

Planning Statement

Croxton Farm
Hamner
Whitchurch
SY13 3BS

Proposed barn conversion scheme to provide two residential dwellings and all associated works including demolition of agricultural buildings, installation of a package treatment plant and upgrading of existing access

Mr Hanmer

November 2025

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement is prepared and submitted in connection with a full planning application, and an application for Listed Building Consent, made to Wrexham County Borough Council ("The Local Planning Authority") for the residential conversion of two redundant agricultural buildings and all associated works including the demolition of agricultural buildings, the installation of a package treatment plant and the upgrading of an existing field access at Croxton Farm, Hamner, Whitchurch, SY13 3BS.

1.2 This Planning Statement should be read in-conjunction with the other plans and documents which have been submitted in support of the applications, principally comprising:

- Completed Full Planning & Listed Building Consent Application Form
- Heritage Impact Assessment [By: Henderson Heritage]
- Bat Presence / Absence Survey [By: UES]
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal [By: UES]
- Structural Survey Reports [By: Plumb Stone Surveyors]
- Green Infrastructure Statement
- Soil Percolation Test Results & Foul Drainage Specification
- Drawing No: 80087 / GH / 001 – Site Location Plan
- Drawing No: 80087 / GH / 002 – Existing Block Plan
- Drawing No: 80087 / GH / 003 – Proposed Block Plan
- Drawing No: 80087 / GH / 004 – Biodiversity Enhancement Plan
- Drawing No: 80087 / GH / 005 – Proposed Access Plan
- Drawing No: 80087 / GH / 100 – Building 1 Existing Plans & Elevations
- Drawing No: 80087 / GH / 101 – Building 2 Existing Plans & Elevations
- Drawing No: 80087 / GH / 102 – Building 3 Existing Plans & Elevations
- Drawing No: 80087 / GH / 103 – Building 4 Existing Plans & Elevations
- Drawing No: 80087 / GH / 110 – Building 1 Proposed Plans & Elevations
- Drawing No: 80087 / GH / 111 – Building 2 Proposed Plans & Elevations

1.3 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 recommendations.

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

2.0 The Application Site & Background

2.1 The application site relates to the traditional farmyard and buildings at Croxton Farm, together with an access route between the farmyard and the class C public highway to the west.

2.2 Croxton Farm comprises a traditional farm complex that includes the farmhouse, agricultural barns, and land located on the north side of the A525 public highway. Croxton Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building, and the outbuildings subject to this application lie within its curtilage, although they are detached from the main built form of the dwelling house.

2.3 The farmhouse is owned by the Applicant but operates as a children's home, and does not form part of the application site. Existing fencing separates the farmhouse from the barns and the farmyard forming the application site. The barns subject of the application form part of an old farmyard used for livestock housing and general storage, and are run as a separate entity, managed independently from the farmhouse.

2.4 The outbuildings are currently vacant, no longer in use and are considered redundant agricultural structures that are not fit for their original agricultural purpose owing to the nature and scale of modern agricultural practices.

2.5 The application site is located within the open countryside in planning terms, located approximately 1.1km east of Horseman's Green, 1.5km north of Hanmer and 8.2km west of Whitchurch town centre.

2.6 As noted, the application site is located to the north of the A525 public highway however access will be gained via an improved access off the class C public highway situated to the west of the application site. To the north and east, the application site is surrounded by open agricultural fields.

2.7 The buildings proposed for conversion (Buildings 1 and 2) comprise timber-framed red brick traditional farm buildings, which have been altered over the years, reflecting changing farming practices over the generations. However, they retain their fundamental traditional form and appearance and are clearly recognisable as traditional agricultural buildings.

2.8 Buildings 3 and 4 are significantly newer agricultural buildings which offer no heritage value and are proposed for demolition as part of the proposed development.

2.9 An aerial view of the application site is provided below, with the site identified by the red star:



Figure 1: Aerial view of application site and surrounding context

3.0 The Proposed Development

3.1 The application seeks full planning permission and Listed Building Consent for the residential conversion of two redundant agricultural buildings (Buildings 1 and 2) and all associated works including the demolition of agricultural buildings, the installation of a package treatment plant and the upgrading of an existing field access at Croxton Farm. The proposed development will result in the provision of two open-market barn conversions, a shared courtyard area, private gardens and a shared driveway.

3.2 Buildings 3 and 4 are proposed to be demolished in their entirety.

3.3 A new shared driveway will be created, linking the application site to an improved existing vehicular access off the class C public highway, to the west of the site. No access will be gained into or from the application site directly from the A525 public highway.

3.4 The proposed development will involve the sympathetic conversion of the existing traditional buildings on the site into 2x residential dwellings, utilising existing window and door openings wherever possible so as to retain the buildings' existing rural character. The overall and intrinsic scale and design/character of the existing buildings will remain as existing as a result of

the proposed development; whilst the buildings will be given a viable long-term use to secure their future.

3.5 Building 1 will provide a two-storey barn conversion containing four bedrooms. No extensions are proposed to the existing building. New windows will be simplistic in design and without glazing bars – maintaining the existing non-domestic appearance of the barn. Existing openings, including cart shed and threshing barn doors, will be subdivided or repaired sympathetically, while hayloft, stable, and shippon doors will be retained or repaired like-for-like. A limited number of rooflights are proposed on the north and south roof planes, vertically aligned and top-hung. These are required in order to make the building fit-for-purpose as residential accommodation. Internally, key spaces include the former stable and double-height threshing areas, which will be fully utilised. A wood-burning stove with a small black flue is proposed for the north elevation. All new doors and windows will be of appropriate materials, such as timber with simple ironmongery or painted timber/aluminium, with details capable of being secured by condition in consultation with the Authority's Conservation Officer.

3.6 Building 2 will provide a single-storey barn conversion containing four bedrooms. Again, a limited number of new conservation roof lights are proposed within each roof plane of the building to achieve sufficient light levels internally. On the western elevation, a small oak-framed extension is also proposed, in-place of a former part of the building which has been demolished at some point in the building's history. A new small, black, flue is proposed to serve a new wood-burning stove within the barn conversion. The existing asbestos roof will be removed and replaced with slate, delivering a clear heritage benefit.

3.7 Two new private garden areas will be created, on land which is currently developed – largely replacing the footprint of Buildings 3 and 4, which are to be demolished and removed from the site. Both gardens would thus be closely related in spatial and visual terms to the host barn conversions and their creation will not involve any new development onto areas of adjoining agricultural land.

3.8 The application site is to be comprehensively landscaped with native species planting; with full details of the proposed planting being included on the submitted Biodiversity Enhancement Plan.

3.9 Vehicular access to the application site will be via an existing field gate lying to the west of the application site (which will be substantially improved and widened) and a new shared private drive which follows the route of an existing farm access track. The proposed access will achieve sufficient levels of visibility to serve the proposed development of 2x residential dwellings – with full details shown on the submitted Proposed Access Plan. No access from the application site directly onto the A525 public highway will be available,

noting that visibility from this existing access to the farmhouse is severely sub-standard. The development as proposed will have no impact upon the use of the existing access onto the A525.

3.10 Parking provision will be provided for each of the proposed barn conversions – with four spaces per unit as shown on the submitted Proposed Block Plan. This is in excess of the maximum standards outlined within Wrexham Local Planning Guidance Note 16 (Parking), which confirms that 3 spaces should be provided for a 3/4 bedroom home.

4.0 Planning Policy Context

4.1 At a national level, the principal policy guidance on the re-use and conversion of existing rural buildings is contained within Technical Advice Note (TAN) 23 (Economic Development). This states:

"3.2.2 Residential conversion of rural buildings which have ceased to be used for industrial or commercial purposes, including agriculture, need to be assessed on their impact including their impact on the fabric and character of historic buildings...

3.2.3 If the existing building is unsuitable for conversion without extensive alteration, rebuilding or extension, or if the creation of a residential curtilage would have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside, the same considerations relating to new house building in the open countryside will apply."

4.2 Part 3.2 of TAN 6 (Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities) adds to this, and confirms that ***"when assessing planning applications for the re-use or adaptation of a rural building, the primary consideration should be whether the nature and extent of the new use proposed 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".*** Paragraph 3.2.3 of TAN 6 further confirms that conversion schemes should respect the landscape and local building styles and materials.

4.3 At a local level, the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (1996-2011) (UDP) 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.

4.4 UDP Policy H3 is of principal relevance and relates to the Conversion of Buildings Outside Settlement Limits. However, it is considered that its

requirements have been superseded by both TAN 23 and TAN 6, along with Policy H9 of the unadopted Wrexham Local Development Plan (LDP).

4.5 Indeed, the un-adopted Wrexham 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.

4.6 LDP Policy H9 states:

"The change of use or conversion of buildings to residential use outside settlement limits will only be permitted where:

i. The building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without extensive alteration, rebuilding or extension; and
ii. The building is worthy of retention due to its appearance, historic, architectural or landscape value; and
iii. The creation of a residential curtilage does not have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside."

4.7 It is therefore noted that the unadopted LDP policy does not favour economic re-use of existing rural buildings over residential re-use and there is no requirement for marketing evidence to be submitted in support of planning applications to demonstrate that an economic re-use of the building has been considered.

4.8 Further local policy guidance in relation to the conversion of rural buildings is outlined within Wrexham County Borough Council's Local Planning Guidance Note 03: Converting Rural Buildings.

5.0 Review of Main Material Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

5.1 In-line with the above, the principal consideration with regards the principle of development in this instance relates to compliance with unadopted LDP Policy H9 (Conversion of Buildings Outside of Settlement Limits to Residential Use), along with the requirements of TAN 23 and TAN 6.

5.2 In terms of the subject buildings being structurally sound and capable of conversion, a Structural Survey of each building accompanies this application, confirming both structures are structurally sound and capable of

being converted without the requirement for any significant structural interventions, alternations or extensions.

5.3 In light of the above, based upon the judgements and conclusions of the experienced surveyor's visits to the site, it is clear the existing buildings are capable of conversion without requiring any substantial alterations or extensions and as such the requirements of Criterion (i) are met in relation to both Building 1 and Building 2.

5.4 In terms of Criterion (ii), both buildings are curtilage listed owing to their spatial and historic ties to the on-site listed dwelling house. Furthermore, both are of local traditional design and character. Therefore, both buildings are clearly worthy of retention and the requirements of Criterion (ii) are met accordingly.

5.5 With regards Criterion (iii), the proposed residential garden areas will be of an overall limited scale and will only extend onto areas which are currently developed as part of the existing farm complex of buildings and yards. Furthermore, both will be closely related in spatial terms to their respective barn conversion; being of a proportionate scale within the rural setting. As such, the proposed residential curtilages are considered to be acceptable in terms of their scale and siting, and the requirements of Criterion (iii) of LDP Policy H9 are met.

5.6 In light of the above, the development as submitted is acceptable in-principle in accordance with the requirements of unadopted LDP Policy H9, LPGN 03, TAN 6, TAN 23 and UDP Policy H3.

Design & Visual Impact

5.7 As is evident from the submitted drawings, the overall and intrinsic character, scale, form and appearance of the existing buildings will be retained as part of the submitted conversion scheme.

5.8 Wherever possible, the buildings' existing window and door openings will be retained and used within the proposed development, ensuring the original form and design of the buildings will be retained and clear to see moving forwards. Existing and matching materials will be used to as full an extent as possible, again to ensure continuity of design and appearance with the site's agricultural origins and use.

5.9 In terms of windows and doors, these will be of overall simplistic design (without glazing bars) and will seek to replicate the design of the buildings' original windows whilst offering modern standards of thermal performance. Roof lights will be 'conservation' roof lights. Final window, door and roof light details could be secured by way of conditions should the Authority's Conservation Officer deem it necessary.

5.10 No extensions are proposed to Building 1. Whist a small-scale oak-framed extension is proposed on the western elevation of Building 2, this will be of an overall minor scale and will simply look to re-instate a section of former building which has evidently been demolished to make way for Building 3 at some point in the site's history. The proposed extension is of sympathetic design and will seek to utilise a mixture of matching facing brickwork, glazing, oak framing and timber weatherboarding externally so as to retain an agricultural aesthetic. Building 2 will also be re-roofed with a natural slate roof, replacing the existing asbestos sheet roof – providing a clear heritage benefit of the scheme.

5.11 Given the above, the development represents a sympathetic conversion of two existing rural, agricultural buildings, which would retain the existing character, design, scale and form of the buildings. As such, there would be no adverse impacts upon the visual amenities of the application site nor the surroundings in this case, in accordance with UDP Policy GDP1 and unadopted LDP Policy DM1.

Neighbouring Amenity

5.12 The nearest residential dwelling to the application site is Croxton Farmhouse, which currently operates as a children's home, and is within the ownership of the Applicant.

5.13 An existing boundary treatment is in-place separating the application site from the farmhouse and this will be retained as part of the proposals.

5.14 Given the separation distance between the proposed barn conversions and the existing dwelling house on-site, ad the proposed window opening configuration within the barn conversions, there will be no adverse impacts in terms of overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing effects in this case.

5.15 Indeed, in this case, given that the existing buildings could, in theory, be used for the housing of livestock, and the proposed development will remove this opportunity, the development will represent a significant improvement in terms of overall amenity levels experienced by the current and future occupiers of the farmhouse at Croxton Farm.

Highway Safety, Access & Parking

5.16 As noted, the proposal involves the access to the site via an existing field gate lying to the west of the application site (which will be substantially improved and widened) and a new shared private drive which follows the route of an existing farm access track. The proposed access will achieve sufficient levels of visibility to serve the proposed development of 2x residential dwellings – with full details shown on the submitted Proposed Access Plan. No access from the application site directly onto the A525 public highway will be available, noting that visibility from this existing access to the farmhouse is

severely sub-standard. The development as proposed will have no impact upon the use of the existing access onto the A525.

5.17 As detailed within the Proposed Block Plan (Drawing No: 80087 / GH / 003), each dwelling will be afforded 4x parking spaces, which is in excess of the requirement for dwellings of this scale outlined within LPGN 16.

5.18 As such, it is considered the access, highway safety and parking elements of the proposed development are acceptable.

Ecology & Green Infrastructure

5.19 Given the nature of the proposed development, the application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Presence/Absence Survey, undertaken by UES. Please refer to the separate reports submitted for full details.

5.20 The submitted Bat Presence / Absence Survey report concludes that Building 1 was assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats, whilst Buildings 2 and 3 were assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats. No evidence of roosting bats was observed during the building inspections. No bats were found to be roosting within the buildings during the bat presence / absence surveys. As such, it is considered that no further mitigation or compensation measures are required with regards to bats.

5.21 The submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report identifies that one statutorily designated ecological site lies within a 2km radius of the application site, the Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 2 Ramsar Site, which is located approximately 1.7km south of the application site. Given the distance from site and the small scale of the proposed development, consisting of converting existing buildings, the PEA finds that it is unlikely that the proposed development will have any direct or indirect impact on any designated protected sites in this case.

5.22 Section 4.2 of the submitted PEA assesses any potential impacts upon any other protected species (other than bats) and outlines mitigation (including RAMs) and compensation measures where necessary. Adherence to the outlined measures can be secured and controlled with the use of appropriately worded planning conditions.

5.23 Provided the measures outlined within the submitted PEA report are implemented, the report confirms the development may proceed without adversely impacting the aforementioned ecological receptors.

5.24 A Green Infrastructure Statement and Biodiversity Enhancement Plan also accompany the application. The development complies with the step-wise approach as prescribed by Chapter 6 of PPW and it would provide a net

biodiversity benefit which is commensurate to the scale of the development proposed.

5.25 In light of the above, in terms of ecological impacts, the proposal has been accompanied by sufficient information to rule out any adverse impacts upon protected sites and protected sites. Additionally, the proposals will avoid adverse impacts upon the site's existing green infrastructure and will provide an NBB effect over and above the site's baseline. Thus, the requirements of TAN 5 and Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales are met.

Heritage

5.26 As noted, the Croxton Farm outbuildings are not individually listed but form part of the listing associated with Croxton Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building [CADW ID: 86935].

5.27 A detailed Heritage Impact Assessment [HIA] accompanies the applications, and provides a comprehensive breakdown of the heritage issues associated with the proposals, as well as an assessment of the impacts upon the host listed buildings and the setting of the listed farmhouse.

5.28 The proposals follow the principles outlined for 'new work or alteration to a significant place' in Section 28 of Cadw's 'Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the Historic Environment in Wales', March 2011. These are:

- The need for the work is fully justified - The works are justified in terms of the understanding of each outbuilding's original function and the subsequent conversion to a private residential dwelling. It allows the outbuildings and a small area of land around it to be used in a beneficial and appropriate way that is generally well-contained. It harmonises new development with old in terms of scale, mass, proportion, and rhythm.

- *There is sufficient information to understand the significance of the building and the proposals upon it.*

- *The proposals would not materially harm the values of the buildings because the scheme is sensitive and well considered.*

- *The proposal establishes a beneficial and long term sustainable use for the outbuildings, which secures their future.*

- *The quality of the design and execution must add value to the existing asset. The designs and materials chosen are a carefully response to the building's character and historic fabric. There is a clear distinction between historic and new fabric.*

- *The long-term consequences of the proposals are positive and the special interest of the group of buildings are preserved. It would positively affect the ability to appreciate and understand the architectural and historic interest of the building and is an evolutionary process of use and appearance.*

5.29 The HIA concludes the proposed change of use to the farm buildings would be a natural extension to the present use of the site. There would be a slight change to the setting of the farmhouse and each outbuilding by virtue of the alteration and change of use of the land from agricultural to domestic. The way in which Croxton Farmhouse, and the former farm courtyard is experienced would change because of the proposal, but not in a way that makes the historic function of each building less understood. The courtyard will remain open. Croxton Farm would remain experienced and appreciated as a site of interest when travelling along the A525, and its contextual and functional relationship to the surrounding historic farming landscape and its contribution to the dispersed settlement character of the area would be preserved.

5.30 Given the above and the contents of the submitted HIA, it is concluded that the proposals will not cause any harmful or unacceptable impacts upon the character and setting of the buildings on-site, and is thus in accordance with the requirements of TAN 24, Planning Policy Wales and Section 66 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

Flood Risk & Drainage

5.31 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 barn conversion scheme in planning terms.

5.32 In terms of surface water drainage, it is accepted that separate SAB approval will 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.

5.33 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 barn conversion development. Soil infiltration test results accompany the application to demonstrate that the use of a drainage field is feasible on-site.

5.34 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.

5.35 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".

5.36 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 barn conversion scheme 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.

5.37 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.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Full planning permission and Listed Building Consent is sought for the residential conversion of two agricultural buildings which are no longer suitable for modern agricultural purposes, together with all associated works as outlined within this statement and the accompanying plans/documents.

The proposed development would provide the listed buildings with a viable and suitable long-term use, to secure their preservation for the future.

6.2 This statement and the supporting reports, plans and drawings submitted alongside it as part of the applications outline that the development is fundamentally compliant with the requirements of TAN 6, TAN 23 and unadopted LDP Policy H9 in terms of the principle of development, whilst also providing an assessment of the main material planning considerations of relevance to the development proposals.

6.3 It is clear that the development is fully acceptable in planning terms – providing a sympathetic conversion in visual terms which would not cause any harmful impacts upon ecology, highway safety, neighbouring residential amenity and the historic environment.

6.4 In light of the above, the proposal is compliant with the relevant local and national planning policy, and it is therefore respectfully requested that full planning permission and Listed Building Consent be granted for the development without delay.