

16th June 2021

Freshfields
Holt Road
Cross Lanes
Wrexham
LL13 0TY

The Planning Inspectorate
Crown Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff.
CF10 3NQ
wales@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Re: Planning Reference P/2020/0363. Commercial glasshouse with packing facility and office space, energy centre and associated infrastructure, carbon dioxide recovery plant, reservoirs, car parking and landscaping.
Land west of Sesswick Way, Marchwiel, Wrexham LL13 0TF

Dear Inspector,

I write as a one of many residents who have the same feelings as myself regarding recent planning applications that are rejected by our local county council and local community councils for good reasons and then automatically go to appeal only for an inspector to overturn the decision of our county council. Our community and county councils are best placed and knowledgeable to make the right decisions and when these are overturned, people feel they are not listened to and that higher forces play a part where other have more to gain and residents pay the consequences of such decisions. As I write there are residents in my area living with the daily pressures of such applications that went to appeal and a rubber stamp approval given.

The proposed planning application above was refused by Wrexham County Borough Council. The proposed 37-acre site is bordered by two flood zones, the Clywedog River and Bedwell brook that flood most winters and causes disruption to local people and business traffic traveling to the nearby industrial estate. This proposed major development would involve a site of green belt and best and most value agricultural land of 37 acres being covered in a non-permeable concrete base that straddles across this 37-acre site, bridging these two flood zone. It will use from the national grid a massive 15.75 MVA (Mega volt amps) of power, putting 98,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide into the environment.

When people learn of this they are shocked that green belt would be covered in concrete to grow food using such massive amounts of energy in a structure that would put in danger and exacerbate this flood zone. People I have spoken to are totally against such methods of food production; they wish to see natural processes to produce the food they eat.

We elect our local council to do what is right for the local people and they use their local knowledge, the UDP plan and government guidelines, AND SO RIGHTLY AND CORRECTLY, THEY REFUSED THIS APPLICATION.

This has now gone to appeal, something all too familiar, and in recent years we have seen community councils and our County Council refuse such developments, and then for them only to be overturned by a government inspector who, with great respect, has little knowledge of the area and no understanding of what local people's needs are. It seems that politics and financial considerations overrule our county council all too often. The cost of fighting such an appeal makes it almost impossible for the county council to react.

I have always believed that devolving power to pass the decision making to the people and letting them decide what is best for them, what is best for the place where they live via the decisions of community and county councils was the best solution. After all is said, the Welsh government is a devolved government, and they would not want Westminster to overturn every decision the Welsh government made.

Furthermore, the original response from the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs for this proposed development made a strong objection to this proposal as their statement...

- The proposal has failed to apply the sequential test and justify the loss of Best and Most Value (BMV) agricultural land in accordance with the procedure required by PPW 3.54 & 3.55. Consequently, the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs of Welsh Government wishes to express its OBJECTION to this planning application.

They then made a complete U-turn. What external influences would cause this dramatic reversal of a specific decision. I find it difficult to believe that a professional government department whose daily practices is assessing the suitability/non-suitability of land for such proposals would get it so wrong; **I believe they got it right in the first instance.**

In addition, the massive water collection off the greenhouse roof the application proposes would involve is a colossal water management, which would be a lifetime commitment, a legacy no one should impose on future generations. If such a site is abandoned, this water management is of even greater risk to the area. Our county council understood this danger and was correct in refusing this application due to the inherent dangers it presents to this area.

Recent news states that Wales will have to prepare for wetting winters. The climate change should be at the very heart of all planning decision making to ensure that any major developments are diverted away from flood zones. The very reason our county council refused this application.

The purpose of our community councils and the county council is to provide local knowledge and advice which provides a better understanding of the possible effect and consequences of any new planning application, which the local people have to live with when things go wrong, and very often they do go wrong with dire circumstances for local people and their well-being.

I hope and trust that in this case the Welsh Government and its inspector will accept that the local people, their community councils and County Council are right and correct to refuse this application and that the Welsh Government are in agreement with this.

Yours sincerely,
Raymond Jones