

PLANNING STATEMENT

Rhydoldog House

October 2021



Summary

Proposal:

The proposed development of log cabins, bath house and associated works

Location:

Rhydoldog House, Llansantffraed-Cwmdeuddwr, Rhayader LD6 5HB

Date:

October 2021

Project Reference:

21.160

Client:

Charlotte Church

Product of:

Asbri Planning Limited
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Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Asbri Planning's client to accompany a full planning application for the erection of log cabins, bath house and associated works at Rhydoldog House, Llansantffraed-Cwmdeuddwr, Rhayader.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to provide a clear and logical document to outline the planning considerations and planning policies relevant to the proposal. The document also acts as a method of demonstrating the details of the planning application in a way that can be read both by professionals and the public.
- 1.3 The planning application comprises the following set of drawings prepared by Barefoot Architects:

Drawing name	Drawing reference
Site Location Plan	2107-P-001
Existing Site Plan	2107-P-100
Proposed Site Plan	2107-P-101 Rev B
Cabin Locations	2107-P-110 Rev A
Services Strategy	2107-P-111
The Woodpecker - Plans and Sections	2107-P-121
The Owl - Plans and Sections	2107-P-122
Bath House - Plans	2107-P-123
The Woodpecker - Elevations	2107-P-141 Rev A
The Owl - Elevations	2107-P-142
Bath House - Elevations	2107-P-143
The Woodpecker – 3d View	2107-P-161
Na The Owl – 3d View	2107-P-162
Na Bath House – 3d View	2107-P-163
Cabin Location 1	2107-P-201
Cabin Location 3	2107-P-203
Cabin Location 4	2107-P-204
Cabin Location 5	2107-P-205

- 1.4 In addition, the following supporting documents are submitted:

Document	Prepared by
Planning application forms (1APP)	Asbri Planning
Design and Access Statement	Barefoot Architects
Planning Statement	Asbri Planning
Drainage Strategy	Barratt Associates
Structural Calculations	Barratt Associates
Foundations for the log cabins	Barratt Associates
Preliminary Ecological Assessment	Ecological Services Ltd
Reptile Avoidance Method Statement	
Tree Survey	ArbTS
Woodland Restoration & Management Plan	Wye Valley Forestry

- 1.5 The Planning Statement takes the format of an overview of the site and its surroundings at section 2, whilst Chapter 3 provides an outline of the proposed development. Chapter 4 identifies the relevant national and local planning policies which provide the framework for appraising the proposed development. Meanwhile, Chapter 5 assesses the overall appropriateness of the proposal in planning terms and finally Chapter 6 concludes as to why the proposal should be granted planning permission.

Site Description

General Location

- 2.1 The site comprises a 0.5ha land parcel which sits within the wider Rhydoldog Estate. Rhydoldog Estate is surrounded by a 13 acre pasture paddock and 33 acres of woodland and is situated at the end of a no through road. The site is located approximately 3.5 and 2.5 miles respectively from the Elan Valley village and the market town of Rhayader.
- 2.2 Rhayader is located at the junction of the A470 road and the A44 road 13 miles (21 km) north of Builth Wells and 30 miles (48 km) east of Aberystwyth. Hereford and Shrewsbury are within 1 hour. Cardiff, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool are all within 2 hours.
- 2.3 Rhayader offers a range of shops and restaurants/public houses which support the local holiday and tourism industry with some of the best fishing, walking and riding opportunities the area has to offer. Mid Wales is renowned for its romantic, outstanding beauty, including the nearby Elan Valley Lakes and Wye Valley, hosting an abundance of natural wild fauna and flora.

Rhydoldog Estate

- 2.4 Rhydoldog Estate comprises of a large, detached, Victorian home, complemented by lawned landscaped gardens, extensive range of traditional farm buildings, 13 acre pasture paddock and 33 acres of mature woodland with dramatic rock outcrops and waterfalls.
- 2.5 Rhydoldog is believed to have originally been a traditional Welsh longhouse, dating back to the 15th century, comprising part of the manor of Grange of Cwmdaiddwr. The house underwent renovation and extension in the 1870s before it was purchased by Bernard and Laura Ashley in 1973. They had established their company "Laura Ashley" in Mid Wales, and were looking for an idyllic location to raise their family. During the 1970s and 1980s the house was not only a family home, but was also frequently used for the promotion of Laura Ashley and its products.
- 2.6 Since its sale by the Ashley family in 2009, Rhydoldog has undergone extensive renovation by the previous owners. The refurbishment to date has concentrated on creating a luxurious apartment; transforming the external facade through carrying out necessary structural works in the cellar and to the front elevation; creating first and second floor stone balconies, external insulation with render finish to all elevations; hardwood double glazed windows; stained glass feature windows; and addition of cast iron rainwater goods. Extensive remodelling to the internal layout of the

house was started but not completed at the point of purchase by our client in 2020.

- 2.7 The sweeping tree lined driveway leads to a vast gravelled parking and turning area to the side and rear of the house. The driveway continues around to the rear of the house to the garage/wood store beyond which are traditional agricultural outbuildings. These comprise an extensive range of predominantly stone and timber built barns under slate roofs – comprising hay barns, cow byres, former milking parlour, and former coach house with tack room stable and grooms quarters over. In total the traditional buildings extend to approximately 625sq. metres/6750 sq. ft.
- 2.8 The predominantly lawned gardens are to the side and front of the house with an upper terrace affording uninterrupted views down the valley to the distant hills. To the front, and overlooked by the house and gardens, is the large enclosed pasture paddock which extends to approximately 5 hectares/13 acres bounded by the access roads on two sides and house and woodland on the others.
- 2.9 Neighbouring land is primarily agricultural with a few properties on the adjacent hill overlooking the Rhydoldog Estate, as well as two cottages at the end of the driveway.

The application Site

- 2.10 The proposed development site comprises 5 distinct parcels of land, positioned within a parcel of coniferous woodland to the south west of the existing, traditional farm buildings. The coniferous woodland (a 60 year old, Western Red Cedar plantation) sits to the south east of a much larger woodland area.
- 2.11 The eastern edge of the woodland site follows a level green lane that leads south from the house. This is understood to be a historic road and now forms Footpath 144/285/1. Mature, mostly broadleaf standards line the eastern edge of this path with the dense wall of evergreen foliage of the plantation to the west. This is an impressive, bright green, single aspect avenue.
- 2.12 The western edge of the site is defined by a steep, gravel track that cuts through the plantation leading to the moorland on top of the hill. This is Footpath 144/287/1. To both sides of the track are plantation – predominantly Cedar to the east, Spruce and Larch to the west. This edge is dark, with no understory vegetation, dominated by the gradient and the tall trunks reaching skyward.
- 2.13 While the two edges of the proposed site hold quite different and exciting qualities - these are largely driven by localised

climatic/topographic conditions rather than the quality of the trees in those locations. The Western Red Cedar trees within the plantation are of varying sizes/quality but, as the arboriculturist records, none are of significant value. As this is Plantation of Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) woodland, the richness of the place is contained in the soil and dormant biomass of the forest floor.

Surrounding Context

- 2.14 Elan Valley Woodland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located approximately 425m to the north of the site. The SAC is designated as it contains old sessile woodland, European dry heath and tilio-acerion forest of slopes, screes and ravines. The SAC extends northwards with small block to the south and south west and is also covered by the Elenydd-Mallaen Special Protection Area (SPA) designation.
- 2.15 The Elenydd-Mallaen SPA site appears to lie directly adjacent to the proposed development site and follows the public footpath which runs to the north west of the development site. The land covered under the SPA designation includes the remaining woodland areas to the north and west, and upland areas in the wider landscape to the north, south and west. The land covered under this designation is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 2.16 The Cwm Gwynllyn SSSI is located approximately 1km to the north of site at its closest point. The Coed Y Cefn SSSI is located approximately 1km to the east of site and covers a block of woodland.
- 2.17 The River Wye SAC is located approximately 1.7km to the south east of site. This area is also designated as a SSSI.
- 2.18 Rhydoldog House and barns are bound to the west by approximately 12.69 ha of Semi Ancient Woodland. The Ancient Woodland Inventory places woodland into one of four categories notably:
- Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW)
 - Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)
 - Restored Ancient Woodland Sites (RAWS)
 - Ancient Woodland Site of Unknown Category (AWSU)
- 2.19 The 12.69ha woodland is a Plantation of Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) which is essentially a site which is believed to have been continuously wooded for over 400 years and currently have a canopy cover of more than 50 percent non-native conifer tree species.
- 2.20 The site is split into two woodlands, separated by a public footpath, named Cwmnant and Creigiau Rhydoldog. Cwmnant is 2.65 ha and

Creigiau Rhydoldog is 10.04 ha. The woodland lies on the edge of the Elenydd Mountain range.

- 2.21 The site is located within the Cwmnant Woodland which is PAWS with ASNW. Cwmnant was a broadleaved woodland that was cleared in the 1950s and restocked with conifer trees as a crop for regular and sustained income. Cwmnant has no statutory obligations but is closely bordered with Creigiau Rhydoldog which is SSSI due to its SPAs and SAC designations.
- 2.22 A number of Public Rights of Way traverse the site (a plan showing the location of these is attached to this Statement at Appendix A). Route 144/232/2 is on a north/south alignment and runs from the woodland area in the north, past Rhydoldog House, the outbuildings and towards the B4518. Route 144.287/1 commences within the site and runs on an east/ west axis from the outbuildings, through the woodland to the Gurn Mountain peak.
- 2.23 A review of Natural Resources Wales Development Advice Map reveals that the site lies within Flood Zone A meaning it is considered to be at little or no risk of fluvial or coastal/tidal flooding. A review of Natural Resources Wales Detailed View Map indicates that there is a low surface water flood risk to the south of the site.
- 2.24 The Flood Map for Planning will replace the Development Advice Map from 1 December 2021. After this date, the Development Advice Map will not hold any weight in the planning decision making process. A review of the Flood Map for planning confirms that the site is within Flood Zone 1 which has a minimal risk of flooding; new development is directed to Zone 1 areas. The Flood Maps show that surface water and small watercourse flood Zone 2 and 3 are present on site.
- 2.25 A review of Historic Wales' online resources confirms that Rhydoldog is not designated as a historic asset of any type. There are 3 listed buildings within a reasonable distance from the site, these include;
- Tyn y Waun Farmhouse – Grade II Listed Farm House (Reference Number 16226) located to north of minor road to Rhydoldog, approx 1km from its junction with Elan Valley Road. The property is listed as a good example of vernacular farmhouse.
 - Attached Barn to Tyn y Waun Farmhouse Grade II Listed Barn (Reference Number 16227).
 - Treheslog Farmhouse Grade II Listed Farm House (Reference Number 16225) Picturesquely sited across small lake; reached from lane near Dderw Bridge. Listed for special interest of C17 block.

Planning History

2.26 Rhydoldog House has the following planning history;

Proposals	Date Determined	Decision
Full: Erection of a stable block with storage SN 96 NW	Thu 31 Jan 2008	Approved
Ag/Notification: Erection of shed to store farm equipment	Mon 08 Mar 2010	Approved
Householder: Remodel the north west wing to accommodate a 'granny flat', erection of an orangery style extension to the north east side of the property, erection of a outdoor kitchen and garden house and other internal and external alterations	Mon 19 Dec 2011	Approved
Full: Installation of domestic grid connected hydroelectricity plant	Tue 27 May 2014	Approved

Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed to develop the site to deliver 4 log cabins, bath house, and associated works. All structures will be attached to trees located within the plantation woodland.
- Layout, Detailed Design and Materials**
- 3.2 The site comprises 5 distinct parcels of land, positioned within a parcel of coniferous woodland. The woodland slopes steeply downwards from west to east and a rock face approximately 15m in height is present to the north east of the site. Two cabins are proposed to be situated on top of the rock face, accessed via PRW 144/287/1. The other two cabins are proposed to be situated to the east and sit alongside a grass footpath (PRW 144/285/1). The bath house is proposed to be located where both PRW routes meet, immediately to the west of the traditional farm buildings. The topography of the site accentuates the separation of the cabins from one another, as the height difference makes them feel further from each other. Their combined floor area equates to only about 1% of the woodland area they occupy.
- 3.3 The proposed location of the cabins has been carefully selected to ensure minimal impact on woodland. Smaller trees are proposed for removal allowing the larger ones to mature – this thinning process is a common management practice within plantations. It is of utmost importance to minimise the disturbance to the woodland floor so that the essential foundations remain intact to enable the restoration of healthy and diverse ancient woodland ecosystems.
- 3.4 Although the trees are the same across the site, the unique context of the east and west edge conditions are likely to drive different design responses. The woodland floor should remain untouched if possible.
- 3.5 The two edges of the proposed site hold quite different and exciting qualities - these are largely driven by localised climatic/topographic conditions rather than the quality of the trees in those locations. To respond to the immediate context, 2 varying styles of accommodation are proposed, notably the 'Owl Cabin' and the 'Woodpecker Cabin'.
- 3.6 The eastern edge of the woodland site follows a level green lane that leads south from the house, this is understood to be a historic road and now forms Footpath 144/285/1. Mature, mostly broadleaf standards line the eastern edge of this path with the dense wall of evergreen foliage of the plantation to the west. This is an impressive, bright green, single aspect avenue. Two woodpecker cabins are proposed to be located here – this is a two-storey cabin, which

minimises the footprint and provides views out of the plantation over the valley.

- 3.7 The western edge of the site is defined by a steep, gravel track that cuts through the plantation leading to the moorland on top of the hill. This is Footpath 144/287/1. To both sides of the track are plantation – predominantly Cedar to the east, Spruce and Larch to the west. This edge is dark, with no understory vegetation, dominated by the gradient and the tall trunks reaching skyward. Two owl cabins are proposed here – this is a single storey structure, which offers a panoramic view over the woodland and one that is exaggerated by the height/depth/slope by cantilevering over the rocks.
- 3.8 The bath house is proposed to be located in a central position, between both sets of cabins, where both PRW routes meet and to the rear of the existing agricultural buildings. The bath house is a triangular design which takes a lead from its position on the site. The bathhouse is split into its component parts (WC, bath, shower, and sauna) so that it is articulated as separate ‘pods’ which help it respond to the topography and trees, and create a more outdoor experience. It’s central position ensures access to all users on site.
- 3.9 Both cabin styles and the bath house share the same materials, including vertical timber cladding elevations and timber windows under a cedar shingles roof, timber balustrades, and a timber platform supported by tree stumps/trees.
- 3.10 All cabins have a similar roof form - an asymmetric pitch which creates one open side and one shielded side. This shape was in part derived from the form of the western red cedar tree itself. While this isn’t true of a tree growing in the open (these tend to be fairly symmetrical), the trees on the edge of the plantation have one very dense side (exposed to the valley) and one side that is largely dead in the understory.
- Engineering**
- 3.11 The Western Red Cedar trees within the plantation are of varying sizes/quality but, as the arboriculturist records, none are of significant value. As this is PAWS woodland, the richness of the place is contained in the soil and dormant biomass of the forest floor. Having established the importance of protecting the woodland floor, it is imperative to conceive of a foundation solution that doesn’t involve extensive digging or concrete pouring.
- 3.12 It is proposed to build the cabins, off the existing trees, using their natural strength and perfectly ‘designed’ trunk/root system as natural

foundations. This requires the certain trees to be felled and to use the remaining stumps as posts to sit beams onto. Specialist connections (referred to as TABs - Tree Anchor Bolts) will be used to enable beams to be 'fixed' into the side of living trees. The exact structural design of each cabin is obviously specific to the different cabin and its tree arrangement. These details will be refined and confirmed during technical design (RIBA Stage 4).

Planning Policy Context

Introduction

- 4.1 The planning policy framework for the determination of this application is provided by the content and scope of National Policy, National planning guidance, together with the adopted Local Development Plan.
- 4.2 National Planning Policy is contained within Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, together with Planning Policy Wales (PPW 11th Edition), published by the Welsh Assembly Government in February 2021. PPW is supplemented by 19 Technical Advice Notes (TANs) which further details the specific aims and objectives outlined within PPW.
- 4.3 The Development Plan for the purpose of Section 38 (6) of Planning and Compulsory Purchase act 2004 is the Powys Local Development Plan 2011-2026 which was adopted in April 2018. The adopted LDP provides the statutory framework for the development and use of land within the plan area up to 2026.

The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act

- 4.4 The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act came into force in 2015 and focuses on improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act places a duty on public bodies to think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. To make sure that all public bodies are working towards the same vision, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals. These include working towards;
- A globally responsible Wales
 - A prosperous Wales
 - A resilient Wales
 - A healthier Wales
 - A more equal Wales
 - A Wales of cohesive communities
 - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

- 4.5 Published on the 28th February 2021, Future Wales comprises the first national development plan of its kind within Wales. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate- resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

- 4.6 Future Wales’ spatial strategy is a guiding framework for where large scale change and nationally important developments will be focused over the next 20 years. The strategy blends the existing settlement patterns and the distribution of jobs and homes with a vision of managing change and future trends for the benefit of everyone in Wales.
- 4.7 The National Plan acknowledges the urgent actions and changes in behaviour that were introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and how they will emerge as permanent features of life. The National Plan notes that the planning system must respond to these changes and contribute to a sustainable recovery, shaping places around a vision for healthy and resilient places. Planning Policy Wales is the primary source of detail on how the planning system will support reconstruction efforts.
- 4.8 Future Wales divides Wales into four regions, North, **Mid Wales**, The South West and The South East.
- 4.9 The Mid Wales region comprises Ceredigion, Powys and the majority of the Brecon Beacons National Park, and is home to 205,000 people. It is Wales’ most rural region and includes extensive upland areas, the Cambrian mountains, Black Mountains, Brecon Beacons and an attractive coastline. Population is spread in towns, villages and rural areas across the region.
- 4.10 The National Plan identifies 11 outcomes that can be achieved over the next 20 years if the planning system – through Future Wales and other development plans – is focused on the long-term and provides quality development in the right places for the right reasons. These outcomes are inter-related and inter-dependent, and will improve places and well-being across Wales. The intention is to create a Wales where people live...
1. ... and work in connected, inclusive and healthy places
 2. ... in vibrant rural places with access to homes, jobs and services
 3. ... in distinctive regions that tackle health and socio economic inequality through sustainable growth
 4. ... in places with a thriving Welsh Language
 5. ... and work in towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth
 6. ... in places where prosperity, innovation and culture are promoted
 7. ... in places where travel is sustainable
 8. ... in places with world class digital infrastructure
 9. ... in places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution
 10. ... in places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems
 11. ... in places which are decarbonised and climate resilient

- 4.11 Policy 25 (Regional Growth Areas – Mid Wales) confirms that *“The Welsh Government supports sustainable growth and development in a series of inter-connected towns across the region. Development in these Regional Growth Areas should meet the regional housing, employment and social needs of Mid Wales. The Regional Growth Areas are:*
- *The Teifi Valley, including Cardigan, Newcastle Emlyn, Llandysul and Lampeter*
 - *Brecon and the Border*
 - ***The Heart of Wales, including Llandrindod Wells and Builth Wells***
 - *Bro Hafren, including Welshpool and Newtown*
 - *Aberystwyth*
- 4.12 The Heart of Wales towns include Llandrindod Wells, Builth Wells, and Rhayader, which are historically significant places, forming part of a network of spa towns in Mid Wales. Llandrindod Wells in particular continues to attract visitors and retains the architecture and charm that made it a popular destination in the Victorian era.
- 4.13 Policy 26 (Growing the Mid Wales Economy) confirms that *“The Welsh Government supports the growth and development of existing and new economic opportunities across Mid Wales. The Welsh Government will work with local authorities, communities, stakeholders and businesses to ensure that its investments and policies support a strong regional economy. Strategic and Local Development Plans must develop policies that support agricultural and land based traditional rural enterprises; and provide a flexible framework to support the development of new, innovative and emerging technologies and sectors”*. The supporting text acknowledges that *“Tourism is an important sector to the Mid Wales economy. Opportunities for active, green and cultural tourism should be explored. The rich landscape, cultural heritage and marine fauna, the Coastal Way along the length of Cardigan Bay, the inland Cambrian Way and the Wales Coast Path provide the potential to develop tourism facilities inland and at the coast. Strategic and Local Development Plans should consider the main existing and potential new tourism areas, the type of visitors they attract and the infrastructure required to support growth”*.

Planning Policy Wales

- 4.14 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) – Edition 11 (February 2021) is the principal document which sets out the land use policy context of the Welsh Government. Its primary objective is to ensure that the planning system itself contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development whilst improving the social, economic, environmental

and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and other pertinent legislation.

- 4.15 PPW encourages a planning system with a *“wider, sustainable and problem solving outlook which focuses on integrating and addressing multiple issues rather than on an approach which is fragmented, un-coordinated and deals with issues in isolation”*.
- 4.16 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) acknowledges at para 2.4 that *“Individual places can take many forms and interpretation of what makes a good place will vary. Each place will have its own unique characteristics, history and identity, based on how people have and will interact with the landscape and townscape. This ‘sense of place’ varies, from the rural countryside which provides an economic and environmental base for agriculture and tourism to thrive, to urban areas which are continually evolving and providing the focus for major social and economic development. The intrinsic value of a place to people or communities is particularly important, which may be due to aesthetic, cultural, spiritual or historical reasons and planning authorities are best placed to understand these. Many of the unique characteristics of places will be revealed in the local well-being assessments and area statements produced in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations and Environment Acts”*.
- 4.17 PPW confirms that *“Tourism involves a wide range of activities, facilities and types of development and is vital to economic prosperity and job creation in many parts of Wales. Tourism can be a catalyst for regeneration, improvement of the built environment and environmental protection”*. Para 5.5.2 confirms that the planning system should seek to encourage tourism where it contributes to economic development, conservation and rural diversification. Appropriate tourism-related development in new destinations is encouraged by PPW; though it is noted that *“there may be a need to limit new development to avoid damage to the environment or the amenity of residents and visitors”*.
- 4.18 Para 5.5.3 confirms that *“In rural areas, tourism-related development is an essential element in providing for a healthy and diverse economy. In addition to more traditional forms of rural tourism, planning authorities should plan positively for active, green and cultural tourism where they are appropriate. Development should be sympathetic in nature and scale to the local environment”*.
- 4.19 PPW acknowledges the important role that long-distance routes, rights of way, disused railways, waterways and other green infrastructure play as tourism and recreation facilities, both in their own right and as a means of linking attractions.

4.20 With regard to rural development, PPW states at paragraph 5.6.1 that *“The rural economy must develop a wide base if it is to be adaptable and resilient to the challenges it faces now and in the future. Events such as the climate emergency, the coronavirus pandemic and exiting the European Union all bring economic and societal uncertainty, and the ability to respond flexibly to these issues will be key to the future success of rural areas”*.

4.21 Paragraph 5.6.4 confirms that *“To unlock the full potential of rural areas, planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to employment arising from foundation and innovative and technology based sectors, including research and development, in addition to employment arising from the traditional agriculture, forestry and leisure sectors. Proposals for diversification, new startups and micro-businesses should also be encouraged, where appropriate, to generate new job and wealth-creating opportunities”*.

Technical Advice Notes

TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (July 2010)

4.22 TAN 6 provides guidance on the role of the planning system in supporting the delivery of sustainable rural communities.

4.23 Para 3.1.2 states that planning authorities should support the diversification of the rural economy as a way to provide local employment opportunities, increase local economic prosperity and minimise the need to travel for employment by *“accommodating the needs of both traditional rural industries and new enterprises, whilst minimising impacts on the local community and the environment”*.

TAN 12: Design (2016)

4.24 TAN 12”) ‘Design’ (2016) provides more detail on the design aspects set out in PPW as well as providing detail on five key aspects of good design that should be integrated into proposed developments.

Figure 1: Objectives of good design



TAN 13: Tourism (July 2010)

4.25 TAN 13 acknowledges that *“Tourism makes a major contribution to the Welsh economy, provides employment in a wide variety of occupations and can bring benefits to local economies and communities in urban and rural areas”*. TAN 13 encourages development plans to *“provide guidance on opportunities for larger scale or innovative projects, appropriate facilities for the countryside or designated areas and the provision of facilities in historic towns and seaside resorts”*.

TAN 18: Transport (2007)

4.26 TAN 18 ‘continues the theme established in PPW of minimising the need to travel, especially by the private car, and seeks to encourage the increased use of sustainable modes of travel, including public transport, walking and cycling.

TAN 23: Economic Development (February, 2014)

4.27 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) defines economic development broadly so that it can include any form of development that generates wealth, jobs and income. It is confirmed at para 1.1.4 that *“economic land uses include the traditional employment uses (Class B in the Use Classes Order) as well as retail, tourism and public services”*.

Powys Local Development Plan (2011-2026)

4.28 The site lies within the Open Countryside as defined within the Powys County Council Local Development Plan. Following a review of the

adopted LDP, the policies contained in the table below are deemed to be most pertinent with regards to the consideration of the proposals. Those of most relevance are copied below:

Policy reference	Relating to
<i>Strategic Policies</i>	
Policy SP5	Settlement Hierarchy
Policy SP7	Safeguarding of Strategic Resources and Assets
<i>Development Management Policies</i>	
Policy DM2	The Natural Environment
Policy DM4	Landscape
Policy DM7	Dark Skies and External Lighting
Policy DM13	Design and Resources
Policy DM15	Waste Within Developments
<i>Economic Development</i>	
Policy E2	Employment Proposals on Non-allocated Employment Sites
Policy E6	Farm Diversification
Transport	
Policy T1	Travel, Traffic and Transport Infrastructure
Planning for Tourism	
Policy TD1	Tourism Development
Sustainable Energy	
Policy RE1	Renewable Energy

4.29 Policy SP5 (Settlement Hierarchy) identifies the settlement hierarchy as follows;

- Towns
- Large Villages
- Small Villages
- Rural Settlements
- Open Countryside including the Undeveloped Coast

The open countryside is defined as land outside the (development) boundaries of defined settlements including the undeveloped coast associated with the Dyfi Estuary.

4.30 Policy SP6 (Distribution of Growth across the Settlement Hierarchy) confirms that *"To protect the open countryside including the undeveloped coast of Powys, the majority of growth is directed into sustainable settlements as defined above. Outside of settlements, strict control will be exercised over new development proposals. Development proposals will need to comply with relevant national policy including PPW and TANs including:*
TAN6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities
TAN 23: Economic Development
AND with relevant development management and topic based policies contained in the Plan. For example on design and resources, landscape, natural environment, air and water quality, transport and waste.
Housing: Only housing development that complies with the national exceptions policies as set out in PPW and TAN 6 will be permitted in the Open Countryside.
Employment: There are no allocations for employment development within this tier. Proposals may be acceptable where they are justified and comply with policy.
Agriculture: Proposals will be assessed against national policy and all relevant policies of the Plan. TAN 6 relates to planning for sustainable rural communities and includes agricultural and forestry development as well as rural diversification".

4.31 Policy DM2 (The Natural Environment) seeks to protect the Natural Environment and confirms that *"Development proposals shall demonstrate how they protect, positively manage and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests including improving the resilience of biodiversity through the enhanced connectivity of habitats within, and beyond the site. Development proposals which would impact on the following natural environment assets will only be permitted where they do not unacceptably adversely affect:*

1. The important site designations, habitats and species afforded the highest levels of protection through European legislation including:

A. European Sites (SAC, SPA and Ramsar).

i. Development proposals likely to have a significant effect on a European site, when considered alone or in combination with other proposals or plans, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

a) The proposal is directly connected with or necessary for the protection, enhancement and positive management of the site for conservation purposes; or

b) The proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

ii. Where it cannot be demonstrated that development proposals would not adversely affect the integrity of the site and there is no satisfactory alternative solution, permission will be refused unless:

- a) *There are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest; and*
- b) *Appropriate compensatory measures are secured.*

B. European Protected Species afforded strict protection by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitats Directive Annex IV Species).

Development proposals likely to have an adverse effect on a European Protected Species will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- i. The proposal is for the purposes of preserving public health or public safety or there are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest; and*
- ii. There is no satisfactory alternative; and*
- iii. The action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the habitat or population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.*

2. The important site designations, habitats and species afforded levels of protection in line with national policy and legislation including:

- A. National Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest;*
- B. Protected Species including those listed in Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992;*
- C. Habitats and Species of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity conservation in Wales as listed in Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016; and*
- D. National Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats and Species.*

Development proposals likely to have an adverse effect on the conservation value of nationally protected sites, habitats or species, either directly, indirectly or in combination, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- i. The proposal contributes to the protection, enhancement or positive management of the site, habitat or species; or*
- ii. There is no suitable alternative to the proposed development; and*
 - a) It can be demonstrated that the benefits from the development clearly outweigh the special interest of the site, habitat or species; and*
 - b) Appropriate compensatory measures are secured; and*
 - c) The population or range and distribution of the habitat or species will not be adversely impacted.*

3. The locally important site designations, habitats and species including:

- A. Local Nature Reserves;*
- B. Local Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats and Species; and*

C. Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites and Geological Conservation Review Sites. Development proposals likely to have an adverse impact upon these sites, habitats or species will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- i. They conserve and where possible enhance the natural heritage importance of the site, habitat or species; or*
- ii. The development could not reasonably be located elsewhere; and*

a) The benefits of the development outweigh the natural heritage importance of the site, habitat or species; and

b) Mitigation and/or compensation measures are provided where adverse effects are unavoidable.

4. The achievement of the Water Framework Directive's overarching objectives.

5. Trees, woodlands and hedgerows of significant public amenity, natural or cultural heritage”.

4.32 Policy DM4 (Landscape) which seeks to manage landscape Impact confirms that:

“Proposals for new development outside the Towns, Large Villages, Small Villages and Rural Settlements defined in the Settlement Hierarchy must not, individually or cumulatively, have an unacceptable adverse effect, on the valued characteristics and qualities of the Powys landscape. All proposals will need to:

- 1. Be appropriate and sensitive in terms of integration, siting, scale and design to the characteristics and qualities of the landscape including its: topography; development pattern and features; historical and ecological qualities; open views; and tranquillity; and*
- 2. Have regard to LANDMAP, Registered Historic Landscapes, adjacent protected landscapes (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and the visual amenity enjoyed by users of both Powys landscapes and adjoining areas.*

Proposals which are likely to have a significant impact on the landscape and/or visual amenity will require a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to be undertaken.”

4.33 The supporting text of Policy DM4 confirms at Paragraph 4.2.32 that;

“Development proposals outside of the development boundaries and, excluding development that is of a very minor nature such as an extension to a dwelling, will be required to take the following approach:

Firstly the quality and value of the landscape character of the location of the proposed development and its surroundings should be assessed by using the evaluation data for each of the five LANDMAP layers (Geological Landscape, Landscape Habitats, Visual and Sensory Landscape, Cultural Landscape and Historic Landscape)

Secondly the susceptibility of the landscape and its relevant receptors to the scale and nature of the specific development proposal within and in the context of its surroundings should be considered. This should include looking at how the proposal will impact on the key characteristics identified for each of the five LANDMAP layers. The combination of the results identifying the value of the landscape and the susceptibility of the landscape to the development proposal should then be used collectively to determine sensitivity of the landscape for not only where the development is proposed but in the context of its surroundings. This will inform whether or not the development proposal can be satisfactorily integrated into the landscape. A site appraisal that identifies any local variations in LANDMAP information, together with an understanding of the visual characteristics and extent of visual influence, may be submitted as evidence if the developer considers the LANDMAP information to be insufficient. Where development proposals can be demonstrated to be capable of being satisfactorily integrated into the landscape such proposals will need to demonstrate measures that will protect and/or conserve and/or enhance the important characteristics and qualities of the site and wider landscape."

- 4.34 Policy DM13 (Design and Resources) lists 14 design and resource criteria which must be met (where relevant) during the consideration of development proposals. Criterion 1, 9, 11 & 13 are deemed particularly pertinent:

"1. Development has been designed to complement and/or enhance the character of the surrounding area in terms of siting, appearance, integration, scale, height, massing, and design detailing.

9. The public rights of way network or other recreation assets listed in Policy SP7 (3) are enhanced and integrated within the layout of the development proposal; or appropriate mitigation measures are put in place where necessary

11. The amenities enjoyed by the occupants or users of nearby or proposed properties shall not be unacceptably affected by levels of noise, dust, air pollution, litter, odour, hours of operation, overlooking or any other planning matter

13. It demonstrates a sustainable and efficient use of resources by including measures to achieve:

- i. *Energy conservation and efficiency.*
- ii. *The supply of electricity and heat from renewable sources.*
- iii. *Water conservation and efficiency.*
- iv. *Waste reduction.*
- v. *The protection, where possible, of soils, especially important carbon sinks such as thick peat deposits”.*

4.35 Policy E6 (Farm Diversification) confirms that:

“Development proposals for farm diversification will be permitted where:

1. *The proposed diversification will be of an intensity of use appropriate to the location and setting and will have no significant detrimental effect on the vitality and viability of any adjacent land uses, either individually or through cumulative impact;*
2. *Adequate provision is made for the parking of vehicles and the storage of materials/equipment; and*
3. *The construction of new, or conversions of existing buildings, that form part of the proposal lie within or immediately adjacent to the existing farm building complex”.*

4.36 Policy TD1 (Tourism Development) sets out key elements of compliance This crucial policy states:

“Development proposals for tourist accommodation, facilities and attractions, including extensions to existing development, will be permitted as follows:

1. *Within settlements, where commensurate in scale and size to the settlement.*
2. *In the open countryside, where compatible in terms of location, siting, design and scale and well integrated into the landscape so that it would not detract from the overall character and appearance of the area and in particular where:*
 - i. *It is part of a farm diversification scheme; or*
 - ii. *It re-uses a suitable rural building in accordance with TAN 6; or*
 - iii. *It complements an existing tourist development or asset, without causing unacceptable adverse harm to the enjoyment of that development or asset; or*
 - iv. *It is not permanent in its nature.*
3. *Accommodation shall not be used for permanent residential accommodation”.*

4.37 The supporting text at para 4.8.5 confirms that *“New tourist development is encouraged because of its contribution to the economy in terms of visitor spending, supporting local business and employment generation. However, the Council seeks to ensure that developments are sustainable and do not have an unacceptably adverse impact and*

effect upon the character and appearance of an area, the natural and historic environment or existing amenities, assets or designations. Non-permanent developments may, for example, include dark skies observatories or eco-friendly woodland camping sites”.

- 4.38 Para 4.8.6 states that “...Log cabin and chalet style developments that are sensitively designed and located to blend into the landscape and include substantial landscaping will be supported. Touring caravan sites and camping will also generally be supported provided they are acceptably located and screened and provide adequate access and servicing. Sporadic tourist development that does not relate to a tourist purpose or which may be damaging to rural tranquillity will not be supported.”

Supplementary Planning Policies

Biodiversity and Geodiversity (2018)

- 4.39 This guidance (adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the Local Planning Authority) details the requirements that the planning process places on applicants to demonstrate how they are protecting biodiversity and geodiversity. The guidance emphasises the importance of good survey work to inform the design stage and to avoid negative impacts; mitigate any negative impacts; provide on or off-site compensation; create new opportunities to enhance biodiversity; and to implement appropriate ongoing management.

Landscape (2019)

- 4.40 This SPG seeks to Supplement the landscape policies set out in the LDP and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The SPG provides step by step guidance to demonstrate compliance with LDP Policy DM4 which seeks to protect the rural landscape, notably;
- Step 1 - Determine the Development Proposal
 - Step 2 – Baseline Assessment
 - Step 3 – Siting and Design Stage
 - Step 4 – Finalise and Assess the Proposal
 - Step 5 - Submit the Planning Application

Appraisal

Overview

5.1 This section aims to identify the main issues relevant to the determination of the application and assess the scheme against the relevant planning policy framework. These matters are considered to be as follows:

- The **Principle of Development** including design considerations
- The impact of the development on the **Ancient Woodland**
- The impact of the development on **Biodiversity**
- The impact of the development on the **Local Landscape**
- The Impact of the development on the **Highway network**

The Principle of Development

5.2 The application site is located outside of the settlement boundary and is designated open countryside in the LDP. However, the site is not located in an area subject to any particular landscape, nature conservation or built heritage designation. The site is a designated Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and whilst Cwmnant Woodland has no statutory obligations it does border Creigiau Rhydoldog which is SSSI due to its SPAs and SAC designations. The impact of the development on these will need to be given full consideration (please see paragraph 5.23-5.29 of this report).

5.3 Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 identifies those foundational economic activities which remain the backbone of the rural economy. In particular, tourism and leisure are recognised as a major and growing employer and contributor to the Welsh rural economy. Technical Advice Note 13 (Tourism) (TAN13) and Future Wales identify the importance of tourism and its major contribution to the Welsh economy, with Future Wales stating specifically in regards to Mid Wales that "*Tourism is an important sector to the Mid Wales economy*".

5.4 Policy TD1 of the adopted LDP, which seeks to control tourism development confirms that development proposals for tourist accommodation, facilities and attractions, will be permitted in the open countryside, where compatible in terms of location, siting, design and scale and well integrated into the landscape so that it would not detract from the overall character and appearance of the area and in particular where:

- It is part of a farm diversification scheme; or*
- It re-uses a suitable rural building in accordance with TAN 6; or*

- iii. *It complements an existing tourist development or **asset**, without causing unacceptable adverse harm to the enjoyment of that development or asset; or*
- iv. *It is not permanent in its nature.*

5.5 Policy TD1 is the pertinent local planning policy by which this proposal will need to be considered. This policy is an 'or' policy, whereby development can be justified on the basis of compliance with one of the criteria enlisted.

LDP Policy TD1 Criteria i-iv

5.6 Policy TD1 confirms that proposals in the open countryside will be supported if they complement an existing tourist development or **asset**, without causing unacceptable adverse harm to the enjoyment of that development or asset. Policy SP7 provides a list of the counties 'recreational assets' which includes registered historic landscapes. The Elan Valley is a Registered Historic Landscape area which includes the larger part of the catchment of the river Elan and its tributary, the river Claerwen. It comprises an extensive area of heavily dissected upland plateau, with the deeply incised valleys of the Elan and Claerwen. This area is a prime example in Wales of a landscape showing human endeavour on a grand scale, having been substantially altered by major civil engineering projects connected with the water industry and its managed estate. Elan Valley is made up of a number of character areas including the famous dams and reservoirs, Elan Village, Cwm Elan Mine, Dalrhiw Mine, Elenydd Moorlands, Cwm Dulas farlands, Carn Gafallt uplands and Deuddwr lowlands. The Elan Valley is a beautiful and unspoilt area which has been inspiring visitors for centuries.

5.7 The proposal will provide affordable accommodation for walkers and tourists and encourage the enjoyment of the Elan Valley Registered Historic Landscape. Surrounding the application site there are a number of public right of ways and bridleways. The nearby towns of Rhayader and Elan Valley hosts a number of events throughout the year attracting worldwide visitors.

5.8 Policy 25 (Regional Growth Areas - Mid Wales) of Future Wales confirms that Mid Wales is a large and predominantly rural area comprising 39% of the land mass of Wales but only around 7% of the population. Mid Wales has a wealth of outstanding natural assets, from harbours and waterways to mountains and designated landscapes, all of which contribute to an outstanding tourism offer. Policy 26 (Growing the Mid Wales Economy) of Future Wales confirms that *"Tourism is an important sector to the Mid Wales economy. Opportunities for active, green and cultural tourism should be explore"*.

- 5.9 The proposed units will complement several existing tourist assets and are located within the recognised regional growth area of Mid Wales which supports tourism development. The proposals comply with the aspirations of the National Plan including Policies 25 and 26, the policies and requirements of the LDP (TD1, DM4) and the requirements of TAN 6 (Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities). It is considered that the principle of development is acceptable subject to compliance with pertinent planning considerations which are discussed in turn below.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 5.10 Policy DM13 of the adopted LDP seeks to ensure that development proposals demonstrate a good quality design and have regard to the qualities and amenity of the surrounding area, local infrastructure and resources.
- 5.11 Consent is sought for the delivery of 4 holiday cabins and a bath house. As discussed within section 3 of this report and the accompanying Design and Access Statement, the proposed layout and design has been well considered to ensure that development responds positively to its surrounding context. Proposals comprise the delivery of 4 cabins and an accompanying bath house. 2 varying styles of accommodation are proposed and these have been carefully designed and positioned to harmonise with the character of their location, to ensure minimal impact on the woodland itself, and to respond positively to the site's topography. The proposed location and design of the bath house has been given equal weight; its triangular design takes a lead from its location on site.
- 5.12 The structures are spread out across a large area and have been designed to be built off the trees/stump so there will be no requirement to dig foundations into the PAWS woodland floor. The structures are set inside the woodland so will not be visible or have any detrimental effect on the surrounding area.
- 5.13 Both cabin style and the bath house share the same materials, including vertical timber cladding elevations and timber windows under a cedar shingles roof, timber balustrades and a timber platform supported by tree stumps/trees. The consistent use of materials across all structures will ensure that the two cabins and the bathhouse tie together in their visual language. The selected materials will ensure that these structures successfully assimilate into their surrounding environment.
- 5.14 The proposed cabins are insignificant in scale to have any visual effect on the wider landscape although light pollution will need to be

minimised so as to protect bat habitat; this is considered further in paragraphs 5.23-5.29 below.

- 5.15 The proposed cabins, whilst innovative in nature, are considered compatible to their context due to their unique design and their ability to nestle into the woodland. Their location, siting, design and scale is considered to not only conform to, but assimilate into the surrounding landscape. The proposal is therefore considered justified in light of Policy DM13 and TD1.

The Impact of the Development on Ancient Woodland

- 5.16 Policy DM2 of the LDP seeks to protect, positively manage and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests including trees, woodlands and hedgerows of significant public amenity, natural or cultural heritage. Paragraph 4.2.13 acknowledges that *“Ancient woodlands and hedgerows and veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats of high biodiversity value that cannot be recreated once lost. This policy will protect them from development that would result in significant damage and developments will be expected to retain them”*.
- 5.17 Rhydoldog Estate comprises a 12.69 ha mixed high altitude PAWS plantation encompassing conifers planted in the 1950s and approximately 5% retained native woodland. It is split into two woodlands, separated by a public footpath, named Cwmnant and Creigiau Rhydoldog. Cwmnant measures 2.65 ha and Creigiau Rhydoldog measures 10.04 ha. It lies on the edge of the Elenydd Mountain range and borders the gardens of Rhydoldog House and surrounding farmland.
- 5.18 Cwmnant Woods, where the development is proposed, was once a broadleaved woodland before it was cleared in the 1950s and restocked with conifer trees as a crop for regular and sustained income. This planning application is supported by a Woodland Management Plan, Tree survey and an engineering specification detailing the foundation of the log cabins.
- 5.19 The Woodland Management Plan sets out the proposed restoration strategy which includes regular thinning of varieties of conifer where appropriate. Improvements to wildlife and visual aspects will be focused on increased natural broadleaf regeneration. It is without question that the long-term management of the woodland will not only improve its overall condition, but ensure its long term protection and protect and enhance local biodiversity.
- 5.20 A targeted Tree Survey has been completed of the development site to review the quality of the immediate woodland setting. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been completed to assess

the impact of the development on individual trees. The AIA confirms that a small number of trees are identified to be removed to facilitate the construction of the proposed development design (17 individual trees – mainly forestry planted western red cedar). All of these trees identified for removal are low or poor quality trees (5 C Low / 12 U Poor Quality) and their removal should not present a constraint on developing the site. The removal of these trees will not cause an adverse impact onto the amenity of the area or the structure of the forestry plantation as a whole.

- 5.21 The accompanying engineering specification detailing the foundations for the log cabins, confirms that following completion of felling works, some of the tree stumps would, if properly prepared, make ideal supports for the log cabins without the need to use piles or construct limecrete posts.
- 5.22 Proposals have been designed to ensure that the PAWS is protected from any significant damage. Indeed, it is considered that the proposed management strategy will maintain the long-term productivity of the woodland and protect and enhance biodiversity and the landscape features in accordance with Policy DM2 of the LDP.

The impact of the Development on Biodiversity

- 5.23 LDP Policy DM2 states that proposals shall demonstrate how they protect, positively manage and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests. Proposals which would impact on natural environment assets will only be permitted where they do not unacceptably adversely affect those assets. This is further emphasised within Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5.
- 5.24 A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) has been completed and is submitted to accompany the application. The PEA confirms that the Elan Valley Woodland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located approximately 425m to the north of the site, whilst the Elenydd-Mallaen Special Protection Area (SPA) site appears to lie directly adjacent to the proposed development site and follow the public footpath which runs to the north west of the development site. The Cwm Gwynllyn SSSI is located approximately 1km to the north of site and the Coed Y Cefn SSSI is located approximately 1km to the east of site. The River Wye SAC is located approximately 1.7km to the south east of site. This area is also designated as a SSSI. There are also a number of non-statutory protected sites within a reasonable distance of the site including the Upper Ochr Cefn is a Road Verge Nature Reserve located approximately 900m to the east of site and a B-Line designation within the wider area.

- 5.25 The PEA identifies that the site is dominated by plantation woodland with a single species of Western Red Cedar. The dense canopy of the trees and layer of needles on the floor prevents the growth of any understory within this woodland area. The green lane along the eastern edge of the woodland comprises of semi-improved grassland which includes ox eye daisy, red campion, herb Robert, Yorkshire fog, creeping bent, knapweed, common mouse ear and wood false brome.
- 5.26 No trees suitable for bat roosting use were noted during the site inspection. The trees had no visible gaps or cracks suitable for bat roosting use within the trunks and limbs. It is considered likely the site is used by bats for foraging and commuting purposes as it has good connectivity to the nearby woodland and the wider landscape. There will be no external lighting erected as part of the proposed development. There will be internal lighting erected within each cabin. In order to reduce the impacts of light spill via glazing within each unit, mitigation measures will be required to ensure the light levels around the units do not exceed 0.2 lux on a horizontal plane and 0.4lux on a vertical plane. Providing the cabins can be designed in a manner that reduces lighting impacts on the woodland area, transect surveys to establish bat use within the development site are not suggested in this instance. Instead, their presence within the boundary will be assumed.
- 5.27 It is recommended that the presence of a small number of common reptile species is assumed along the green lane to the east of site during the summer months and that the woodland is used for hibernation purposes during the winter months.
- 5.28 A number of recommendations are put forward within the PEA including standard bird nesting mitigation, the need for a reptile mitigation strategy to be submitted and approved, careful consideration to the use of lighting and the implementation of appropriate Tree Protection Measures during work. The PEA acknowledges that the proposed woodland management strategy is key to biodiversity enhancement alongside the provision of bat and bird boxes.
- 5.29 The proposed layout and detail design has been carefully considered to minimise the impact on woodland. The proposed woodland management strategy will allow the PAWS to be positively managed and the recommendations contained within the PEA will ensure biodiversity enhancement. Proposals fully comply with Policy DM2 of the LDP and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5.

The Impact of the Development on the Local Landscape

- 5.30 Policy DM4 seeks to ensure that proposals for new development outside the Towns, Large Villages, Small Villages and Rural Settlements defined in the Settlement Hierarchy must not, individually or cumulatively, have an unacceptable adverse effect, on the valued characteristics and qualities of the Powys landscape.
- 5.31 LANDMAP identifies the area as being characterised as the following:
- Geological Landscape - High; Key area of outcrop of well known "Rhyader Pale Shales" including potential geological SINC and part of significant landscape feature (Cambrian Mountains).
 - Landscape Habitat - High; River Wye SSSI and pSAC
 - Visual and Sensory - High; Steep mountain side with diversity of vegetation and visual interest, seen from road.
 - Historic Landscape - High
- 5.32 LANDMAP recognises that the principal management recommendation for the area is to encourage extensive grazing preferably with native hill breeds, plus native woodland. Policy DM4 seeks to ensure that development proposals are appropriate and sensitive in terms of integration, siting, scale and design to the characteristics and qualities of the landscape including its: topography; development pattern and features; historical and ecological qualities; open views; and tranquillity. Policy TD1 also supports this by confirming that sites should be "compatible in terms of location, siting, design and scale and well-integrated into the landscape so that it would not detract from the overall character and appearance of the area".
- 5.33 The application site features Cwmnant PAWS. The site is surrounded to the north and east by woodland and to the east by Rhydoldog Estate, Agricultural Buildings and Gardens. The proposed cabins have been designed to nestle into the woodland by taking cues from their immediate surroundings and working with the site's topography. The proposed cabins are insignificant in scale and have been positioned to ensure no visual effect on the wider landscape. Indeed, it is considered that the proposed woodland management strategy will result in improvements and conforms to the recommendations made by LANDMAP.
- 5.34 In light of the above it is considered that the proposed development fundamentally complies with relevant planning policy and would not be seen as having a significant impact on the landscape and/or visual amenity.

The Impact of the Development on the Highway Network

- 5.35 The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement by Acstro. The TS considers the highway and transport issues associated with the proposed development. Each of the proposed cabins will be allocated a single car parking space, which is considered sufficient for this development type. An assessment of TRICs data suggests that the proposed four log cabins have the potential to generate a total of 8 daily vehicle movements (4 arrivals and 4 departures). The impact of this additional traffic will be minimal and it is unlikely that this development's traffic will cause any perceptible change in conditions currently experienced on the local highway network.
- 5.36 Opportunities to provide a further two passing places have been identified and are proposed as part of the development; this will mitigate any potential impact. Proposals comply with Policy T1 and the guidance contained with TAN18 and PPW.

Conclusion

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of our client to accompany a full planning application for the erection of log cabins, bath house and associated works at Rhydoldog House, Llansantffraed-Cwmdeuddwr, Rhayader.
- 6.2 It is proposed to develop the site to deliver 4 log cabins, bath house and associated works. All structures will be attached to trees located within the plantation woodland.
- 6.3 The application site is located outside of the settlement boundary and is designated open countryside in the LDP. However, the site is not located in an area subject to any particular landscape, nature conservation or built heritage designation. The site is a designated Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and whilst Cwmnant Woodland has no statutory obligations it does border Creigiau Rhydoldog which is SSSI due to its SPAs and SAC designations.
- 6.4 The log cabin units will complement several existing tourist assets and are located within the recognised regional growth area of Mid Wales which supports tourism development. The proposals comply with the aspirations of the National Plan including Policies 25 and 26, the policies and requirements of the adopted LDP (TD1, DM4) and the requirements of TAN 6 (Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities). It is considered that the principle of development is acceptable subject to compliance with pertinent planning considerations.
- 6.5 The proposed layout and design has been well considered to ensure that development responds positively to its surrounding context. Proposals comprise the delivery of 4 cabins and an accompanying bath house; 2 varying styles of accommodation are proposed, these have been carefully designed and positioned to harmonise with the character of their location, to ensure minimal impact on the woodland itself, and to respond positively to the sites topography. Their location, siting, design and scale is considered to not only conform to, but assimilate into the surrounding landscape. The proposal is therefore considered justified in light of Policy DM13 and TD1.
- 6.6 The proposed cabins are insignificant in scale to have any visual effect on the wider landscape, although light pollution will need to be minimised so as to protect bat habitat. The proposed layout and detail design has been carefully considered to minimise the impact on woodland. The proposed woodland management strategy will allow the PAWS to be positively managed and the recommendations

contained with the PEA will ensure biodiversity enhancement. The structures are spread out across a large area and have been designed to be built off the trees/stump so there will be no requirement to dig foundations into the PAWS woodland floor. Proposals fully comply with Policy DM2 of the LDP and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5.

- 6.7 The proposed four log cabins have the potential to generate a total of 8 daily vehicle movements (4 arrivals and 4 departures). The impact of this additional traffic will be minimal and it is unlikely that this development's traffic will cause any perceptible change in conditions currently experienced on the local highway network and therefore complies with Policy T1, TAN 18 and PPW.
- 6.8 In light of the above, it is concluded that the proposal fully accords with both national and local policies and there are no material considerations which should prevent the planning application from being approved in accordance with the relevant planning policy framework. In this respect, it is respectfully requested that Powys County Council consider this application favourably and grant planning permission for the proposal.