



Planning Design and Access and Heritage Statement

Change of Use of Mission Hut to showers and toilets to be used in conjunction with the recently approved certified caravan and camp site adjacent.

**Roseland
Leominster Road
Dymock**

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1.0 The Proposal

1.1 The application seeks to change the use of the former Mission Hut, Roseland, Leominster Road, Dymock to showering and toilet facilities to be used in association with the caravan and camping site recently approved in the adjacent field.

1.2 The application proposes the retention of the building, utilising existing openings but creating a new doorway in the western elevation for shared access. The Building will contain separate male and female showers, toilets and sanitary facilities.

1.3 It is proposed to retain the existing cladding where possible but due to the existence of asbestos in the roof a new roof of insulated profile sheeting colour goosewing grey is proposed to replace it.

1.4 The application is supported by an Ecology Report which identifies that there will be no negative impact on the biodiversity of the area.

2.0 Planning Policy

National

2.1 In policy terms the starting point for planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework which has the presumption in favour of sustainable development running through as the main thread but reiterates that Local Authorities should determine planning applications in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The current development plan is the Core Strategy for the Forest of Dean which was adopted in 2012.

2.2 The Government revised the National Planning Policy Framework in July 2018 and again in early 2019, 2021 and September 2023, which reinforces the principles for determining planning applications and plan making. At the heart of this document is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a common thread running through both plan making and decision taking. The Government recognises that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent. Economic growth can secure higher social and environmental standards, and well designed buildings and places can improve the lives of people and communities. Therefore, to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. The planning system should play an active role in guiding development

to sustainable solutions. Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life.

2.3 Paras 194 to 208 in the NPPF set out the requirements for dealing with applications on buildings which are designated and non designated heritage assets. Para 197 specifically states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

2.4 In assessing the impact on heritage assets it is necessary to determine the level of harm created by the proposal. (para) 202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

2.5 The NPPF requires that Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

2.6 Furthermore, it requires planning policies to support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. Para 84 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

Local

2.7 The Core Strategy for the Forest of Dean was adopted in 2012. The following policies are considered to be relevant:

CSP1

Design, environmental protection and enhancement (strategic objective: providing quality environments)

The design and construction of new development must take into account important characteristics of the environment and conserve, preserve or otherwise respect them in a manner that maintains or enhances their contribution to the environment, including their wider context. New development should demonstrate an efficient use of resources. It should respect wider natural corridors and other natural areas, providing green infrastructure where necessary. In achieving the above, the following will be considered: The effect of the proposal on the landscape including AONBs and any mitigation/enhancement that is necessary or desirable.

The impact on any protected sites (natural and historic sites and heritage assets and potential for avoiding and/ or mitigating any impacts, or providing enhancement, should the development be acceptable

The requirements of the management plans of the AONBs Whether the existing infrastructure is adequate- additional provision will be required where it is not. Whether the development is at risk from flooding, whether it can be permitted taking into account any risks, and the sequential approach and any mitigation that may be necessary to ensure the development is safe and flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

The impact of the development on any land contamination or risk to the development from ground instability including the mining legacy- Proposals must undertake appropriate remediation measures and verification works where contamination and /or stability issues are identified.

The potential for the development to cause pollution and any mitigation measures to avoid pollution or make environmental improvements where existing problems occur.

The provision of water supply and the development's impact on groundwater, watercourses and any protected abstractions Any potential impact on the sterilisation of mineral resources and consideration of the potential for the prior extraction of those mineral resources ahead of development

Proposals for waste minimisation and management Development that is not able to be satisfactorily accommodated in respect of the above will not be permitted.

CSP7

Economy (strategic objective: develop the local economy including tourism)

Economic development will be promoted throughout the district in accordance with the spatial strategy and its allocations. This will encourage new and more diverse types of employment and supporting infrastructure to be established by making land and

premises available. The location of new development must be justifiable in terms of the settlement hierarchy and policy CSP 4. Priority will be given to:

- *sustaining the development of key economic sectors or clusters, including knowledge based enterprises and tourism;*
- *supporting the development of growth sectors providing office and business (B1) space in attractive locations;*
- *providing the conditions and support for small and medium sized enterprises to become established and grow;*
- *supporting further and higher education and skills training and the facilities to provide it;*
- *supporting transport investment that will aid economic development and ensuring that secure and safe environments result from any provision.*

Land presently used for employment will be expected to remain so, unless allocated for another purpose. In order to encourage this, a range of employment generating uses appropriate to each site will be considered favourably. Where a site is underused and unsuitable (by way of environment or location) for any employment generating use, (including service based uses) then a mixed use may be appropriate (eg employment and housing) and failing that an alternative non employment use.

2.8 Reference is also made to the Allocations Plan in particular policies:

AP1 Sustainable Development
AP7 Biodiversity

surroundings and Neighbourhood Development Plan

2.9 In July 2023 Dymock Parish Council produced the Dymock Neighbourhood Development Plan 2023 to 2026. This has been out to public consultation and the period is now closed. Whilst it is recognised that the NDP carries only limited weight at this stage, it gives a clear indication of the Parish support for rural enterprise and tourism and the importance of local historically significant buildings including the Mission hut which is specifically included in the plan.

2.10 Aims of the NDP include the desire :

- To support and encourage small business development.
- To support appropriate small scale employment development which provides employment opportunities for the local community.
- To safeguard employment sites by resisting any change of use unless their current operation can be established as no longer economically viable. Tourism To provide opportunities for the development of appropriate and proportionate tourism facilities to increase both the local and wider Forest of Dean economy.
- To support appropriate high quality tourism businesses
- To support proposals for the change of use or redevelopment of agricultural buildings to tourism facilities

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- To encourage tourism to the area with its network of public footpaths, daffodils, Dymock Poets and the historic St Mary's Church.

2.11 The draft NDP recognises that apart from the many Listed Buildings, there are other buildings with no statutory protection which the community considers important and that make a valuable contribution to Dymock's local history. Such non-designated heritage assets can be a consideration in planning matters because of their heritage interest even if they do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets as defined by NPPF Annex 2

2.12 Mention is made in the pre reg 14 Consultation draft of the NDP

"A Mission Hall opened in 1921 by supporters of John Coates of Ross Carriage and Caravan Mission. Converts had been meeting in the Rifle Hall which was attached to the Beauchamp Arms before the Mission Hall was erected. This was replaced in 1973 when the Western Way Chapel was opened."

2.13 The following draft policies are considered to have some relevance:

Policy BE1 – Historic Environment and Non-designated Assets

Development proposals will be supported where they conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets, including their setting. In particular this applies to:

- *Designated heritage assets i.e. listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments.*
- *The historic landscape, including locally distinctive settlement patterns, field systems, woodlands and commons and historic farmsteads and smallholdings.*
- *Designed landscapes, including churchyards, local green spaces and Local Wildlife Sites.*
- *Archaeological remains of all periods.*
- *Historic transportation networks and infrastructure including roads and trackways, canals and railways.*

The Plan identifies the following non-designated heritage assets:

- *The Mission Hall, Dymock*
- *The Garland Hut, Ryton*

Proposals which would directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets will be assessed against the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the asset. Where an alternative use is proposed for a Listed Building or a building of local historic or architectural importance, planning permission will be granted where:

- *It can be demonstrated that the proposal will preserve the historic and architectural character of the building in its setting*
- *No other reasonable alternative use exists which would better safeguard the architectural or historic importance of the building.*

Policy E1 – Small-scale Local Employment Development

Proposals for new businesses within the Neighbourhood Area will be supported if they are of a scale, type and nature appropriate to their location and setting and where they can be satisfactorily and safely accommodated in the local highways network. This includes:

- *New buildings for small-scale employment use*
- *The diversification of farm, forestry and other land-based rural businesses*
 - *Rural tourism, craft and leisure proposals, particularly those which sustain, enhance and promote a better understanding of the local natural, historic and cultural environment.*
- *Offer opportunities for local employment, i.e. do not require specialist skills*

Policy E2 - Re-use of Redundant or Disused Buildings

The reuse of redundant or disused buildings for business, leisure or residential purposes will be supported, provided that the proposed use meets all of the following criteria:

- *The development would lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.*
- *Design proposals respect the character and significance of the redundant or disused building.*
- *The proposal is compatible with neighbouring uses, including any continued agricultural operations and would not cause undue environmental impacts.*
- *The buildings are of permanent and substantial construction capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction; and*
- *The building is capable of accommodating the proposed new use without the need for substantial alteration or extension, ancillary buildings, areas of hard standing or development which individually or taken together would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building or have a detrimental impact on its landscape setting*

3.0 Planning Issues

Historical

3.1 The application seeks an alternative use for the former Mission Hut to support rural tourism whilst seeking to protect its historical significance. Whilst it is accepted that the building is not listed it is clearly considered to be of local historical significance and as such a non-listed historical asset.

3.2 Mention is made of the Mission hut in the British History Online. This records the significance that religion played in the development of Dymock and reference is made to the Mission Hut and the role it played. [Dymock | British History Online \(british-history.ac.uk\)](https://www.british-history.ac.uk/dymock)

About 1920 an evangelical group put up a small wooden hall at Shakesfield. The building, which later was clad in iron and had a porch added, (fn. 1321) was described as a gospel hall in 1939 (fn. 1322) and remained in use in the early 1970s. (fn. 1323) In 1973 a former railway shed on the south side of the village was adapted as a chapel (Western Way Chapel) (fn. 1324) and in 2006 the hall at Shakesfield stood long abandoned. From 1924 the Baptist mission to Four Oaks held its services in a new chapel just within Oxenhall

3.3 As stated in the draft NDP the historic significance of building and its past is specifically identified.

The Mission Hall, Dymock This Mission Hall was built and opened in 1921 by Christians who were supporters of the missionary John Coates of Ross Carriage and Caravan Mission. Converts, along with local Christians from Henry Street Gospel Hall, Ross on Wye and The Baptist Church, Gorsley met in the Rifle Hall which was attached to the Beauchamp Arms in Dymock before the Mission Hall was erected.

3.4 Photos of the mission hut in the past and currently are included in the document.

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The Mission Hall (which still stands along the Leominster Road) had been built and opened in 1921 by Christians who had supported the missionary John Coates of the Ross Carriage and Caravan Mission in his outreach missions in Dymock. Converts from these, along with local Christians from Ross (Henry Street Gospel Hall) and Gorsley (Baptist Chapel) started meeting in the Rifle Hall attached to the Beauchamp Arms at Dymock before the Mission Hall was erected.

3.5 Policy BE1 of the draft NDP states that Historic Environment and Non-designated Assets Development proposals will be supported where they conserve and enhance the

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significance of heritage assets, including their setting. This clearly reflects the NPPF and the adopted Core Strategy. The NPPF also requires an assessment to be made on heritage assets and in determining an application, it is necessary to determine the level of harm created by the proposal. (para) 202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use

3.6 On the opposite side of the road is Shakesfield ,a Grade 11 Listed Building gable end to the road the listing is described below. Given the interrelationship between the two, the separation of the buildings by the main road and the adjacent non listed dwellings it is considered that the proposed improvements to the Mission Hut will result in less than substantial harm . Indeed the proposals will not only not impact on the Listed Building but the enhanced planting and improvements to the building which has not been used as a chapel since the 1970s will enhance the area and the setting of the cluster of dwellings in which Shakesfield sits.

House. C17, C18, C19. Brick-nogged timber framing, Sussex-bond gable to road, tiled roof. Three-bay, 1½ storey at road end, 2- bay, 2 storey far end, one room deep; lean-to along back. House at right angles to road: 2-light casement with cambered brick arch at each floor in gable: double C20 doors to gable lean-to store on right, projecting slightly forward of gable. Right face, front: framing to main wall 3 panels high to eaves. On left, painted brick front to lean-to, 4-pane window, weatherboard over: boarded door under corrugated-iron roofed gabled hood with timber former in front: 2-light casement with weatherboard over to right: painted brick porch on right end, hipped roof, half-glazed door, 2-light casement left return. Above 2 gabled dormers, 2-light casements: brick chimney from ridge one bay in from road end: brick chimney from rear eaves on right end against higher section. Front wall right end sets forward: 2 panels high per floor, heavier timber. On left 2-light casement under weatherboard; right end partly rebuilt in brick, 4-pane sash. Two single-light casements first floor, brick chimney from eaves in centre. Interior not inspected.

Landscape Character

3.7 The site lies in close proximity to the settlement of Dymock on the B4215. A footpath runs to the south linking the former mission hut with the village edge, a distance of some 200m. There is a small pedestrian gate to the Mission Hut immediately to the south. Immediately opposite the site are a cluster of residential properties and to the north the access to the Golf Club access (200m).

3.8 Whilst it is accepted that the site lies outside the built up area of Dymock, it is clear that the area in visual terms is not considered open countryside. There is an area of close boarded fencing by the mission hut which is in need of some repair and various suburban style fencing and gateway to the residential properties immediately opposite the site. Some of which are up to 1.8m/ 2m in height.

3.9 The proposals involve minimal change to the building and include the removal of the damaged wooden fence and its replacement with a low timber boarded fence with planting to the rear, thus it is considered there will be significant visible improvement.

Impact on biodiversity

3.10 A Preliminary Ecological Report has been carried out. This concluded that:

The physical inspection of the barn and hut was carried out in August 2023 to identify and assess features for their potential to support use by bats. The inspection also provided opportunities to search for any live bats present. Features were examined for signs of present and past use by bats including presence of bat droppings (a very useful indicator of species), surface smoothing, staining, urine deposits, crevice clearing, and prey remains. The hut is of timber-framed construction with corrugated sheet cladding on walls and roof. The interior is lined. Close inspection revealed no suitable gaps on the exterior suitable for access or roosting for bats. The interior is effectively sealed and no sign of use by bats was found.

In the absence of any features with suitability for roosting use, the buildings are scoped out for any further necessary surveying.

One active barn swallow nest was present within the porch of the hut. Converted use of the hut will prevent the continued use of the nesting position, which will be compensated for at an alternative position at the building. To compensate for the loss of the swallow nesting site within the hut porch, it is recommended that an overhang nest box structure is installed onto its south gable. One artificial swallow nest bowl or 200mm X 75mm ledge will be installed 150mm below the internal apex at the back of the box on the wall of the hut.

Principle of Conversion

3.11 Policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, the adopted Core strategy and the draft Dymock NDP support the reuse of redundant buildings in the countryside and also support the development of rural based tourism. As stated, the proposal is to convert this modest building to accommodate sanitary facilities to support the recently approved Certified Caravan site.

3.12 The applicant has indicated his desire to have a small, certified caravan and camping site in the corner of the paddock to the north east of the access for up to 5 caravans and ten tents. An application has been made under the Caravan sites and Control of Development ACT 1960 and for the tents under section 269 of the Public Health Act 1936. The Local Authority confirmed that this was permitted development in July 2023. (copy letter attached). This application has now been approved by the Camping and caravan for 5 caravans, considering that the proposal would not give rise to undue harm to residential amenity. The application for 10 tents will be added to the certificate once sanitary facilities are provided. It is considered that the reuse of the

Mission Hut building rather than the erection of a bespoke facility in the field will provide a suitable long term use for this historical building.

3.13 Furthermore in 2023, the Government amended the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015 in July 2023 introducing in Schedule 2 Part 4 Class BC to allow the temporary use of the land for up to 50 tents and motor homes for up to 60 days per year subject to conditions. One of these conditions is that temporary toilet facilities can be brought to the site and retained there for the period the site is in use. The use of the Mission Hut to provide these facilities will be significantly better in visual terms should the applicant chose to utilise these recently introduced permitted development rights in the future. At present it is his aim to provide a high end small site with exceptional facilities within walking distance of the village. However, the applicant wishes to have the option to increase the site if the scheme proves to be popular.

3.14 The use of the Mission Hut alongside the proposed new access will promote the proposed development of the site for tourism in accordance with Paras 84 of the NPPF and policy CSP7 of the adopted Core Strategy which support the sustainable growth and expansion of businesses and enterprises in rural areas including sustainable rural tourism. It is recognised, particularly in the Forest of Dean, that tourism plays a large part in the wider community and contributes significantly to the rural economy. The principle of low key rural tourism is therefore not only accepted but promoted.

3.15 In terms of sustainability the site lies within 200m of the development boundary of Dymock and 200m of the adjacent Golf Club. There is a safe footpath route to the village and the location of the proposed caravan and campsite would be considered sustainable. It is accepted that the application is not seeking the use of the site for caravans, motorhomes and camping as this is covered by permitted development rights but it does allow for the enhanced use of the site for tourism to the benefit of the local economy.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 to conclude it is considered that the proposal promotes sympathetic and sustainable use for this locally listed building which has been neglected for many years. It lies in a sustainable location in close proximity to the village and allows the development of rural tourism in the locality.

4.2 The application is considered to comply with policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, the adopted Core Strategy and the Draft Dymock Neighbourhood Plan.