MEMORANDUM

From:	Chief Officer, Environment & Technical	**To:**	Chief Officer Economy & Planning
		FAO:	Lauren Rowlinson
Our Ref:	ET/DC/PP/P/2026/0427	**Your Ref:**	P/2026/0427
Date:	07/10/2026		

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

PROPOSAL: ADEILADU GRISIAU ALLANOL A WAL CYNNAL / ERECTION OF EXTERNAL STAIRCASE AND RETAINING WALL

LOCATION: LAND EAST OF AEL Y BRYN, FFORDD ALMA, FRONCYSYLLTE, LLANGOLLEN, WREXHAM, LL20 7RN

I refer to your consultation / email dated 11/09/2026 in respect of the above.

General

The submitted application states the following:-

The proposal is for the erection of an external staircase with associated landings to provide safe pedestrian access from Alma Road to privately owned land situated on rising ground above Alma Road. The staircase has been designed to follow the natural slope of the site, minimising excavation and reducing disturbance to the existing embankment while providing safe and convenient access. The staircase has been designed in accordance with structural sketches prepared by the appointed Structural Engineer. The purpose of the staircase is to enable access to the land for its use as a private allotment for personal cultivation. The proposal relates solely to the provision of pedestrian access and does not include any residential or commercial development. The design has been developed with due regard to ground stability, protection of the adjoining highway and the character of the surrounding area.

Access

The proposed development site is located on Alma Road which is a classified road subject to a 20mph speed limit.

Alma Road is typically narrow ie/ less than 4.1m wide and cannot easily accommodate the simultaneous passage of vehicles. There is no footway provision along Alma Road

The proposed steps / pedestrian access is located on the western side of the existing passing bay (adopted highway) along this section. Given the significant difference in levels between the development site and Alma Road there is an existing substantial retaining wall - 2.3m high

(assumed to be under private ownership) located along the full length of the passing place which must not be disturbed by any proposed development in this location.

Previous Construction Works

Comments from Traffic / Streetscene Section:-

The LHA have previously been made aware of issues regarding these works and have previously had to serve a Section 143 Notice (Highways Act) on the applicant given he had built an extremely dangerous wooden set of steps with no planning consent or highway permission onto a live carriageway (adopted highway). Following this notice, the applicant failed to remove the steps in the specified timeframe which resulted in the LHA having to physically remove the structure from the adopted highway.

To carry out the project the applicant is proposing would take a huge amount of civil engineering works, large excavations, and construction, stating that " Excavation will be undertaken by hand wherever practicable to minimise disturbance" and "The works are expected to be completed within approximately two weeks". The LHA consider this to be totally unrealistic. Also, given the narrow road width and difficult access to the site a full road closure would be needed for the duration of the works.

The LHA have serious concerns regarding highway safety. The proposed staircase would provide direct pedestrian access from private land onto the live carriageway and, due to its excessive gradient, would create an unacceptable risk of slips, trips and falls. Users of the staircase would emerge directly onto the highway with limited opportunity to observe approaching traffic. The proposal would therefore result in an increased likelihood of pedestrian and vehicle conflict and is considered detrimental to highway safety.

Retaining Walls

Comments from Structures Section:-

The proposed retaining walls will need to be designed by a qualified structural Engineer and will require an AIP. *The supporting drawings are inconsistent and don't indicate the proposed staircase section i.e. risers, treads, angle, no. of flights, landing. It is therefore impossible to assess whether they would meet any standard regulation. The proposal indicates that the gabion baskets are 'set back' 4m into the existing slope which will involve extensive excavation. It's unrealistic to expect that this could be achieved by hand, and machinery would be required so a road closure would be needed for the duration resulting in great inconvenience, and disruption to surrounding properties.*

The methodology suggests that materials can be delivered in small quantities and stored off the carriageway. It is difficult to understand how gabion stone could be bought to site and not off loaded on the carriageway. As previously highlighted, there is likely to be an increased danger exiting the steps onto a live carriageway. Steps only indicate one handrail which also adds an additional risk of slips and falls.

The previous 'access' was constructed by the landowner himself. It is therefore assumed that the applicant will be carrying out most of this work himself, so the time frame is likely to be extended.

It is assumed that any private / external domestic steps of this nature would need to comply with current building regulations and would be assessed by the WCBC Building Control Section.

It is assumed that as part of any structural assessment for the proposed development, a geotechnical slope stability report would also be required when building steps on a steep slope above a highway if the construction involves cutting into the hillside, adding weight, or if the slope shows any history or risk of sliding that could threaten the road below.

Given the development site is in close proximity to the A5 Trunk Road, the LHA assume that the LPA will be consulting with Welsh Government on this application.

Conclusion

Given the above issues, it would be difficult for the LHA to support the proposed development.

Supplementary Notes

The applicant's attention should be drawn to item nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 of the supplementary notes.

Appendix

Highways Development Control Standard Advisory Note

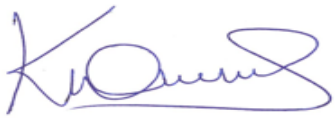
In the interests of maintaining highway safety, and to avoid obstruction of the public highway (in contravention of the Highways Act), The Applicant is advised to coordinate with the highway authority at highwayroadworks@wrexham.gov.uk in advance of commencement of the development/works with respect to:

1. *Skip, scaffolding, hoarding or A frame/signage (Permit required for these items, if on the public highway);*
2. *Use of a parking space for a set down/delivery area;*
3. *Record a dilapidation survey of the adjacent carriageway prior to commencement (to avoid being ask to repair damage by the Applicant whilst carrying out their works);*
4. *If any lane closure or obstruction of the highway is required for a crane or similar;*
5. *Protection against dust and debris blowing onto the public highway*
6. *Construction traffic parking locally avoiding nuisance to others;*
7. *If the Applicant's scope of work includes new apparatus in the highway, such as new mains services then a Section 50 licence will be required. Insurances and demonstration of competency to carry out works in the public highway will be required.*
8. *Lowering of kerbs or minor pavement alterations require Section 184 / 171 agreement. Insurances and demonstration of competency to carry out works in the public highway will be required.*
9. *A section 278 agreement works agreement is required for more significant alterations to the existing highway*
10. *Any temporary works affecting traffic lights, [pedestrian/cycle road crossings, or bus stops require pre-planning and permits;*
11. *For applications with a private driveway (either existing or proposed) connecting onto the public highway, the following conditions of approval apply:*

    - *No surface water from the applicants site should be allowed to drain onto the public highway,*
    - *The first 5m* minimum (for residential property) should be hard paved, avoiding gravel or loose chippings form spreading.*
    - *No gate should be built in a location where it would result in a car obstructing the highway whilst being unlocked, and it should not swing out and over a pavement or any other part of the highway.*

**The hard paved length and set back if required is subject to the applicants proposed vehicular length*

The applicants should allow a minimum of 4 weeks' notice for any of the above standard requirements, and 6-8 weeks for lane closures & road closures (lead times may change without notice subject to workload and complexity). Any works involving Trunk roads should be coordinated separately and directly with the North & Mid Wales trunk Road Agency. For larger sites with a significant impact upon the highway, a Construction Traffic Management Plan will be required.



On behalf of Chief Officer, Environment & Technical