

**Bob Dewey
PLANNING**

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**PROPOSED ERECTION OF 24 DWELLINGS,
LAND SOUTH OF MINERS INSTITUTE, LLAY, WREXHAM.**

Background: The proposal is to erect 24 houses (a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses) on land which was formerly a section of public open space but was declared redundant by Wrexham County Borough Council and I am informed has been vacant for in excess of 15 years.

Accessibility: The site is in the village of Llay but was not included in the settlement boundary in the Unitary Development Plan (presumably) because it was in use as public open space when the plan was prepared. It is not known what proposals will be shown in the draft Local Development Plan. It is located in a very sustainable location.

There are regular bus services directly outside the site. These link to Wrexham at least half hourly through the whole day and to Mold/Flint (7per day) and Rossett (3 per day). There are good public pavements along the road which would enable residents to walk to the employment sites on the industrial estate and to local shops, schools a pub and churches.

(This would accord with policy GDP1 (d) of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.)

Environmental Sustainability:

The site immediately adjoins the settlement boundary and makes a natural extension to the community. The applicants who own the site leased the site to the recreation authority - , Wrexham CBC for many years and envisaged that it should continue to be used by the public. However, the Council decided it was no longer required and its use was abandoned prior to 2000 and the site was returned to the applicants in 2012. Despite a small shortage of informal open space in the community, it is believed that there is no reasonable prospect of the land being reused in that way. It is considered better that the site should be redeveloped and that the proceeds of any sale devoted to maintaining and enhancing the open spaces and facilities provided by the applicants.

(This would accord with policy GDP1 (c) (e) and (h) of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.)

Character:

The precise form of the development is unknown at this time and the layout accompanying the application is intended to demonstrate that the number of units proposed can easily be accommodated. The village has a variety of densities, house types and layouts and it is considered that it should be relatively easy to design a scheme which will harmonise with the rest of the community.

The dwellings are expected to be constructed of brick and/or render under concrete tiled roofs. At present it is not possible to specify exactly the form of the buildings but they are expected to be two storeys in height.

(This would accord with policy GDP1 (a) of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.)

Community Safety: The entrance to the site is overlooked by dwellings opposite which will give a high degree of surveillance and will improve the security of the properties. The rear site boundary is expected to be securely fenced to prevent accidental encroachment into the properties from stray balls and /or trespass to/from the playing areas adjacent. This will minimise the possibility of unauthorised trespass to the properties.

(This would accord with policy GDP1 (b) of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.)

Movement to from and within the development: This is dealt with under “accessibility” above. The site is level and disabled access should not be an issue. Building Regulations will ensure basic access requirements and if practicable, those standards will be exceeded.

(This would accord with policy GDP1 (d) of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.)

Conclusion: The erection of dwellings will bring the site into economic use without any adverse impacts on the neighbours or the area.

(This would accord with policy GDP1 (k) of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan.)

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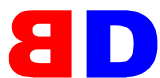
WREXHAM UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (adopted 14 Feb 2005)

Policy GDP1 All new development should:-

- a)** Ensure that built 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.
- b)** Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public / private spaces.
- c)** Make the best use of design techniques, siting and orientation in order to conserve energy and water resources.
- d)** Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and in the nearby locality.
- e)** Ensure that built development is located where it has convenient access to public transport facilities, and is well related to pedestrian and cycle routes wherever possible.
- h)** Safeguard sites and areas of nature conservation and wildlife interest, and to provide new habitats where there is an unavoidable loss of existing habitats and areas of wildlife interest

...

- k)** Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.



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PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

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Planning policy

The site is located outside the settlement limit in the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan. Whilst it is recognised that planning policy (PS1) “directs” new housing to sites within settlements it is clearly not an absolute bar. This is unlike sites within green barriers where (policy EC1) where developments will only be granted if it is for one of the specified uses (not including housing) which retain the “openness” of the site.

The site is believed to be outside the settlement only because of its actual use at the time the plan was prepared. The boundary makes a series of right angle turns which have limited justification to exclude it.

Indeed the decision to approve housing immediately to the south of the site (Drill Hall Court) some twenty years ago emphasises the lack of value the Council attributed to its exclusion from the settlement.

HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY:

The Welsh Government requires Local Planning Authorities to ensure that sufficient land is genuinely available to provide a 5 year supply of land for housing. (Technical Advice Note 1, *Joint Housing Land Availability Studies 2006*). (JHLAS)

The Wrexham UDP has now passed its expiry date and in preparing the replacement plan (the Wrexham LDP), the Council had to provide additional housing sites to try and meet the expected requirement for the new plan period. The Inspector appointed to consider the LDP at a very early stage identified that he had: “fundamental concerns” about the draft plan – in particular he identified: “ a **significant shortfall** in the supply of housing which, if it were to be addressed, would undermine the strategy of the Plan of confining general housing to within settlement boundaries.”

The 2014 JHLAS was published in April 2015 concluded that there is a supply of only 3.1 years (a reduction from 2013 which showed 3.4 years)

It therefore clear that the Council fails to provide adequate housing supply and this was so obvious to the Inspector appointed to review the draft Wrexham Local Development Plan early in 2013 that without embarking on the detailed investigation he recommended the Council withdraw their plan. This was accepted and the Council have had to embark upon a total review of their plan. It is little consolation to people trying to purchase housing now that

when the new LDP is finally adopted it in March 2018 (the current estimate) the UDP will be some seven years past its expiry date.

Recognising that difficulty, permissions have been granted for housing on several sites which are outside settlements and even in the green barrier.

This site will do minimal harm to the settlement strategy of the UDP and will help to remedy the severe housing land deficiency.

As indicated in the Design & Access Statement, the site is located in a very sustainable location, surrounded by housing, within walking distance of local employment and community facilities.

Open Space Policy

UDP policy CLF4 seeks to protect open space from development. However it does recognise that there may be cases where long term requirement has ceased and in such cases, consideration can be given to its redevelopment.

Llay ED

Site Ref:	Description:	Size Ha:	
Llay ED	Ward Requirement	Actual Ward Amount	Surplus/Deficit (Ha)
Children's Equipped Playground	1.259	1.308	0.049
Informal Playing Space	2.770	5.892	3.122
Outdoor Sport	2.014	0.409	-1.605
Playing Field	6.043	4.901	-1.142
Total	12.086	12.510	0.424

The above figures (provided by the Council) show that there is a significant over provision of informal play space in Llay (212% of the standard). This would perhaps explain why the Council's Leisure department resolved not to continue to maintain it as open space.

It would be totally unreasonable for the Council as Planning authority to seek to retain it as open space when the Council as recreation provider had declared it redundant.

Conclusion

The proposal is likely to be non-controversial and will provide an opportunity to provide additional housing in the village of Llay and will do no harm to any of the policies in the UDP. The resultant funds will be utilised to continue the valued community work provided by the Welfare Institute.

The Council is urged to grant the application.