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BY POST & E-MAIL

Dear Matthew

LAND OFF DODDS LANE, GWERSYLLT, WREXHAM OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF A NEW COMMERCIAL UNIT FOR A1 / A2 / A3 USES

We refer to the above and my recent telephone discussions with both yourself and your colleague David Williams. On behalf of the applicant, The Co-operative Estates, we attended the Planning Committee meeting on 3rd December 2012 and note that the application was deferred for a site visit. The site visit has been scheduled for the 14th December, following which, Committee will return to the Guild Hall to determine the application.

In advance of the site visit and subsequent Committee meeting next week, we consider it important that we formally respond to Members' comments and reiterate the inherent acceptability of the proposals in accordance with the adopted Wrexham UDP. We trust that this letter will be reported fully to Members accordingly.

The site visit was requested and agreed to on the grounds of the scheme's potential 'impact on the streetscene'. The application has been submitted in outline with all matters reserved. The basis for this long standing and commonly adopted procedure is to establish the principle of an additional commercial unit in the existing Gwersyllt District Shopping Centre. As such, the external design of the unit, and therefore its visual impact on its surrounds, will be subject to further agreement by the Council through the reserved matters approval process. Should the Council not be satisfied with the subsequent design it would be refused at this later stage.

The Council itself has issued clear guidance on outline planning applications - the extract overleaf is taken from the Council's guidance sheet available on its website. This sets out those elements of a proposal that would be considered as reserved matters and these clearly include the scale and appearance of a proposal. These elements have not been requested or deemed necessary in the determination of the

proposal.

PLANNING INFORMATION SHEET



Outline Planning Applications

This information note has been prepared by the Wrexham County Borough Council Planning Department and is intended as interim guidance until the Welsh Assembly Government has finalised its own guidance.

Available in accessible formats on request



Outline Planning Applications are intended to assist developers in obtaining formal approval of the principle of built development before committing themselves to full detailed plans.

Outline Planning Applications

From 6 October 2008, the format of outline planning applications has changed in Wales and it now follows the model adopted in England in 2006.

Under the terms of an outline planning application, one or more matters may be "reserved" for latter approval. These are called the Reserved Matters. This enables you to establish whether a site is suitable for the building proposed in principle. Clearly, the more detail you are able to give at the outline stage, the easier it is for the Local Planning Authority to understand what is proposed and to make the appropriate decision.

The Reserved Matters are now:

- Access
- Appearance
- Landscaping
- Layout
- Scale

Specific definitions are provided as follows:

Access:- covers accessibility to and within the site for vehicles, cycles, and pedestrians in terms of positioning and treatment of access and circulation routes and how these fit into the surrounding access network.

Appearance:- the aspects of a building or place which determine the visual impression it makes including the external built form of the development.

Landscaping:- the treatment of private and public space to enhance or protect the site's amenity through hard and soft measures for example through the planting of trees or hedges or screening by fences or walls.

Layout:- the way in which buildings, routes and open spaces are provided within the development and their relationship to buildings and spaces outside the development.

Scale:- the height, width and length of each building proposed in relation to its surroundings.

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION

The application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of a new commercial unit for A1, A2 and / or A3 uses at the existing Gwersyllt District Centre. An illustrative proposed layout plan accompanied the application and demonstrated that a single storey commercial building of approximately 3,750 sq.ft. could be accommodated at the site. The application was clear that full details of the layout, configuration and appearance of the unit will be confirmed as part of future reserved matters submissions.

In terms of planning policy, the proposals are considered to be fully compliant with both local and national policies of relevance. The development would provide a new commercial unit within an established district centre, thereby enhancing the vitality, attractiveness and viability of the centre. This would help achieve the objectives of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 5, November 2012) related to retail and town centres. Furthermore, the proposals are entirely in accord with the policies of the adopted Wrexham UDP, particularly Policy S5 which states that new shopping and commercial development will be permitted in district shopping centres.

From our review of the Officer's report to Committee, and the brief discussion at Committee, we understand that the site visit was requested by Cllr David Griffiths and that his principal concerns are as follows:

- Potential increases in traffic; and
- Height and design of the building, its close proximity to nearby dwellings and potential impact on the streetscene.

With respect to the potential for increases in traffic, a Transport Statement was commissioned and submitted to the Council setting out the likely levels of traffic that the uses proposed (A1 / A2 / A3) would generate. The statement demonstrated that:

- the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the highway network;
- the site has adequate parking provision;
- the site is well served by public transport; and
- there are no transport and highway reasons to prevent the approval of the application.

Importantly, the Transport Statement has been reviewed by the Council's Highways Officers, and they concur with its findings.

In terms of the concerns expressed by Cllr Griffiths over building design, and as we set out earlier in this letter, we do not consider that this is a matter for consideration at outline stage, particularly when the application was submitted with all matters reserved. Notwithstanding our position on this, however, and if Officers deem it necessary, our client is prepared to accept conditions on any permission granted restricting the height of the unit to one storey and limiting the gross floorspace of the unit to 3750 sq.ft.

The introduction of a new single storey commercial unit for A1 / A2 / A3 uses is entirely appropriate to the scale and function of the existing centre. In addition, a well-designed building in this location will enhance the overall appearance of the district centre and the streetscene. This is entirely in line with Policy S5 of the adopted UDP. The Design and Access Statement submitted in support of the application clearly demonstrated that the proposals can be delivered in a manner that is appropriate to the site and its surroundings. It also highlighted that the development can be achieved in line with the general development objectives of Policy GDP1 of the UDP, as well as relevant policies and guidance notes on transport, parking and accessibility. The scheme will therefore clearly enhance the District Centre in line with these policy objectives.

On the matter of proximity to nearby dwellings, we agree with the Officer's view that there is sufficient separation (circa 20 metres) between the proposed development

and the front elevations of the dwellings on the opposite side of Dodds Lane. This will ensure that there will be no detrimental impact on these properties from the proposals.

In conclusion, it is clear that there is no justifiable reason why planning permission cannot be granted for the proposed commercial unit at the Gwersyllt District Centre. The key points are as follows:

- The proposal is in accord with national and local planning policy;
- The proposal is located within an existing District Centre and will improve its vitality and viability;
- The scheme will not have any detrimental impact on highway capacity;
- Adequate parking is provided by the existing surface level car park with circa 250 spaces;
- No objection to the proposal has been raised by any Officers of the Council, including Highways;
- The final design of the unit will be approved under reserved matters procedures and presents the opportunity to deliver significant enhancement to the streetscene and the Gwersyllt District Centre.

The proposed development will complement the existing uses at the site and surrounding area by seeking to develop a further commercial unit within the defined district centre. The outline application envisages a range of potential end uses (A1, A2 and/or A3) which are all considered to be acceptable at this location. The flexibility provided by an outline permission of this nature will enable a suitable end user to be identified that will complement the existing properties within the district centre. The proposal represents a sustainable, justified and acceptable form of development that will enhance the vitality, attractiveness and appearance of the District Centre in which it is located.

We trust that Planning Committee Members will recognise the merits of the proposals, which are made in outline with design to be agreed via future reserved matters and concur with their Officers' view that permission should be granted.

In advance of the site visit, should you require anything further with respect to the proposals, please do not hesitate to contact me on 02920 248911.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely



Ben Lewis MRTPI
Planning, Development & Regeneration
For and on behalf of GVA

cc	David Williams	-	Planning Control Manager, Wrexham CBC (by e-mail)
	Matthew Stafford	-	The Co-operative Estates