
Planning Statement

Proposed change of use of existing log cabin from a rural enterprise tied residential use to tourism use and all associated works

Prepared for: PA & JM Astley

Cefn Farm
Deyther
Llansantffraid
SY22 6TF

September 2023

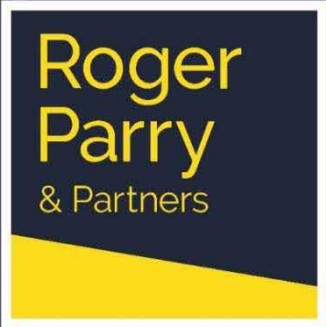
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1.0 Introduction

This supporting statement considers the planning issues relating to the application proposals for the proposed change of use of an existing log cabin from a rural enterprise tied residential use to a tourism use on land at Cefn Farm, Deyther.

Planning was granted in September 2020 for the erection of a rural enterprise dwelling (log cabin), installation of sewage treatment plant, formation of vehicular access and all associated works on land at Cefn Farm, SY22 6TF (20/1007/FUL). Unfortunately, due to personal circumstances the clients no longer require the log cabin to be used as a rural enterprise dwelling and would like to change the use to a tourism use.

The Astley family would like to offer a unique holiday experience, allowing visitors to relax and escape in this rural setting. The proposed development is on land under the ownership of PA & JM Astley.

The proposal will provide additional tourist accommodation in Powys, contributing to the local economy.

The trading name of the business is PA & JM Astley, being a family business based at Cefn Farm, Llansantffraid. The family moved to Cefn Farm from Staffordshire in 2007, since moving to Cefn farm they updated the farm infrastructure. In total, the business farms approximately 98 acres of agricultural land. The business' main enterprise was a dairy enterprise, comprising of 130 milking cows. However due to the recent change in circumstances the clients have had to sell their dairy cows and now require additional income to ensure they can remain at Cefn Farm. (see appendix 1 supporting letter)

2.0 Description of the Site and Surroundings

The proposed development is not located within a settlement development boundary and therefore for the purposes of this application is considered as development within the open countryside as defined by the Powys Local Development Plan (2018). The application site is surrounded by agricultural land to the north and west, an access track to the south, and the main farm complex to the east.

A visual and sensory evaluation of the area using LANDMAP classifies this area of land as being of high value. The log cabin was considered to have been sited at a suitable location within the

landscape, adjacent to an existing farm complex, where buildings are present of a significantly larger scale and height. The topography of the landscape to the south and west, as well as the presence of trees and hedgerows means that the dwelling will not be highly visible to these elevations. In addition, to the east lie an extensive number of existing buildings which will entirely screen the development from this elevation. The log cabin is visible from the north elevation, however will be viewed as a continuation of the existing built development, and given the scale and height of the log cabin, it was not considered to cause a detrimental impact upon the character of the landscape.

The design of the cabin was considered acceptable and is of a scale and height that will not be overbearing upon the surrounding area. The selected materials will not look out of place within an open countryside location and are considered acceptable.



The site plan



Tourism is a substantial sector of the Powys economy, spreading employment and income across Powys. The Wales Visitor Survey 2013 –Powys booster concluded that visitors to Powys tend to have a very high overall trip satisfaction and that the quality of the natural environment including Powys' natural landscapes are the county's key tourism draw.

The natural and built environment and Powys' natural landscapes are significant tourism assets. The large majority of attractions in Powys are associated with the area's landscape, history, heritage and culture, few of which are of a scale to become attractors in their own right. This is coupled with their use being influenced by seasonality and the weather. Any new developments therefore should be sympathetic to their surroundings and not detrimentally impact on their environment.

Planning Policy Wales encourages the diversification of farm enterprises and other parts of the rural economy for appropriate tourism uses subject to adequate safeguards for the character and appearance of the countryside, particularly its landscape, biodiversity and local amenity value.

The proposed development can be sited and developed without detrimental effect on the surrounding landscape and the existing trees.

The site is within the ownership of the Astley family and can provide an opportunity for the family to gain an additional income. The family realises the need to diversify to improve the sustainability of the land and provide an additional income.

The site is located within cycling distance of several guest houses, local shops and bus stops. There are several local attractions just a short drive away, these include Powis Castle, Coed y Dinas, Rodneys Pillar, The Iron Works, Lynclys Farm Shop, Welshpool & Llanfair Light railway, Montgomery Canal, Derwen Garden Centre, Dingle Nurseries and Lake Vyrnwy.

With the recent pandemic the client feels it's more important now than ever to provide self-contained and outdoor accommodation. The site benefits from miles of country lanes that are safe for families to walk along while enjoying the surrounding countryside.

This is supported The Welsh Government Building Better Places, The planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures July 2020.

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/building-better-places-the-planning-system-delivering-resilient-and-brighter-futures.pdf>

Reawakening Wales' tourism and cultural sectors 'Visit Wales. Later' has been the instruction to tourists who had hoped to explore our beautiful environment, tourist attractions and visitor accommodation in both rural and urban areas. The direct economic impact on the tourism sector will not be fully known for some time, but it is clear that losing out on trade in the peak Easter and summer periods will have significant consequences for many businesses and employees. The crisis has curtailed cultural activity such as live music, cinema, theatre, visiting museums and formal sport and recreation. Participation and engagement in cultural life is essential for our social well-being, but these assets are also key parts of our local economies. Supporting the continuation of our way of life, be this in urban or rural places, depends on these assets being able to function in ways which protect the health of all those working in or using these assets as well as their vibrancy as local businesses. The planning system strongly supports a diverse, sustainable tourism and culture industry. It brings jobs and income into Wales and it enables people worldwide to enjoy and experience Welsh hospitality, landscape and culture. We want this sector to resume and recover as soon as it is safe to do so and we support appropriate efforts to build quality and diversity into the visitor and cultural economy. It is particularly important that tourism and culture opportunities that can deliver community benefits to the local area are supported in coastal and rural areas. Tourism and cultural developments may offer a positive way of reusing empty buildings, historic buildings or disused land as part of regeneration schemes. Cultural and historic assets can help to attract and complement investment in our communities. They can add value for businesses in terms of the wider economic opportunities they might bring. Such value to be gained for new businesses through the wider economic opportunities our cultural and historic assets can offer is likely to make Wales a more attractive place to invest during the post-Covid recovery period. It is important that any new investment works with our cultural and historic assets to maximise benefits and positively contribute to sustainable development. As our tourism and cultural assets begin to reopen there will be a need for sensitive social distancing measures so they can still be appreciated in their own right. In a similar way to our town centres, outdoor spaces around tourism and cultural assets will need to be carefully

planned and managed to allow associated industries (such as cafes and bars) to operate effectively. Appropriate access to facilities and sites will also require careful thought and management including access by active travel means, public transport and private vehicles. PPW sets out the positive framework for tourism and culture that encourages the sector to enhance the sense of place in tourist hotspots and to develop new opportunities and cultural experiences in new destinations. The importance of tourism to coastal towns, and its potential role in regeneration projects, is also recognised.

3.0 The Planning Application Proposal

The Astley family would like to offer a unique holiday experience, allowing visitors to relax and escape in this rural setting while having tourist attractions nearby. The clients have realised the need to diversify due to the unpredictable farming market along with their recent change in circumstances.

This site will attract visitors from all areas and will be a popular destination for visitors on their way to the coast.



A map showing the number of rights of way surrounding the site

There are extensive activities available to visitors in the area such as hill walking, mountain biking, pony trekking and multiple golf courses.

4.0 Tourism in Powys

Powys is the largest county in Wales with sparse populations and a highly rural context. Tourism is one of the largest employers and rival's agriculture in its economic importance. It is therefore vital that tourism develops strongly.

Tourism makes a substantial contribution to the Powys economy, supporting over 12,327 jobs. There are 1,549 tourism accommodation establishments' in Powys, with a recent bed-stock survey confirming a total of 49,697 sleeping / bed spaces. The average length of stay is 3.71 bednights with an average spend per day visitor of £41.61 per night. STEAM research figures indicate that 3 million day trips were taken in 2011, spending £ 84.4 million in the local economy. Tourism is a substantial sector of the region's economy, spreading employment and income throughout Powys.

Tourism in Powys helps to support other industries such as agriculture, crafts and local services. These in turn support the tourism industry, transport and local services. The current situation presents a platform of opportunity to target growth sectors of the market and this provides a sound foundation for further development and niche marketing activity. The landscape and environmental resources of the area are, in tourism terms, attractive and capable of competing with other destinations.

Although only a small site, it will contribute to the local economy from the construction stage through to bringing visitors to the area.

Below are recent quotes from tourism websites:

"The future looks bright for glamping business, as tourists choosing to stay closer to home rather than booking a foreign holiday

Tourism research is beginning to highlight why the numbers wanting to go glamping won't be slowing down any time soon and what you should be doing to take advantage of the strengthening trend in the market.

The Increasing Staycation and Glamping Trend in 2019

Now there's political unrest, terrorist threats, the refugee crisis, and Brexit, all leading to a very unstable world and equally nervous holidaymakers worried about hostility abroad and losing money on cancelled vacations.

More research conducted by the 'Family Break Finder' website who questioned 1400 of their members revealed 50% intended to stay in a local campsite or

holiday park next year, while nearly a third specifically said they wanted to try Glamping.” Inspiredcamping.com

It is predicted with the current health crisis and potential recession will have the same impact as the previous financial crash and lead to staycations rising even more. Travellers are more concerned than ever about traveling abroad not only due to health concerns but also the risk of holidays being cancelled.

A major study conducted by Tripadvisor has found that ‘getting back to nature’ holidays is set to be the new holiday trend. They found that travellers are 218% more likely to want to take a trip where they can relax compared to before the pandemic.

Its research found 59% of travellers would prefer to holiday somewhere ‘off the beaten track’

Shorter breaks closer to home are also a recurring theme, with Tripadvisor finding that nearly half of consumers (44%) are more likely to take a road trip and two thirds say they are most comfortable taking a road trip for three to five days.

5.0 Rural Diversification

The DEFRA and Welsh Government definition of a diversified enterprise is:

‘The entrepreneurial use of farm resources for a non-agricultural purpose for commercial gain’

Under this definition, activities such as non-agricultural contracting, the letting of buildings for non-agricultural purposes, processing and retailing of farm produce, using farm resources for tourism, sport and recreational activities would be included as diversification. On-site energy generation which either offsets on-site use or is exported to the grid is also considered to be a diversification activity.

The following activities would not be included as diversification: other gainful activity (for example, a second job or investing in stocks and shares), agricultural contracting, activities inseparable from agriculture (for example packing mushrooms if there is no market for unpacked mushrooms), agri-environment payments, the letting of land (it is assumed the farmer does not have an entrepreneurial role in letting the land), and the hiring of assets (again unlikely to involve the farmer in an entrepreneurial role). (Statistics for Wales –Farm Diversification in Wales 2011-12 ref: SB125/2012).

Rural diversification is of increasing importance to those with an interest in agriculture and rural communities as a whole. With rising uncertainty in farming, diversification offers a way of supplementing incomes and improving the economic viability of a farm business. Diversification reflects the reduced dependence of farmers on agriculture as a source of income. Diversification

also implies some kind of entrepreneurial activity on behalf of the farmer (DEFRA –Farm Diversification in England: 27/01/11).

Farm resources are defined as land or capital that was previously used for agricultural purposes. Where a farmer/spouse takes up external employment, this will be classified as other gainful activity. However, any activities that the farmer/spouse spends their time doing will still be classified as diversified activities whenever any land or capital previously used for agricultural purposes is also employed (for example a farmer running a shop selling produce from the farm).

Whether an activity is defined as diversified or as other gainful activity would depend on a combination of factors. For example whether the farm resource previously used for agricultural purposes could be switched back to agricultural use, whether the accounts of the activity are separate from those of the farm, and how long it has been a diversified activity. It is useful to think of diversification as a transition rather than an end-state (Statistics for Wales –Farm Diversification in Wales 2011-12 ref: SB125/2012).

The proposal is a rural diversification scheme.

6.0 Design and Access

The existing log cabin was designed to fit into the surroundings and to be unobtrusive into the countryside.

The proposed development complies with local planning policy; the proposed development is appropriate to the rural Powys landscape and is not obtrusive into the character of the surroundings. The design aims to keep a balance between the two aims of the planning system – efficient economic development and protection of the landscape.

Access to the site is proposed from the adjoining road with appropriate visibility achievable in both directions. The local road network can accommodate the negligible amount of traffic generated by the proposal. Parking is on site.

7.0 Assessment of Access and Inclusive Design against Planning Policies

One of the key requirements of inclusive design is the need to ensure that development is accessible to all users. This relates not only to its detailed design but also to its locational characteristics. All users of the development would have equal and convenient access to the development itself and also to the local community and service.

Access by Disabled Persons. Applications will be permitted for the development of new buildings, public amenities, recreational spaces and, where practicable and reasonable, the changes of use or alterations to existing buildings, where suitable access is made to and within the building or amenity and adequate facilities are provided for people with disabilities.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) seeks to avoid discrimination against people with impairments and disabilities and for instance ensures that work premises do not disadvantage someone with a disability.

The access arrangements have adopted an inclusive approach and aims to ensure that all users will have equal and convenient access.

The design of the application will have full consideration for ease of access for disabled pedestrian use. Our full application submitted incorporates the following points:-

1. The car parking area will be located near to the principal entrance and is at the same level as the principal entrance.
2. Access from the car parking area to the principal entrance is by way hard landscaping, which is suitable for a disabled wheel chair.
3. The principal entrance is at a level threshold.
4. Easy access is obtained around the circumference of the house by way of hard landscaping.
5. All construction work to comply (where relevant) to Part M of the Building Regulations Act 2000, and also subsequent amendments.
6. All doors to be of disabled criteria.
7. All external doors to be 930mm minimum width.
8. All sockets and light switches to be in compliance with Part M with regard to the height from floor level.
9. All washing facilities are located on the same level (ground level).

All of the measures detailed above will be maintained in such a way that will allow all people access to and from lodge. Also, the facilities within the Hobbit House will also be constructed and maintained in such a way to ensure people's access to the development.

8.0 Planning Policy

The Policies that have been taken into account when preparing this application are:

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Wales Edition 9 was adopted in November 2016 and is the key national land use planning policy document for Wales.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 6 –Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)

3.1.2 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.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 13 –Tourism (1997)

This TAN provides guidance on tourism related issues in planning including matters relating to hotel development, holiday and touring caravans and seasonal and holiday occupancy conditions.

Local Planning Policy

Policy GP1 Development Control

Criteria of the above policy:

- 1) The design, layout, size, scale, mass and materials of the development shall complement and where possible enhance the character of the area.
- 2) The design, layout and lighting of the development shall minimise the potential for crime.
- 3) Features and designated or proposed sites of natural, historic, archaeological or built heritage interest shall not be unacceptably adversely affected and biodiversity and wildlife habitats shall be safeguarded wherever possible.

- 4) The amenities enjoyed by the occupants of nearby or proposed properties shall not be unacceptably affected by levels of noise, light, dust, odor, hours of operation or any other planning matter.
- 5) The development shall incorporate appropriate measures to protect water and soil quality and also for energy, water and waste efficiency and conservation.
- 6) The development shall incorporate adequate provision for drainage including the use of sustainable urban drainage systems where appropriate.
- 7) The development shall not be located in a high flood risk area unless in accordance with policy UDP SP14.
- 8) Adequate provision shall be made for highway access and parking in accordance with policy GP4.
- 9) Adequate utility services shall exist or be capable of being readily and economically provided without the unacceptable adverse effect on the surrounding environment.
- 10) Important trees, hedgerows, open spaces and other local features that contribute significantly to the quality and character of the local environment shall be safeguarded and, where practicable, be incorporated within the development.
- 11) Developments shall be landscaped using appropriate indigenous species or materials, which complement and enhance the character of the locality. Planting shall be carried out in the first available planting season, or in accordance with the stated planning condition, and any plants which die or are removed within 5 years shall be replaced with similar species.

LDP TD1 –Tourism Developments

Tourism developments appropriate in scale and appearance to the locality and community will be acceptable where they would:

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

10.0 Conclusion

The site is within the ownership of the Astley family and can provide an opportunity for the family to gain an additional income. The Astley family realises the need to diversify to improve the sustainability of the business and provide an additional income. Rural diversification is of increasing importance to those with an interest in agriculture and rural communities. With rising uncertainty in rural businesses, diversification offers a way of supplementing incomes and improving the economic viability of a rural business.

The local road network is capable of accommodating the negligible amount of traffic generated by the proposal.

The development was intelligently and sympathetically designed and strikes a balance between practical and economic efficiency and minimal landscape impact.

The proposal is of an appropriate location, scale and type so as not to be detrimental to the amenities of any nearby existing residential properties. This development will support both the local economy and local tourism. The proposal also meets the need for holiday accommodation within Powys.

This proposal has significant merit, fits within the policies of the core strategy and national planning guidance, and it is respectfully requested that the submitted planning application be approved.

