



Property Advisers

Planning Statement

December 2014

Ref JL/NC106203

Westminster Industrial
Estate, Gwersyllt

Prepared for

Whitely Brothers Ltd

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of an outline planning application for the residential development of the northern part of Westminster Industrial Estate, Gwersyllt, on behalf of the landowner; Whitley Brothers Ltd.
- 1.2 Outline planning permission is sought for up to 85 dwellings, including details of access.
- 1.3 The proposal seeks to deliver a much needed sustainable housing development on a prominent brownfield site in need of investment.
- 1.4 Wrexham's planning policy team has been in contact with the applicant regarding the potential for housing development on the site (site reference GWER001UCS) in an attempt to understand the Borough's capacity for brownfield housing development and identify future housing allocations in the emerging Local Development Plan.
- 1.5 This statement assesses the proposal against prevailing national and local planning policy.
- 1.6 The statement is structured as below:
 - Chapter 2 – Site and surroundings;
 - Chapter 3 – Proposed development;
 - Chapter 4 – Policy review;
 - Chapter 5 – Policy assessment; and
 - Chapter 6 – Conclusion.

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site comprises the northern section of Westminster Industrial Estate which is under the full ownership of the applicant. Please find attached a Site Location Plan at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The site is 2.6 hectares in size and includes eight rundown commercial buildings which are single storey and of steel frame construction. The majority of the units are vacant but some remain in sporadic use for storage. The site also includes an occupied bungalow close to the site's northern boundary.
- 2.3 The established use of the site is for B2 industrial operations.
- 2.4 The site's surface is hardstanding although there is some low value scrubs and vegetation, particularly around the perimeter. The perimeter of the site to the north and west lies on a raised embankment.
- 2.5 There is a coal tip to the south west of the site, outside the applicant's ownership. Beyond this, to the south, is Kent Supplies; a building merchants.
- 2.6 To the south east of the site are Gwersyllt's Social Club and a small taxi office. The Social Club is a relatively large two storey property with an associated car park and retaining wall.
- 2.7 Other B2 uses including vehicle repairs are situated further south (the Hanson site).
- 2.8 Access to the site is taken from a two-way access road off Mold Road via a priority controlled junction.
- 2.9 Playing fields are situated to the north of the site and a leisure centre to the west. Both are separated from the site by a palisade fence and a public footpath which has become overgrown.
- 2.10 In the wider context the site lies to the north of Gwersyllt, which is commonly referred to as an urban village. Mold Road is the main arterial route running north/south through the settlement. Gwersyllt is approximately 3 miles north west of Wrexham.

3. Proposed Development

- 3.1 Outline planning permission is sought for:

Residential development for up to 85 dwellings with all matters reserved apart from access.

- 3.2 An indicative layout plan can be found at Appendix 2.
- 3.3 A mix of dwellings will be provided which respond to local need. 25% of the dwellings will be affordable. The exact mix of dwellings will be determined at the Reserved Matters stage.
- 3.4 The indicative layout demonstrates that the site can suitably accommodate 85 dwellings while providing sufficient separation distances between dwellings and space for the manoeuvring of refuse vehicles.
- 3.5 Approximately 2,500 sqm of amenity Public Open Space (POS) will be provided on site. This is shown at the south west corner of the site which will serve as both a buffer to the coal tip and the operations of Kent Supplies.
- 3.6 A footpath will be provided within the POS which will enhance the connectivity of the site, providing access to the Leisure Centre to the west and beyond.
- 3.7 Access to the site will be taken from the existing access point off Mold Road. This access comprises a priority controlled junction and is sufficient to support the development, as demonstrated in the accompanying Transport Assessment.

4. Policy Review

- 4.1 This section sets out all levels of planning policy which should be taken into consideration when assessing the proposal.
- 4.2 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the national land use policies of the Welsh Government. This is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs). Both are material considerations of significant weight in the determination of planning applications.
- 4.3 Wrexham's adopted development plan is its Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (adopted February 2005).
- 4.4 The UDP will eventually be replaced by Wrexham's Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) which is at an early stage and not due to be adopted until December 2016 at the earliest.
- 4.5 Wrexham's first LDP was withdrawn following examination in February 2012 due to significant concerns raised by the Local Plan Inspector, including the lack of a future housing land supply.
- 4.6 In the absence of an up-to-date development plan, more weight should be given to other material considerations, such as Welsh national planning policy, to ensure that decisions are based on policies which have been written with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development (PPW, paragraph 2.7.1).
- 4.7 By law it follows that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Planning Policy Wales

- 4.8 The Welsh Government has a statutory duty to promote sustainable development through the Government of Wales Act 2006.

- 4.9 Sustainable development can be defined by development which enhances the economic, social and environmental well-being of people and communities (paragraph 4.1.4).
- 4.10 In relation to housing, PPW sets out that local planning authorities must ensure that sufficient land is genuinely available or will become available to provide a 5 year supply of land for housing (paragraph 9.2.3).
- 4.11 For sites to be considered deliverable, they must be free, or readily freed, from planning, physical and ownership constraints, and economically viable (paragraph 9.2.3).
- 4.12 Preference is given to the delivery of housing on brownfield (previously developed) rather than greenfield land (paragraph 9.1.1).
- 4.13 Paragraph 9.2.6 of PPW states that:

‘Maximising the use of suitable previously developed land for housing development can assist regeneration and at the same time relieve pressure for development on greenfield sites. In particular, local authorities should consider the contribution to the overall provision of land for housing that can be made by reclaimable or reclaimed urban land and by disused or underused buildings. Sites which are no longer likely to be needed for office or industrial purposes may also be appropriate locations for housing’.

TAN 23 – Economic Development (February 2014)

- 4.14 TAN 23 sets out that existing employment sites, such as Westminster Industrial Estate, should only be released for other uses if one or more of the following apply:
- They have poor prospects of being re-occupied for their previous use;
 - The particular market that the site is part of is oversupplied;
 - The existing employment use has unacceptable adverse impacts on amenity or the environment;

- The proposed redevelopment does not compromise unduly neighbouring employment sites that are to be retained;
- Other priorities, such as housing need, override more narrowly focussed economic considerations; and/or
- Land of equal or better quality is made available elsewhere, even if this is not within the local planning authority boundary.

Wrexham UDP

4.15 The following policies of the UDP are relevant to the proposed development:

- Policy PS1 – New development for housing should be directed within defined settlement limits;
- Policy PS3 – Development should use previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to greenfield land;
- Policy PS4 – Development should maintain existing settlement patterns and integrate with the existing transport network;
- Policy EC15 – Derelict sites should be reclaimed and restored;
- Policy H2 – Residential development on unallocated land within settlement limits will be permitted subject to compliance with Policy GDP1 (detailed below);
- Policy H7 – Affordable housing will be negotiated on new proposals of over 25 dwellings where there is an evidenced shortfall;
- Policy CLF5 – New development of 10 dwellings or more must provide public open space within the site at a minimum level of 0.4 hectare per 50 dwellings.

4.16 Policy GDP1 is a general development policy which states that 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.
- f) Ensure the safety and amenity of the public and safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land or air, hazards from industry and quarrying, and associated noise, odour or vibration arising from development.
- g) Secure public services (e.g. gas, water, electricity) to development at minimum public cost.
- 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.
- i) Ensure that development does not result in, or is subject to, flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination, either on or off the site.
- j) Have regard to the need to safeguard those areas that possess a strong Welsh cultural and/or linguistic identity from development that could harm this identity.
- k) Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

Other material considerations – housing land supply

- 4.17 The Council's most up-to-date adopted position on its housing land supply comes from the Joint Housing Land Availability Study 2013 (published March 2014). This confirms that the Wrexham has a 3.4 year housing land supply which represents a shortfall of 1.6 years against PPW's requirement for local planning authorities to

maintain a 5 year supply. This is a material consideration of significant weight in the determination of the application.

5. Policy Assessment

5.1 This section assesses the proposal against the prevailing planning policy and material considerations highlighted in the previous chapter.

5.2 The main issues to be considered include:

- Principle of development;
- Housing need;
- Loss of employment land;
- Residential amenity;
- Affordable housing;
- Public Open Space;
- Access and transport;
- Ground conditions; and
- Ecology.

Principle of development

5.3 The site lies within the settlement boundary of Gwersyllt where new development for housing is directed under Policy PS1.

5.4 The site represents underutilised brownfield land which is to be used for development in preference to greenfield sites in accordance with Policy PS3, EC15 and PPW.

5.5 The proposal represents sustainable development which will result in significant and wide reaching economic, social and environmental gains in accordance with PPW.

5.6 In economic terms, the proposal will create jobs and activity in the local construction trade during the construction phase. It will generate capital for the Council which can be spent locally through extra Council Tax receipts and the New Homes Bonus. It will also boost local expenditure in Gwersyllt and the wider area which will have a positive knock-on effect for local businesses.

- 5.7 In social terms, the proposal will delivery a high quality mix of family housing which will make a substantial contribution to the Council's housing land supply shortfall. The proposal also includes a proportion of affordable housing and POS.
- 5.8 In environmental terms, the proposal will result in remediation of a contaminated brownfield site which currently serves a limited industrial purpose. It lies in a sustainable location which is readily accessible in relation to services, amenities, public transport and schools.
- 5.9 The proposal also accords with Policy GDP1, which through this policy assessment, all elements of its criterion will met.
- 5.10 Overall, the principle of residential development on the site is acceptable as it lies within the settlement boundary of Gwersyllt and represents sustainable development.

Housing need

- 5.11 The Council has a 3.4 year housing land supply. PPW requires local planning authorities to maintain a rolling 5 year land supply as a minimum. Wrexham therefore has a deficit of 1.6 years worth of supply.
- 5.12 The proposal will make a substantial contribution to the Council's housing deficit on a sustainable brownfield land within Gwersyllt's settlement boundary.
- 5.13 The scheme is deliverable within a short term period (0 – 3 years). The applicant wishes to secure outline planning consent before taking the site to the market.
- 5.14 Following the grant of outline planning permission, the site will be relatively freed from planning constraints and site clearance and remediation work will commence which will remove the physical constraints to development. As such, the site is deemed deliverable in the short term in line with paragraph 9.2.3 of PPW.

Loss of employment

- 5.15 Although the site is not allocated for employment purposes, it does warrant some protection as an existing employment site.

- 5.16 The latest guidance on the protection of existing employment sites comes from TAN 23 identified in the previous chapter.
- 5.17 The site meets the criteria of TAN 23 for it to be released for housing for the following reasons:
- The site has been largely vacant and underutilised for a prolonged period of time which indicates that the prospects are poor of it being permanently re-occupied in its current use in the future;
 - Wrexham's Employment Sites Study identified that there is an oversupply of low-end employment land in the Borough;
 - The proposal can come forward in isolation without causing a disturbance to existing employment operations at the Industrial Estate. Sufficient buffering has been shown on the indicative layout and can be controlled during later stages in the planning process; and most importantly,
 - The Council's lack of a five year land supply is a material consideration of significant weight which overrides more narrowly focussed economic considerations.

Residential amenity

- 5.18 The residential amenity of future residents will be protected through a series of measures.
- 5.19 Firstly, Kent Supplies, which has the potential to cause the most activity near the application site, has no right to park or unload vehicles on the access road, which is not a public highway and the stretch alongside Kent's premises is wholly within the applicant's ownership.
- 5.20 Planning permission P/2005/1364 granted to Kent requires all parking and unloading of vehicles to be either within Kent's premises or in the Social Club's car park.
- 5.21 The applicant is taking active steps to ensure that unauthorised parking on that part of the access road in its ownership ceases.

- 5.22 Secondly, robust boundary treatments (combining fencing and planting) will be incorporated at the site's sensitive boundary points (predominantly to the south). The indicative layout also demonstrates how positioning the POS at the site's southern boundary can serve to minimise the impact of industrial activity to the south. It is also worth bearing in mind that the industrial activity to the south does not involve intensive outdoor mechanical operations which have high noise levels associated with them.
- 5.23 Finally, the indicative layout shows accordance with standard separation distances between dwellings which demonstrates that 85 dwellings can be accommodated on the site without any loss of amenity through privacy / overlooking etc.
- 5.24 Overall, the proposal has been designed in a considered manner to protect the amenity of future residents.

Affordable housing

- 5.25 The proposed development includes an allowance for 25% affordable housing. It therefore accords with Policy H7.

Public Open Space

- 5.26 The proposal includes 2,512 sqm of POS on site. Although this falls short of the policy requirement of CLF5, it is considered more than sufficient to meet the needs of future residents, particularly considering the plentiful supply of open space to the north of the site, within the control of the Council and available for use by the public.

Access and transport

- 5.27 A Transport Assessment (TA) has been prepared by SCP and submitted in support of the application.
- 5.28 It concludes that the application site is located in a sustainable area where there is a realistic choice of mode of travel other than the private car.

- 5.29 The application proposals include improvements to the footway provision between the site and the A541 and also to/from the residential area to the west.
- 5.30 The anticipated traffic impact of the development has been calculated and it is anticipated to add around 2% to flows on Mold Road, which represents just over one additional vehicle every two minutes on average during peak hours.
- 5.31 The TA demonstrates that the existing site access junction with Mold Road would operate with spare capacity in 2020.
- 5.32 Overall, it is therefore concluded that the proposal is acceptable in highway terms.

Ground conditions

- 5.33 A Phase 1 Site Investigation has been prepared by Terra Consult Ltd and submitted in support of the application. The study concludes that the site does pose a contamination risk at present and that further Phase 2 works will be required in order to assess what remedial works will be necessary (e.g. gas monitoring).
- 5.34 Phase 2 works will be undertaken post submission (as appropriate). Remedial works are likely to include localised hotspot removal, ground gas protection and clean cover systems.

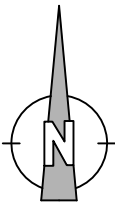
Ecology

- 5.35 An Ecology Assessment has been undertaken by JW Ecological Ltd and submitted in support of the application. No evidence of protected species was found at the site.
- 5.36 Although the bungalow was found to have moderate potential for roosting bats, it is to be incorporated into the scheme so no extra surveys were undertaken. Although the commercial buildings were found to have low potential for roosting bats, further surveys were undertaken by Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd, which confirmed that no bats were present.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Outline planning permission is sought for up to 85 dwellings with all matters reserved apart from access.
- 6.2 The application site is a large part-vacant, underutilised, low-end employment site. The applicant has already been approached by the Council's planning policy team regarding the potential for housing development at the site.
- 6.3 Wrexham lacks a five year housing land supply as required by PPW. This represents a material consideration of significant weight in the determination of the application.
- 6.4 Local planning policy encourages housing development within settlement boundaries and on brownfield sites.
- 6.5 The principle of residential development at the site is therefore acceptable, coupled with the fact the proposal represents sustainable development which will deliver significant and wide reaching economic, social and environmental benefits.
- 6.6 The loss of employment land is acceptable, most notably due to the significant need for new housing in the short term and the oversupply / lack of demand for low-end employment sites.
- 6.7 Detailed consideration has been given to other technical matters, including land contamination and residential amenity, which can be overcome through appropriate remediation / mitigation at a later stage in the planning process.
- 6.8 A Transport Assessment has been prepared by SCP which confirms that the site is sustainable in locational terms and the access road and surrounding highway network has sufficient capacity to support the proposed development.
- 6.9 Overall, it can therefore be concluded that the principle of the proposed residential development and its access arrangements are acceptable and planning permission should be granted.

APPENDIX 1



Site Area =
6.18acres / 25,016sqm

-	00-00-00	-----	XXX	XXX
Rev	Date	Description	Rev By	Chk'd By
Project Title	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT			
	WESTMINSTER INDUSTRIAL ESTATE MOLD ROAD GWERSYLLT WREXHAM			
Client	WHITLEY BROTHERS LTD.			
Status	DRAFT PLANNING			
Scale	1:1250	Drawing Size	A3	
Drawn By	HVS	Checked By	SSR	Date OCT 14
Drawing Title	LOCATION PLAN			
Job-Dwg No	13092 - 099			Rev -

Location Plan Scale 1:1250



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APPENDIX 2



Proposed Development - Westminster Industrial Estate, Mold Road, Gwersyllt, Wrexham

Client: Whitley Brothers Ltd

Date: 11/12/14

Job/Dwg: 13092 V101A - Proposed Site Layout

Not to Scale@A3

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13092V101A-ProposedSiteLayout