

Planning Statement

Land at Erw Gerrig
Tregeiriog
Llangollen
LL20 7HS

Proposed holiday pod development, formation of vehicular access, installation of package treatment plant and all associated works

Mr Gilchrist

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement is prepared and submitted in connection with a full planning application made to Wrexham County Borough Council ("The Local Planning Authority") for a proposed holiday pod development comprising the change of use of the land from agriculture to tourism, the siting of three holiday pods to be used as holiday accommodation, the formation of a new vehicular access, the installation of a package treatment plant and all associated works to include site-wide landscaping and the formation of a parking/turning area on land at Erw Gerrig, Tregeiriog, Llangollen, LL20 7HS ("the Application Site").

1.2 The proposed development will provide a small-scale tourism site which will be operated by the Applicant as a form of rural diversification; boosting the local tourism economy within the Ceiriog Valley.

1.3 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the other documentation submitted as part of the application, listed below:

- Completed Full Planning Application Form
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal [By: Arbor Vitae Environment Ltd]
- Green Infrastructure Statement
- Soil Percolation Testing Results & Drainage Specification
- Dwg No: 80402 / GD / 001 – Site Location Plan
- Dwg No: 80402 / GD / 002 – Existing Block Plan
- Dwg No: 80402 / GD / 003 – Proposed Block Plan
- Dwg No: 80402 / GD / 004 – Biodiversity Enhancement Plan
- Dwg No: 80402 / GD / 005 – Proposed Site Sections
- Dwg No: 80402 / GD / 006 – Proposed Access Plan
- Dwg No: 80402 / GD / 100 – Proposed Pod Plans & Elevations
- Dwg No: 80402 / GD / 101 – Proposed Plant Room Plans & Elevations

1.4 This Planning Statement provides a balanced overview of the planning issues associated with the proposed development and is designed to aid the Planning Officer in making their recommendation.

1.5 The information set-out within this statement confirms that the proposal can be delivered on-site without giving rise to any unacceptable or adverse impacts in planning-terms.

2.0 The Application Site & Background

2.1 The application site comprises approximately 0.15 hectares of agricultural grazing land lying to the south of the existing farm complex at Erw Gerrig.

2.2 The site lies within the open countryside in planning policy terms; being located approximately 2.6km south of Glyn Ceiriog and 4.5km north-east of Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog. The smaller village of Pandy lies approximately 650m north of the application site.

2.3 As noted, the site is currently in use for grazing and is situated in close proximity to the complex of buildings and yards at Erw Gerrig. The land is to be accessed via the unclassified public highway running along the application site's western boundary. The land gradually slopes downwards from the public highway (western boundary) to the River Ceiriog (forming the field parcel's eastern boundary).

2.4 The area surrounding the application site is rural in nature and lies within a steep sided valley with lots of vegetation and woodland within the area. The area is characterised by isolated farmsteads and small groups of traditional cottages interspersed within the landscape.

2.5 The application site is located within a designated Special Landscape Area (SLA) as per both the adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the unadopted Wrexham Local Development Plan (LDP). The site comprises Grade 3b agricultural land as per the Welsh Government's Predictive Agricultural Land Classification Map.

2.6 An aerial view of the application site is provided below within Figure 1, with the application site being identified approximately by the red star:



Figure 1: Aerial view of application site and context

3.0 The Proposed Development

3.1 The application seeks full planning permission for a proposed holiday pod development comprising the change of use of the land from agriculture to tourism, the siting of three holiday pods to be used as holiday accommodation, the formation of a new vehicular access, the installation of a package treatment plant and all associated works to include site-wide landscaping and the formation of a parking/turning area for use by guests.

3.2 Each proposed pod will measure 6m in length and 4m in width; having a resultant internal floor area of approximately 24m2. The pods will measure approximately 3m in height at their tallest point. Each will comprise of a single internal space incorporating sleeping and 'living' areas, along with a kitchenette and a separate W.C. and shower. Externally, the proposed pods will be finished with a mixture of vertical timber weatherboarding and slate; both of which are natural Welsh materials characteristic of the locality.

3.3 As noted, the proposed development will be accessed via a new vehicular access off the adjacent unclassified public highway. Visibility splays of 2.4m x 65m will be provided in both directions and full access details are contained within Drawing No: 80402 / GD / 006 submitted in support of the application.

3.4 Within the site, a new parking and turning area is proposed and this will be surfaced with a gravel/crushed stone surface. This will be of sufficient size to allow the parking and turning of up to three vehicles at one time – ensuring all cars accessing the site can both enter and egress the site in a forward gear.

3.5 The site will be comprehensively soft landscaped using a native species planting scheme; details of which can be viewed on Drawing No: 80402 / GD / 004. The site will be enclosed by a new post-and-wire stock-proof fence. This will ensure the proposed development is fully assimilated into the application site's landscape setting and will not have the potential to adversely impact upon the quality of the host rural landscape. The proposed soft landscaping measures will also provide a net benefit for biodiversity (NBB).

3.6 A new package treatment plant will be installed with a sub-surface drainage field, to deal with the foul drainage flows from the proposed development. Soil infiltration testing has been carried out on-site and the results, along with a foul drainage specification, accompany the planning application. These demonstrate the ground conditions on-site will support the use of a drainage field.

3.7 The proposed pods are to be used as short-term holiday lets only, and will not be used as a person's sole or main place of residence.

3.8 An extract of the submitted Proposed Block Plan is provided below within Figure 2:

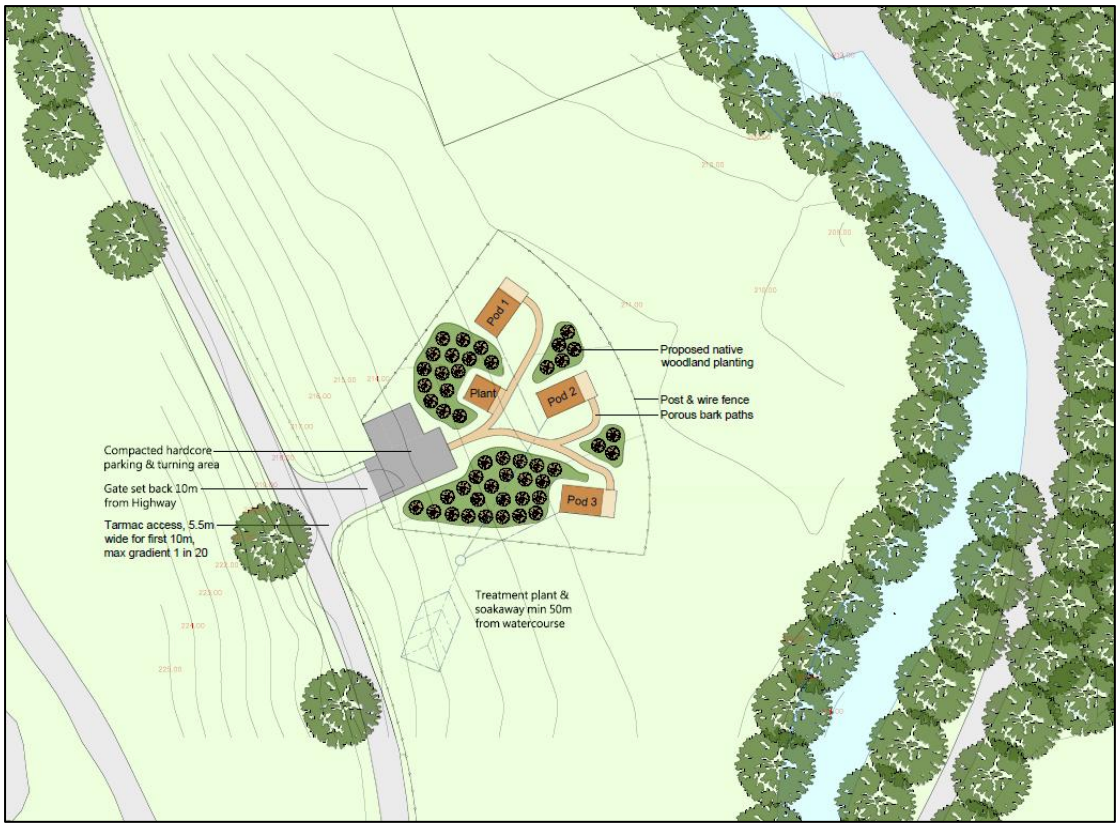


Figure 2: Extract of Proposed Block/Site Plan

3.9 Figure 3, below, shows the design of the proposed pod units:

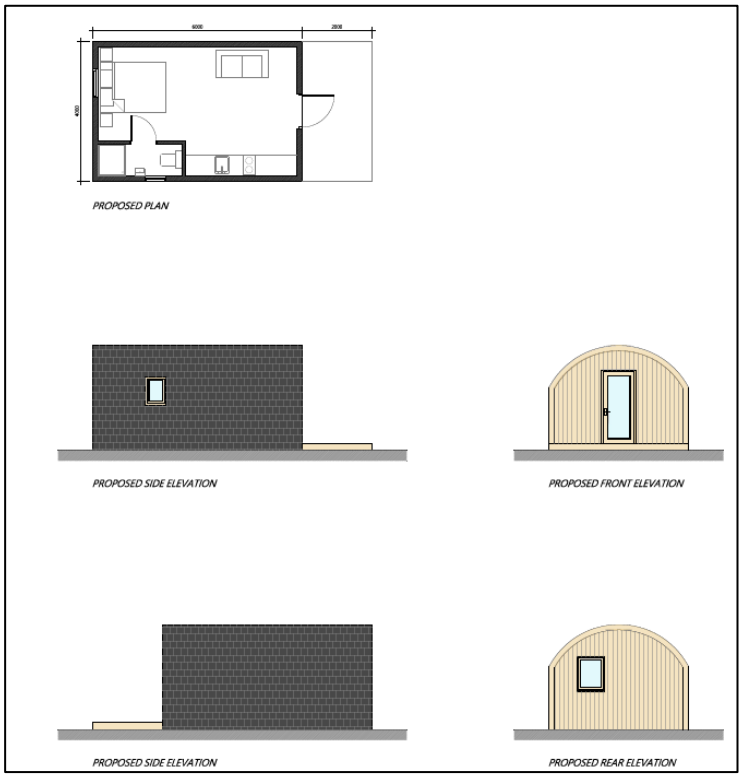


Figure 3: Proposed Pod Design

4.0 Planning Policy Context

4.1 Future Wales: The National Plan 2024 is the Welsh Government's National Development Plan for Wales, and sets out the Welsh Government's objectives and aspirations for the nation moving towards 2040. Policy 5 of Future Wales (Supporting the Rural Economy) confirms that ***"foundational economic activities remain the backbone of the rural economy. In particular, tourism and leisure is recognised as a major and growing employer and contributor to the Welsh rural economy. Sustainable forms of tourism, including opportunities for active, green and cultural tourism, should be explored"***.

4.2 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 12, 2024) represents the Welsh Government's primary national planning policy document and at Paragraph 5.5.1 confirms that tourism is ***"vital to economic prosperity and job creation in many parts of Wales. Tourism can be a catalyst for regeneration, improvement of the built environment and environmental protection"***.

4.3 PPW Paragraph 5.5.3 adds:

"In rural areas, tourism-related development is an essential element in providing for a healthy and diverse economy. In addition to more traditional forms of rural tourism, planning authorities should plan positively for active, green and cultural tourism where they are appropriate. Development should be sympathetic in nature and scale to the local environment".

4.4 Paragraph 5.5.6 of PPW further confirms that Local Planning Authorities in Wales should provide a framework for maintaining and developing well-located, well-designed and good quality tourism facilities.

4.5 At a local level, the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (1996-2011) comprises the adopted development plan for Wrexham County Borough. Whilst time-expired by nearly 15 years, it nevertheless still comprises the adopted development plan for the area, and therefore carries some weight in the overall planning balance.

4.6 UDP Policies CLF9 and CLF10 are of principal relevance to this development proposal. Policy CLF9 relates to 'Visitor Accommodation outside Settlement Limits' whilst Policy CLF10 relates to 'Touring Caravan and Camping Sites' and is therefore deemed to be most relevant. It states:

"New touring caravan and camping sites, and extensions to existing sites, will only be permitted where:

a) the site is unobtrusive and well screened without the need for additional strategic landscaping; and

b) the site is not located within a green barrier or Special Landscape Area; and

c) the site is used for touring purposes only and is not used for the storage of caravans which are not in use".

4.7 The un-adopted Wrexham Local Development Plan (LDP) is noted to still be a material planning consideration and recent appeal decisions within Wrexham have confirmed this to be the case. Indeed, it is noted the evidence base underpinning the UDP is approximately 30 years' old, whereas the unadopted LDP is underpinned by much more recent evidence and has been found 'sound' by a Planning Inspector as part of an examination in public. It is therefore appropriate to afford significant weight to the provisions of the unadopted LDP within the overall planning balance.

4.8 Policy EM5 of the LDP relates to 'Visitor Accommodation Outside Settlement Limits' and states as follows:

"Proposals for visitor accommodation outside settlement limits will only be permitted where:

[...]

iii. New touring caravan, camping and glamping sites and extensions to existing sites provided that:

(a) The scale, form and location of the development does not have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside; and

(b) The site is used for touring purposes only and not for the storage of caravans which are not in use.

[...]"

4.9 Paragraph 4.60 of the LDP, within the supporting text for Policy EM5, identifies that (for the purposes of the LDP) tourist accommodation includes serviced visitor accommodation, hotels, self-catering visitor accommodation, static caravans, chalets, cabins, touring caravans, glamping pods and camping.

4.10 Paragraph 4.61 adds that new tourist accommodation is encouraged because of its contribution to the economy in terms of visitor spending, supporting local business and employment generation.

4.11 Paragraph 4.62 adds to this, and confirms that ***"touring caravan sites, glamping and camping will also generally be supported provided they are acceptably located and screened and provide adequate access and servicing"***.

5.0 Review of Main Material Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

5.1 Considering the nature of the proposed development and the current status of Wrexham's two development plans, it is considered the policy of principal importance in this case is Policy EM5 of the unadopted LDP.

5.2 The proposal comprises a minor development of three small-scale glamping pods and all associated works on a greenfield site within the open countryside.

5.3 The proposed development will be located within a rural part of the County Borough, where the local tourism economy is already strong. The proposals will enhance and further this, offering additional short-term accommodation to be utilised by tourists and visitors to the area – strengthening the local economy and providing local jobs during both the construction and operational phases of development.

5.4 Indeed, whilst the tourism economy is strong within the Ceiriog Valley, the Applicant has noted a lack of such glamping sites within the application site's vicinity. Such glamping installations are commonplace throughout the UK at this time and offer a unique 'glamping' experience for visitors to an area.

5.5 The application site is ideally situated to offer a new small-scale tourism development – being located within close proximity to several local villages such as Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog, Tregeiriog, Pandy and Glyn Ceiriog; as well as being within relatively close proximity to the large population centres in the north-west of England and along the north Wales coast. The site is also located within close proximity to local tourist attractions at Llangollen, Bala, Lake Vyrnwy and Eryri National Park.

5.6 The proposed development will comprise a form of farm diversification on-site at Erw Gerrig and will also help to boost local businesses such as The Hand and The West Arms at Llanarmon, the Glyn Valley Hotel at Glyn Ceiriog, and a number of local eateries, pubs and restaurants at Chirk and Llangollen – all helping to stimulate the local visitor economy and helping to sustain local jobs.

5.7 It is noted Policy EM5, in relation to new glamping developments, gives primary importance to issues relating to the design, scale and landscape visual impact of a development upon the character of the area. This will be assessed in detail below.

5.8 There are several examples of such glamping pod development proposals receiving planning permission within Wrexham County Borough over recent years, including an example at Golly, Rossett (planning application reference P/2022/1061). In this example, the application was for the siting of two

glamping pods and associated works again, on a site lying within the open countryside. The application received approval from the Local Planning Authority – confirming that such developments can positively contribute towards the local tourism economy without causing any harmful impacts upon the character of an area.

5.9 As such, subject to the proposed development not causing any harmful or unacceptable impacts upon the character of the host rural landscape, the development is acceptable in-principle in accordance with the provisions and requirements of LDP Policy EM5.

Design & Visual/Landscape Impact

5.10 As noted, the application site is located within a rural area which is also subject to a Special Landscape Area (SLA) as per both the Wrexham UDP and the unadopted Wrexham LDP.

5.11 The application site is located within a sheltered valley location, where there are no wide-ranging views of the application site available within the host landscape. Indeed, owing to the topography of the surrounding valley sides, no views of the application site are available from a long-range and the site is not prominent within the host rural landscape.

5.12 More locally, the application site is located below the B4500 public highway, and is largely screened from view along this route by extensive mature native species screening in the form of trees, woodland and scrub. Thus, the site is not widely visible from along the route of the B4500.

5.13 The site is accessed directly off a lightly-trafficked single-track unclassified public highway, and is again beneath the level of the highway – thus reducing its prominence and overall public visibility. No public footpaths offer any close-ranging views of the application site.

5.14 The proposed development is of an overall modest scale and comprises of very low-lying structures. Indeed, the tallest man-made structure on the site will be the proposed pods themselves, at approximately 3m tall.

5.15 Furthermore, as noted from the submitted drawings, the site will be extensively soft landscaped with native species planting which will not only soften the visual appearance of the development and the site, but will also ensure the development fully assimilates into the surrounding landscape; which as noted already benefits from high levels of tree planting.

5.16 The Applicant's intention is to make the site as naturally attractive as possible – to both ensure the site does not cause any adverse landscape visual impact as well as to ensure the site appears beautiful for its guests.

5.17 In terms of hard landscaping, the proposed parking and turning area will be finished with a natural gravel/crushed stone surface so as to not appear overly-engineered within the rural setting of the site. Porous bark paths will lead from the parking area to each pod; again utilising a natural material which will not appear 'harsh' within the local landscape. The site will be enclosed by an agricultural-style post-and-wire fence – which is typical of the area.

5.18 Given the proposed landscaping measures, the limited height of the proposed development and its overall modest scale, the topography of the application site and its surroundings as well as the extent of existing landscape screening already present within the area, the development as proposed will not have the potential to cause any harmful or adverse impact upon the visual amenities of the area nor upon the character of the host rural landscape.

5.19 As a result, taking into account the requirements of LDP Policy EM5, by extension the proposed development is confirmed as being acceptable in-principle in this location.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

5.20 There are no residential properties which directly border the application site; with the closest being located approximately 110m to the west of the application site, at Pont y Meibion.

5.21 In light of this distance, there is no potential for the proposed development to cause any unacceptable impacts upon the privacy or amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers.

5.22 Therefore, the development will not result in any adverse impacts in terms of amenity on this occasion.

Ecology & Green Infrastructure

5.23 The application site currently comprises an area of improved agricultural grazing land, which is currently in agricultural use. Given this, it is considered to be of low ecological value.

5.24 The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal which has been completed in the Summer of 2025.

5.25 The submitted appraisal acknowledges the proximity of designated ecological sites to the application site, as well as details records of any protected species within the application site's vicinity.

5.26 The submitted report notes that the on-site grassland is of little botanical diversity, and its loss is of limited ecological significance. A native tree planting scheme will be adopted within the site to off-set the loss off grassland areas. The application site is situated over 30m from the River Ceiriog,

therefore not encroaching. However, a buffer screen is recommended to provide a barrier between the development and the riparian corridor.

5.27 There are no historical records of badger within the site, and no field signs were found within the search area.

5.28 There were no habitats within the site that provide a suitable roosting site for bats. The adjacent river and riparian corridor provide a suitable commuting and foraging habitat for bats that are present locally. Overall, plans are unlikely to impact major flight lines or foraging areas, however external lighting will be subject to a wildlife sensitive lighting scheme (see Appendix 2 of the submitted appraisal).

5.29 There are no habitats within the site that provide suitable coverage for breeding birds and the grassland itself is unsuitable for ground nesting birds. Overall, plans are unlikely to impact this species, and no further survey work is required.

5.30 No ponds were identified within 250m of the proposed development site and there are no historical records of GCN within 1km of the site. No further survey work is required with regard to this species.

5.31 No hibernation sites were identified within the site, however there are several records of hedgehog within 1km of the site and the grassland can be used as a foraging site.

5.32 There was no sign of otter within the site boundary or the surrounding field. The nearest sign of otter was identified on the banks of the River Ceiriog, where otter spraints were identified along the exposed rock. The section of river also provides a suitable habitat for otters where there are ledges and under crofts from the reinforced wall. There are no plans to alter the between the development site and the riverbank, or the river itself.

5.33 Overall therefore, it can be concluded that the development will not cause any significant ecological effects. The submitted appraisal also includes suitable RAMS at Appendix 1 which will be implemented on-site as part of the proposals. As noted, Appendix 2 of the appraisal contains details of a wildlife sensitive lighting scheme. The implementation of the measures set-out within Appendices 1 and 2 of the submitted ecological appraisal can be secured through appropriately worded conditions.

5.34 In terms of green infrastructure and providing a net benefit for biodiversity (NBB), Drawing No: 80402 / GD / 004 shows the proposed planting of a site-wide native species landscaping scheme. The proposed planting will provide a significant NBB effect over and above the application site's existing green infrastructure baseline, in accordance with the requirements of Planning

Policy Wales (Chapter 6). Please refer to the submitted Green Infrastructure Statement for further details.

5.35 In light of the above, the development will not cause any adverse ecological effects and would provide an NBB effect on-site in-line with the requirements of PPW (Chapter 6) and TAN 5.

Highway Safety, Access & Parking

5.36 As noted, a new vehicular access off the adjacent unclassified public highway is proposed as part of the development, in order to facilitate access into the site by guests.

5.37 An Access Plan accompanies the planning application (Drawing No: 80402 / GD / 006) which details that the proposed access will be built fully up to standard and the access will benefit from sufficient levels of visibility in both directions.

5.38 Given the proposed development is only for three 1-bed glamping pods, it is considered it is not of a scale which has the potential to cause any significant impact upon the use of the wider local highway network.

5.39 On-site, a new parking and turning area will be constructed which will allow three vehicles to park comfortably whilst also ensuring all vehicles can both access and egress the site in a forward gear.

5.40 The application site is also accessible by sustainable means – with a public bus stop being located approximately 150m away from the site entrance. This distance can be walked safely on-foot meaning visitors/guests to the site will not need to travel to/from the site by private motor vehicle.

5.41 In light of the above, the proposed development is acceptable in planning-terms from a highway safety, accessibility and parking perspective.

Flood Risk & Drainage

5.42 With regards flood risk, the application site is located within Zone 1 of the Flood Map for Planning in terms of both fluvial flooding and surface water flooding. Thus, flood risk is not a planning constraint in this instance and there will be no adverse flooding impacts caused by the proposed glamping pod development in planning terms.

5.43 In terms of surface water drainage, it is accepted that separate SAB approval is likely to be required in addition to the need for planning permission. In accordance with SuDS principles, in the first instance, the opportunity to retain as much surface water as possible on the site will be explored – with solutions such as water butts and rain gardens being implemented on-site. Should any additional surface water runoff need to be dealt with on-site, then

the use of soakaways will be investigated. Given the extent of land within the ownership/control of the Applicant on-site, it is clear that a SuDS-compliant surface water drainage strategy can be implemented on-site and full details of this strategy would come forwards as part of a SAB application made to the Local Authority.

5.44 As noted, a private package treatment plant and drainage field are to be installed on-site to deal with the foul sewerage from the proposed glamping pod development. Soil infiltration test results accompany the application to demonstrate that the use of a drainage field is feasible on-site.

5.45 As the application site is located within the freshwater catchment of the River Dee & Bala Lake Special Area of Conservation (SAC), NRW's Advice to planning authorities for planning applications affecting nutrient sensitive Special Areas of Conservation is noted to be of relevance.

5.46 The published advice confirms the following developments can be screened out as not likely to have a significant effect on a river SAC in relation to nutrient inputs, as there is unlikely to be a source of additional nutrients or pathway for impacts:

"... private sewage treatment systems discharging domestic wastewater to ground, built to the relevant British Standard (BS 6297:2007+A1:2008) having a maximum daily discharge rate of less than 2 cubic metres (m3) and where the drainage field is located more than 40m from any surface water feature such as a river, stream, ditch or drain and located more than 50m from a SAC boundary and at least 50m from any other known discharge to ground".

5.47 In this case:

- The proposal will discharge wastewater to-ground via a package treatment plant and drainage field;
- The proposed foul drainage system will be built in accordance with BS 6297:2007+A1:2008;
- The submitted soil infiltration test results confirm the ground conditions on-site will support the use of a drainage field in this location;
- The proposed 3-pod development will have a combined daily discharge rate of less than 2m3;
- The proposed drainage field will be located in excess of 40m from any surface water feature;
- The proposed drainage field will be located in excess of 50m from the SAC boundary; and
- The proposed drainage field will be located in excess of 50m from any other known discharge to ground within the vicinity.

5.48 Accordingly, the proposed development complies with the requirements of the NRW advice, and as such, the proposals can be 'screened out' as not likely

to cause a significant effect upon the integrity of the River Dee & Bala Lake SAC.

Heritage

5.49 The following designated heritage features lie within the vicinity of the application site:

- Grade II Listed Monument to Huw Morys, including boundary walls and gate (CADW ID: 81165) – approximately 88m south-west of the application site
- Grade II Listed Farm Building to the S of Pont y Meibion Farmhouse (CADW ID: 647) – approximately 110m south-west of the application site
- Grade II Listed Pont y Meibion (CADW ID: 614) – approximately 155m south of the application site.

5.50 As noted earlier within this statement, the application site benefits from high levels of existing landscape screening afforded to it by existing mature trees and woodland, as well as the natural topography of the land. Thus, the application site is not visible from any of the designated heritage assets identified above.



Figure 4: View from application site looking south-westwards towards listed buildings 81165 and 647

5.51 Figure 4, above, shows the view looking south-westwards from the application site towards listed buildings 81165 and 647. As can be seen, due to the land rising steeply in this direction and the extent of screening in existence, there is no intervisibility between the application site and the listed buildings.



Figure 5: View from listed building 614 looking northwards towards application site

5.52 Figure 5, above, shows the view looking northwards from listed building 614 towards the application site. As can be noted, no views of the application site exist from this position owing to the topography of the land and existing mature trees which effectively screen the site from view.

5.53 Given that no intervisibility exists between the application site and the nearby designated heritage assets, there is no potential for the proposals to cause any harmful impact upon the setting of the listed structures in this instance.

Agricultural Land Classification

5.54 The application site is classified as being Grade 3b agricultural land quality as per the Welsh Government's Predictive Agricultural Land Classification Map.

5.55 As a result, the land does not comprise the 'best and most versatile' agricultural land as per Paragraph 3.58 of Planning Policy Wales, and does not, therefore, need to be specifically safeguarded from development.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Roger Parry & Partners LLP on behalf of Mr Gilchrist ("the Applicant") in support of a full planning application a proposed holiday pod development comprising the change of use of the land from agriculture to tourism, the siting of three holiday pods to be used as holiday accommodation, the formation of a new vehicular access, the installation of a package treatment plant and all associated works to include site-wide landscaping and the formation of a parking/turning area on land at Erw Gerrig, Tregeiriog, Llangollen, LL20 7HS ("the Application Site").

6.2 The proposed development has been sensitively designed so as to not cause any adverse or harmful impacts upon the character of the surrounding rural landscape and will offer significant benefits to the local tourism economy.

6.3 The 'Development Plan' for the area relevant to the application comprises Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, the adopted Wrexham UDP and the unadopted Wrexham LDP. National planning policy and guidance is also a material consideration in the determination of this planning application. The proposal has been shown to be in compliance with the relevant Development Plan policies and the national planning policy prescribed by the Welsh Government.

6.4 The impacts of the proposals have been shown to be acceptable in planning terms and, where necessary, mitigation measures have been set-out to reduce potential impacts of the proposed development.

6.5 In light of the above, the development is acceptable in planning terms, and it is therefore respectfully requested that full planning permission be granted for the development without delay.