

Huw Evans Planning

**Proposed agricultural building on
land at Bronwylfa Road, Aberoer,
Wrexham, LL14 4ND**

Agricultural Statement

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1.0 Policy Context

- 1.1 This statement is to be read in conjunction with the Planning Statement submitted with the planning application reference P/2020/0220. It has been provided at the planning authority's request to justify the requirement for locating a building of the size proposed on this site to satisfy the requirements of Policy EC 3 of the UDP. Policy EC13 states:

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. Isolated buildings will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where there is an essential agricultural need, and no reasonable alternative location for the development.

- 1.2 In justifying the policy the council recognises that there is a need for continuing investment in modern farm buildings and equipment acknowledging that farm businesses need to change and grow in response to market forces and legislation if they are to survive. In some cases problems may arise due to proposals which are unusually large or in sensitive locations. In these instances planning conditions may be necessary to lessen the impact although consideration will be given to functional requirements and cost implications. It defines the farm complex as being the curtilage of usable farm buildings usually centred around the farmhouse.
- 1.3 In the case of this proposal there is no farmhouse or existing agricultural buildings and it is therefore different to the circumstances in which the policy was intended to serve. Consideration needs to be given to situations where a small rural enterprise is becoming established and which is not served by a farm dwelling as such. This is becoming increasingly commonplace as existing farm holdings are being split due either to changing practices or financial pressure. Paragraph 6.2.6 of TAN 6 recognises this by explaining that farms vary considerably in size, type of farm business and layout, adding that the loss of part of a holding can have important implications for the remainder. The effect of severance and fragmentation upon the farm and its structure may be relevant.
- 1.4 Planning Policy Wales states that in paragraph 5.6.1 that a strong rural economy is essential to support sustainable and vibrant rural communities. The establishment of new enterprises and the expansion of existing business is crucial to the growth and stability of rural areas. Small-scale enterprises have a vital role to play in the rural economy, contributing to both local and national competitiveness and prosperity with new development being required in many areas.

- 1.5 PPW advises planning authorities to adopt a constructive approach towards agricultural development proposals, especially those which are designed to meet the needs of changing farming practices
- 1.6 TAN 6 also emphasises that strong rural economies are essential to support sustainable and vibrant rural communities. Strong rural economies help to promote social inclusion and provide the financial resources necessary to support local services and maintain attractive and diverse natural environments and landscapes.
- 1.7 These are all material considerations that need to be taken into account in the consideration and determination of this application.

2.0 Extent of the land holding

- 2.1 By way of clarification the current total extent of the rural enterprise in terms of area is not just confined to the land shown on the application. The applicant is the freeholder of the application site, amounting to 3.75 acres, together with land at Bwlchgwyn which amounts to a further 5.85 acres. This gives a freehold total of 9.6 acres (3.9 ha).
- 2.2 The applicant also rents two further parcels of land at Llandegla amounting to 10 acres (4 ha), and at Talwrn amounting to 2.5 acres (1 ha). This provides a total holding of 22.10 acres (9 ha).
- 2.3 The applicant has the intention of purchasing or renting more land in the future as soon as opportunities arise. It is therefore considered that it is best to have sufficient suitable accommodation in readiness for this situation rather than be faced with having to apply for further development and extensions.

3.0 Suitability of proposed location

- 3.1 It is necessary for the location of the proposed building to be on the applicant's freehold land for obvious reasons. This restricts the applicant's options to the Aberoer or Bwlchgwyn holdings. The Aberoer site is less prominent, has better access and better quality of land particularly during the winter months.
- 3.2 It is situated in the low part of the field and is not unduly prominent. It makes use of an existing farm access, is close to and partially screened by the existing hedge. It is not isolated as it visually relates to built development on the other side of the road without creating any adverse amenity impact.

4.0 Use of the land

- 4.1 The current stocking levels are 20 sheep, that will be rotated between freehold and rented lands, for grazing, livestock and producing forage. The shed will be used for lambing, storage of winter feed/bedding and tractors and farm implements.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Given the strict interpretation of Policy EC3 and its intent, it is considered that this proposal is not in conflict with its purpose. The proposal related to a developing new enterprise with no established base in terms of buildings. It is a matter of fact that an enterprise such as this has to start somewhere.
- 5.2 By nature such development will inevitably be situated in the open countryside.
- 5.3 The type of structure is typical of farm buildings and it will not be seen as an alien or obtrusive feature in the landscape and will not detract from the rural character of the area.
- 5.4 Taking all material considerations into account the proposal complies with local and national planning policy causing is no material harm which would prejudice the implementation of the UDP's plans and proposals.

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22 July 2020