



PLANNING AND DESIGN STATEMENT

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Detailed planning application for:

Proposed construction of 2no detached holiday lets (11 months per year) including parking, landscaping and alterations to existing vehicle access, at:

Land to the east of The Wain House, Lye Head Road, nr Bewdley DY12 2UP

Prepared by Boughton Butler Ltd on behalf of Mr John Rawlings

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Appendices

1. Introduction

Boughton Butler Ltd have been instructed by Mr John Rawlings of The Wain House, Lye Head Road, to submit a detailed planning application for the construction of 2no detached holiday let units (11 months per year).

This statement outlines the existing characteristics of the site in terms of its location, use and environment and then sets out the relevant planning policies and design approach to the scheme.

2. Existing Site

The application site amounts to a 0.1 Ha parcel of amenity land that does not contain any permanent structures, mature trees (within the site) or any areas of ecological value. The land sits on the south side of a private access road (PRoW 716(C), to the east of a cluster of existing development, within the same title ownership as The Wain House.

The site is a parcel of amenity land used as wider curtilage for The Wain House and contains a former Nissin Hut (subject to being demolished) and laid to grass. The site is bound by a hedgerow on its north, east and south boundary and buildings occupy the boundary to the West (agricultural and storage buildings).

The private access road leading to the site is directly off Lye Head road, and also a Public Right of Way (PRoW). This road also links up with the wider cycle and footpath network with connections to the National Cycle Network and, most relevantly, a wide range of visitor amenities such as the tourist facilities in the Forest itself, (Visitor Centre/Go Ape!) and to Bewdley Town and also the Severn Valley Railway.

The application site is currently served with vehicular access on its east boundary which provides both foot and private vehicle access onto the site. Lye Head Road runs north to the main road Long Bank (adopted A road), which provides vehicle access to Bewdley, Cleobury and the rural hinterlands of the Wyre Forest. This road is also part of a national cycle network and forms part of the footpath network linking the Wyre Forest itself to the site via the variety of public footpaths in the immediate area.

3. Planning Policy

Proposed Use

The onus of the *Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development* (Framework 11) rests on the decision-taker to undertake a balancing exercise of the in order to conclude whether the proposal, as submitted, constitutes sustainable development.

The proposal is for the use of the site for 2no holiday let units in the form of ‘cabin’ type development. The permanence of the structure (the structure need not be ‘permanent’) is an does not itself determine to determine use of a proposal. This is apparent from DCLG guidance to Councils on data gathering.¹ The DCLG guidance (as referenced) states “*Non permanent (or ‘temporary’) dwellings are included (as a dwelling) if they are the occupant’s main residence and council tax is payable on them as a main residence*”. These include caravans, mobile homes, converted railway carriages and houseboats. Permanent traveller pitches should also be counted if they are, or likely to become, the occupants’ main residence.”. The ‘permanence’ or independence’ of the accommodation is not relevant ; the nub of the issue is that the proposed accommodation cannot become a ‘main residence’ counted against the ‘development needs’ in CP01 so it is not the business that policy, but of CP10.

It is clear from this that if residential accommodation cannot be occupied as a main residence (and self-evidently ‘holiday accommodation’ is used by people who have their main residence elsewhere) then it cannot be counted as a C3 dwelling and will not attract Council Tax as a first or second home. It is the intention of the proposal that the scheme would be for use for up to 11 months of the year and not a sole residence. A condition requiring accommodation to be vacant during an identified part of the year (February is usual) as proposed in this application description is both enforceable and typical of such provision. The property will be owned as part of a business and let accordingly. As such it is not considered that the proposal would amount to the construction of new build residential development, as resisted within the location but would amount to wholly holiday accommodation.

¹ www.gov.uk/guidance/definitions-of-general-housing-terms

²The proposal will be taxed as a business, not as a residence or second home.

Sustainable Tourism

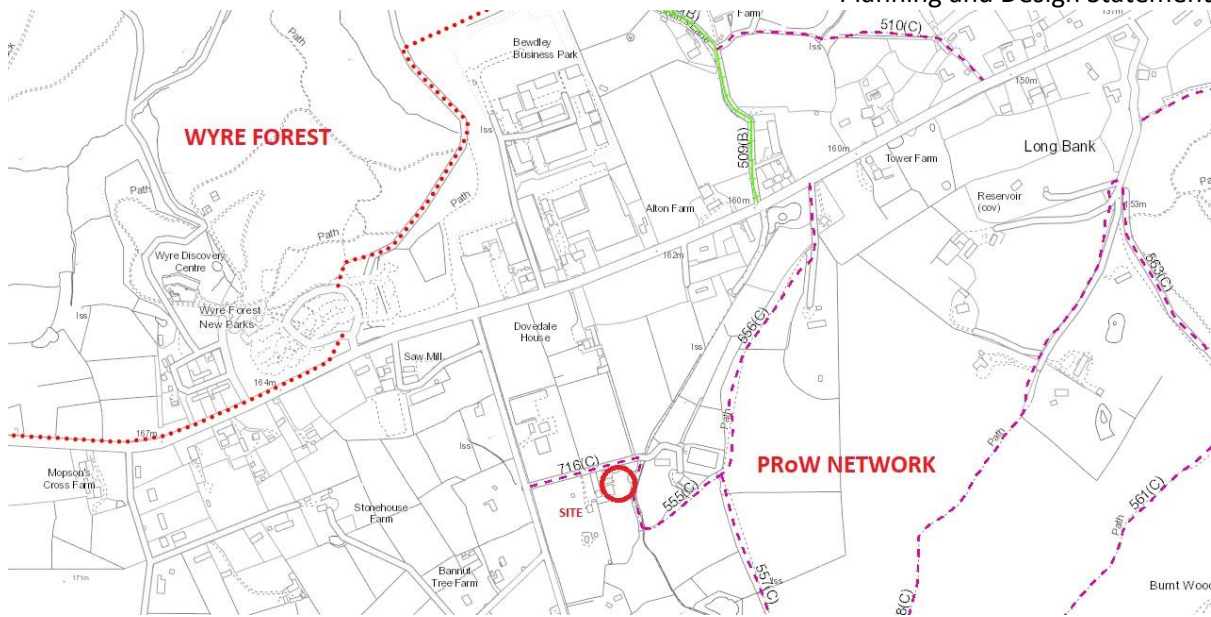
From the outset this application is aimed at facilitating sustainable tourism and regeneration within the rural area in accordance with policies of the Core Strategy:-

- DS03 identifies Bewdley as a sustainable tourism destination.
- DS04 (rural regeneration) identifies the Forest's role as a tourist attraction as its major economic opportunity.
- CP10 (sustainable tourism) refers to tourism in the locality (Forest and Bewdley)

CP10 (and DS04) identify the Wyre Forest as an economic resource in terms of sustainable tourism. CP10, subject to a test of harm, supports sustainable proposals that improve the quality and diversity of accommodation along with improvements to existing tourist facilities. Although the towns are identified as locations for 'new tourist accommodation development' this constraint is clearly directed at larger developments not individual self-catering units. Such an interpretation conflicts with the objective of CP10 to improve the quality and diversity of the tourism offer, with the identified potential for such provision in the rural areas and, where there is opportunity, to improve tourism access to the Forest in a sustainable manner as the proposal intends.

The site is identified within the Core Strategy: Key Diagram as being located within policy areas CP10/CP14 and DS04. All of the policies relevant to this site, whilst potentially conflicting, suggest that improving and diversifying rural tourism; in this instance by the provision of a self-catering holiday let, is an appropriate and sustainable form of development.

As identified there is latent and unmet demand for self-catering accommodation for those wishing to explore the area whilst enjoying the tranquil countryside and forest setting but also accessing (particularly by walking and bicycle)- tourism facilities in the Forest and nearby in Bewdley and the Severn Valley with its famous and popular Heritage Railway.



Above: The site in relation to the PRoW network, Wyre Forest, St Johns Lane and wider National Cycle Network 45.

The site is within close proximity to both the Wyre Forest (and associated walks and cycle routes), but also just south of the recognised 'National Cycle Route 45' which begins at Long Bank and is therefore directly accessible from the site via:

- Walking or cycling along PRoW 716(c), 555(c) up to Long Bank, or walking or cycling on the highway to the West, Lye Head Road, and heading north to Long Bank; directly opposite to the entrance to the Wyre Forest.

Cycling

The 'WYRE FOREST CYCLE STRATEGY' is relevant to this proposal, particularly OBJECTIVE 7 –TO PROMOTE CYCLE ROUTES FOR LEISURE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PURPOSES WITHIN THE DISTRICT.

Stating:-

- *"The District Council recognises that cycling has an important role to play in the promotion of tourism opportunitieswithin attractive areas such as the Wyre Forest,*
- *.....substantial scope for increasing the levels of leisure cycling for local residents and visitors. The Severn Valley Railway Stations in Kidderminster and Bewdley³ offer opportunities to promote sustainable tourism through improving links with cycling. In addition, opportunities*

³ The SVR Station at Arley is also close to the site

for promoting cycle tours around the District are increasing and a number of local business ventures have been set up.

- *The District Council will seek to influence the provision of cycle facilities and links to the stations.*
- *...The District Council plays an active role in publicising cycling opportunities within the Wyre Forest through providing promotional leaflets and guides in its Tourist Information Offices. It will also promote recreational cycling opportunities on the Council's website*

4. Design Statement

This section of the statement outlines the key design strategy for the site based on a response to the existing natural and built environment, as well as consideration as to the most efficient and least impact for the development on site.

Layout

The existing site is bound by the access road to the north and the east, of which narrows the southern portion, leaving the northern portion being fairly wide. This naturally presents an opportunity to contain the proposed holiday units with the existing confines of the site.

The first unit is proposed to sit at the wider northern section of the site, parallel with the access road. This allows the existing hedgerow to be retained and also permits a frontage to the access road.

The second unit is proposed to be perpendicular to the first, occupying the western boundary. This arrangement also allows for efficient use of parking and turning, but most notable provides both units with southern views of which are not blocked or fetter by the other holiday unit.

Internal Arrangement

The strategy for the internal accommodation for both holiday units is similar in that the main living spaces are orientated to make most of the view to the south, with bedrooms and secondary spaces (such as bathrooms) located away from the primary elevation.

There is a mix of 2 and 3 bed accommodation on site to create some diversity and choice for the future users.

External Appearance

The buildings are of a modest scale and simple linear forms. The design is of a contemporary nature where large expanses of glazing and north-lighting create interest in the immediate area and the roof form again is simply yet effective at providing a non-intrusive interest to the area.

The external finishes could be a variety of claddings or render panels, all of which are considered to be appropriate for the location where they will be seen against the contemporary redevelopment of Treacle Hall and the Wain House as 'host' dwellings.

5. Conclusion

The first main issue in this application is the distinction between residential development and holiday accommodation. The description of proposed development is expressed in clear terms such that the Council could be in no doubt as to the intention of the applicant.

In essence, although only an small scale development, the proposal captures the opportunity to diversify visitor accommodation to the menu of provision in the area, and bring in the 'centrepark' clientele group; those families who would like to explore (in this case) a heritage area *and* the natural beauty and tranquillity of the Wyre Forest and facilities without total reliance on the private car.

Presented with such an application the decision-taker has four key issues to address: -

1. Is the use, as self-catering holiday accommodation, appropriate in this location?
2. Can the use be controlled so that the Council is not approving a C3 dwelling in an inappropriate location?
3. Does the design and appearance and layout support the above issues?.
4. Is any harm to the landscape character of the area sufficient to outweigh the economic and social benefits arising from the proposal's contribution to sustainable tourism?

This statement demonstrates that the first three questions can be answered in the affirmative.

It would be wholly reasonable for a decision-taker to conclude that subject to suitable conditions, the development will make a positive, if small, contribution to the pursuit of sustainable tourism bringing economic and social benefits that are not outweighed by any concerns.