

STATEMENT OF PLANNING BENEFITS

Erection of 82 Dwellings, Realignment and
Improvements to Top Road, Formation of Public Open
Space and Provision of Affordable Housing

Land off Top Road, Summerhill,
Wrexham LL11 4SP

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1. Introduction

This report seeks to highlight and summarise the special circumstances which are associated with the planning application on Land at Top Road, Summerhill, Wrexham LL11 4SP.

The application proposes:

Erection of 82 Dwellings, Realignment and Improvements to Top Road,
Formation of Public Open Space and Provision of Affordable Housing

The application was submitted on the 2nd August 2017 and has been the subject of extensive negotiations with the Planning Team since that time.

The scheme is the subject of a number of planning benefits and these are highlighted in the following part of the report.

2. Planning Benefits

2.1 Supply of Housing

Planning Policy Wales and TAN 1 requires each Local Planning Authority to ensure that sufficient land is available to provide a 5-year supply of housing land within their areas.

Technical Advice Note 1 – January 2015 – Joint Housing Land Availability Studies states that:

2.1 The requirement to maintain a 5-year supply of readily developable housing land in each local planning authority across Wales remains a key planning policy requirement of the Welsh Government ... local planning authorities are required to ensure that sufficient land is genuinely available to provide a 5-year supply of land for housing.

6.2 ... Where the current study shows a land supply below the 5-year requirement or where the local planning authority has been unable to undertake a study, the need to increase supply should be given considerable weight when dealing with planning applications provided that the development would otherwise comply with development plan and national planning policies.

A letter from the Welsh Government dated 18th July 2018, removed paragraph 6.2 which refers to attaching 'considerable' weight to the lack of a 5 year land supply.

However it is our view that this issue should remain a significant material consideration given the following factors:

- the considerable age of the UDP (expired 2011)
- the Wrexham County Borough Council Joint Housing Land Availability Study (JHLAS) 2015 concludes that there is not a 5 year supply of housing land
- the significant housing requirements set out in the deposit LDP (provision is made for 8525 new homes in order to deliver a requirement of 7750 over the plan period to 2028).

The current application seeks to assist in the increase in the supply of housing land within the Wrexham County Borough area in line with the requirements of Planning Policy Wales and TAN 1 and this is a significant planning benefit.

In the context of the supply of housing units, Macbryde Homes also commit to making all reasonable endeavors to commence work as quickly as possible and complete the site within three years.

2.2 Improvements to Summerhill Road/Top Road/Bottom Road junction

To the east of the site Summerhill Road/Bottom Road are the priority routes within the village.

The junction of Summerhill/Bottom Road with Top Road sits on the eastern boundary of the site.

These roads lie within the 30mph limit and are shown below.



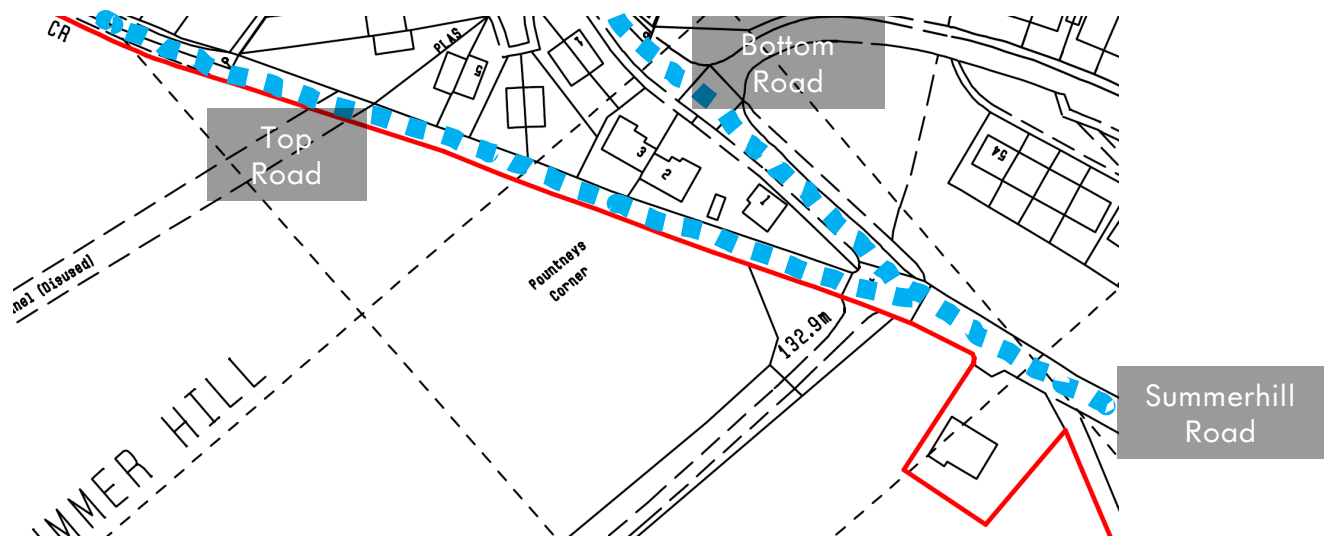
Top Road runs at an acute angle which creates a substandard junction in terms of its width, alignment and visibility as shown below.



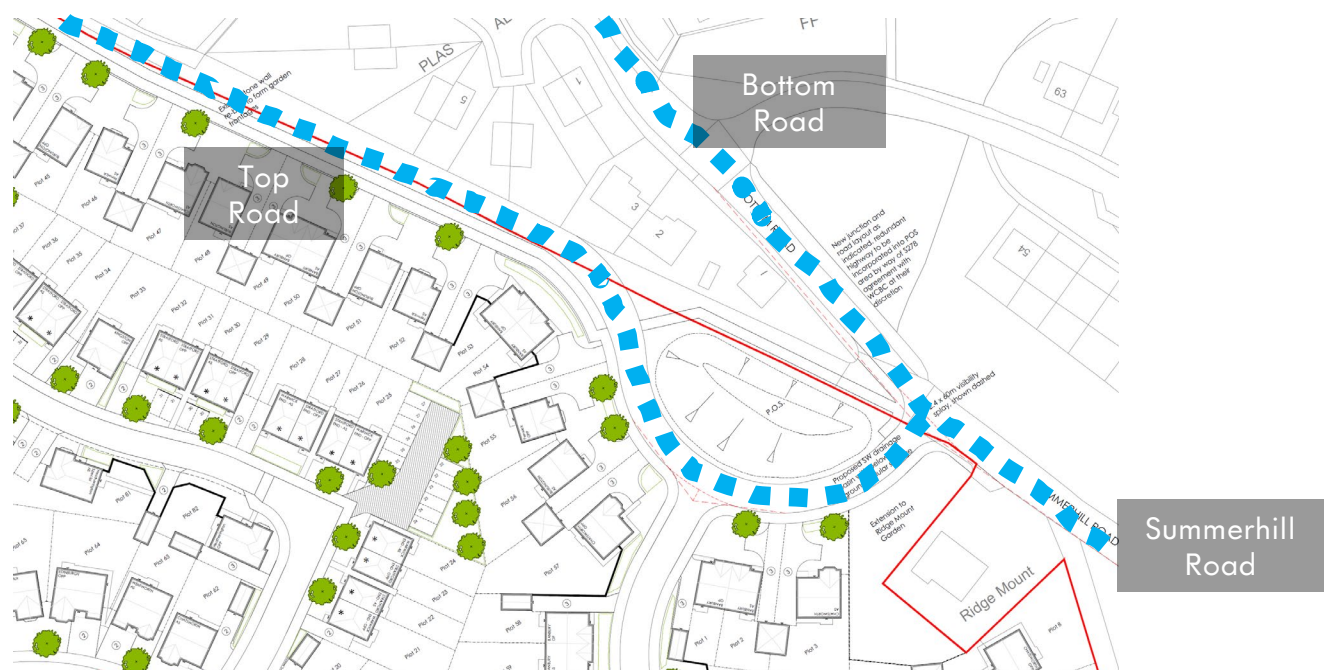
Traffic also tends to speed along Summerhill Road and into Top Road which creates a dangerous position for vehicles and pedestrian.

The scheme proposes to re-align Top Road so that it sits at 90° to Summerhill/Bottom Road. The new Top Road would sweep into the site and rejoin the existing Top Road creating a safer road junction.

The Location Plan shows the current alignment of the road and an extract is shown below.



Drawing TRS-SP01revE – Proposed Site Plan shows the principles of this re-aligned junction and an extract is shown below



The details of the junction improvement have been discussed with the Highway Authority and the details are considered further in the Transport Assessment dated March 2017 provided by Croft Transport Solutions.

The provision of the improved road junction will act as a natural traffic calming measure and considerably reduce traffic speeds within the local area. The re-alignment of the junction geometry will also improve traffic safety in the vicinity. The re-alignment along with the associated footpaths will also assist in the safe pedestrian movements around the junction.

2.3 Width of Top Road

Top Road along the eastern edge of the site is contained by stone walls and a mature hedgeline.

Top Road accommodates a bus route (ARRIVA route 21/21A) and the limited width of the road causes conflicts between road users (buses, cars, cyclists and pedestrians).

The scheme proposes the setting back of the existing boundary wall to provide a carriageway between a minimum of 5.5m wide and 6.5m wide.

The wall would be rebuilt to ensure the rural character of the existing road is retained.

The widening of Top Road would be a significant improvement which would greatly assist with traffic movements and road safety along Top Road.

2.4 Footpath along Top Road

Top Road does not include a formal footpath along the site frontage between the Summerhill/Bottom Road junction and 1 Grey Holt.

At present pedestrians walk along the roadway and a narrow kerbed verge on the eastern side of the road.

The scheme includes the provision of a 1.8m wide footpath alongside the widened road referred to above. This would cross onto the area of open space at the junction of Summerhill Road/Bottom Road.

Natural surveillance of the footpath would be provided from the new houses within the site.

The new footpath alongside Top Road would significantly improve pedestrian safety in the local area.

2.5 Pedestrian Links to Footpath GWE/7 and GWE/8

There are currently no public footpaths/routes within or through the site.

In addition the areas around the site include various pinch points which inhibit safe pedestrian movement around the site.

The existing Footpath GWE/7 runs to the north of the site between Top Road to the east and the Golf Club within Moss Valley to the west.

The footpath also links with the existing housing estate Westminster Rise/Bryn San Stefan developed by Gower Homes.

The existing Footpath GWE/8 runs to the east of the site between Top Road (to the west) and Bottom Road (to the east) and lies between the Vicarage Close and Plas Allyn Crescent housing developments.



The scheme proposes a new opening within the boundary wall along the northern edge of the site to provide a link from the existing site to this footpath GWE/7. The internal footpaths within the site allow greater permeability through the site and into the wider area to the north.

The provision of the footpaths within the site would assist with accessing footpath GWE/8 and provide a direct route to the centre of the settlement and local services and facilities.

The footpaths within the site allow a greater permeability through the site into the wider area.

The footpaths also provide a link between existing footpaths within the local area to the benefit of existing pedestrians.

2.6 Pedestrian Routes Outside the Site

Following discussions with the Councils Highways Team the scheme Macbryde Homes would be willing to fund an additional footpath on the eastern side of Summerhill Road, outside of the application site.

Two options for a route covering the section of Summerhill Road not currently served with a footpath between the junction of Bryn Coed and Bottom Road,

past the development site, to the Junction of Wheatsheaf Lane and Summerhill Road have been discussed with the Council's Highways Team.

The preferred route of the footpath along with its specification would be secured through an appropriate s106 Agreement.

2.7 Affordable Housing

Unitary Development Plan Policy H7 requires a 20% provision of affordable housing to be provided on new developments of more than 25 dwellings. This is calculated as 16.4 dwellings of the proposed 82 dwellings.

As part of the package of benefits within the scheme, 24 units (of the 82 proposed) are shown to be affordable, which equates to a provision of 29.3% of the overall site.

Macbryde Homes accept that this is an overprovision of affordable housing but wish to include this as a planning gain/benefit in bring the site forward for development.

These 24 units would be a mix of 2 and 3 bedroom houses as follows:

6 x Warwick 2 Bed, 2 Storey Semi Detached Dwelling	726sqft
18 x Stafford 3 Bed, 2 Storey Semi Detached Dwelling	830sqft

2.8 Public Access to the Site

The land is currently private with no public access.

The re-instatement of the historic parkland landscape setting along with footpaths through the site will allow access to significant open spaces within the site (far in excess of the policy requirement for a development of this size).

These areas of open space will benefit the wider community.

2.9 Green Barrier

The purposes of a Green Barrier are to prevent the coalescence of urban areas and villages with other settlements; assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; protect the setting of urban areas and villages and assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict/urban land.

The land is shown below in the context of the surrounding development.



On the basis of the above the site does not significantly contribute to the key aims of the Green Barrier/Wedge policy.

The scheme proposes the logical adjustment of the Green Barrier and the designation would remain on the western side of the site.

The value of the site to the Green Barrier would be enhanced by the re-instatement of the historic parkland setting on the western side of the site and the introduction of public access to the site adjacent to Moss Wood (see 2.3 and 2.4 below)

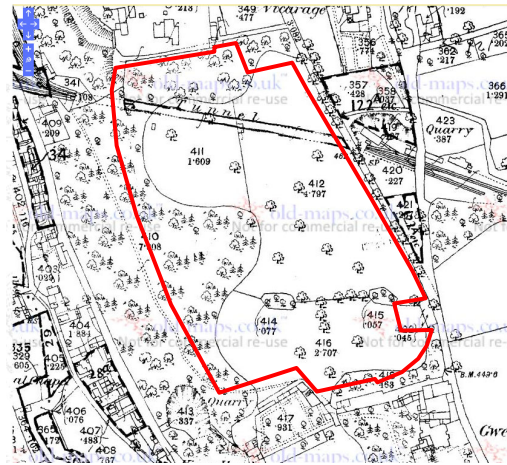
2.10 Re-Instatement of the Historic Setting of the Site

A review of the historic landscape setting has found that the site was part of the estate of Gwersyllt Hill Hall. There are tall brick estate walls along the northern and southern boundaries and parkland tree species around the edges of the site (notably sweet chestnut and turkey oak), indicating the site was formerly parkland associated with the Hall.

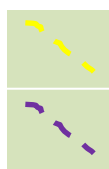
The hall was quite grand but demolished in the 1980s (and its footprint/site was subsequently developed into Chestnut Court).

The Hall was home to the famous architect Thomas Penson, which is worthy of some interpretation within the open spaces.

Below is the historic map extract showing the site in the 1870s. Note the original boundary line of Moss Wood, which is still marked by the hedgerow/treeline in the northern half of the site.



An extract from the Proposed Site Plan Drawing TRS-SP01 is shown below.



the historic hedge which remains on the site.

new planting to re-create the line of the historic parkland/woodland

The open space on site would:

- be landscaped to re-create the historic landscape setting
- be open and available to public access for recreational space and walking routes

- provide the new line of the green barrier (which would run along the new highway within the site)

The re-instatement of the historic parkland landscape setting would provide a significant community/social benefit.

2.11 Sustainability

The site has the following sustainability credentials

- The site lies within Gwersyllt/Summerhill/Rhosrobin/Bradley which is identified as a Tier 2 Settlement
- The settlement contains a wide range of services and facilities including
 - Wide range of Shops
 - Heulfan Primary School (Ysgol Heulfan) – 360m distant
 - Bryn Alyn Secondary School (Ysgol Bryn Alyn) – 280m distant
 - Bus Services alongside the site frontage (Services 21/21A/23)
 - Local employment opportunities Mold Road Industrial Estate, Rhosddu Industrial Estate and Wrexham town centre
 - Community Centre at Gwersyllt Resource Centre – 600m distant
 - Pen Y Maes Health Centre/Doctors Surgery – 480m
 - Gwersyllt Train Station – 750m
- The site lies close to the urban centre of Wrexham
- The scheme would improve the road/highway network with an improved road junction and road widths along Top Road
- The scheme would create additional footpaths within and through the site to improve walking opportunities within the local area and the permeability of the site
- Trees and hedges within the site would be retained
- An ecology report has been being prepared which suggests that there are no significant impacts upon protected species
- The historic parkland landscape setting will be re-introduced to the western area of the site

The site lies within a sustainable location which accords with the Council's Preferred Strategy. The scheme creates a sustainable development which would contribute to the local community.

3. Conclusion

This report seeks to demonstrate that there are significant planning benefits inherent within the proposed scheme.

It is concluded that the scheme is well considered with high design principles and significant community benefits.

It is respectfully considered that the current planning application be approved.

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