DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

APPLICATION

Type of Application
Full Planning

Location of Proposed Development
Tyddyn Dedwydd, Frondeg, Rhostyllen, LL14 4ND

Description of Proposed Development
Conversion of disused agricultural building into 1no. dwelling house

Date of Preparation
01/09/2025

Date of Any Amendments
N/A

Applicant
Mr Mark Baker
Agent
David Corran



1.00 INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access statement has been produced on behalf of the Applicant [redacted] to support a Full Planning application for the proposed development of the disused agricultural storage unit, to provide 1 No. Residential unit with associated hard and soft landscaping.

This application is essentially a re submission of refused application P/2021/0059 which was ultimately refused when judged against the new Wrexham UDP which has since been revoked. As such it is the view of the applicant and agent that the resubmitted application should be judged against the previous and still current UDP guidelines which we understand this application should be supported as a result. We state this as the previous application was supported but held in abeyance for a long period due to the overriding Phosphates impasse in relation to foul drainage. As agreement on this issue was reached with NRW and no objection to the application noted we feel the application now addresses all previous planning concerns and should be supported.

This document is to be read in conjunction with drawings prepared by the Agent, David Corran, which accompany this application submitted to Wrexham Council along with the revised structural report, revised ecology and bat roosting assessment reports and lastly the drainage strategy, and for ease of reference the confirmation from NRW that no objection was felt necessary on the previous application.

This statement has been prepared in accordance with the requirements set out in Design Commission for Wales' guidance document, 2017 'Guidance on Changes and Development Control System with regard to Design and Access Statements'. This statement also follows guidance on preparing Design and Access Statements issued by CABE (Design and Access Statements – How to write, read and use them, 2006).

As stated above we consider in the absence of a new replacement UDP being in place then this statement is prepared in accordance with the current active UDP and associated supporting guidance documents.

This statement is structured based on the requirements to cover key topics and demonstrate the design process that has been followed as set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and Technical Advice Note 12: Design (TAN 12) & Guidance on Information Requirements and Validation', notably 'Appraising the context (paragraph 45)'.

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The design process is reflected in the chapter headings and topics covered within them; assessment,
Involvement, Evolution and design. This statement within 'Design' explains the principles and concepts that have been applied to the following aspects of the development; namely;

i) Amount
ii) Layout
iii) Scale
iv) Landscaping
v) Appearance

In addition to these requirements, there is also a section covering the development standards which deals with sustainable development – and what specific measures are proposed to achieve this with regard to climate change. This is required by 'Guidance on Information Requirements and Validation'

POLICY BACKGROUND

National Policy

This proposal has been guided by, and as such is supported by, Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as demonstrated below with the intention to seek a design that protects the environment and promotes sustainable growth.

Planning Law requires that applications for Planning Permission must be determined in accordance with the decision-making framework set out in the planning act 2008; these have to be considered a material consideration in decisions on Planning Applications.

Reference to Guidance from Planning Policy Wales (PPW) first published in 2002 and most recently revised in December 2018 (PPW10) as this document contains current land use planning policy for Wales. PPW has been referenced as it provides the policy framework for the effective preparation of local planning authorities' development plans. This is supplemented by Local Planning Guidance Note 3. PPW, the LPGN and the circulars being material considerations in determining planning decisions on individual applications have been carefully considered here.

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Local Planning Policy

At a local level, the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996 - 2011 was first adopted by Wrexham County Borough Council on the 14th February 2005. The Plan covers the administrative area of the Wrexham County Borough Council which is relevant to this application until the 2013 – 2028 Plan is adopted.

This section of our statement sets out the order of planning policy that is considered relevant to the determination of this application; they are examined separately in detail by assessing and interpreting the merits of our proposals against them, with a view to demonstrating the case in support of the proposed scheme. As the legal test for all planning decisions is to determine the application in accordance with the statutory development plan (unless material considerations indicate otherwise), we have reviewed the key principles of PPW and the Local Development Plan, and feel there is no conflict with policies saved under these documents.

Local Planning Guidance Note 3 is the main influence to this application however GDP1, H3, E5 and CLF9 contained in the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan have been considered.

Cross Reference to Policy

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

The site is located within an large area of land all under the ownership of the applicant; it takes advantage of the existing natural screening, being protected by native species hedges and trees so, therefore, it will not be visible to any other existing dwellings in the area, meaning that there is no adverse impact upon landscape interests associated with this proposal.

The whole development will form a neatly laid out courtyard arrangement . This parking will be made up of surface designated space.

Policy PS3 “Development should use previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to the use of greenfield land, wherever possible”.

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The proposed development seeks to reuse the existing farm building which is currently vacant and occasionally used for storage and are surplus to modern farming requirements.

Policy PS4 “Development should maintain the existing settlement pattern and character and be integrated with the existing transport network to help reduce the overall need to travel and encourage the use of alternatives to the car”.

Prospective residents will be afforded the enjoyment of rural living, and the scheme promotes a strong sense of outdoor recreational opportunity with an appealing external environment. It is hoped that in this location, safe and enjoyable outdoor living will be desired over the use of the car.

Policy EC1 Green Barriers

The site is not identified as being in a Green barrier/wedge location, the proposal does not involve any substantial built development as the buildings are existing, and any night time lighting will be kept to a minimum. Lighting around the site will be on a short timed PIR and down lighting will be used to avoid disturbance, with hoods, cowls, louvres or shields being utilised to direct light only to where it is needed. As this application is for the re-use/adaptation of a rural building, the primary consideration should be whether the nature and extent for the building is acceptable in planning terms. It should not normally be necessary to consider whether a building is no longer needed for its present agricultural or other purposes. Both national and local planning policy / guidance require conversion to respect the surrounding area in terms of landscape and local building styles and use of materials and this is detailed below.

The need to consider these issues is also expanded upon in the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan. All proposals are subject to UDP Policy GDP1 (Development Objectives) and ensuring that the important characteristics of the site and surrounding area are not compromised. Policy EC3 “The construction of new agricultural buildings will be permitted unless the development is materially detrimental in terms of its impact on the environment or surrounding landscape. The development should form part of an existing farm complex and take advantage of topography and other landscape features for screening”.

The proposal takes advantage of existing topography and vegetation and also accords with Policy EC4 in this respect. Policy H3 Residential conversion of buildings outside settlement limits “New homes can be created from the conversion of redundant buildings – the sympathetic conversion of redundant non-residential buildings to housing accommodation will be encouraged, providing the basic standards can be

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achieved. Conversion may provide much needed smaller accommodation more quickly and cheaply than would the provision of new homes and, at the same time, ensure a satisfactory re-use of existing resources and supplement conservation policies. Similarly, the sympathetic conversion of redundant non-residential buildings to housing accommodation will be encouraged, providing that basic design standards can be achieved."

Policy H3 is supported as it satisfies all of the following criteria that the change of use or conversion of a building to residential use outside settlement limits will be permitted where in the case of agricultural buildings, a) there is no longer an agricultural need and alternative non-residential uses have proved inappropriate; b) the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive rebuilding tantamount to the erection of a new dwelling; c) any inherent characteristics of merit in the building are retained; d) the proposed dwelling and the resulting curtilage do not constitute an undesirable intrusion into the landscape, create access problems, nor require the provision of services at public cost; and e) the floor plan of the existing building is sufficient to create a habitable dwelling. In principle, therefore, both Planning Policy Wales and Wrexham Unitary Development Plan policies both allow for the possibility of conversion of rural buildings to residential use in the countryside. Policy H5 "Outside defined settlement limits new dwellings will only be permitted where: a) proposals accord with Policies H3, H4, and H8".

With regard to H3a specifically, consideration was given to a variety of alternative non residential uses. The wider site has ceased any agricultural activity for many years now and permission was first granted back in 2009 for the conversion of a stone barn on the site to a residential unit to allow investment to avoid further dilapidation. The wider site currently home to the family's scaffolding business yard however due to the rural nature of the location access to the site is difficult and the remote nature of the site has meant little interest in attracting further non-residential uses to the area. It is considered any investment in the building to make it habitable for any non residential unit would be unviable due to the limited interest in small isolated commercial units and as such the building has sat derilict for many years now. As part of the current scaffold business operation use of the proposed site has been offered and declined many times although this is all of an informal unrecorded nature. It if further considered that any non residential use option would be inappropriate due to the change is non residential business operations due to the current pandemic and it is unlikely this situation will change for many years to come.

Policy H4 relates to sub-division and Policy H8 relates to affordable housing proposals on the edge of settlements so neither is relevant in this case. We feel that the proposed conversion scheme meets the criteria relating to the requirements concerning the provision of housing in the countryside, in this instance, through the conversion of the building outside settlement limits. The proposal is in accord with the above UDP

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Policies together with the more detailed considerations contained in the relevant Council's local planning policy, H3: Converting Rural Buildings (see above).

2.00 DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPT

2.01 Use and Current Condition

This application seeks permission to create 1 No. detached dwelling to satisfy local need for high quality accommodation.

The barn is a timber frame sat on masonry low walls under a current presumed asbestos cement profiled roof sheet product.

The style of sheet roof over timber frame is a very common form of barn construction and whilst probably not as common in numbers as the stone built under a slate or stone roof style found locally, this in itself should be justification for the applicant investing in the building to preserve it and have it retained as a form of architecture.

Documents have been provided to planning to confirm that substantial structural work is not required to make the building habitable and therefore it is suitable for conversion and in dialogue with the planning officer it has been agreed that the roof product will be acceptable in being replaced with a natural Welsh slate finish.

The design proposals seek to maximise the architectural merit of this building as once completed a slate roof over timber clad structure is a very pleasing aesthetic and therefore the building has architectural merit.

The applicant is happy to invest in high quality materials to ensure this conversion is undertaken and results in an architectural statement but that is clearly sympathetic to its heritage in that it is a timber barn. Bespoke timber frame windows are proposed and a natural Welsh slate. Pre aged ship lap cladding will be used along with salvaged existing ship lap cladding for the external walls.

The barn sits at the higher altitude part of the site and is visible from the surrounding landscape. The aesthetic of the barn is far more sympathetic to the landscape that a steel frame and steel profile building would be and there we believe it does have architectural merit worthy of saving from further dilapidation as it adds in interest to the landscape with it not being of the more common stone form.

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Many of these timber barns will have been lost over the years due to lack of maintenance and investment as owners do not have the foresight to appreciate the architectural merit that a renovated timber barn brings.

2.02 Amount

This proposal is for 1 No. detached, single storey, 3b/5p dwelling with parking for 2 cars

2.03 Layout

The proposed dwelling would occupy a part of a larger site, all within applicants ownership as previously described, and form another dwelling house on the site.

Accessed directly off the lane, the access road to the proposed dwelling would be separate from the current access ways for existing dwellings on site and would lead to the ceasing of the use of the rear part of the larger site as a commercial scaffolding storage yard, thus decreasing HGV traffic in the local area. The proposed dwelling will have off street private, vehicular parking space for 2 cars.

2.04 Scale

The proposals provides a valuable opportunity to create a high quality dwelling and does not seek any increase to the current disused building.

2.05 Landscaping

The small private amenity area will be screened behind boundary fencing to afford the residents privacy and be to the rear of the property so as not to affect the open aspect to the front of the site.

2.06 Appearance

Materials to be used have been selected to by sympathetic to the current form and appearance of the building and guidance in LPGN 3 has been adhered to.

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Materials

Roof	Welsh slate finish with Velux Conservation roof windows
Rainwater Goods	Black metal half round gutters (150mm) and round downpipes by Lindab Majestic or equal
Windows	Bespoke made timber casement units with double glazing
Walls (lower part)	The current concrete block face is to be clad with stone walling effect cladding
Walls (upper part)	reuse/match shiplap timber cladding

3.00 ACCESS

The Site is in a rural area thus has a heavy reliance on car as a means of transport, the road structure is well connected to the local rural villages and Wrexham.

Provision has been established for disabled visitors to access the dwellings via a level access threshold.

The site topography is generally flat and therefore no level changes anticipated as a result of the topography of the site.

The car parking provision is immediately accessed from the front door, enabling a swift transition into the vehicle with level thresholds throughout.

All footpaths where possible, to exceed the minimum 1200mm width allowing good manoeuvrability of persons in wheelchairs. The surfacing/pathways leading up to entrances will be formed flush and level using concrete paving slabs not exceeding 1:17 gradient; and any cross falls, not to exceed 1:40. Where possible the surfacing around the perimeter of the building will be soft landscaped with planting.

3.01 External Access and Transport

The Site is in a rural area thus has a heavy reliance on car as a means of transport, the road structure is well connected to the local rural villages and Wrexham.

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3.02 Inclusive Access

The front entrance to the dwelling is located directly adjacent to parking and paths.

In accordance with current AD_M, of the Building Regulations, external door openings to have low level thresholds to benefit both wheelchair visitors and residents.

4.00 ENERGY

4.01 Design

The Scheme will, as a minimum, achieve the standards set out in the current Building Regulation Approved Documents.

4.02 Carbon Emissions

Recommendations for suitable development within the NPPF, which calls for a reduction in the use of energy within homes in a variety of ways – including both renewable energy and reduction in energy consumption. It states that attaining these standards should receive a favourable reception with both committee and planning officers.

4.03 Water

Specification of water saving devices such as dual flush WC's and electric showers will help reduce water consumption within each dwelling. Details will be provided to promote purchase of 'A' rated appliances / white goods in support of minimising internal water consumption.

A ground survey will establish the most appropriate form of sustainable rainwater discharge for the conditions on site.

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5.00 CONCLUSION

National and Local Policy have been considered in the development of this proposal and pre –application stage advice sought. In our experience, we believe the proposals fulfil Planning Policy and satisfy local targets. It is hoped, the proposals should therefore find favour with both Planning Officers and Elected Members of the Committee.

There has been prior approval for the conversion of an agricultural building on the same site to a dwelling (P/2013/0380) in 2013.

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