Robinwood Activity Centre



Design & Access Statement

prepared by Lawray Architects for Robinwood Activity Centre

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P00 - April 2026

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PREFACE

Robinwood Activity Centres provide residential courses for 7 - 11-year-old school children. The former Maes-y-Nant hotel site has been converted to a Robinwood Activity Centre with the creation of additional buildings and structures to facilitate a variety of adventure and team-building activities.

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared to accompany a Planning Application for a scheme to construct a new meeting room building for school groups to carry out activities and dine. It aims to provide a written and illustrated commentary when read in conjunction with the associated design drawings.

In addition, the following documents will be provided in support of the planning application and will be referenced in this document:

- Preliminary Ecology Appraisal, *Wildbanks Conservation*
- Green Infrastructure Statement, *Wildbanks Conservation*
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment, *Tree Solutions*
- Arboricultural Method Statement, *Tree Solutions*
- Pre-Application Advice, *Wrexham County Council*

2.0 PLANNING POLICY & GUIDANCE

This design and access statement is prepared following guidance in the following documents:

NATIONAL POLICY

Planning Policy Wales 11
Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning
Technical Advice Note 12: Design
Technical Advice Note 18: Transport

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011
Strategic Policies
Policy PS1 Strategic Policy
Policy PS2 Strategic Policy
Specific Policies
Policy GDP1 Development Objectives
Policy EC4 Hedgerows, Trees and Woodlands
Policy EC5 Special Landscape Areas
Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028
Strategic Policies
Policy SP15 Natural Environment
Topic, Criteria and Area Based Policies
Policy DM1: Development Management Considerations
Policy NE3: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
Policy NE5: Special Landscape Areas

LOCAL PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTES (LPGN)

Local Planning Guidance Note 17: Trees and Development
Local Planning Guidance Note 32: Biodiversity and Development Local
Planning Guidance Note 16: Parking

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

P/2016/0953 – Change of use of Cross Lanes Country Hotel (Use Class C1) and The Lodge (Use Class C3) to Children's Activity Centre (Use Class C2) to include extension to existing hotel building, erection of buildings and equipment for children's activities with associated car parking, coach parking, landscaping and railings – Granted 11/04/2017.

Pre-Application Advice has been received from Wrexham Council in October 2022 for a previous similar design which has also been included with this application, however, to summarise their conclusion, no significant objections to the proposals were received at that particular stage. It concluded that the proposed new school/meeting room is likely to be acceptable in some form as it is well contained within the existing site layout. The main considerations have been addressed in this statement and were based on landscaping, visual amenity, highways, ecology, and drainage.

3.0 SITE & CONTEXT

3.1 SITE LOCATION

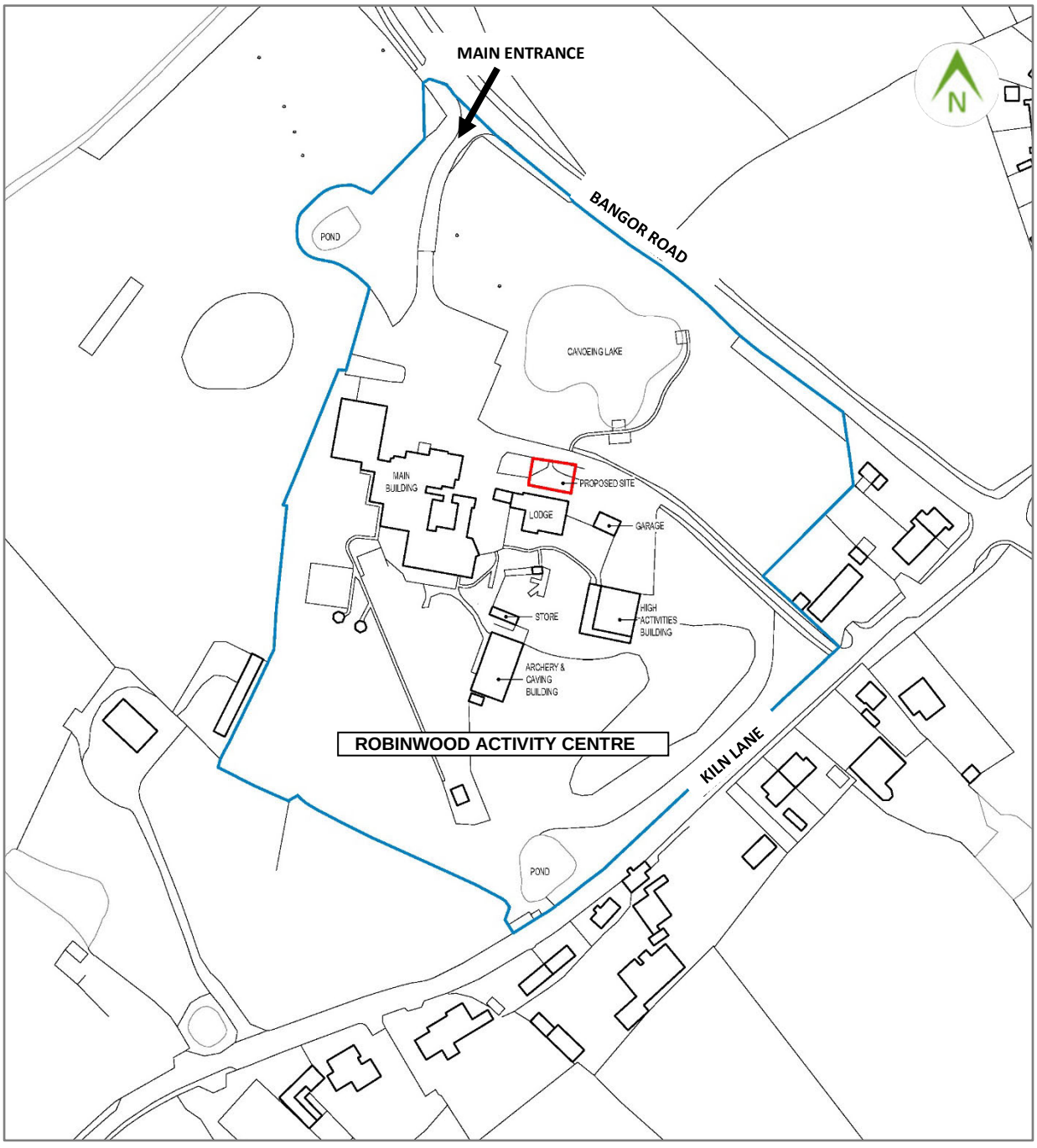
Maes y Nant, Robinwood Activity Centre
Cross Lanes, Bangor Road
Marchwiel
Wrexham
LL13 OTF

Marchwiel is a rural village located in Wrexham County Borough. It's around 2 miles south-east of Wrexham city on the A525 road towards Bangor-on-Dee.



3.2 EXISTING SITE

The site is located on Bangor Road in the rural settlement of Cross Lanes, approximately 4–5 km south east of Wrexham. It lies within a semi-rural landscape characterised by agricultural land, scattered residential development, and small local settlements. The surrounding area is predominantly countryside with open fields, hedgerows, and mature trees, giving the site a relatively secluded character.
The area of the site owned by Robinwood Activity Centre is outlined in blue and the proposed development site outlined in red on the below Location Plan drawing.



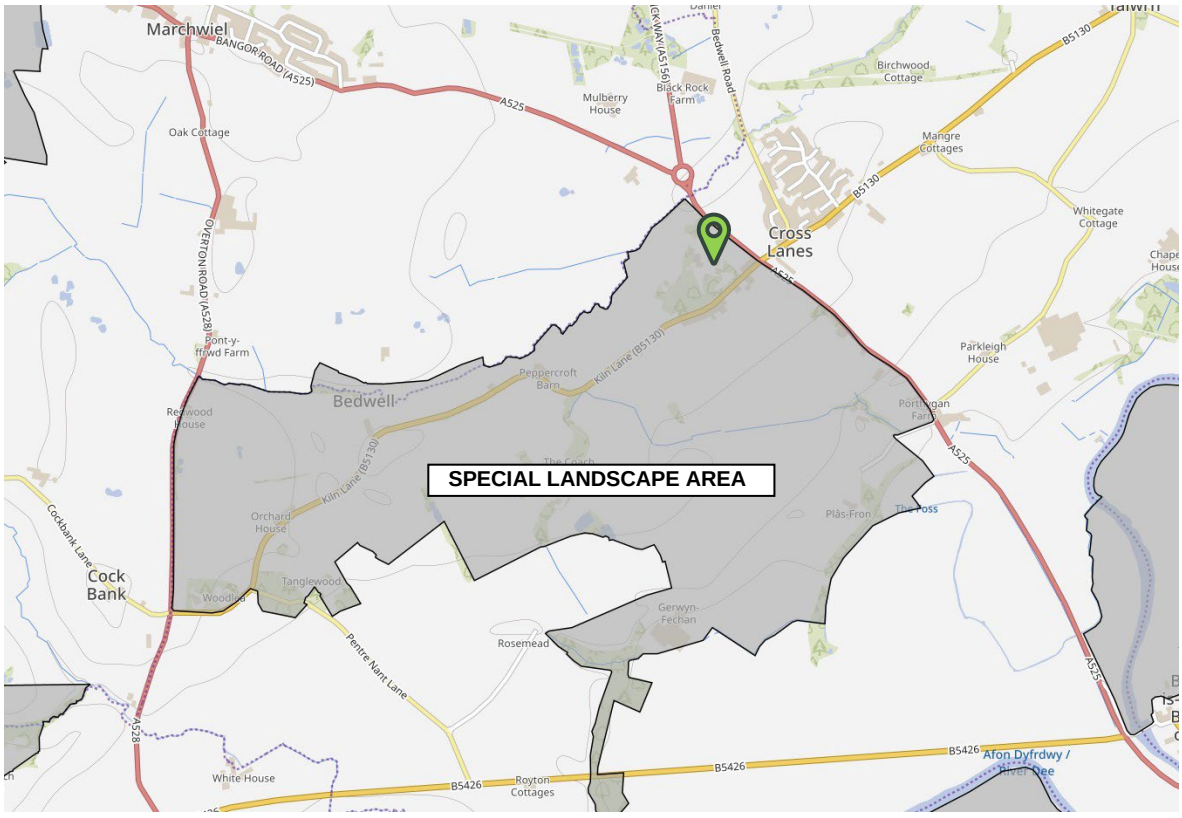
Location Plan

3.3 SITE CONTEXT & CHARACTER

The surrounding land uses are mainly rural and low-density, including:

- Agricultural farmland surrounding much of the site
- Detached and semi-detached residential properties along Bangor Road and nearby lanes
- Small rural community facilities within Cross Lanes village
- Local road infrastructure connecting the village with Wrexham and surrounding countryside

This mix creates a quiet rural setting with limited urban development, typical of villages on the edge of Wrexham. The site is in a Special Landscape Area as identified in the Wrexham Local Development Plan. This is indicated on the extract below.



Special Landscape Area, Cross Lanes- Cock Bank, Wrexham

Primary access:

The site is primarily accessed from Bangor Road, a local rural road that connects the village of Cross Lanes to Wrexham. Bangor Road acts as a secondary route linking rural settlements to the wider regional road network. Nearby key roads include, A534 – a major regional route providing connections between Wrexham and Cheshire, A5152 – linking eastern Wrexham with surrounding villages and A483 – a major north, south route connecting Wrexham with Chester and the wider motorway network.

Access to the site is designed primarily for coaches, minibuses, and staff vehicles. There is a single main entrance from Bangor Road, internal circulation space for coach turning and drop-off and dedicated on-site parking areas for staff and visitors.

Public transport access to the site is limited due to the rural location, however bus services operate between Cross Lanes and Wrexham. The nearest major public transport hub is Wrexham General railway station, which provides rail connections to cities such as Chester, Shrewsbury, and Birmingham. Visitors typically transfer from these transport hubs by coach or minibus. Pedestrian access exists along Bangor Road, but it is limited due to the rural character of the area.

The character of the Robinwood Activity Centre site is defined by a combination of built structures and outdoor activity spaces.

Key characteristics include:

- A large central building, the former hotel, providing accommodation, dining, and indoor activity areas.
- Purpose-built outdoor activity structures, such as climbing towers, high ropes, and zip wires.
- Smaller scattered buildings around the site for indoor activities such as rock climbing and archery.
- Open outdoor spaces used for adventure activities and group exercises, which includes trees, grassed areas, ponds and natural terrain.

The former hotel was extended and converted as the main building for Robinwood Activity Centre. This building dates back to the late Victorian era and was originally built as a private house named Maes-y-Nant. This was subsequently converted into The Cross Lanes Hotel before its use class was changed to C2 under application P/2016/0953. The white rendered building with prominent slate roofs, black window surrounds and detailing was extended in a similar style under the same application.



Aerial photograph of existing Robinwood Activity Centre, Cross Lanes.

A 2-storey red brick former lodge has been converted to provide additional staff areas. The remainder of the site has been developed by Robinwood to facilitate the activities they offer. These range from indoor activities which are housed in larch timber clad buildings, an aesthetic which suits the wooded surroundings and external structures such as swings and high ropes situated in the middle of the development.

Robinwood Activity Centre currently has limited indoor provision for whole school groups to gather together. Post covid there has been more demand for schools to have their own area for exclusive use for the duration of the course and the new development will enable this. The activity centre operates all year round and the increase in indoor provision will significantly improve the experience for schools who attend in the winter months. Whilst the capacity and visitor numbers will remain the same, the proposed development will enable the centre to operate more successfully throughout the seasons, post covid.



Former hotel lodge



Giant Swing & High Activities Building



View from High Activities Building

4.0 ARCHITECTURAL

4.1 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1.1 DESIGN INTENT

The design brief resulting from discussions between Robinwood Activity Centre and Lawray Architects, has guided and led the development of the proposals resulting in the outline design plans that support this access statement.

The Meeting Room / Whole School Room Building would provide a facility for school groups to meet and dine together. Proposed internal spaces include a meeting room, a servery room with a small kitchenette which will store a bain marie trolley, this can be wheeled in from the main kitchen to provide hot food at mealtimes, this will be used by use of staff and teachers. There is also a small, shared WC for the use of the children.

The new meeting room building is to complement the existing facility and enhance the user experience at Robinwood Activity Centre, Cross Lanes. Therefore, the capacity and visitor numbers will remain the same. Vehicular access to the site will remain the same as will number of car parking spaces.

The key items identified are as follows:

- **Sustainability**
  - Consider including renewable energy technologies such as PV panels to the south facing roof slope.

- **Access**
  - Levelled access to the new building.
  - Levelled access WC facilities.
  - Vehicular access maintained either side of the new building.

- **Appearance**
  - Large windows to maximise views of the adjacent canoeing lake.
  - Rooflights to the north side providing sufficient natural direct light.
  - The use of natural materials to compliment the surrounding area.
  - Minimise scale of the building in order to not adversely impact the surrounding area.

4.1.2 OVERVIEW AND APPEARANCE

The proposals involve constructing a single-storey meeting room building to provide flexible space for group activities, dining, and associated facilities for school groups.

The building will feature a shallow-pitched roof, full-height glazing, and north-facing rooflights to maximise natural daylight and capture views of the adjacent canoeing lake. The open-plan meeting room will have direct access to the lake and connecting footpaths, supporting a variety of indoor and outdoor activities.

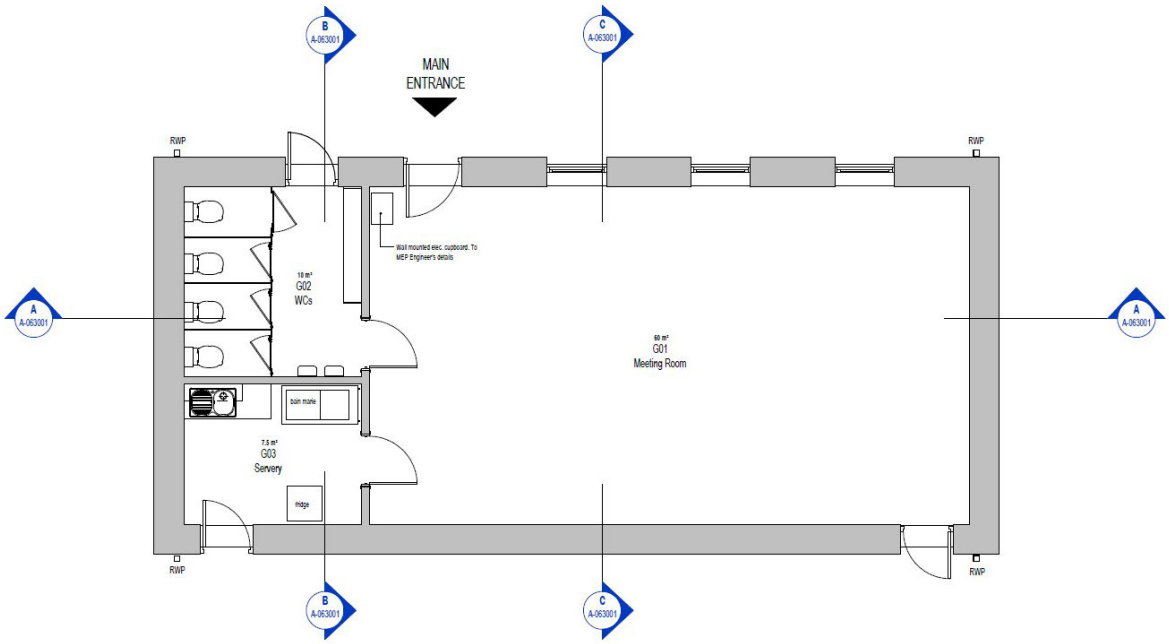
Shared WC facilities will be accessible to children both internally and externally, and a small servery will accommodate limited meal preparation for staff and teachers. The building will have an approximate gross internal floor area of 78 m², providing the additional space required for group gatherings and activities.

4.1.3 PROPOSED INTERNAL SPACES

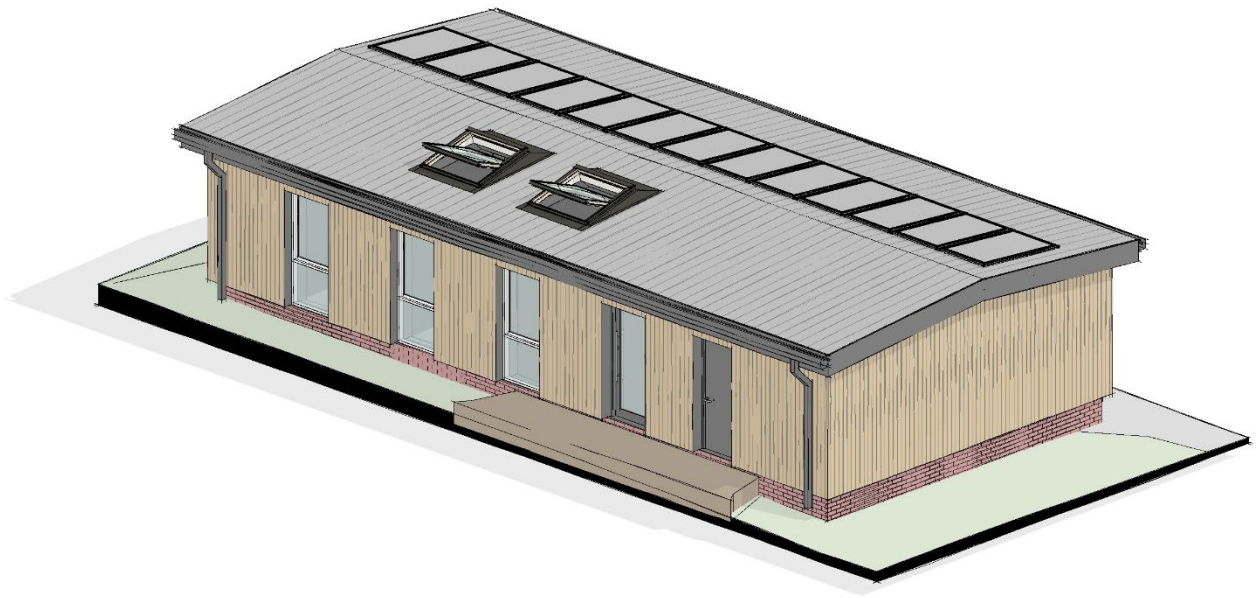
- G01 - Meeting Room – 60m^2
- G02 - Shared WCs – 10m^2
- G03 – Servery – 7.5m^2

4.1.4 ACCESS

- Main entrance via the north elevation from road that leads to connecting footpaths on the site and car park, with levelled access to allow for wheelchair access
- Secondary ingress / egress from the south elevation, will assist in servicing the spaces.
- Levelled access to shared WCs via the north elevation – internal and external access.



Proposed Meeting Room Ground Floor Plan



Proposed Meeting Room 3D View

4.1.5 VISUAL AMENITY & LANDSCAPE

The proposed meeting room building has been designed to reflect the character of the existing activity buildings on the site. The materials will match the established palette, including a powder coated standing seam roof finish in grey and larch timber wall cladding. Full-height aluminium windows and rooflights on the north elevation introduce a contemporary element while maintaining consistency with the overall site aesthetic.

The building's form has been carefully refined in response to feedback from the pre-application enquiry. A shallow-pitched roof has been chosen to minimise overall height and enable the structure to integrate seamlessly with its surroundings, maintaining the character of the designated Special Landscape Area. The proposed building is notably lower than the nearby activity structures, while its design echoes the distinctive gable features of the existing buildings.

This approach follows the guidance provided in the pre-application planning response, which recommended that the design remain at an appropriate scale consistent with the existing archery, caving and high-activities buildings. The development also seeks to maintain the quality of the existing site by retaining key mature trees and established shrubbery, while introducing additional planting to support biodiversity enhancement.

The building will be located off the internal site road connecting to Kiln Lane, adjacent to the existing lodge. The layout has been carefully designed to avoid the root protection areas of Trees 1 and 3 (see tree constraints plan and impact assessment) while maintaining vehicular access on both sides of the new building.

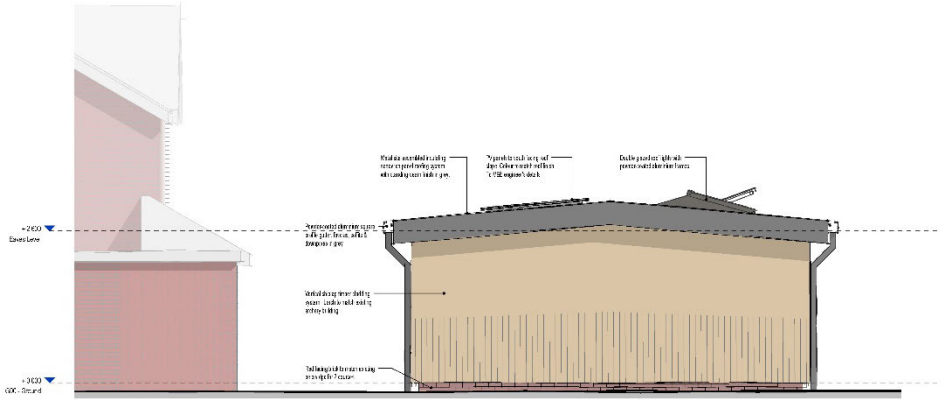
Mature trees and hedgerows to the east will provide natural screening, helping to minimise views of the building from surrounding areas. This will reduce potential visual impacts on nearby residential properties along Kiln Lane and help preserve the character of the Special Landscape Area.



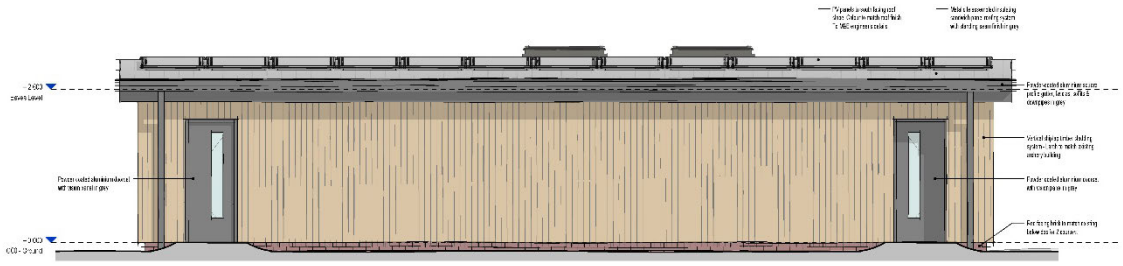
Proposed Site Plan



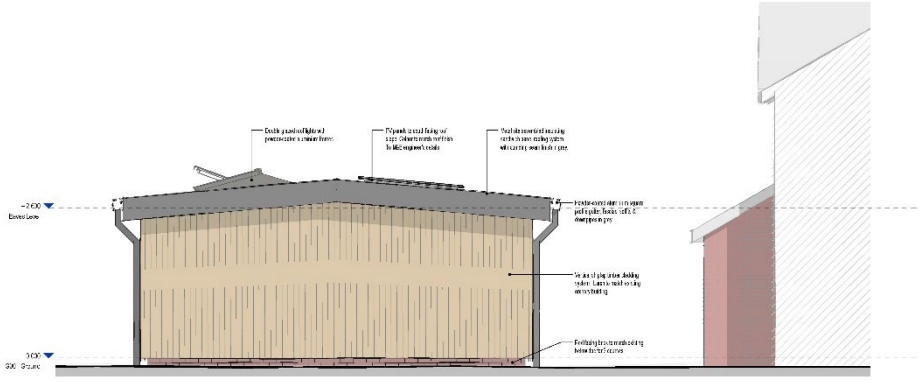
Proposed North Elevation



Proposed East Elevation



Proposed South Elevation



Proposed West Elevation

4.1.6 MATERIALS

The proposed extension will match the character of the existing site, using a similar material and colour palette to ensure the new scheme blends seamlessly with the site. The proposed material palette will therefore consist of:

- Vertical tongue and groove, larch timber cladding to match the existing
- Aluminium Standing-Seam Roof Finish – powder-coat finish in grey, to pitched roof.
- Powder-coated Aluminium rainwater goods, fascias and soffits, in grey.
- Powder-coated Aluminium Windows and Doors.
- Red facing brickwork to match existing below dpc
- Glazed roof light with Powder-coated Aluminium frame in grey



4.1.7 SUSTAINABILITY

In line with Wrexham County Borough Council's commitment to achieving net-zero carbon by 2030 and its wider sustainability objectives, including reducing emissions, increasing renewable energy, and enhancing biodiversity. The proposed design seeks to deliver a building that performs as sustainably as possible. From the earliest stages, the design has incorporated measures to minimise energy demand, reduce environmental impact, and support low-carbon development within the project's scope and budget.

At this stage of the project, the following key principles have been identified and will be carried through the detailed design and delivery stages.

Active Measures to Minimise Energy Consumption

- Incorporate energy efficient lighting.
- Incorporate high-efficiency heating and ventilation system.

Renewable Energy Sources

- Solar PV panels are proposed to be installed on the south facing roof.

Passive Design

- Maximise insulation to solid walls, floors, and roofs to minimise both heating and cooling requirements.
- Using thermally efficient windows and doors to create high thermal efficiency, airtightness and reduce heat loss.

Materials

- The project will aim to minimise the embodied carbon associated with construction materials wherever possible. This includes prioritising the use of locally sourced materials to reduce transportation impacts and selecting products with low embodied energy where feasible.
- The design team will also seek to ensure that materials are responsibly sourced and will avoid products that contribute to unsustainable resource extraction or generate excessive construction waste. Where appropriate, materials will be chosen for durability and longevity, further supporting the building's long-term environmental performance.

Overall, the approach to sustainability focuses on a balanced strategy combining energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, passive design and responsible material selection to deliver a building that aligns with wider local and national sustainability objectives.

5.0 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 ECOLOGY

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken at the proposed development site within Robinwood Activity Centre, comprising a desk study and a field survey completed on 1st April 2026 by Wildbanks Conservation. The field survey included a site walkover and Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA).
The site was assessed for evidence of protected species including bats, badgers, great crested newts (GCN), reptiles and nesting birds. No direct evidence of these species was identified on site. However, a known GCN breeding pond is located approximately 20m from the site, supporting a medium population confirmed in 2024–2025, with an egg recorded during the survey. As a result, mitigation for GCN will be required.

The site offers negligible habitat for bats, badgers, reptiles, water vole and otter due to disturbance and limited habitat availability. Nearby areas within the Activity Centre provide low-quality bat roosting and badger foraging habitat, but the site itself is largely isolated by hardstanding. Tree T3 has negligible bat roost potential. While impacts are considered low, precautionary working methods are required. The site does have potential for nesting birds.

Survey Recommendations
No further ecological surveys are required.

Mitigation and Enhancement Measures
General

- External lighting must follow ILP Guidance Note 08/23 to minimise impacts on wildlife.
- Native scrub planting will replace lost vegetation and enhance biodiversity.

Bats

- A Reasonable Avoidance Method Statement (RAMS) will be implemented; no further surveys required.
- A licensed ecologist will oversee works and provide toolbox talks.
- Lighting should minimise spill and disturbance.
- A 10m buffer for noisy machinery around the Lodge is recommended.
- Protective fencing should reduce dust and debris spread.
- Works must stop if bats are encountered.

Badgers

- Scrub planting with fruit and nut species will enhance foraging habitat.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

- An EPS mitigation licence from NRW is required.
- Works must follow a GCN mitigation strategy, including:
    - Ecological supervision during vegetation clearance and excavation.
    - Toolbox talks for site staff.
    - Identification of a receptor area near Pond 3 (125m away).
    - Daily checks of open excavations.
    - Elevated storage of materials.
- A new native scrub area (130m², 130 trees) will be created nearby to enhance habitat.
- Felled vegetation will be used to create a hibernaculum.

Birds

- Vegetation clearance should occur between October and March, or follow a nesting bird check.
- Active nests must be protected with a 5–10m buffer.
- A barn owl box will be installed within the wider site.
- Scrub planting will provide nesting and foraging habitat.

Compensatory Habitat / Biodiversity Net Benefit

In line with Planning Policy Wales (PPW12), the development will deliver a net biodiversity benefit. Habitat loss is minimal (limited to non-native scrub and one immature tree).

- A 50m native hedge will be planted near the car park to screen the GCN pond and enhance habitat connectivity.
- The hedge and scrub planting will support GCN, birds and badgers.
- Planting will use native species, maintained for at least three years with replacement planting as required.



Extract taken from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

5.2 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

A Green Infrastructure Statement was produced in April 2026 by Wildbanks Conservation. The full statement has been submitted within this application however the summary of proposals are as follows;

Existing Green Infrastructure

The site (approx. 120m²) does not contain formal boundaries or gardens. It comprises:

- 40m² hardstanding
- 80m² mixed ornamental and native shrubs
- One immature horse chestnut tree

Vegetation Removal

To facilitate development, the following will be removed:

- All ornamental and native shrubs (approx. 83m²)
- One immature horse chestnut tree

Mitigation and Replacement Planting

To compensate for habitat loss, new planting will be delivered within the wider landholding:

Native Hedgerow (50m)

- Plants used will be of a minimum of 1 + 1 age (40-60cm) and planting will be carried out at a density of 9 per metre in a triple staggered row. Each tree planted will be guarded using a "Bio-Earth Biodegradable Plastic-Free Tree Shelter Guard", wooden stakes and re-usable cable ties. Species mix:
    - Hazel (Corylus avellana) – 35%
    - Elder (Sambucus nigra) – 20%
    - Rowan (Sorbus aucuparia) – 20%
    - Guelder rose (Viburnum opulus) – 15%
    - Spindle (Euonymus europaeus) – 10%

Biodiversity Enhancements

Scrub Planting (approx. 130m²)

- Provides habitat enhancement, particularly for great crested newts (GCN)
- Planted at 1 tree per m² using native species including hawthorn, hazel, crab apple, rowan, wild cherry, holly and wych elm
- Random planting pattern to improve structural diversity
- All plants protected with biodegradable guards

Additional Measures

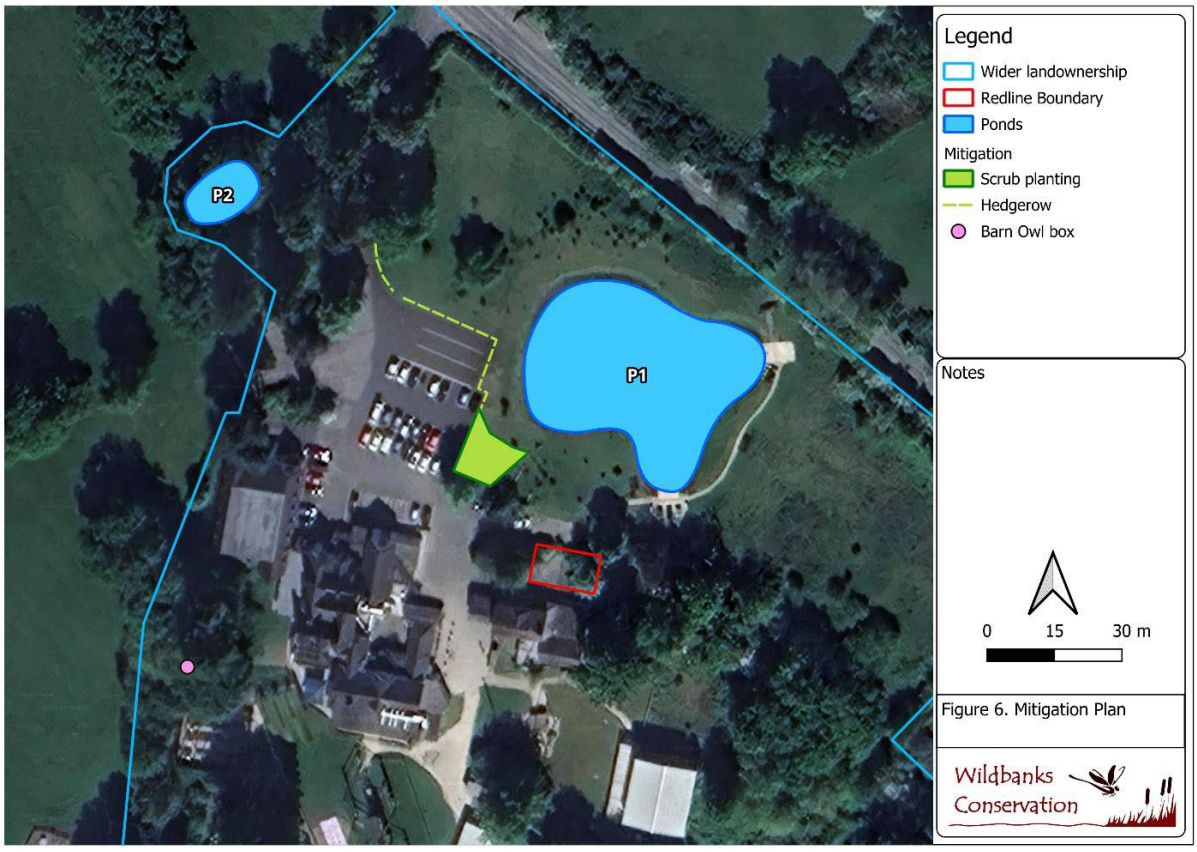
- Installation of one barn owl nest box within the wider site
- Creation of a 1.2m access gap within the hedge for maintenance

Management and Maintenance

- Annual checks for 3 years to ensure establishment
- Replacement of failed plants during winter
- Mulching of hedgerow to retain moisture and suppress weeds
- Watering during drought conditions as required
- Ongoing inspection of guards and stakes to maintain stability

Conclusion

Although development will result in the loss of a small area of vegetation, the proposed mitigation and enhancements, particularly new native hedgerow and scrub planting, will deliver a net gain in biodiversity in line with planning policy requirements.



Extract taken from the Green Infrastructure Statement

5.3 DRAINAGE

Existing Drainage

Drainage information has been reviewed from original design drawings prepared in 2017, when the site was redeveloped from Cross Lanes Hotel into the Robinwood Activity Centre. The original drainage design incorporated capacity for both foul and surface water associated with hardstanding areas and a proposed meeting facility.

Surface water from the site discharges to an adjacent unnamed watercourse, which flows east of Wrexham Industrial Estate before ultimately connecting to the River Dee. Discharge rates are controlled, with surface water runoff restricted to 16.3 l/s via an attenuation tank designed to accommodate storm events.

Foul drainage is managed by an existing Klargester Bioficient 55 package treatment plant, which serves the wider site.

Proposed Foul Drainage

The proposed development will connect directly into the existing foul drainage network. As the original system was designed to accommodate a meeting facility, no upgrades or additional infrastructure are required.

The foul drainage peak discharge will remain consistent with existing levels, as the proposed development will not result in an increase in the number of children attending the site. In line with guidance received through the pre-application planning enquiry, it is also confirmed that the development will not lead to an increase in phosphate loading.

Proposed Surface Water Drainage

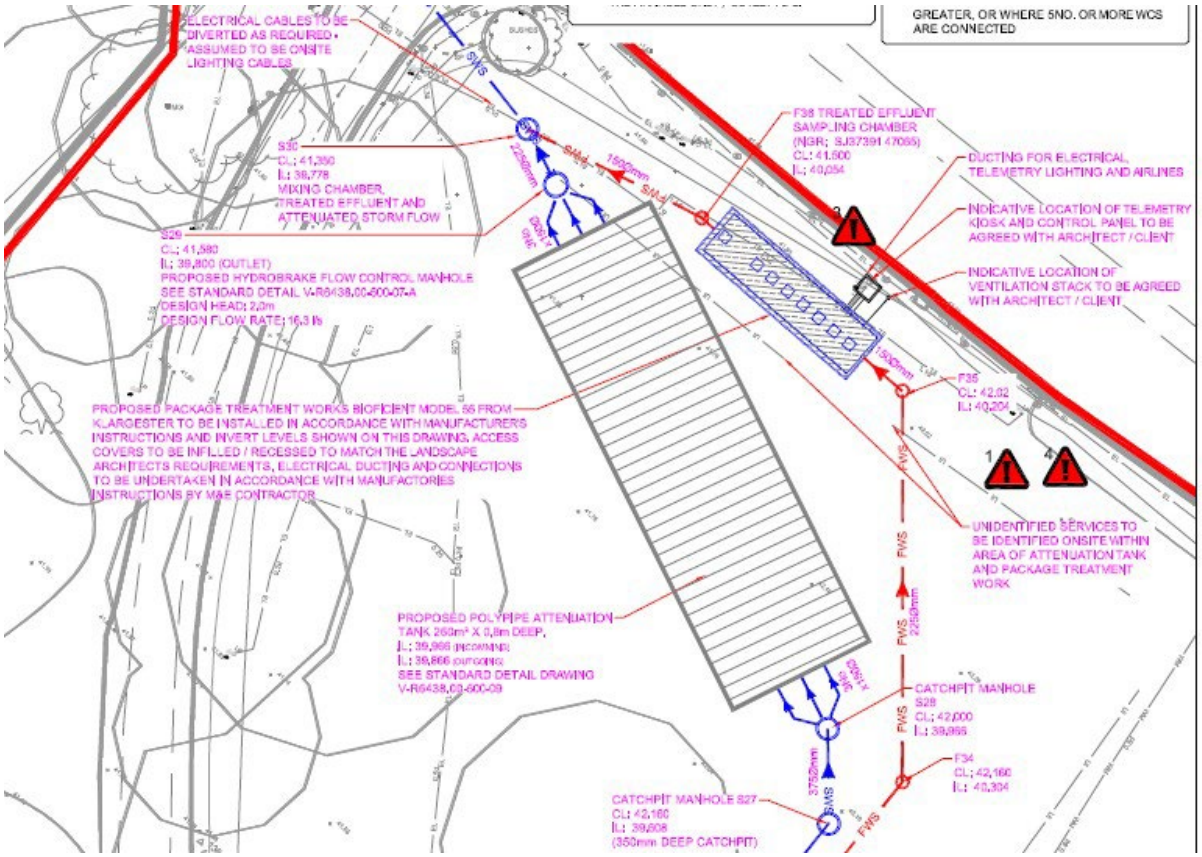
Initial discussions with Wrexham County Borough Council, acting as the SuDS Approval Body (SAB), have confirmed that the proposal is exempt from SAB approval, as the development footprint is below the 100m² threshold.

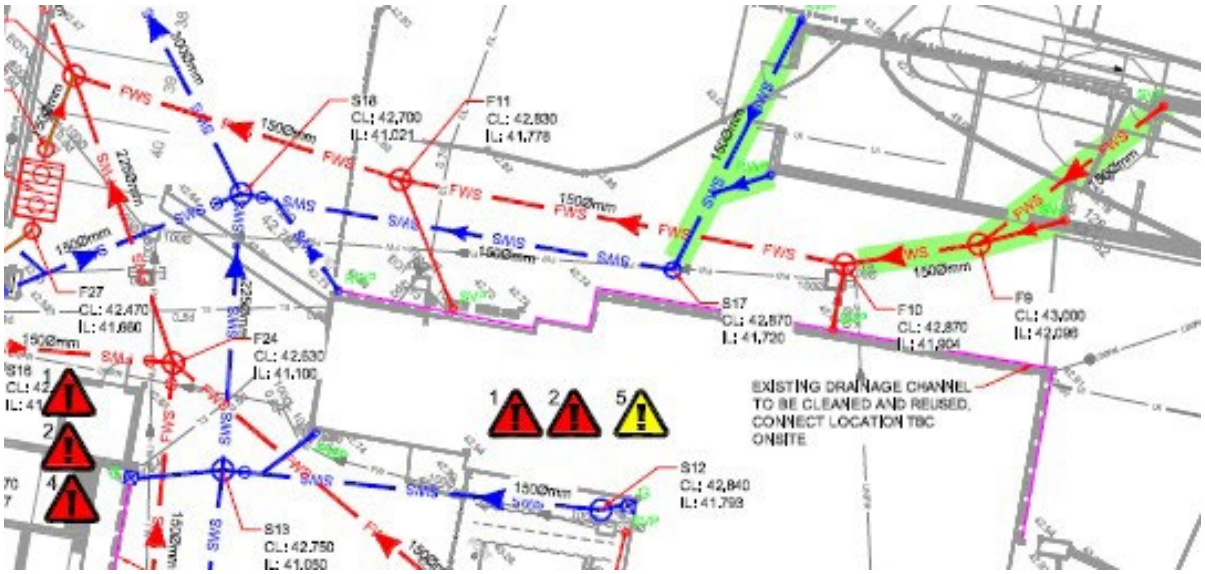
Surface water drainage will be managed through a connection to the existing system. The original design accounted for the meeting centre, and therefore sufficient capacity is already in place.

Runoff from the proposed building will be limited to clean roof water, representing a low pollution risk. As such, no additional treatment measures are considered necessary.

Design Approach

The drainage strategy follows the principles established in the original site design, ensuring efficient use of existing infrastructure and minimising the need for new works. The approach provides a sustainable and proportionate solution, with controlled discharge rates and existing attenuation measures ensuring resilience during peak rainfall events.





Proposed drainage layout when the site was redeveloped from Cross Lanes Hotel into the Robinwood Activity Centre
'Phase 2 works' highlighted in green

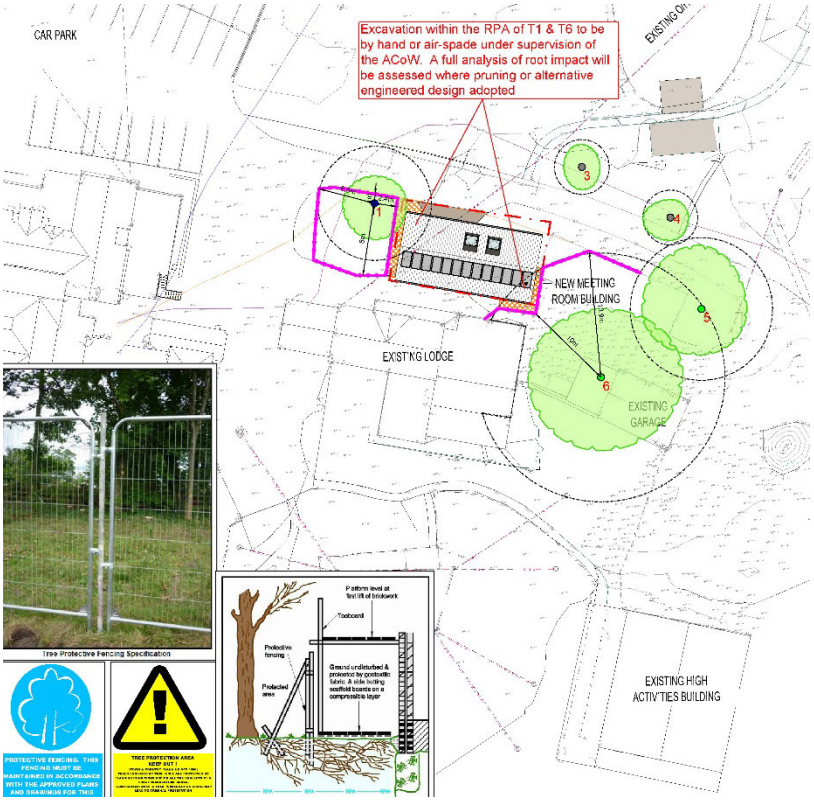
5.4 ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An arboricultural survey was undertaken in April 2026 by Tree Solutions Ltd. There are several large, mature trees within the application site. The full detailed Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been issued with this application, however the summary of proposals are as follows;

The proposed development involves the removal of one Category C tree (T2), which is of low arboricultural value and has limited growth potential due to its location within compacted ground and existing hardstanding. Its loss is not considered significant and will be mitigated through replacement planting within the site.

Care has been taken to set out the building away from the root protection areas of both trees ensuring that they are not negatively impacted by the development however there will be minor incursions into the root protection areas (RPAs) of retained trees. These are limited in extent and occur within already constrained ground conditions. Works within these areas will be undertaken using low-impact construction methods under arboricultural supervision, ensuring no adverse effects on the health or stability of retained trees.

All retained trees will be protected during construction in accordance with the Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan. Replacement planting at a ratio of 3:1 will ensure no net loss of tree cover and will enhance the overall landscape value of the site. Overall, the proposals are considered sustainable and do not present any arboricultural constraints to development.



Extract taken from the Arboricultural Method Statement

6.0 CONCLUSION

This Design and Access Statement, alongside the scheme drawings and supporting documentation, illustrates how the proposed meeting room building enhances the operational functionality of Robinwood Activity Centre while carefully minimising impacts on the surrounding site, in accordance with the pre-application planning advice received.

The proposed development at Robinwood Activity Centre, Cross Lanes, seeks to provide a purpose-built meeting and gathering space that will enhance the existing facilities available for visiting school groups. The proposal responds directly to the operational needs of the centre by creating a flexible indoor space where groups can meet, dine, and undertake activities together, particularly during periods of adverse weather and throughout the winter months.

The design has been carefully considered to ensure it integrates sensitively within the established character of the site and the surrounding rural landscape. The building has been deliberately limited in scale and height, with a simple pitched roof form and a palette of natural materials that reflects the existing activity buildings on site. Mature trees and existing vegetation will continue to provide natural screening, helping the development sit comfortably within the Special Landscape Area while maintaining the rural character of the wider setting.

Importantly, the development does not propose any increase in visitor numbers, site capacity, or vehicle movements. Existing access arrangements, parking provision, and operational patterns will remain unchanged. Instead, the proposal focuses on improving the quality of facilities available to users of the centre, enabling Robinwood to continue delivering its educational and recreational programmes more effectively throughout the year.

Environmental considerations have been integral to the design process. Measures have been incorporated to support sustainable construction, minimise operational energy use, and encourage biodiversity enhancements. Ecology surveys, arboricultural assessments, and green infrastructure proposals have informed the layout and ensure that existing habitats, trees, and wildlife are appropriately protected and enhanced wherever possible.

Overall, the proposal represents a modest and well-considered addition to the existing Robinwood Activity Centre. The design ensures that the new meeting room building integrates with the surrounding development and reads as a coherent part of the overall site. It supports the continued use and long-term viability of the facility while respecting the character of the surrounding landscape and village setting. The development is therefore considered to be an appropriate and sustainable enhancement to the site.