PLANNING STATEMENT

Change of Use of Existing Single Storey Building to a Residential Dwelling (Use Class C3)
Maes Derwen, Higher Lane, Burton, Wrexham

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1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the change of use of an existing single storey building at Maes Derwen, Higher Lane, Burton, Wrexham to use as a self-contained residential dwelling (Use Class C3).

The building lies outside the defined settlement boundary. It comprises a single storey structure, the front element of which incorporates a former Pullman railway coach that has been positioned on site for many years and integrated into the overall structure.

The application is submitted to regularise and formalise the residential use of an existing building that has historically been used as a residential unit over a prolonged period, with no history of enforcement action.

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2. Site Description and Context

The application site is located at Maes Derwen, Higher Lane, Burton, within open countryside and outside any defined settlement boundary as identified in the adopted development plan.

The site contains an established single storey structure, incorporating a former Pullman railway carriage forming the principal frontage element. The coach has been integrated into the building for a significant period and forms part of the permanent built structure. Attached to this statement is an aerial photograph clearly showing the building in position from 1945. Additional images of the site through the years is also attached.

The surrounding area is semi-rural in character, comprising dispersed residential properties and agricultural land. The building is already present and visually assimilated within its setting.

There is no record of enforcement action relating to the residential use of the building.

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3. The Proposed Development

The proposal seeks planning permission for the use of the existing building as a single residential dwelling (Use Class C3).

No operational development, extensions, rebuilding, or external alterations are proposed. The structure remains physically unchanged. The proposal relates solely to its formal planning use.

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4. Planning Policy Context

4.1 National Planning Policy

Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise under the:

- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
- Planning (Wales) Act 2015

National policy is set out in Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11), which promotes sustainable development and the effective reuse of existing buildings.

PPW supports:

- Reuse and adaptation of existing structures
- Avoidance of unnecessary new build in the countryside
- Sustainable patterns of development

The proposal aligns with these principles as it involves no new build, no expansion into open countryside, and no material intensification.

4.2 Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

Although previously superseded in part by the LDP, relevant UDP countryside and housing policies remain material considerations given the withdrawal of the LDP.

Policy GDP1 – General Development Principles

This policy requires that development:

- Is appropriate in scale and design
- Does not adversely affect the character of the area
- Does not harm neighbouring amenity
- Ensures safe access

The proposal satisfies Policy GDP1 because:

- No new built form is introduced
- The building is long established and assimilated and clearly identified on the UDP policy map as being in open countryside.
- Residential use is consistent with historic use
- No adverse amenity or highway impacts arise

Policy H5 – Conversion of Buildings in the Open Countryside

Policy H5 supports the reuse of existing buildings in the countryside where:

- The building is structurally sound
- The proposal does not require substantial reconstruction
- The character of the building is retained
- The development respects the rural setting

The building is already constructed and historically used for residential purposes. No rebuilding or significant alteration is required. The distinctive Pullman coach element is retained in situ and forms part of the established character of the structure.

Google Earth images attached to this document clearly show the building dating back to 1945 and being in exactly the same form and location throughout the years and up until the present day.

In addition the Structural Report, which accompanies the application, clearly shows that the building is structurally sound, has been used for residential development and can continue to do so going forward.

The proposal therefore accords with the intent of Policy H5 by securing the reuse of an existing building without additional encroachment into the countryside.

4.3 Wrexham Local Development Plan (LDP) 2013–2028

The adopted LDP was recently withdrawn as a development plan document. Whilst the document does not have any weight in decision making it can be seen that the policies related to the more up to date document continued to support the re-use of rural buildings.

For reference and completeness the relevant policies are noted below.

Relevant policies include:

Policy SP2 – Development Management Principles

Development must:

- Protect amenity
- Respect local character
- Provide safe access
- Promote sustainable locations

The proposal complies as it:

- Introduces no visual or physical change
- Maintains established rural character
- Generates minimal traffic
- Utilises an existing structure rather than creating new development

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Policy H5 – Conversion and Re-Use of Rural Buildings

The LDP supports conversion or reuse of buildings in the countryside where:

- The building is permanent and structurally sound
- The proposal preserves or enhances character
- It does not require major rebuilding
- It does not harm the landscape

The structure at Maes Derwen is permanent and established. The Pullman railway coach has long been sited and integrated into the building and forms part of its permanent construction. The proposal does not require rebuilding or extension and results in no additional landscape impact.

Policy SP11 – Housing Provision

While the site lies outside settlement limits, the proposal does not represent new isolated residential development. Rather, it formalises long-established residential occupation within an existing building footprint. It does not result in additional sprawl or fragmentation of the countryside.

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5. Material Considerations

Historic Residential Use

The building has been used as a residential unit over many years with no enforcement action undertaken. The proposal formalises and regularises that established pattern of use.

Impact on the Countryside

There is no physical expansion, no new structures, and no encroachment into undeveloped land. The visual impact remains unchanged.

Character and Design

The former Pullman railway coach is an established and distinctive feature of the site. It is stationary and fully integrated into the building. The proposal retains this element without alteration.

Amenity and Highway Safety

Residential occupation is consistent with previous use and typical rural residential activity. Traffic generation remains minimal.

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6. Conclusion

The proposed use of the existing single storey building at Maes Derwen, Higher Lane, Burton as a residential dwelling:

- Complies with national policy in Planning Policy Wales
- Is consistent with the statutory framework of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015
- Satisfies Policy GDP1 and Policy H5 of the Wrexham UDP

- Complies with recently withdrawn, more up to date, Policies SP2 and H5 of the Wrexham LDP
- Secures the sustainable reuse of an existing rural building
- Is structurally sound and capable of continuing residential use
- Causes no harm to countryside character, amenity, or highway safety
- Formalises a long-established residential use with no enforcement history

The proposal represents sustainable development through the continued use of an existing structure without new build or expansion into open countryside.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.