

Design and Access Statement

for

*Proposed addition of **4 x Shepherds Hut Holiday Units** to
Farm Education and Leisure Activity Centre.
Sheepfold Farm, Ellesmere Road, Bronington,
Whitchurch, SY13 3HD*

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Robert Middleton, Hill Top Farm, Ilton, Masham, Ripon, North
Yorkshire, HG4 4JY – 01765 688674 – rob@farmadventure.co.uk

Introduction

This proposal is for the addition of 4 x Shepherds Hut holiday units to the Farm Adventure site at Sheepfold Farm, Bronington. The existing Events Barn will provide undercover amenity area for users of the huts.

The proposal seeks to continue with the current uses of the site including permission granted in 2018 (P2018/0375). The proposal will both compliment the existing business model and broaden the range of offerings.

The Coronavirus Pandemic has had a serious negative impact on the current business model and has in part contributed towards the thinking behind this proposal. The huts will provide the business with the flexibility to provide fresh air, isolated, staycation, individual family holidays.

The consent will allow a greater chance of maintaining existing employment levels at the site and will increase the likelihood of more employment opportunities in the future.

The Huts will measure 6m x 2.5m.

The Huts will be advertised for use by families using platforms such as Airbnb.

The toilet block, associated water treatment plant and all relevant highways, access and parking issues were approved in 2018.

Appearance (character)

The Shepherds Huts will be of typical traditional design.

As shown on the plan, the huts are to be tucked away behind the large barn. There is full woodland screening to the south of the site. There are substantial hedgerows to the west, east and north of the site. The huts will also be screened by the existing farm barn on the north side.

There will be no other changes to the appearance of the site.

Planning considerations

The prevailing Development Plan is the Wrexham UDP (1996 – 2011).

Chapter 9 of the UDP addresses Community and Leisure facilities and Tourism. However, whilst the Wrexham UDP is presently in force, it is considerably out of date and the replacement Wrexham Local Development Plan is still some way off adoption; under these circumstances, the Welsh Government planning policies should be the principal guide for the development decision.

Planning Policy Wales and TAN 6 (Planning for sustainable rural communities) is supportive of rural diversification. Paragraph 3.12 states that,

Planning authorities should support the diversification of the rural economy as a way to provide local employment opportunities (and) increase local economic prosperity.....

paragraph 3.7.2 states that

*Many economic activities can be sustainably located on farms. Small on-farm operations such as food and timber processing and food packing, together with services (e.g. offices, workshop facilities, equipment hire and maintenance), **sports and recreation services**, and the production of non-food crops and renewable energy, are likely to be appropriate uses.*

In general development management terms, the proposal is

- sited close to an existing settlement (Bronington) where there are a range of services and facilities.
- it is located well away from residential properties, so any noise generated on site will not adversely affect the amenity of neighbours. There will be no material change in the visual appearance of the site and the site will maintain a predominantly agricultural character – as at present.
- The development will provide local employment opportunities in the agriculture, education, and leisure sectors
- The proposal will have economic benefits to the local community by providing business opportunities for local public houses, shops, caterers, transport providers, visitor attractions, laundry / cleaning companies and suppliers etc.
- The proposal has an already approved safe access and adequate car parking provision.

All the above bullet points demonstrate compliance with the general development policies of the current Wrexham UDP policy GDP1.

Landscaping (character)

The site is well screened from public view by dense roadside and perimeter hedges. A new mixed native copse was planted in front of the farm building in approximately 2007 and this has matured considerably. As a result, it is not necessary to provide additional planting, however the existing hedges and trees will be maintained.

Layout

The site layout will remain unchanged apart from the addition of the Shepherds Huts themselves.

Access (movement to, from and within the site)

Vehicular access arrangements are already approved and within the 2018 granted permission.

Only pre-booked visitors will be arriving on site at any time.

This proposal will not increase the overall number of visitors as approved by the 2018 granted consent. The purpose of this proposal is to broaden the offering of the business and thus increase the likelihood of it succeeding in the future.

Ecology

The proposal will not create any development which may harm or be detrimental to protected species. An ecology survey, Great Crested Newt and Arboriculture method statements have already been completed.

Accessibility

Disabled parking spaces are already provided and a disabled wc with ramped access. The main farm building / amenity area has a smooth clear floor area suitable for disabled access.

Community Safety

The site is relatively isolated from any dwellings and there is limited natural surveillance. The site is already protected by security cameras and locked gates.

Environmental sustainability

There are no new buildings proposed for the development other than the Shepherds Huts themselves.

The site hedges and trees are maintained and managed for wildlife enhancement. It is in the interests of the business to have a well-managed site of interest to visitors.

The energy requirements of the Huts themselves will be fulfilled using only renewable and environmentally sustainable sources. The Huts will each have solar panel generated electricity which will power low wattage lighting. Heating & cooking will be wood fired using local, renewable resources.

The site is within walking/cycling distance from Bronington so will be accessible to local people/employees by methods other than a private motor car.

Conclusion

The proposed addition of accommodation units to this site will enhance a subtle and low-key diversification of an agricultural unit.

It is paramount that the existing business is supported to ensure continued survival and provision of local employment opportunities especially during a time when both tourism and employment have been hugely affected by the global pandemic.

The business will continue to provide local employment opportunities and local economic benefits in the rural area of Bronington....in accordance with Planning Policy Wales and TAN 6.

The proposed use will comply with the requirements of the current Wrexham UDP policy GDP1

Safe access, sufficient car parking and provision of water treatment are already established.

The existing business has been operational since the granted permission on 30th July 2018 with absolutely **no** negative impact on the local community or area.