

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed Conversion of Former Public House to
Three Residential Units
at

THE GREDINGTON ARMS
HOLT ROAD
LLAN-Y-PWLL
WREXHAM
LL13 9SD



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1.0 INTRODUCTION.

1.1

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of an application for full planning permission for the conversion of the former Gredington Arms Public House to three residential units together with parking facilities and private amenity spaces in accordance with the submitted plans and external elevations supplied.

1.2

This statement meets the statutory requirements of Article 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)(Wales) Order (“the DMPWO”) 2012, as amended by Article 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2016.

1.3

This Design and Access Statement provides an analysis of the application site and sets out the principles that have guided and informed the design.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1

The application site comprises an irregular shaped parcel of land immediately to the north of the Holt Road and with extensive frontage to this formerly busy major arterial route between the town of Wrexham and Holt / Farndon and beyond to Cheshire. The former pub building and adjacent two storey outbuilding occupy the western portion of the overall landholding, an area of around 0.133 Hectares or 0.33 Acres. The former car park serving the pub is a generally level parcel of land situated to the east of the application site and elevated above the Holt Road. This part of the site amounts to approximately 0.2 Hectares or 0.5 Acres. The applicant's total landholding therefore amounts to 0.333 Hectares or 0.83 Acres.

2.2

The site is a brownfield, former commercial site located in open countryside comprising the former pub building and adjacent, detached outbuilding and the former hard surfaced pub car park. The site is bounded to the western, northern and eastern boundaries by established landscaped areas which form an attractive backdrop to the site and which serve to insulate the site from passing traffic using the new Industrial Estate Link Road to the north.

2.3

The site benefits from a substantial frontage to Holt Road. Holt Road, in this particular location, now comprises a quiet country lane following the opening of the recently completed Wrexham Industrial Estate Link Road and only provides access to a small number of properties in the hamlet of Llan y Pwll together with two commercial quarrying operations, one to the east of the application site and one beyond the site to the west.

2.4

The former Gredington Arms public house comprises an attractive, traditional double-fronted Georgian property which is in good structural condition and which retains a range of original internal and external features together with

some later, utilitarian additions to the eastern and western extremities. The detached outbuilding is a former agricultural building which retains extensive vernacular external detailing. The former public house includes a three bedroomed manager's apartment to the first floor.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL.

3.1

The proposal is to convert the former public house to two, semi-detached residential dwellings including the removal of some later ad-hoc additions to the eastern extremity of the main building together with the conversion of the former outbuilding to a two storey detached dwelling. The development will provide the following accommodation :-

Unit 1 – 4-bedroomed semi-detached dwelling.

Unit 2 – 3-bedroomed semi-detached dwelling.

Unit 3 – 3-bedroomed detached dwelling.

3.2

The development will involve the retention of the existing buildings together with the enhancement of the buildings by the removal / demolition of later extensions and the erection of limited extension in order to provide good levels of residential amenity and improve the overall balanced appearance of the former pub building. The former outbuilding will require the existing south facing gable wall to be dismantled and re-built in re-cycled materials approximately 700mm behind the existing building line in order to provide sufficient visibility sightlines in eastern and western directions in the interests of highway safety. This alteration is indicated on the drawings submitted as part of the application and is discussed further in Section 6.0 of this Statement.

3.3

Detached garaging is proposed to be erected to Units 1 and 3 in order to provide an appropriate level of amenity. Vehicular and pedestrian access is to be provided to Unit 2 in the space between the former pub building and the detached outbuilding.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT.

4.1

The site is located in open countryside and in Green Barrier (Policy EC1) and partially within and partially without an area designated for the Protection of Mineral Resources (Policy MW9).

4.2

Accordingly and in addition to the above, the following Policies contained in the Adopted Unitary Development Plan are relevant considerations in this matter :-

Policy S9 – Loss of Local Facilities.

Policy H3 – Conversion of Buildings Outside Settlement Limits.

Policy GDP1 – General Development Principles.

4.3

Policy S9 states that *“Outside Wrexham Town Centre and the district shopping centres, proposals that entail the loss of shopping/commercial facilities will only be permitted where :-*

- a) the use is no longer viable and all reasonable attempts to sell or let the business over a 12 month period have proved unsuccessful or;*
- b) the building is in a derelict or unsightly condition and the proposals would bring about substantial environmental improvements and*

- c) *the loss of the facility would not prove detrimental to the social and economic fabric of its locality."*

4.4

Sub-paragraph b) of this particular policy is not relevant in this matter as the building is neither derelict nor unsightly. However, the former use as a public house ceased with the closure of the pub in June or July 2012 as a result of the construction of the new Wrexham Industrial Estate Link Road which effectively removed all passing trade from the enterprise and changed the nature and character of the hamlet of Llan y Pwll. The former owners of the property, Hyde's Brewery in Manchester, argued that prior to commencement of construction of the link road, the pub enjoyed steady passing trade. Subsequently the business failed because the property is no longer passed by potential customers. The construction of the link road dramatically improved the setting and characteristics of Llan y Pwll for other residents, removing extremely heavy traffic, noise and nuisance, significantly improving residential amenity. However the effects upon the business were terminal resulting in failure and closure. The property has been actively marketed as a going concern since that date in mid 2012 but the only interested party have been the applicants who have acquired the property as a development opportunity. Discussions with planning officers prior to submission of the application indicated that it is accepted that a public house in this location is not a viable business proposition and this is partly as a result of the development of the new road.

4.5

Sub-paragraph c) of this policy states that the loss of a commercial facility and subsequent re-development would be acceptable where such loss would not prove detrimental to the social and economic fabric of its locality. The locality of Llan y Pwll no doubt benefited from but was not reliant upon the public house. Indeed the nature of the clientele that frequented the establishment indicates that the business relied upon visiting trade from both the locality and also from further afield in order to survive as opposed to "locals". Therefore it can be shown that the loss of the pub, whilst regrettable, did not negatively impact upon the social and economic fabric of the locality. The benefits in terms of

the improved residential amenity and vehicular and pedestrian safety for residents far outweighs the negative impact of the loss of the public house.

4.6

Consequently, the proposals are shown to be compliant with the aims and objectives of this locally adopted planning policy.

4.7

Policy H3 of the Adopted UDP states that *“The change of use or conversion of a building to residential use outside settlement limits will only be permitted where :-*

the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive rebuilding tantamount to the erection of a new dwelling; and

any inherent characteristics of merit in the building are retained; and

the proposed dwelling and the resulting curtilage does not constitute an undesirable intrusion into the landscape, create access problems, nor require the provision of services at public cost; and

the floor plan of the existing building is sufficient to create a habitable dwelling.”

4.8

The buildings are structurally sound having been occupied and utilised as a busy public house and ancillary accommodation until a few years ago and comprise an architecturally pleasing pair of buildings which contribute significantly to the character and appearance of the locality. The proposals, as discussed further later in this document under the heading “Design”, seek to respect the building’s architectural character and to enhance this character in the interests of achieving a pleasing and acceptable scheme of conversion. The proposals are therefore compliant with this adopted planning policy.

4.9

It is necessary to dismantle the front elevation of the former outbuilding which comprises Unit 3 as indicated on the application drawings, in order to re-build it a further 700mm away from the edge of the highway in order to provide adequate vehicular visibility sightlines from the car parking spaces serving Units 2 and 3. There is no reason to suspect that this would have a detrimental impact upon the structural stability of the building as it stands. The wall shall be taken down brick by brick following the correct propping of the

existing first floor structure and roof timbers. The new wall will then be built with recycled brickwork as a cavity wall off a new concrete foundation which will be designed in compliance with Building Regulations and to the satisfaction of the Local Authority's Building Control Department in order to ensure the long term structural stability of this part of the building in compliance with Policy H3 of the Adopted UDP.

4.10

Policy GDP1 in the Adopted UDP sets out a prescriptive list of development principles which are to be considered in the design of all developments. The sections relevant to the application include the following :-

Ensure that build development in its scale, design and layout, and in its use of materials and landscaping, accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality.

Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public / private spaces.

Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and the nearby locality.

Secure public services (e.g. gas, water, electricity) to development at minimum public cost.

4.11

In accordance with this particular policy, the proposed conversion of the former public house to a range of dwellings will indeed preserve, enhance and ensure the long term survival of these buildings. The buildings are traditional in design and their use of materials and have made a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area for many years. The careful and sympathetic scheme of conversion proposed will ensure that this contribution and therefore the character of the site and the wider area is preserved and enhanced in the long term.

4.12

Personal and community safety and security are important elements in the design of any new development. As a currently empty building, the safety of the community as a whole is compromised because the building is vulnerable to criminal and / or anti-social behaviour. The re-use of the building following conversion will improve the safety of the community by removing this risk and

by increasing the natural surveillance provided by new occupants. Additionally, the new occupants will benefit from well designed homes which will form an important part of the local community.

4.13

Individual vehicular and pedestrian accesses are proposed to serve each of the three residential units. Units 1 and 3 are to be provided with on-site garaging facilities and Unit 2 is to enjoy the benefit of an off-street parking area. The current nature of Holt Road and the very limited use by traffic following the completion of the Industrial Estate Link Road means that each of the proposed access points will provide safe and secure vehicular and pedestrian access. This is a significant improvement from the previously dangerous access to the former public house which was historically located to the western extremity of the site only. This situation was improved in recent years prior to construction of the link road due to the formation of an egress lane from the pub which utilised a secondary link to the roadway to Borrass Quarry. Nevertheless, the proposed site layout arrangement and the positioning and nature of the proposed accesses will provide safe vehicular and pedestrian access to and from the development. As mentioned earlier, it is proposed to dismantle and re-build the south facing gable wall of the former outbuilding / Unit 3 in response to concerns raised by the Highway's Department that visibility in both directions was a little below the required standard. Consequently the proposals are able to exhibit visibility sightlines of at least 2.4m by 43m in either direction in the interests of vehicular and pedestrian safety.

4.14

The existing property is currently served by mains gas, water and electricity and these existing services can be adapted to serve the new development without public cost. The property currently drains to a large septic tank which is located to the south of Holt Road in third party land. The use of this facility is long established and legally protected. Following the completion of the conversion, the discharge of foul effluent to the septic tank from the three dwellings will be significantly less than from the previous public house and therefore the existing drainage system will continue to serve the new development adequately.

4.15

In consideration of the above, it can be demonstrated that the proposals which form part of this application, to convert the existing buildings to three residential dwellings, are fully compliant with the aims and objectives of locally adopted planning policy.

5.0 DESIGN

5.1

Good design is an all embracing concept. This statement considers the essence of good design in response to the following factors :-

- Use
- Amount
- Layout
- Scale
- Landscaping
- Appearance

The above objectives are key to good design, to the understanding of and response to context and should form the basis of any scheme and design statement.

5.2 Use and Amount.

The existing buildings which comprise the former public house and detached, two storey outbuilding comprise the following areas of accommodation :-

Pub – ground floor bar and ancillary spaces = 175m² / 1,883sq ft.

Manager's Accommodation = 102m² / 1,079sq ft.

Outbuilding – ground floor store = 54m² / 581sq ft.

Outbuilding – first floor function room = 58m² / 624 sq ft.

Total floor areas = 389m² / 4,167sq ft.

Initial consideration of the floor areas involved and the simple sub-division of the two buildings resulted in proposals to achieve three residential dwellings by conversion, two within the existing pub building and a further detached unit within the outbuilding. When taking into account the removal / demolition of various utilitarian structures to the east of the main building which are clearly not original but poorly designed later additions, together with limited extension in order to provide a good level of accommodation and amenity to Unit 2 and the slight reduction in the footprint of Unit 3 in order to improve vehicular and pedestrian visibility to Units 2 and 3, the following units of accommodation have been achieved :-

Unit 1 – 4-bedroomed semi-detached dwelling of 148m² / 1,593sq ft.

Unit 2 – 3-bedroomed semi-detached dwelling of 125m² / 1,345sq ft.

Unit 3 – 3-bedroomed detached dwelling of 105.7m² / 1,137sq ft.

Total floor areas = 378.7m² / 4,075sq ft.

Whilst the floor areas achieved are no doubt generous, the conversion of the buildings in this way achieves the optimum use and amount of residential accommodation taking into account the nature, orientation and character of the existing buildings.

5.3 Layout.

The layout of the development is dictated by the nature, massing and scale of the existing buildings. Vehicular and pedestrian access together with garaging to Units 1 and 3 has been designed around the existing layout and form of the buildings in order to ensure a satisfactory level of residential amenity.

5.4 Scale.

The scale of the development is also dictated by the scale of the existing structures. The floor areas and volume of the converted buildings are similar

to the original form of the buildings prior to development. The proposed extension at first floor level which is provided in order to ensure an adequate level of accommodation and residential amenity to Unit 2 is mitigated by the demolition of poorly designed structures to the east of the main building, the dual purpose of the partial demolition and subsequent extension being to improve the overall appearance, character and balance of the main former pub building.

5.5 Landscaping.

The areas to the north or rear of the buildings and which previously comprised the access road to the former pub car park located to the west of the application site are to be subject to a soft landscaping scheme generally as indicated on the site layout plan in order to provide adequate and suitable private amenity spaces. The open aspect and hard surfaced areas to the south elevation to Holt Road are to remain hard surfaced as existing in order to preserve the existing elevational setting and context of the buildings.

5.6 Character and Appearance.

The only outward changes of appearance which affects the public view of the buildings are the proposed bedroom 3 and landing extension to the eastern side of Unit 2 which will have the effect of balancing the front elevation of the former pub building in the interests of preserving and enhancing the character of the building in the streetscene together with the dismantling and re-building of the south facing gable elevation to Unit 3 in the interest of highway safety. Whilst the extensions as part of the conversion of Unit 2 are designed to enhance the character and appearance of this part of the building, the alterations to Unit 3 will have a neutral impact upon the appearance of the former outbuilding because it is proposed to utilize recycled materials and reinstate the southern elevation in a form identical to the existing elevation. All other elevational repairs and improvements to the rear of the buildings will be undertaken in accordance with the existing style and design detailing of the buildings in order to preserve the character of the buildings throughout.

6.0 ACCESSIBILITY AND MOVEMENT.

6.1

Local planning policy GDP1, subsection e) requires that development sites are located in an area with good public transport provision. The site is located close to the A534 which is a major County distributor road at a point which is approximately a 5 minute walk in an easterly direction to bus stops on the north-east and south-west bound routes.

- Bus routes 13, 34 run between Wrexham Town Centre and the Wrexham Industrial Estate generally on an hourly basis commencing at 5:34am.
- Bus route C56 runs between Wrexham Town Centre and Chester, again generally on an hourly basis.

The site is therefore in an accessible location with good access to public transport facilities. This constitutes a sustainable location for development with good public transport links to the centres of Wrexham and Chester and to the major employment hub of the Wrexham Industrial Estate.

6.2

The application site is located on the “Gresford Loop via Pandy and Holt Cycle Route” which provides safe and convenient cycle access between the site and Wrexham Town Centre to the west and the village of Holt to the east.

6.3

Access to the proposed dwellings is available via a ramped approach (1in20 gradient) adjacent to the driveways which provide vehicular and pedestrian access from the Holt Road to the main entrance door of the dwellings. Ramped approaches to the rear external private spaces are not possible due to the topography of the site itself and therefore ambulant steps in accordance with Building Regulation Approved Document M will be provided.

6.4

Individual vehicular and pedestrian accesses are proposed to serve each of the three residential units. Units 1 and 3 are to be provided with on-site garaging facilities and Unit 2 is to enjoy the benefit of an off-street parking area. The current nature of Holt Road and the very limited use by traffic following the completion of the Industrial Estate Link Road means that each of

the proposed access points will provide safe and secure vehicular and pedestrian access. This is a significant improvement from the previously dangerous access to the former public house which was historically located to the western extremity of the site only. This situation was improved in recent years prior to construction of the link road due to the formation of an egress lane from the pub which utilised a secondary link to the roadway to Borrás Quarry. Nevertheless, the proposed site layout arrangement and the positioning and nature of the proposed accesses will provide safe vehicular and pedestrian access to and from the development. As mentioned earlier, it is proposed to dismantle and re-build the south facing gable wall of the former outbuilding / Unit 3 in response to concerns raised by the Highway's Department that visibility in both directions was a little below the required standard. Consequently the proposals are able to exhibit visibility sightlines of at least 2.4m by 43m in either direction in the interests of vehicular and pedestrian safety.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY.

7.1

The design objectives as far as promoting community safety are to ensure attractive linkages with public spaces which benefit from natural surveillance. The primary reason for this requirement is "To ensure that adequate visibility is maintained at the proposed point of access". However, the dual role that this requirement performs is that the front external spaces of the development are open to public view thereby providing natural surveillance during daylight hours. It is during the hours of darkness when problems may occur either to the front external spaces or the more secluded private garden areas to the rear, which could result in anti-social behaviour. It is therefore important in this situation, that effective artificial lighting of the front and rear of the plots is included in order to deter anti-social behaviour and to provide potential for natural surveillance by residents who overlook the site or who may pass on foot or in vehicles. However, any artificial lighting which is provided must respect the amenity of adjoining local residents and therefore must be

carefully designed in order to respect the position of the site and relationship between the application site and adjoining residents.

7.2

The proposal to rebuild the south facing gable wall of Unit 3 in order to achieve visibility sightlines in either direction of 2.4m x 34m from the vehicular accesses will not only ensure a good level of pedestrian and highway safety for occupiers of the new development but will have the dual effect of improving pedestrian and highway safety for other road users either on foot, on bicycle or in cars, thereby contributing to community safety as a whole.

9.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

In summary, the proposed conversion of the existing public house and adjacent outbuilding identified as part of this application for planning permission has striven to achieve the following aims and objectives :-

- Achieve an acceptable scheme of conversion which complies with the identified planning policies in terms of justifying the loss of a local facility, the conversion of buildings to residential use outside of settlement limits and to a good standard of design in order to preserve and enhance for the long term, existing buildings which form an important part of the character and appearance of the locality.
- Provide units of residential accommodation within the fabric of these architecturally important buildings which enjoy a good level of residential amenity both within the accommodation and to the external private spaces.
- Provide dwellings which also benefit from good pedestrian and vehicular safety having regard to the provision of visibility sightlines in both directions which meet National Guidelines.

In conclusion, this Design and Access Statement has demonstrated that the conversion of this former public house and the adjacent outbuilding to residential use is possible in accordance with adopted planning policy and principles of good design.

In consideration of the above and the drawings and other information provided as part of the application, officers are respectfully requested to view these proposals favorably and resolve to grant planning permission.

D.S. Jones &Co. July 2020.

For and on behalf of Mr. D. Whilding.

