

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** **9<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2013**

**REPORT BY:** **HEAD OF PLANNING**

**SUBJECT:** **FULL APPLICATION – CHANGE OF USE FROM AGRICULTURAL TO CARAVAN PARK WITH 27 NO. SPACES INCLUDING THE CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL SHED INTO CAMPSITE AND FISHING FACILITIES, CONVERSION OF BARN INTO SITE MANAGERS DWELLING, FORMATION OF AN ACCESS, CONSTRUCTION OF FISHING POOLS, PARKING AND ANCILLARY WORKS AT LAND OPPOSITE STAMFORD WAY FARM, STAMFORD WAY, EWLOE**

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** **050839**

**APPLICANT:** **MR JAMES WOODCOCK**

**SITE:** **LAND OPPOSITE STAMFORD WAY FARM, STAMFORD WAY, EWLOE**

**APPLICATION VALID DATE:** **24/05/13**

**LOCAL MEMBERS:** **COUNCILLOR A HALFORD**  
**COUNCILLOR D MACKIE**

**TOWN/COMMUNITY COUNCIL:** **HAWARDEN**

**REASON FOR COMMITTEE:** **SIZE OF DEVELOPMENT (APPLICATION SITE IS OVER 2 HECTARES)**

**SITE VISIT:** **NO**

**1.00 SUMMARY**

- 1.01 This is a full planning application for a the change of use to a touring caravan site forming 27 pitches, the creation of fishing ponds and the conversion and extension of existing buildings to form café, toilet and shower facilities and a managers dwelling. The proposal also involves

the creation of a new access, demolition of buildings fronting the main road, formation of driveway and car parking areas and fencing and landscape planting.

- 1.02 This application is the resubmission of application 049803 which was refused at Planning and Development Control Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2012 on green barrier grounds.
- 1.03 The issues for consideration are the principle of the development in planning policy terms; the effect on the openness of the green barrier; the effect on the visual appearance and character of the open countryside and the extension to the barn to form a dwelling.

**2.00 RECOMMENDATION: TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:-**

- 2.01
1. Time implementation.
  2. Compliance with submitted information and amended plans.
  3. Samples of all external materials
  4. Provision of 2.4m x 160m visibility splays in both directions.
  5. Visibility splays kept free of all obstacles during construction.
  6. Provision and retention of loading, unloading, parking and turning facilities.
  7. Closure of existing access and creation of new access prior to commencement of any other development
  8. Submission, approval and implementation of detailed landscape scheme, including details of grasperete surfaces to caravan bases.
  9. Removal of permitted development rights on all future openings (windows/dormer windows etc) for dwelling
  10. Removal of permitted development rights on all future extensions, outbuildings, porches etc for dwelling
  11. Caravan site operating months between 1<sup>st</sup> March & 31<sup>st</sup> October.
  12. Occupation of house tied to management of caravan site and fishing lakes.
  13. Commercial use to be established prior to conversion/occupation of house.
  14. Mitigation for barn owls and swallows and implementation of ecological recommendations
  15. Surface details of car parking areas and access track to be submitted.
  16. Submission and approval of lighting scheme.
  17. Touring caravans only
  18. Caravans to be used for holiday purposes only.
  19. Submission of details of the caravan waste compound and refuse compound.
  20. Submission of details of the play area.
  21. No external storage except in maintenance area.

### **3.00 CONSULTATIONS**

3.01 Local Member  
Councillor A Halford  
No response received.

Councillor D Mackie

There are many issues to consider and the applicant has submitted a number of surveys relating to ecology and habitat. There is also the impact on the green barrier.

Hawarden Community Council

Object on the grounds of;

- green barrier
- concerns on its impact on the water supply to properties in the locality
- traffic hazard created by the proposed access

Head of Assets and Transportation

No objection subject to conditions covering;

- visibility splay of 2.4m x 160m in both directions
- visibility splays kept free from obstructions during all construction works
- siting, layout and design of the means of site access to be agreed
- adequate facilities shall be provided and retained within the site for the loading, unloading parking and turning of vehicles

Head of Public Protection

No adverse comments to make.

Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru

No response received at time of writing.

Natural Resources Wales

No objections in principle to the proposed development. As private drainage is proposed to be used discharges above 5m<sup>3</sup> to surface water require an environmental permit.

SP Energy Networks

Have plant and equipment in the area and the developer should therefore be advised of the need to take appropriate steps to avoid any potential danger.

### **4.00 PUBLICITY**

4.01 Press Notice, Site Notice and Neighbour Notification

10 letters of objection on the grounds of;

- Out of character with the rural area and landscape

- This is green barrier and would affect the coalescence between Northop Hall and Ewloe
- Would affect openness of rural area and green barrier contrary to GEN4
- Would lead to conflict between the adjacent use of the cattery and kennels due to noise disturbance to the new use
- Intensive development on a small site
- Impact on SSSI Connah's Quay Ponds and Woodlands and Ewloe Wood Ancient Woodland and Deeside and Buckley Newt SAC
- Impact on surrounding farmland
- Impact on drainage system of adjacent land
- Access is dangerous, as is the existing access for adjacent business
- 60mph road and caravans move slowly
- Does not comply with Policy GEN1 a), d) g) h) and i) of the UDP
- Hedge planting will take a while to establish therefore visual impact of caravans will be greater
- Impact on the amenity of the area contrary to policy T6 of the UDP
- No mains drains in the area
- No footpaths on the south side of the B5125
- Other application for a caravan site in the green barrier was refused
- Fishing and youngsters don't mix
- Visual impact of caravans
- Light pollution
- Noise associated with 27 caravans

#### 3 letters of support

- No objection to a dwelling as a replacement or conversion of the existing agricultural building.
- Jobs are needed
- Will bring tourism to the area and there are other facilities in the area for users of the caravan site to use in Deeside
- Fishing is need in this area to relieve pressure on Wepre Park and the SSSI site
- Have to travel further afield for fishing facilities such as this at present

## **5.00 SITE HISTORY**

5.01 047414 Application to close up existing access, provision of a new vehicular access and demolition of farm building. Permission refused July 2010. Appeal dismissed in Oct 2010.

049803 Change of use from agricultural to caravan park with 27 spaces including the conversion of barn into residential and

agricultural shed into campsite facilities, demolition of existing outbuildings, formation of an access, construction of fishing pools, parking and ancillary works. Refused 12.10.12. Appeal lodged but not progressed.

## **6.00 PLANNING POLICIES**

### 6.01 Flintshire Unitary Development Plan policies:

STR1 New Development

STR6 Tourism

GEN1 General Requirements for Development

GEN3 Development in the Open Countryside

GEN4 Green Barriers

D1 Design Quality, Location and Layout

D2 Design

D3 Landscaping

L1 Landscape Character

WB1 Species Protection

AC13 Access and Traffic Impact

AC18 Parking Provision and New Development

HSG7 Change of use to Residential Outside Settlement Boundaries

RE4 Small Scale Rural Enterprises

SR2 Outdoor Activities

T6 Touring Caravan Sites

TWH2 Protection of Hedgerows

### Planning Policy Wales

TAN 6 Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities

TAN 13 Tourism

### Local Planning Guidance Notes:

5 – Conversion of Rural Buildings

10 – New housing in the open countryside

11 – Parking standards

The proposal is in accordance with the above development plan policies.

## **7.00 PLANNING APPRAISAL**

### 7.01 Introduction

This is a full planning application for a the change of use to a touring caravan site forming 27 pitches, the creation of fishing ponds and the conversion and extension of existing buildings to form café, toilet and shower facilities and a managers dwelling. The proposal also involves the creation of a new access, demolition of buildings fronting the main road, formation of driveway and car parking areas and fencing and landscape planting.

7.02 This application is the resubmission of application 049803 which was

refused at Planning and Development Control Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2012. The reason for refusal was “The site is located within open countryside and within the designated green barrier as defined in the adopted Flintshire Unitary Development Plan. The proposed development is an inappropriate use which would unacceptable harm the open character and appearance of the green barrier and contributes to the coalescence of settlements and is therefore contrary to Policy GEN4 of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan.”

7.03 Site Description

The site is located on the south side of Stamford Way, opposite Stamford Way Farm, between Northop Hall and Ewloe. It lies in open countryside within the green barrier.

7.04 The application site is a field of 2.5ha (6.3 acres), bounded on all sides by hedgerows containing some trees. There is an existing vehicle access at the eastern end of the site frontage. The site contains three former agricultural buildings, one on the road frontage, and the other two are further inside the site. The site is no longer part of a working farm and the buildings are unused. The field slopes down gradually from north to south, away from the road. There are power lines running across the site. There is a residential property the former farm house which is in separate ownership, opposite the application site. There is a boarding kennels and associated dwelling located to the east of the site.

7.05 Proposal

The proposed development comprises:

- creation of a new access and closure of the existing access;
- demolition of a brick and slate farm building located on the road frontage;
- conversion and extension of a barn to a dwelling;
- conversion and extension of an agricultural building to caravan site facilities;
- access driveway;
- 2 fishing pools with central islands;
- 1 specimen pool and a wildlife pond;
- car park for fishing pools, including disabled spaces;
- play area;
- 27 caravan pitches
- landscaping.

7.06 The primary use of this development is to create recreational fishing ponds. The proposal would create 2 fishery pools with 38 angling pitches and a specimen pool with 8 pitches. The recreational fishing pools would have a surface water area of 650m<sup>2</sup> located at the southern end of the site. The proposed 27 touring caravan pitches is to provide accommodation for visiting anglers, although would be open to non-anglers. This is located between the buildings and the

fishing ponds. The fishing ponds and caravan site will be screened by substantial landscaping and planting. Oak trees will be planted between the caravan site and fishing pools. Around the fishing pools will be grassed areas with shrubs.

- 7.07 It is proposed to convert the existing barn into a three bedroom dwelling as manager's accommodation. The existing barn is of stone and brick construction with a slate roof. This building is attractive and of architectural merit. It has a two storey element measuring about 8.8m long x 5.7m wide x 6m high and a single storey element measuring about 12m long x 6m wide and about 4.5m high. The conversion would involve new roof lights on the rear elevation. To the rear would be a single storey 9m x 9m x 4.3m high extension for a bedroom, sitting area and living room. The extension would be rendered with a slate roof. The dwelling would have private amenity space to south and its own internal access and parking area.
- 7.08 The existing brick agricultural building would be converted to form a café, reception, toilet/showers, kitchen and maintenance/storage area as facilities for the fishing and caravan enterprises. The existing building measures approximately 14m x 10.5m x 5m high, with a small projection of 6m x 3m x 4m high, would be extended by 7m x 6m to provide. The building would retain a brick external finish, with vertical timber cladding to gable ends above eaves level and a grey sheeted roof. A formal play area is also provided between the café and the caravan pitches.
- 7.09 The new access would be formed at the western end of the road frontage and serve a road through the site to the caravan park. This requires the removal of the existing roadside hedge and the erection of a 1.5m high post and rail fence with new hedge planting. 7 parking spaces would be provided for the café; 20 spaces for the fishing and 2 disabled parking spaces by the first fishing pool. A private drive off the access road would serve the barn converted to a house. The existing access would be closed up. A bore hole and pumping station would be used to supply water to the development. Foul sewage would be dealt with via bio-disc treatment plant and discharged into an existing ditch.
- 7.10 The fishing and café would be open for 52 weeks of the year, with the fisheries open from 8am to 10pm. The touring caravan park would be open from 1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> October. The development would create two full time jobs and four part-time jobs.
- 7.11 The application is accompanied by the following supporting documentation - Covering letter; Design and Access Statement; Business plan report; Ecological assessment report; Speed survey; Electrical supply housing unit; Klargester plant report; Structural report; Caravan park eurobollard services supply and a letter from North Wales Training agency regarding the applicant's offer of an

open day with fishing tuition for student placements.

7.12 Business Plan Report

The business information submitted with the application shows projections for income levels for the first 3 years of trading. The income streams are based on the assumption that there will be 25% occupancy of the caravan site /usage of the fishing pools in the first year; 50% in the second year and 80% in the third year of trading. Full occupancy means 27 caravan rentals per day for 8 months and 42 fishing pegs per day for the whole year.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Caravan	£51,940	£84,980	£124,740
Fishing	£26,754	£53,508	£85,684
Total	£78,694	£138,488	£210,424

7.13 After the 3<sup>rd</sup> year income levels are expected to be fairly static. The project is likely to cost £500,000 to set up. The above income levels would be required to fund the set up costs and cover running costs, including wages.

7.14 Following the refusal of the previous application the applicant submitted an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). As part of the appeal process PINS undertaken their own screening process under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations. During this process Countryside Council for Wales (at that time) expressed concerns in relation to the potential indirect impacts of the development on the Deeside and Buckley Newt Sites Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Wepre Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). In light of these comments the Planning Inspectorate took a precautionary approach and determined that the application required an Environmental Impact Assessment and the submission of an Environmental Statement. The applicant has now submitted amended ecological information to overcome the concerns of the former CCW, now NRW and following a screening opinion by the Local Planning Authority it is considered that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required.

7.15 Issues

The issues for consideration are the principle of the development in planning policy terms; the effect on the openness of the green barrier; the effect on the visual appearance and character of the open countryside and the extension to the barn to form a dwelling. The key to acceptability of this proposal is in the detail, having regard to its green barrier location covered by policy GEN4 Green Barriers and the requirements of policies STR6 Tourism, SR2 Outdoor Activities and T6 Touring Caravan Sites.

7.16 Policy Considerations and the Principle of Development

The site lies within the green barrier in open countryside. The most



important attribute of a green barrier is its openness and there is a general presumption against any inappropriate development within a green barrier except in very exceptional circumstances. These circumstances should outweigh any harm that may be done to the green barrier and its openness. The visual amenity of the green barrier should not be detrimentally affected by development.

7.17 Green Barrier

Policy GEN4 'Green Barriers' states development within green barriers will only be permitted where it comprises (amongst others):

- b) essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation...
- f) the re-use of existing buildings; and
- g) other appropriate rural uses/development for which a rural location is essential,

provided that it would not:

- i. contribute to the coalescence of settlements; and
- ii. unacceptably harm the open character and appearance of the green barrier.

7.18 It is considered that the creation of fishing ponds creates essential facilities for outdoor recreation and is also a rural use for which such a location is essential as referred to in g) above. It is also considered that the same argument can be made for a touring caravan site. It is relevant to refer to the Inspectors decision on Magazine Lane as this was for development of a caravan site in the green barrier. In the Inspectors decision he considered that while a gypsy and traveller site may be an appropriate rural use he did not accept that a rural location was essential for such a use. Conversely in relation to this development, it is considered that a touring caravan site for holiday purposes and in this case in association with an outdoor recreation use; the fishing ponds, is a use for which a rural location is essential in order for it to be attractive to visitors and due to its linkages with the fishing enterprise. While the use for a touring caravan site may be appropriate development in a green barrier location it still has the potential to cause harm to the green barrier location. It needs to be demonstrated that this harm is considered to be acceptable due to other overriding circumstance or the harm can be mitigated, for example by landscaping or seasonal use.

7.19 It is the caravan element of the proposal which has the most potential impact on the green barrier and open countryside location. The caravans would be sited at the northern end of the site, closest to the buildings, minimising visual impacts. The proposal for Magazine Lane was for a permanent site with both touring caravans and static caravans along with brick utility buildings on each pitch surrounded by landscaping bunds and a close boarded fence. In this instance the caravan element of the proposal introduces temporary features in the landscape in the form of the touring caravans with variable occupation levels throughout the season. The Magazine Lane proposals

introduced a significant number of permanent features in to the landscape which would have had a markedly different impact on the green barrier. While there are fencing, access roads and parking areas associated with this development, measures have been taken to minimise the impact of these. The fencing has been reduced to 1.5 metres in height and be conditioned to ensure it is appropriate to this rural location. The fencing would also be screened by new planting.

7.20 It is therefore considered that while the siting of the caravans would inevitably cause some harm to the green barrier, particularly when the site was full, this would be a temporary harm as the touring caravans are not permanent features in the landscape and would only be during March - October. Also this part of the business would help support the fisheries business and would bring in users from outside the area. It would therefore have economic benefits for the business as a whole.

7.21 In terms of criteria f) this proposal involves the re-use of 2 existing buildings – the barn for a dwelling as managers accommodation and the agricultural building for a café, toilet, reception and maintenance block with an extension to each building. The amount of new build is not significant in the context of the site as a whole and the extensions would have a limited impact on the green barrier. It is not considered these minor elements would cause significant harm.

7.22 A further issue is whether the proposal would contribute to the coalescence of Northop Hall and Ewloe. The site is located approximately 0.5km from the settlement boundary of Northop Hall and 1km from the settlement boundary of Ewloe. There are 3 existing buildings on the site, one of which is to be demolished to improved the visibility for the new access point and the other two are being utilised in support of the proposed enterprise as managers accommodation with an extension and as a café/shop amenity block. The other works at the site would not involve any additional built form. The fishing ponds would be engineered at ground level, with small islands. The caravan element would involve the creation of bases and electricity/water hook ups and access road. This can be conditioned to minimise its impact on the landscape with the use of grasscrete etc. As previously stated it is unlikely that the touring caravan site would be at capacity for the whole length of its season as reflected in the applicant's business plan, therefore the visual impact of the caravans would be limited and would vary. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not lead bring about any coalescence of Ewloe with Northop Hall.

7.23 Tourism and Outdoor Recreation

With regard to Policy STR6 'Tourism' it is considered that the proposal will meet the needs of visitors and residents; it will be in scale and type appropriate to the locality, as the caravans will be sited for 7 months rather than 12 and it involves regeneration of existing buildings into a beneficial economic use contributing to rural

diversification.

- 7.24 In relation to Policy SR2 'Outdoor Activities, permits activities where the activity proposed is of a type, scale and intensity that would not unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings, residential or other amenity, or any landscape, nature or conservation interest. The policy also requires sites to be accessible by a choice of modes of transport.
- 7.25 There is a residential property opposite the application site. There will be some impact on the amenity of this dwelling with the introduction of a new use to a currently vacant site, particularly associated with vehicle movements. However it is not considered the operation of the fisheries would have any significant impact on amenity and subject to proper management neither would the touring caravan site. Any impacts from the caravan site would be mitigated due to the seasonal nature of the site, the additional planting and the location of the caravans. The site is accessible by a choice of modes of travel other than the private car, as it is located on a bus route, therefore there are alternative options for accessing the site.
- 7.26 Policy T6 'Touring Caravan Sites' a) requires sites to not have a 'significant adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents, other users of nearby land/property or the community'. The nearest dwelling is the house opposite, Stamford Way Farm, about 70m from the nearest caravan. The dwelling associated with boarding kennels is about 150m from the nearest caravan. The policy criteria b) also requires 'the scale of the proposals, together with the number, siting and layout of pitches and circulation roads to be appropriate to the characteristics of the site and locality'. It is considered that the site complies with these criteria as the caravans are located on the part of the site nearest to the buildings and the circulation road has been reduced in length to serve only the caravan site. In terms of the other elements of the policy, the site is not in an area of landscape or nature conservation protection in accordance with criteria c) and mitigating measures for nesting birds are covered by the provision of nests sites within the buildings secured by condition. Additional planting will provide increased screening from the main road to accord with criteria d). The site is also in close proximity to and can be easily accessed from the local highway network as required by criteria e) as the site is adjacent to the B5125 linking westwards to Northop Hall, Northop and the A55 and eastwards to Ewloe, the A494, Hawarden, Broughton and the A55 towards Chester. These routes are suitable for use by vehicles towing caravans and by motorhomes. The caravans would be removed from site outside the season as required by criteria f), secured by a condition and essential services are provided within existing buildings as advocated by criteria g).
- 7.27 Policy GEN3 'Development in the Open Countryside' allows for developments related to tourism, leisure and recreation to be located

in the open countryside, provided there is no unacceptable impact on the social, natural and built environment. In this case it is considered the caravan park and fishing pools would not be detrimental to the social, natural or built environment.

- 7.28 Policy HSG7 permits the change of use to a dwelling of an existing non-residential building where residential conversion is a subordinate part of a scheme for business reuse provided that;
- a. the building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without significant extension, extensive rebuilding, or external alteration. The applicant has submitted a structural report of the barn with the application which supports this re- use. The front of the building will not be altered and the existing openings of the building would be used. There is one new door opening to the rear of the building and the introduction of some roof lights. The scheme does involve an extension to the barn to provide additional residential accommodation to meet the applicants needs to accommodate his family.
  - b. the traditional architectural and historic features are retained.  
The building is a traditional existing brick, stone and slate building. The existing openings are being reused and there is not a significant number of new openings.
  - c. the residential use of the building and curtilage provides adequate privacy and space around dwellings and does not have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, by virtue of its siting, scale, design, form, use of material and landscaping.  
The applicant is applying for a single storey rear extension of 9m x 9m x 4.3m high. The proposed extension is single storey and render in finish. The proposal provides adequate residential amenity space for a three bedroom dwelling which would be private from the commercial use. There are no issues with overlooking as the nearest dwelling is across the road.
  - d. reasonable standards of residential amenity are provided by the proposal.  
There would obviously be the potential for conflict between the proposed touring caravan use and the proximity of a dwelling, however this is managers accommodation associated with that use and the fishery use. Measures have been put in place to ensure that there is surveillance of the business while maintaining some privacy.
- 7.29 Policy RE4 'Small Scale Rural Enterprise' is relevant to the proposal. The proposal complies with the policy as the buildings to be converted are structurally sound and capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction and it is suitable for the specific re-use. The development is of a form, bulk, design and materials and sited so as to respect the character of the site and surroundings. It does not

unacceptably harm features or areas of landscape, nature conservation or historic value. The permission can be conditioned to not allow external storage or operations which would be harmful to residential amenity or to the character and appearance of the area. Satisfactory on-site parking, servicing and manoeuvring space for the nature and volume of traffic likely to be generated which should be capable of being served satisfactorily by the highway network is proposed. The site is accessible by a choice of means of travel, particularly by foot, cycle or public transport.

7.30 PPW paragraph 7.6.8 in relation to 'supporting the economy', says the re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of rural areas for tourism and recreation. Local planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to the conversion of rural buildings for business re-use, especially those buildings located within or adjoining farm building complexes, provided that:

- a. they are suitable for the specific reuse;
- b. conversion does not lead to dispersal of activity on such a scale as to prejudice town and village vitality;
- c. their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings;
- d. imposing conditions on a planning permission overcomes any planning objections;
- e. if the buildings are in the open countryside, they are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;
- f. conversion does not result in unacceptable impacts upon the structure, form, character or setting where the building is of historic and/or architectural interest.

It is considered that the proposal complies with this WG advice.

7.31 Access and highway considerations

It is proposed to create a new access and visibility splay as the existing access does not provide adequate visibility for a commercial use as proposed. The roadside building needs to be demolished to provide adequate visibility.

7.32 Previously an application was submitted to create a new vehicle access with no associated development (047414). This application was refused and dismissed on appeal. The proposed new access is in a similar position to that previously dismissed on appeal, so it is important to explain the differences between the schemes. In dismissing the appeal the Inspector considered the 5m wide access would represent an urbanising and incongruous feature that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding rural area. The Inspector noted that the area of land to be served by the proposed access amounted to only 2.4 hectares and was not part of an agricultural holding. Therefore there was no need for such a wide

entrance as only one vehicle would need to gain access to the field at any one time and another would not be exiting at the same time.

7.33 In this case, the proposed 5m wide access would serve a new commercial enterprise. It therefore needs to be wide enough for 2 vehicles to pass. The Head of Assets and Transportation has no objection, subject to conditions. The proposed access is seen in the context of the development of the site as a whole. Although the existing roadside hedge would be removed this would be replanted set back behind the new visibility splay so over time any impact would be mitigated.

7.34 Ecology

The site itself is primarily improved grassland with mixed hedgerows. The site is within 170m of Deeside and Buckley Newt Sites Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Wepre Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which are designated for their woodland and great crested newts. The nearest GCN breeding site is over 500m away.

7.35 The habitats present on site are poor great crested newt terrestrial habitat and there are no breeding sites in close proximity. While it is considered unlikely that great crested newts will be found on site, wildlife features created away from the fishing pools and caravan area were previously recommend along with connectivity planting. This has now been incorporated in the revised application.

7.36 An Ecological Assessment was submitted with the application. This refers to a Bat and Breeding Bird Survey undertaken in 2010 which found no evidence of bats in any of the buildings but large numbers of nesting swallows. Mitigation measures mentioned in that survey need to be incorporated into the existing proposals. The Ecological Design Scheme recommends the erection of 15 bat and bird boxes of various designs and a barn owl box. Swallow nesting sites are proposed in the converted agricultural building.

7.37 The proposal involves removal of approximately 160m of roadside hedge to create the appropriate sight lines. This is a mainly hawthorn hedge and is gappy in places. A new hedge outside the sight lines would be planted of predominately hawthorn plus other native species. Additional hedge planting is also proposed around the wildlife pond. Habitat connectivity for amphibians will be provided through this new planting, the inclusion of a wildlife pond and the replanted roadside hedge. The implementation of these along with appropriate mitigation for swallows and barn owls, will ensure there is ecological objection to the proposal. These matters are dealt with in the recommended conditions.

7.38 The Deeside and Buckley Newt SAC will not be directly affected by the proposal which is a self contained recreational activity. In the long

term the provision of managed fishing ponds may have the potential to reduce fishing pressures within the SAC.

7.39 Lighting

Limited low level lighting would be required for the touring caravan site. The caravan hook ups would be a 'Euroballard' system which is a low level bollard style with a low watt light including hook ups for service provision. A condition can be imposed to control any additional lighting on the site by the requirement for a lighting scheme to be submitted.

**8.00 CONCLUSION**

8.01 It is considered that the proposed use is appropriate development in the green barrier and while there may be some harm associated with the touring caravan element of the proposal this harm has been mitigated by the siting of the caravans, the proposed landscaping and the seasonal use of the site. It is not considered that the proposal would lead to the coalescence of settlements.

8.02 The proposed conversion of the buildings for the café, shop and toilet/shower facilities and managers dwelling reuse existing buildings on the site with some extensions. The elements of new build are therefore limited. It is considered all elements of the proposal are acceptable suitable to conditions as set out above.

8.03 In considering this planning application the Council has acted in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998 including Article 8 of the Convention and in a manner which is necessary in a democratic society in furtherance of the legitimate aims of the Act and the Convention.

**Contact Officer:** Emma Hancock  
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