

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** **7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018**

**REPORT BY:** **CHIEF OFFICER (PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT)**

**SUBJECT:** **APPEAL BY MR. P. EDWARDS AGAINST THE DECISION OF FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL TO REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE IMPROVEMENTS AND EXTENSION TO FARM TRACK, LAYOUT OF HARDSTANDING FOR THE PARKING AND MANOEUVRING OF VEHICLES, IMPROVEMENT OF TOILET, WASHING AND BATHING FACILITIES, PROVISION OF HOOK UPS FOR POTENTIAL VISITORS (INCLUDING A GREY WATER DISPOSAL POINT) AND LANDSCAPING (IN RETROSPECT) AT YNYS HIR FARM, PICTON ROAD, PICTON, HOLYWELL – ALLOWED.**

**1.00 APPLICATION NUMBER**

1.01 055871

**2.00 APPLICANT**

2.01 Mr. P. Edwards

**3.00 SITE**

3.01 Ynys Hir Farm, Picton Road,  
Picton, Holywell.

**4.00 APPLICATION VALID DATE**

4.01 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016

**5.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

5.01 To inform Members of the Inspector's decision into the refusal to grant planning permission for improvements and extension to farm track, layout of hardstanding for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles, improvement of toilet, washing and bathing facilities, provision of hook-ups for potential visitors (including a grey water disposal point)

and landscaping all in the support of a certificate site application submitted to the camping and caravanning club for five caravans and ten tents at Ynys Hir Farm, Picton Road, Picton CH8 9JG. The application was refused by committee contrary to Officer recommendation. The appeal was dealt with by way of written representations and was **ALLOWED**. The Inspector was Clive Sproule.

## **6.00 REPORT**

### **6.01 Background**

Members may recall that this application was reported to Planning Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017, and was refused on the basis that the developments would/do have a detrimental impact upon the landscape and highway safety.

### **6.02 Issues**

The Inspector considered the main issues to be the effect of the development proposed on the character, and appearance of the site and the locality, the effect of the development proposed on highway safety and whether the proposal is an appropriate form of development in the open countryside.

**6.03** Members may recall that Ynys Hir Farm includes a farmhouse and associated buildings, one of which has been converted to holiday accommodation. These stand next to 40 acres of land that is used for the grazing of cattle and sheep. The report on the application confirmed the proposal to be retrospective. It concerns the extension of existing tourist accommodation; and, the use in relation to touring caravans and tents does not require planning permission. Part of the land now includes the track, 'hook-up' points and grey water disposal point, which are new structures and plant, while other works have extended existing facilities on the farm. It was apparent to the Inspector that much of the development that was the subject of the appeal was also used in connection with the agricultural activities at Ynys Hir Farm.

### **6.04 Character & Appearance**

Policy RE5 deals with 'small scale farm diversification' and through Criterion 'D', it is permissive of development that would not have a significant adverse impact on features or areas of landscape, nature conservation or historic value.

**6.05** The site is on a hillside that overlooks the coast. Low lying land is present between the shore and the raised ground that includes the site, and the raised ground extends along this section of the coast. Views from the site are principally of the coast, intervening countryside, the occasional development within it, transport infrastructure and a number of commercial and industrial sites. Commercial development includes caravan parks and one of these is

downslope and in close proximity to the appeal site. Upslope of the appeal site is: open countryside with occasional agricultural and residential development within it; and, a school which is near to the appeal site and located at the junction of rural roads that provide some of the routes to and from Ynys Hir Farm.

- 6.06 For the most part the works carried out, and that which comprise the proposal, sit easily within the landscape, the Inspector considered. This is because the works have resulted in structures that would be expected to be found in an agricultural environment and not unusual for agricultural tracks to have trees planted along them. Planning permission is not required for trees to be planted in a layout that could be considered to have a degree of formality.
- 6.07 The notable exceptions to structures that would be expected to be found in an agricultural environment are the eight hook-up points that have been introduced on two adjoining sides of a field boundary. These are features that would not be expected in an agricultural field. Nevertheless, their visual impact (and that of the grey water disposal point) is very limited given their size, and their positioning at considerable distance from any neighbouring or public viewing point, the Inspector felt.
- 6.08 Three of the field boundary hook-up points are not within the area delineated as the 'Certificated Application Site'. Their use, which the Inspector considered noted to involve trailing extension leads to tents in the Certificated Application Site, would be complicated in comparison to the straightforward connections to any caravans positioned next to the hook-up point in the Certificated Application Site. Caravans reasonably would be expected to be located in such a position as it would enable the occupiers to take full advantage of the coastal views from the Certificated Application Site. Even if the nature of any certificated site accreditation were to result in these three hook-up points (normally) being redundant, they have a negligible effect on the character and appearance of the locality and their retention would not result in unacceptable harm in this respect.
- 6.09 In views from the higher ground to the south, there is already a hedge of sufficient height to screen the works on the Certificated Application Site. In any event and within the context of the land uses in the surrounding area, it is apparent the Inspector considered that the development does not result in unacceptable harm to either the character or appearance of the site and the locality.
- 6.10 Highway Safety  
The Inspector considered that the development would assist tourism and recreation in an area that already has caravan and camping sites. Some of these sites are much closer to the main highway network than Ynys Hir Farm. However, the nearest caravan park to the appeal site is accessed from the same junction with the A548 as that

highlighted within the proposal's Transport Statement. The A548 would be the route most likely to reduce the incidence of caravans and other wide vehicles/trailers travelling to and from the site encountering other wide vehicles on narrow sections of the highway.

- 6.11 It is possible that wide vehicles/caravans accessing the site would choose to travel by routes other than those set out in the Transport Statement. If this were to occur it could increase the likelihood of wide vehicles/caravans approaching each other on the narrow rural roads in the locality. These are public highways where agricultural and heavy goods vehicles, of a similar width to a caravan, are likely to meet and it is not evident that this has resulted in problems in the past. Even so, the A548 would provide a predictably straightforward route that people travelling to and from the appeal site reasonably would be expected to seek to use. If this appeal were to be allowed, a planning condition could assist this through the implementation of the Transport Statement. For these reasons, it is not apparent that the development would be likely to be harmful to highway safety, the Inspector considered.
- 6.12 However, it was explained why the works that have been carried out could be considered to be 'other development' as they concern matters that fall squarely within UDP Policy GEN3 'g'.
- 6.13 The scheme would have social benefit for those whose camping/caravanning activities would be facilitated by the development. Concerns have been raised regarding the possibility of loss of privacy and other impacts on local living conditions resulting from activity associated with the development. However, the Council report on the proposal noted that the nearest homes to be 150 m from the campsite described in the application, and that the Head of Public Protection had no adverse comments to make on the proposal. At this appeal stage, it had not been shown that noise, cooking odours and any other associated potential impacts have been, or would be likely to be unacceptably harmful to local living conditions.
- 6.14 In addition and in regard to the first reason for refusal, it has not been shown the Inspector noted that the development has resulted in a significantly adverse impact on the natural environment for there to be conflict with UDP policy STR1. Nor, for the reasons given above, has it had an unacceptable impact on the built environment. The development complied with UDP policy GEN3, including its criterion 'g', which is the Council's adopted planning policy for development in the open countryside.
- 6.15 Other Considerations  
The scheme is intended to facilitate activity that would benefit the local economy and it has a neutral impact on culture.

## **7.00 CONCLUSION**

7.01 For the above reasons, the Inspector considered that the development has an acceptable effect on: the character and appearance of the site and the locality; highway safety; local living conditions; the natural environment; and, is an appropriate form of development in the countryside. All representations were taken into account and no matters had been found to outweigh the identified lack of harm and policy compliance. Accordingly, the appeal was **ALLOWED**.

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Planning Application & Supporting Documents  
National & Local Planning Policy  
Responses to Consultation  
Responses to Publicity

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