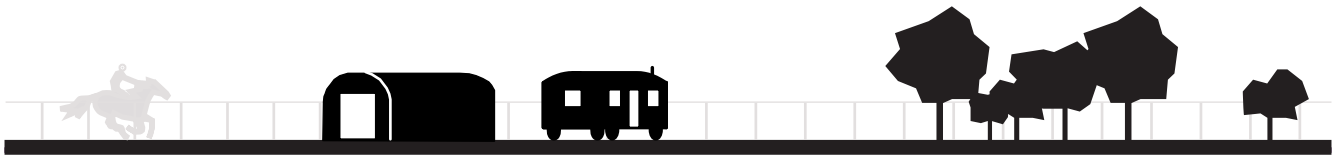


The Building Plot



Planning Statement & Business Case

Bangor-on-Dee Racecourse, Bangor-on-Dee
Full Planning Application



Document Information

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Planning Statement & Business Case

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Bangor-on-Dee Racecourse

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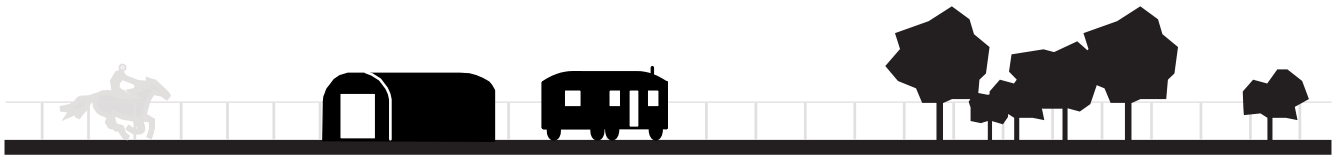
Robert Jones



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Introduction



This planning statement is prepared by 'The Building Plot Limited' in support of a full application for the change of use of land adjoining 'Stable Cottages' at Bangor on Dee Racecourse.

The business owners have invested heavily in the business over a number of years, with improvements being undertaken to all aspects of the buildings, racecourse and the unique grounds surrounding the site.

The proposal includes the installation of 4 glamping pods, 2 Shepherd huts, together with associated landscape works including footpaths, soft landscape planting, and drainage.

01/ View north across the racecourse.



08/ View west across the racecourse.



The Business



The company is an evolving organisation with an ever-expanding portfolio. The company provides, year-round events, race meetings and conference and banqueting facilities at Bangor-on-Dee Racecourse and numerous other affiliated venues and bespoke events.

The coronavirus pandemic, as with other businesses and sports, has had a significantly negative effect upon Bangor On Dee Races.

Before Covid-19, there were opportunities to attend horse races throughout the year. However, once lockdown came into full effect, race meetings were suspended putting huge pressure on the business.

The absence of attendances at race meetings has not only affected on course bookmakers but also the related businesses on site. The sudden shift to remote gambling along with the changes in gambling habits have also added to existing pressures.

Bangor on Dee Racecourse is a left handed jumps racecourse enjoying delightful countryside views. Bangor itself has unique character, amplified by the fact that it is the only racecourse in the country that doesn't have a grandstand. The first steeplechase meeting took place at Bangor on 25th February 1859 over much the same course as that on which the races are held today.

Today, many of the top trainers send their horses to race at Bangor as part of their education. Bangor-on-Dee Racecourse has been awarded the Gold Standard Award by the Racehorse Owners Association (ROA).

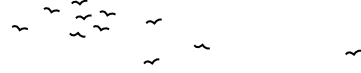
Bangor-on-Dee Racecourse also offers a selection of fantastic private spaces for corporate entertaining. Also, the impressive site operates as a wedding venue which holds weddings of up to 600 guests.

The proposal would form a valuable addition to the racecourse and ensure the long term commercial viability of all the associated businesses on site.

We are confident that this development will have a positive impact on the local economy, as a vast majority of holiday makers will visit local attractions, places of interest, public houses and outdoor activity centres (as well as the racecourse).



The Application Site



The application relates to land that forms part of The Bangor on Dee Racecourse and consists of grassland enclosed by hedgerow, shrubs and trees (photographs attached).

The site falls within the grounds of the workers' dwelling, 'Stable Cottages' which is highlighted upon the submitted Location and Proposed site plan.

In terms of impact upon traffic, the proposals will have a negligible impact due to the existing access point.

Having regard to the relatively flat nature of the proposed site, the retention of existing trees and hedgerows and the proposed planting scheme, the overall visual effects arising from the proposed development would be limited and localised and would not be significant.

The Vision



The vision of the proposal is to provide an environmentally sensitive scheme that reflects its context, and provide accommodation on site for existing customers visiting the racecourse, associated businesses on site, and holiday makers visiting North Wales.

The glamping units will also allow regular customers and holiday makers enjoy short, and flexible breaks offering diverse holiday experiences.

The proposed units will be constructed with a timber frame and cladding exterior finish. As previously mentioned, there is already an existing access point to the site.

Due to the location of the site, the majority of visitors will drive to the site. However, once visitors arrive, many of their activities will be on foot exploring the surrounding countryside.

The racecourse itself already benefits from planning permission for the change of use in land to site static caravans, serviced with electric hook up points and WC and washing facilities. However, the applicant seeks to develop a tourism business to meet the wider demand for different styles, location and types of accommodation in the local area and provide all year-round facilities.

03/ View east from the Racecourse site.



04/ View south across the proposed site.



Local Policy and Tourist

Planning policy is set out in the adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

The site is outside any settlement limit.

Policy CLF10 New touring caravan and camping sites, and extensions to existing sites, will only be permitted where;

- the site is unobtrusive and well screened without the need for additional strategic landscaping; and
- the site is not located within a green barrier or Special Landscape Area; and
- the site is used for touring purposes only and is not used for the storage of caravans which are not in use.

New tourist accommodation is encouraged because of its contribution to the economy in terms of visitor spending, supporting local business and employment generation. However, the Council seeks to ensure that developments are sustainable and respect the character of the countryside.

Tourist accommodation development in the open countryside that supports an existing tourist facility, attraction or asset but is also sympathetic to the natural environment and rural landscape will that make a positive contribution to the rural landscape and sympathetically designed additions and alterations to existing accommodation. Touring caravan sites and camping will also generally be supported provided they are acceptably located and screened and provide adequate access and servicing.

Holiday and touring caravan and camping sites are an important part of the self-catering holiday sector, and can make a useful contribution to the rural economy. There may be a demand for additional sites, or extensions to existing sites, during the Plan period. However, caravan and camping sites can also be an extremely alien and intrusive feature in the landscape, and their siting needs to be very carefully controlled. The location of sites is also important in order to ensure that danger and inconvenience is not caused to other

road users, since caravans under tow are slower moving and more unwieldy than most other vehicles. Ready access to the main road network is therefore important.

In terms of the current UDP policy, the issue is to determine whether the site is sufficiently well screened and unobtrusive. The development will be of very low impact as the units will be finished with timber cladding, which will help to assimilate the studios within the rural setting.

Mature, well established screening is already present to screen view when passing the site.

National Planning Policy (Planning Policy Wales (9th Edition))

Planning Policy Wales sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government, which should be taken into account in the determination of planning applications.

The aim of the document is to translate the Welsh Government's commitment to sustainable development into the planning system so that it can play an appropriate role in moving towards sustainability.

The National Planning Policy for Wales is relevant to the application in section 5.5.1, it states that; "tourism involves a wide range of activities, facilities and types of development and 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".

Section 5.5.2 confirms that in Wales "the planning system encourages tourism where it contributes to economic development, conservation, rural diversification, urban regeneration and social inclusion while recognising the needs of visitors and those of local communities."

Section 5.5.3 is relevant to this planning application and states that “In rural areas, tourism-related development is an essential element in providing for a healthy and diverse economy. Here development should be sympathetic in nature and scale to the local environment.”

PPW is therefore very much ‘pro-tourism’ in terms of how it expects policies to be formulated and applied with an emphasis on sustainable forms of tourism development relating to the social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainability. The policy basis of PPW fully supports this development and the proposals to offer a wider (improved) range of holiday accommodation within the wider area.

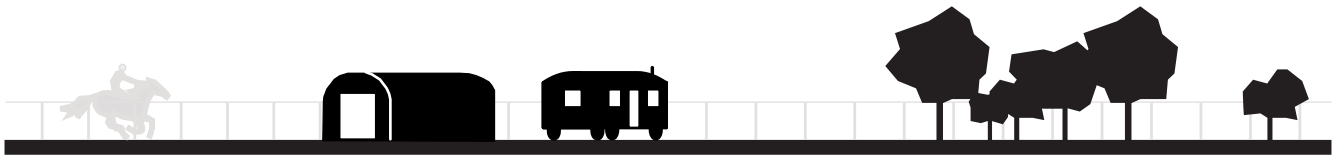
Technical Advice Notes (TANs).

The Welsh Technical Advice Notes (TANs) are provided to supplement Planning Policy Wales and should be read in conjunction with the advice and guidance within PPW.

Consistent with the approach of PPW, TAN 13 (Tourism) confirms the importance of the tourism sector to the Welsh economy and under paragraph 4 states that Tourism “Makes a major contribution to the Welsh economy, provides employment in a wide variety of occupations and can bring benefits to local economies and communities in urban and rural areas”.

The advice in relation to holiday sites is similarly positive with paragraph 12 stating that “holiday and touring caravan parks are an important part of the self-catering holiday sector and can contribute as much to the local tourism economy as serviced holiday accommodation whilst using less land for the purpose”.

The Viability of the Business



The current and future viability of the business is the key driver for this application.

The proposals to enhance the site with a modest number of high quality glamping units designed to attract those with an interest in horse racing as well as holiday makers.

Glamping developments attract a range of different consumers, in particular those looking for an experience with a difference, which is what this proposal will also offer once complete.

The applicant also intends to offer discounted meals etc at the restaurant / venue as part of the package on offer to guests. Further details on the financial status of the business can be provided if required.

The Economy



The county has a growing reputation in the outdoor activity sector. Policy specifies that high quality development proposals that support and enhance the visitor economy of the county will generally be supported and encouraged.

Tourism is a significant contributor to the Welsh economy. The importance of holiday accommodation to this economy cannot be underestimated.

The tourism strategy for Wales was set out in the 'Partnership for Growth: strategy for tourism 2013-2020' which is aimed at driving higher tourism earnings to deliver maximum value for the Welsh economy. The objectives of this strategy include promoting Wales as a destination through a higher quality tourism offer and extending the tourism season; and objective this planning application seeks to promote.

UK Caravan and Camping Alliance (UKCCA) commissioned an independent economic impact assessment and benefit assessment of the holiday park sector across the UK in 2018, with detailed reports produced for each country within the UK.

The Wales report breaks down the economic contribution of all forms of holiday park and camping accommodation to the Welsh economy. It is estimated that visitors to Welsh holiday parks/campsites spent a total of £1.33 billion in the Welsh economy through direct and indirect means.

The UKCCA 'Economic Impact Assessment and Benefit Assessment Wales 2018' report provides robust data on the contribution holiday and camping parks make to the economy and this is broken down into individual accommodation type. According to this report, owned accommodation creates a visitor spend of £95 per group per day through on-site and off-site expenditure in Wales (UKCCA, 2018).

Tourism can have a profound economic benefit to the local economy. The 'Tourism Performance Report for Wales 2019' shows that self catering was increasingly popular showing

an increase of 3% year on year with an average spend increase of around 11%. The effects of the Covid pandemic will inevitably maintain this increase and good quality accommodation will help to change holiday makers habits.

The applicant has seen a clear demand for camping holidays; therefore, he wishes to increase the number of holiday units on the parcel of land adjoining Stables Cottage. The proposed modest additional number of glamping units will help enhance the site due to additional landscape planting.

The applicant also wishes to grasp the opportunity to develop 'high spec' self-catering units to increase the range of quality accommodation to meet changing market demand, and support a thriving tourism economy.

The proposed construction/development works on site would create employment opportunities. Local tradesmen will be used, including carpenters, plumbers and electricians, further boosting the local economy.

The rural economy will be boosted by the introduction of a new rural enterprise as well as consumer spending at local amenities.

Given the above, it is evident that the proposal will have a positive impact upon the local economy. Local employment opportunities will be created, and will support and sustain the business.

Employment Opportunities

As with any new or growing business, employment opportunities are created for local and regional companies and workforce. The company is committed to utilise local skills and labour.

It is envisaged that as the lettings increase opportunities will be created for the employment of additional grounds personnel and cleaning assistants on site. Local companies will also be approached for assistance with construction of this project. Local suppliers will be used for the supply of goods and produce, with visitors and guests encouraged to buy locally and visit the local public house.

Water and Waste Management

Foul drainage disposal will be by means of a septic tank (detail design submitted within planning application). Surface water will be dealt with by means of new on-site soakaways.

Any materials excavated during construction suitable for re-use will be utilised on site. Any development waste after construction will be dealt with by recycling storage facilities that can be easily accessed for collection. Separated recyclable and non-recyclable bins will be provided within each unit.

Sustainable Transport



The site is situated approximately five miles from the historic market town of Wrexham which offers a range of shops and public transport options etc. Local taxi firms are based within the settlements should visitors wish to use these options.

As such, it is considered that the site is relatively highly sustainable, therefore, once visitors arrive many of their activities will be on foot to explore the surrounding countryside.



Biodiversity



Ecology reports are being carried out by Mr Paul Jones. The proposal does not give rise to any biodiversity issues.

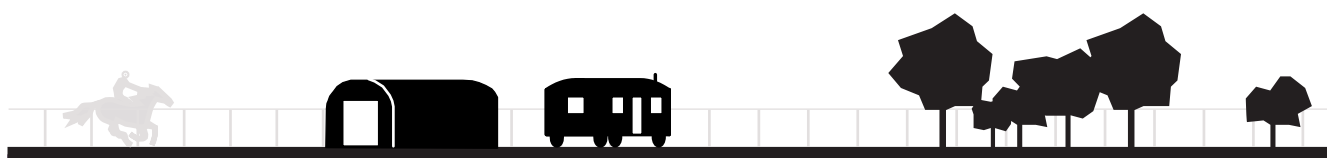
05/ View south from Racecourse site.



06/ View east from the proposed site.



Summary & Conclusion



Summary

In summary, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in principle.

The development is required to improve the viability of the site, as detailed above. It is limited in terms of scale and will have negligible impact on the surrounding countryside, especially considering how secluded and screened the site is.

The development will be high quality, in keeping with the existing business, and will provide local benefits.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the applicant wishes to seize the opportunity to develop self-catering units for the purpose of increasing the range of quality accommodation to meet changing market needs and to secure the viability of the existing business.

Additional employment opportunities will be created during the construction/ development works and the holiday accommodation will result in an increase in consumer spending at local amenities, especially the racecourse and on site restaurant / function rooms. The proposal therefore would have a positive impact upon the local rural economy.

The proposal has also been designed to ensure that it would have a low visual impact, and be an appropriate addition to the site and the landscape. The units will be located in areas that are well screened from public vantage points.

The glamping units will be finished with timber cladding, which will help to assimilate the units within the rural setting. The proposal will have a negligible impact upon traffic as the existing site benefits from an existing access point.

As previously mentioned, to date, there are no known protected species present at the site. Shrubs and hedgerow will be retained, therefore, the proposal does not give rise to any biodiversity issues.

The proposals meet the requirements of the Local Plan Policies in all aspects.

The Building Plot

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