

6818 Mill House Studio, Malpas. Design & Access Statement

Rev A 07/02/12 Updated at Planners request. C.B.



Site Address: Mill House Studio, Higher Wych, Malpas, Cheshire, SY14 7JR.

Date: January 2012

Applicants Details

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Agents Details

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GENERAL

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement should be read in support of a full planning application for a residential redevelopment (material change of use) and the demolition & extension at the above address. This statement responds to the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2009. The statement should be read giving full regard to the applications' documentation including the attached appendices and proposed drawings.

Description of Development

The site is being developed to provide a home in what is currently the Clients place of work (Video Editing Studio) in Higher Wych and the existing dwelling is to be extended to form an office/smaller studio at which the Client may continue to work, albeit at a smaller scale, with the demolition of the existing dilapidated outbuildings.

Physical Context & Community

The development site is located near the village of Higher Wych, Malpas, and is in a rural setting on the border of England & Wales.

The demolition of the existing dilapidated outbuildings and development of the Office will play an important role in ensuring the Client may continue to work from home at a smaller scale and the conversion of the current studio to residential will help increase the housing availability in the area. It will also serve as an integral part of the ongoing regeneration of the area.

Higher Wych lies to the South East of Wrexham County Borough and outside the settlement limit as defined by the current Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011.

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The application site is surrounded by residential developments of single and two storey dwellings inhabiting a standard facing brick design style.

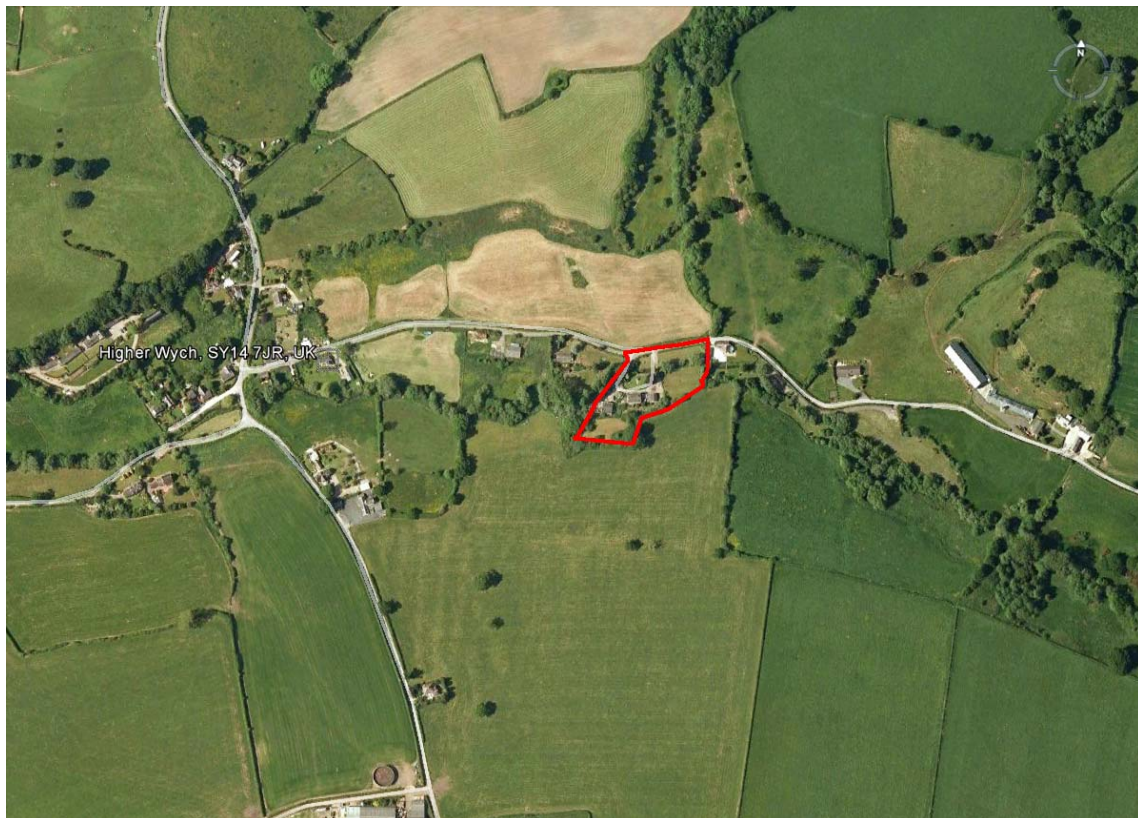
An analysis of the surrounding area identifies that the existing buildings surrounding the application site are made of traditional materials including facing brick, with slate or tile roofs and a mix of UPVC and timber to windows and doors. Existing site boundaries are of low level hedges & timber fencing.

The design process has also ensured that the proposed development will be in-keeping and complimentary to the current design of the built form surrounding the application site and also we have retained as far as is practicable the existing form & features of the original building.

In terms of topography, the site is fairly flat and the finished site level matches that of the adjacent properties.

In preparation of the application, discussions have been undertaken with the Planning Department in order to present a scheme that fits well within the application site and also has a positive effect on the amenity of the surrounding homeowners.

The aerial photograph below identifies the application site in context of its surroundings.



Site Constraints

The key constraints that have been identified to developing our site, namely, the poor condition of the existing outbuildings. These constraints and the decisions made to overcome them have been made in full conjunction with Planning Department & Environment Agency and copies of the responses are included as part of the application and also described in the 'Design' section of this statement below.

Social Context

It is considered that the proposed development will offer additional housing within the existing residential site whilst allowing the Client to continue to work from home albeit at a smaller scale.

Economic Context

Given that the proposal is for residential development it is not considered that the development will lead to any significant economic benefits in the long term. However in the short-term the proposal will provide employment for those contracted to build the new dwelling & conversion.

National & Local Policy Context

The policy guidance which has been taken into account in relation to the design of the proposed development is set out within Planning Policy Wales (4th Edition) and the following Technical Advice Notes:

TAN12 – Design (2009) and Planning (2009)

TAN18 – Transport (2007)

TAN22 – Sustainable Buildings (2010)

The development plan consists of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (1996 – 2011) which was adopted in 2005.

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan:

Policy GDP1 – General Development Principles;

Policy H3 – Conversion of Buildings Outside Settlement Limits;

Policy EC13 – Surface Water Run-off;

Policy H10 – Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside;

Policy H5 – Housing in the Countryside;

Policy T8 – Parking;

The application site is located outside the development boundary for Wrexham Town Centre in the Wrexham UDP and in an area identified as a Special Landscape Area (EC5).

As the proposal involves a material change of use and infill development of dilapidated buildings we believe it is in accordance with the above policies.

The proposed development also fully considers the guidance contained with Policy PS2 of the plan;

Policy PS2 Development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.

We believe this site can be considered as in accordance with policy GDP1 objectives.

Policy EC13 states that 'Development which would result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the water environment due to additional surface water run-off will not be permitted'. As we are retaining the existing roof and refurbishing the dilapidated outbuildings we in no way are providing additional surface water run-off.

Policy H4 encourages the 'sympathetic conversion of redundant non-residential buildings to accommodation' and we comply fully in this respect.

The design section of this statement will identify the main design elements of the proposed development and identify how they should reflect the character and appearance of the settlement and surrounding area as well as compliance with the above identified policies.

Pre-application Consultation:

Pre-application consultations have taken place direct between our Client and Kevin Hughes of the Planning Department.

DESIGN

Policy Approach

The following identified planning policy frameworks have influenced the design of the proposed development.

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and TAN 12 are the principal planning documents of the Welsh Assembly Government, which set out the context for the design consideration and evaluation of all types of development.

The main thrust of both documents is to promote sustainable development by ensuring that the planning system provides for an adequate and continuous supply of land, available and suitable for development to meet society's needs in a way that is consistent with overall sustainability principles.

PPW seeks to promote resource-efficient settlements that minimise land-take and urban sprawl, locates development so as to minimise the demand for travel, ensure that all communities have good quality housing for their needs in safe neighbourhoods, promote access to employment, shopping, education, health, community, leisure and sports facilities and open space.

It is identified in paragraph 9.9.1 of PPW Objectives that;

The Assembly Government will seek to ensure that:

- *Previously developed land is used in preference to Greenfield sites;*
- *new housing and residential environments are well designed, meeting national standards for the sustainability of new homes and making a significant contribution to promoting community regeneration and improving the quality of life; and that*
- *the overall result of new housing development in villages, towns or edge of settlement is a mix of affordable and market housing that retains and, where practical, enhances important landscape and wildlife features in the development.*

Paragraph 9.1.2 identifies that;

"Local planning authorities should promote sustainable residential environments, avoid large housing areas of monotonous character and make appropriate provision for affordable housing. Local planning authorities should promote:

- mixed tenure communities;*
- development that is easily accessible by public transport, cycling and walking, although in rural areas required development might not be able to achieve all accessibility criteria in all circumstances;*
- mixed use development so communities have good access to employment, retail and other services;*
- attractive landscapes around dwellings, with usable open space and regard for biodiversity, nature conservation and flood risk;*
- greater emphasis on quality, good design and the creation of places to live that are safe and attractive;*
- the most efficient use of land;*
- well designed living environments, where appropriate at increased densities;*
- construction of housing with low environmental impact by using nationally prescribed sustainable building standards; reducing the carbon emissions generated by maximizing energy efficiency and minimizing the use of energy from fossil fuel sources, using local renewable and low carbon energy sources where appropriate; and*
- 'barrier free' housing developments, for example built to Lifetime Homes standards."*

We believe we have produced a scheme that meets these requirements well by reusing redundant buildings to provide new homes for existing residents.

TAN 12 has offered guidance to the contents of this Design and Access Statement.

Local Planning Policy - Wrexham UDP

Policy GDP1 outlines the general development principles for all new developments:-

- 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.
- Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public / private spaces.
- Make the best use of design techniques, siting and orientation in order to conserve energy and water resources.
- Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and in the nearby locality.
- 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.
- 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, odor 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.

The following design principles and concepts have been applied to the proposed development which ensures that the development conforms to national and local planning policy.

ACCESSIBILITY

Policy Approach

The following section of the statement aims to identify the national and local planning policy guidance that has been taken into consideration with regards to the means of access to and from the proposed development.

National Planning Policy Wales

CABE defines Inclusive Design as an effort that '*aims to remove the barriers that create undue effort and separation. It enables everyone to participate equally, confidently and independently in everyday activities*'.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) seeks to promote resource-efficient settlements that minimise land-take and urban sprawl, locates development so as to minimise the demand for travel, ensure that all communities have good quality housing for their needs in safe neighbourhoods, promote access to employment, shopping, education, health, community, leisure and sports facilities and open space.

PPW advises that all Local Authorities should consider the issue of accessibility for all, including the needs of those with visual and hearing impairments and those with limited mobility such as wheelchair users, elderly people and people with young children.

PPW, paragraph 2.3.2 advises to locate development so as to minimise the demand for travel, especially by private car.

TAN 18: Transport has also been taken into consideration to ensure that new development will continue to allow the Client to work from home and not travel to and from work by means of car or public transport.

Paragraph 2.4 of TAN 18 identifies that the inter-relationship between land use planning and transport is complex and varied. The development of land is dependant, in part, upon transport infrastructure and services to function efficiently. By influencing the location, scale, density and mix of land uses and new development, land use planning can help reduce the need to travel and length of journeys.

TAN 18 also considers people with disabilities. TAN 18 identifies that it is important to consider their needs in terms of parking, in particular ensuring that adequate numbers of suitably designed parking spaces are provided in appropriate locations.

Local Planning Approach - Wrexham UDP

Policy T8 of the UDP refers to highway and parking provision and states that;

Development granted planning permission will be required to provide vehicle parking spaces either on site or nearby, in accordance with the Council's current parking standards. Special regard will be paid to the following factors, as appropriate:-

- a) the availability of public transport nearby,*
- b) proximity to public car parking,*
- c) proximity to local services and facilities,*
- d) road safety hazards and amenity considerations arising from on-street parking in the vicinity of the site.*

Where implementation difficulties arise in making parking provision on-site or nearby, the Council will require a developer to make financial contributions for measures to assist public transport, or walking and cycling as appropriate.

We believe the site offers sufficient car parking as described below.

Site Access and Locational criteria considerations

Due to it's rural location the application site is accessible primarily by private transport and is located close to the village of Higher Wych.

Parking Provision

There is ample, un-demarcated parking available within the itself.

Sustainable Transport

Due to it's rural location as described above, public transport is limited in the area. The plan below identifies a more detailed view of the location of the site.



Approach:

The approach to the new dwellings will offer clear and flat access (1:20) from the car parking areas. Level (1:20) and ramped approach (1:15) can be provided to the dwelling & extension.

Horizontal Circulation:

Sufficient clear widths are provided to door openings and corridors with ample clear door opening widths for wheelchair access.

Toilet Facilities:

A WC will be located within the ground floor of the dwelling & extension making it accessible for wheelchair users, fully compliant with Approved Document Part M.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development will be accessible by all its users and therefore complies with policy GDP1 of the Wrexham UDP.

How Access is to be maintained

Once the site is developed the access which is to be retained can be maintained through the imposition of planning conditions requiring the access to be provided in accordance with the approved plans and for the parking and circulation space to be maintained.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The development is to fulfil the current Building Regulation standards in terms of environmental sustainability.

Not only it is proposed to fulfil Building Regulation standards and to reduce energy demand and carbon emissions but the potential to implement other measures including Landscape/townscape setting, biodiversity and local environment, sustainable materials,

water, waste management, climate resilience and sustainable building standards has been considered as part of the design process:

Biodiversity and Local Environment

There are a number of mature trees surrounding our site, all of which we propose to retain.

Energy Efficiency/ Carbon Reduction

The development and extension are to fulfil the current Building Regulation standards. Structures will be detailed to have as high insulation levels as possible and good air tightness values. Low energy light fittings will be used throughout the development, and subject to the full design and SAP calculations results.

Sustainable Materials

Locally sourced sustainable materials with a low environmental impact are to be used for the development. All timber used will be sourced from sustainable managed forests and certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

Water

Existing permeable surfaces are proposed to be retained to the car parking areas and all of existing grassed areas are to be retained. We have been advised by the Environment Agency that the site lies within a flood zone of 'Low' rating (see attached response letter from the Environment Agency'.

Waste Management

Existing appropriate facilities for sorting, storing and recycling of waste are to be retained on the site. WCBC Refuse department have confirmed that there is a Local Authority recycle collection scheme already in place in the area.

Climate Resilience

The development and all individual dwellings are to fulfil the current Building Regulation standards, which means u-values of the building envelope as well as air tightness measurements have to be in accordance to standards set out in the Building Regulations 2000, Conservation of fuel and power, Part L1A.

Sustainable Building Standards

National recognized and quality assured standards have been used to demonstrate that environmentally sustainability design solutions (as set out above) have been incorporated into the new development. These include but are not limited to the aforementioned Building Regulations, specifically Part L of the Approved Document.

CHARACTER AND SCALE

As already identified, the design process included an analysis of the context of the application site. This analysis has informed the design process and as such it is considered that the presented scheme offers development that compliments the character of the surrounding area.

The aim has been to design a development that is in-keeping with the existing building being retained and therefore the features of the area and to ensure the enhancement of the character of the area by preserving existing spatial arrangements.

The change of use to form a new dwelling satisfies 'Local Planning Guidance Note No. 3: Converting Rural Buildings' as the building to be converted is of modern and sound

construction, it is not in a flood risk area, the majority of existing openings have been retained and new openings have been kept to a minimum. The roofline also remains unaltered. The existing building for conversion requires a minimum of work to provide suitable residential accommodation.

The change of use to form a new dwelling also satisfies 'Local Planning Guidance Note No. 13: Housing in the Countryside' as the only extension, aside from a small rear 'Utility' is the addition of a double garage which is less than one third of the original floor area and is proportional to the needs of a four-bedroom house (I.e. two cars) and respects the scale, proportion, form & detailing of the original building. We require no extension to the existing residential curtilage and as described elsewhere will provide a much needed home within the local area.

- *Layout*

The car parking areas are located to the front of the existing dwellings and they can be accessed directly off the existing access, the width/visibility height of which has not been altered.

We have retained the existing vehicular access into the site, as described above, as the conversion of the Studio to residential will not generate additional traffic movement and there is ample area to park & turn within the curtilage of the site.

- *Appearance*

The aim has been to design a development that is in-keeping with the existing features of the established residential area by retaining the existing Studio building for conversion and extending the existing house.

- *Amount*

The proposed development comprises of single storey extension & conversion of the two-storey Studio.

The extension proposed reflects the constraints imposed by existing buildings and infills what is currently occupied by dilapidated outbuildings.

- *Landscaping*

Landscaping around the buildings and car parking areas is proposed to enhance the character of the site whilst working closely with the existing layout.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

During the design progress, design measures such as layout, appearance and landscaping have been carefully assessed to help to prevent crime.

The following safety measures have been implemented as part of the design process:-

- security through natural surveillance: overlooking of car parking areas from windows. All residential parking has been provided within the curtilage of the dwelling,

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- a sense of ownership through retaining clearly defined boundaries between private and public areas,
- adequate lighting retained for all communal areas i.e. car parking,

MOVEMENT TO, FROM AND WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT

Matters relating to accessing the proposed development site, have been dealt with in detail elsewhere in this statement.

CONCLUSION

This statement has identified that all Design and Access matters have been fully considered at the design stage and that the scheme presented offers a sustainable form of development that compliments its surroundings and a form of development that will be accessible by all its users.

For the reasons set out above it is therefore concluded that the proposed development can be supported to allow the provision of one new home within the site through the 'Material Change of Use' of the existing Studio and an infill extension to the existing House to form an Office/Study.

APPENDIX

1. **Copies of Environment Agency 'Flood Risk' response letter & Septic Tank approval notice.**