 6 Imposed Under Planning Permission P/2006/0668 To Allow Property To Be Used As A Permanent Dwelling
P/2017/0822	02/10/2017	Bron Haul Farm Drury Lane Tybroughton Wrexham	Construction Of New Vehicular Access With Two Brick Gateposts, Driveway, Fence And Hedge Planting And 1.8M High Boundary Wall
P/2016/0787	19/08/2016	Lodge Cottage Drury Lane Ty Broughton Wrexham	Relaxation Of Condition 02 Imposed Under Planning Permission Code No P/2015/0819 To Allow Use Of Garage As Utility/Back Room And W.C (In Retrospect)
P/2016/0393	25/04/2016	Lodge Cottage Drury Lane Ty Broughton Wrexham	Material Change Of Use Of Land From Domestic To A Mixed Use Of Domestic And For The Stationing Of A Single Holiday Caravan (Shepherds Hut)
P/2016/0363	14/04/2016	Drury Lane Farm Drury Lane Tybroughton Wrexham	Application For Approval Of Details Reserved By Condition 04 - Samples Of All External Facing And Roofing Materials Imposed Under Planning Permission P/2015/0736
P/2015/0819	28/10/2015	Lodge Cottage Drury Lane Ty Broughton Wrexham	Alterations And Extensions To Existing Two-Storey Dwelling
P/2015/0736	29/09/2015	Drury Lane Farm Drury Lane Tybroughton Wrexham	Demolition Of Existing Dwelling, Erection Of Replacement Two-Storey Dwelling And Detached Garage / Garden Store And Construction Of New Paved Terrace
P/2015/0535	15/07/2015	Drury Lane Farm Drury Lane Tybroughton Wrexham	Demolition Of Existing Single Storey Rear Extension, Proposed Two Storey Side Extension, Alterations To Existing Dwelling, Removal Of Some Hardstanding And Proposed New Paved Terrace, Erection Of Detached Garage With Garden Store
P/2014/0382	02/06/2014	Lodge Cottage Drury Lane Ty Broughton Wrexham	Erection Of Barn For Non-Domestic Animals, New Access And Closure Of Existing Entrance (Partly In Retrospect)
P/2007/0083	26/01/2007	Lodge Cottage Drury Lane Ty Broughton Wrexham	Erection Of 2 No. Stables.

There are several comparable developments in the surrounding area which can act as **planning precedent** when assessing this application which include the following:

P/2013/0093 Plas Power Home Farm Buildings, Ruthin Road, Coedpoeth, Wrexham - **Change Of Use of Farm Buildings into 8 No Dwellings** with Associated Garaging and New Access (Renewal of Planning Application No Code P/2007/1189)

This was a renewal of a previous permission granted in 2007 (see above) and has been the subject of various minor amendments to the scheme culminating with application **P/2019/0640** earlier this year.



Above: Main Outbuilding



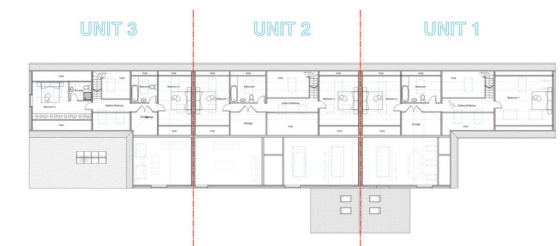
Above: Proposed Elevation



Above: Proposed Ground Floor



Above: Inside Main Outbuilding



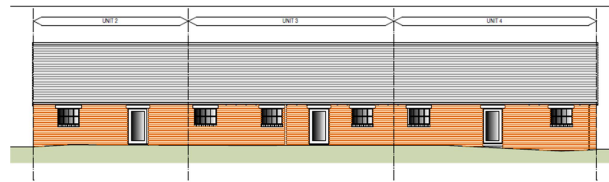
Above: Proposed First Floor

Our application site is visually quite similar as can be seen below:

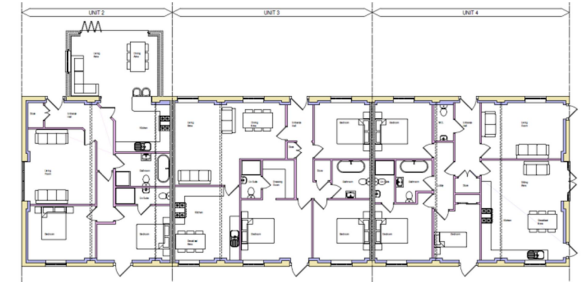
It compares with the Plas Power Home Farm Buildings with the main building being of brick under slate construction and linear in its form with one large opening in the gable end. It is also to be logically divided into three units because of its existing layout and openings as this is the most appropriate subdivision.



Above: Proposed Application at The Drury Main Building



Above: Proposed Elevation



Above: Proposed Application Ground Floor



Above: Inside Main Outbuilding

P/2018/0888 Change of Use and Conversion of Barns to 10 No. Residential Units Including Demolition, New Build Parking Barns, Access and Parking Arrangements at Broadoak Farm, Llyndir Lane, Rossett, LL12 0AU.

- This application represents a similar site with vacant farm buildings at a redundant farm that is no longer in operation. The scheme involved the restoration and conversion of several barns with associated landscaping.

P/2017/0709 Conversion of Barns to 2 No Dwellings, Alterations to Existing Barn Conversion and Erection of Car Port at Charity Farm, Halghton Lane, Bangor on Dee

- The barns proposed for conversion are considered to be traditional in appearance and construction with original features worthy of retention.

P/2016/0384 Change of Use and Conversion of Barns to Form 6 No. Residential Units, Construction of 2 No. Semi-Detached Dwelling Houses (Replacement of Existing Farm House) and Demolition of Remaining Structures across the Site at Gamford House, Gamford Lane, Rossett, LL12 0EW.

- The overall objective for these successful schemes was the development of several existing buildings for residential use, whilst retaining their rural character as much as possible. As with our application site, a residential use for the buildings was considered the most viable and sustainable use.

P/2013/0505 Conversion of Timber Framed Shippon and Brick Shippon to Form Dwelling; Alteration of Stable Building for Ancillary Residential Use; Demolition of Three Shippons and Workshop and Store; New Vehicular and Pedestrian Access; and Change of Use of Land at Brunette Farm, **Tybroughton, SY13 3BA.**

- This application represents a scheme at a farm which is no longer used for agricultural purposes and has been successfully converted to create dwellings within close proximity to the application site which demonstrates the suitability of the location.

P/2013/0205 Conversion of Redundant Barns to Form 2 Dwellings (Amendments to P/2011/0838) at The Darland, Darland Lane, Rossett, Wrexham. LL12 0BA

- This site has been subject of a number of successful planning applications for conversion of agricultural buildings to residential units. The most recent of these was in 2013.

9.0 Conclusions

It is hoped that through extensive research into current planning policy and a review of similar applications approved by the Council that this proposal will be positively considered. In line with relevant policies and guidance, the new development would satisfy the requirements as follows:

- The proposal respects the character of the countryside at an appropriate location which is reiterated in the local plan policies examined above.
- The proposal has carefully considered the context of the site and its surroundings as well as reflecting any existing planning policies in order to form the final design.
- It takes account of personal and community safety, and security in the design through the lighting and arrangement of outdoor spaces.
- In accordance with planning policy, the proposed converted barns will be screened by the existing hedgerow and trees to mitigate any impact upon the landscape.
- Environmental amelioration implementations will be in accordance with an environmental report to protect wildlife at the site.
- The proposal is relatively small in scale and is appropriate in terms of scale and character for its immediate surroundings.
- The proposal represents a sympathetic conversion scheme of existing outbuildings which is appropriate for its rural location.
- The conversion results in the retention and beneficial reuse of currently underutilised buildings while maintaining their original character and features.
- The location is easily accessible and will appeal to a wide range of families being located within a reasonable commuting distance of Malpas, Whitchurch, and Wrexham.
- It secures the development of a sustainable community through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.
- The final proposal has evolved out of extensive consultation to form a thoughtfully planned site layout that offers a positive contribution to the rural economy. There is adequate provision for amenity, parking, access and drainage, therefore, it is respectfully requested that the submitted planning application be positively determined.

10.0 Appendix

- Design and Access Statements in Wales - What, Why and How
<http://dcfw.org/design-and-access-statements-in-wales/>
- Planning Policy Wales
<http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/150924planning-policy-wales-edition-7-en.pdf>
- Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP)
https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/planning_portal/plan_policy/wxm_udp.htm
- TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (Sept 2019)
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan5-nature-conservation.pdf>
- TAN 6: Sustainable Rural Communities (July 2010)
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan6-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf>
- TAN 12: Design (March 2016)
<http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/140731technical-advice-note-12-en.pdf>
- TAN 18: Transport (March 2017)
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan18-transport.pdf>
- Wrexham Local Planning Guidance Notes
https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/planning_portal/lpg_notes/lpg_notes.htm
- Practice Guidance: Planning for Sustainable Buildings
<http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/150311practice-guidance-planning-for-sustainablebuildings-en.pdf>
- Welsh Government Development Advice Map (DAM) which supports TAN 15 and PPW
<http://data.wales.gov.uk/apps/floodmapping/>
- Model Design Guide for Wales
http://cdn.dcfw.org.uk/posw_residential_guide1.pdf
- Building for Life 12 Wales
<http://dcfw.org/building-for-life-12-wales/>
- Building Regulations Wales
<http://gov.wales/topics/planning/buildingregs/?lang=en>

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