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PLANNING

Land off Chester Road, Wrexham, LL12 7AU
DESIGN, ACCESS AND PLANNING STATEMENT
Wrexham County Borough Council
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Conwy | 20 Connaught House, Riverside Business Park, Benarth Road, Conwy LL32 8UB

Chester | 1 Aldford House, Bell Meadow Business Park, Pulford, Chester CH4 9EP

Design, Access and Planning Statement



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Author:	Eleanor Carpenter MA Historic Environment MRTPI		
Checker:	Sioned Edwards MRTPI		
Reviewer:	Sioned Edwards MRTPI		
Approved by:	Sioned Edwards MRTPI		
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Design, Access and Planning Statement accompanies an application by Wrexham County Borough Council, for outline planning permission for the erection of a new school, car and coach parking, playground, sports pitches, forest school area and open space for use by the public on land off Chester Road, Wrexham, LL12 7AU. Access and layout are to be determined as part of this planning application with details relating to scale, appearance and landscaping being reserved.
- 1.2 At present, the area of land is fenced off and is inaccessible to the public. The site was previously used as sports pitches however, these were private and are not recognised as formal open space. They have been disused since 2005.
- 1.3 The development would provide a 315 place primary school, of which 45 are nursery places, to meet the demand for additional school places locally.
- 1.4 The scheme has been subject to the statutory Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) process, and this Design, Access and Planning Statement is accompanied by a suite of documents including the required PAC Report, a Travel Plan, Car Park Management Plan, Transport Statement, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, visuals and an indicative site plan.
- 1.5 The adopted development plan consists of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 (UDP), which was adopted on 14th February 2005.

2. The site and context

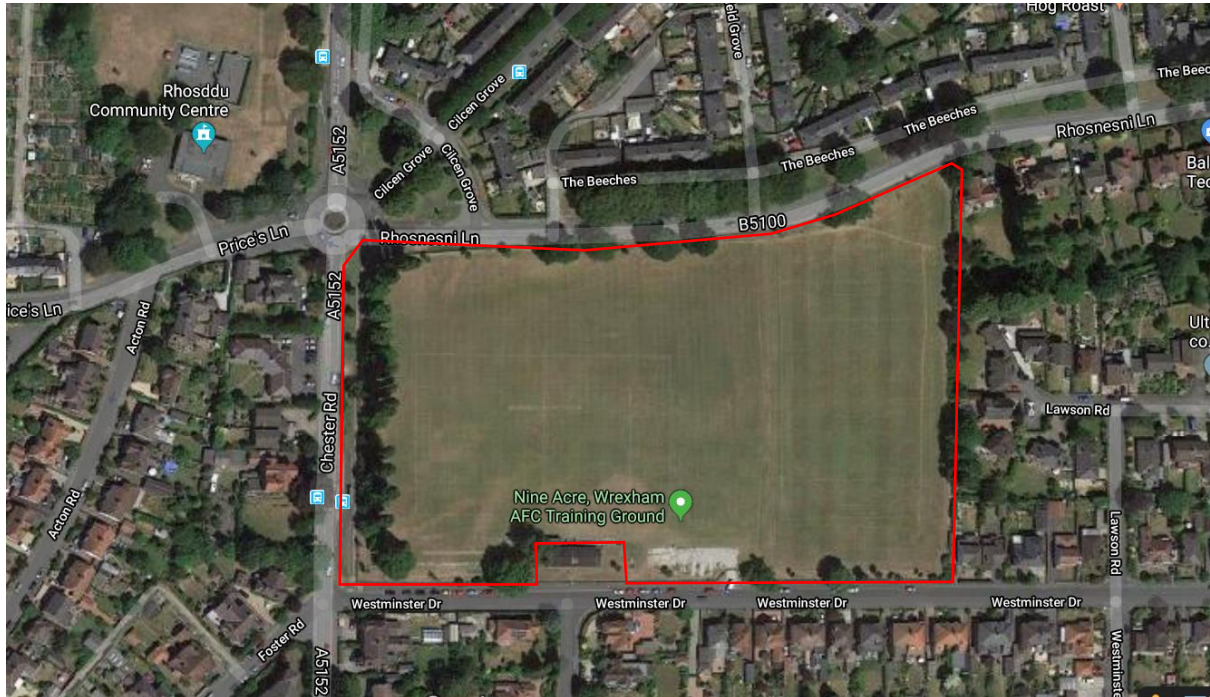
- 2.1 The application site is located within the area of Rhos-Ddu in Wrexham. The site is surrounded by residential properties and is bound to the north by Rhosnesni Lane, to the west by the A5125, to the south by Westminster Drive and to the east by the residential curtilages of the properties off Lawson Road.
- 2.2 The application site is currently used as private sports pitches and has been leased out to Wrexham Football Club as their training facility. Due to this being a private site, the site is not identified within the UDP as a formal area of Public Open Space (POS) and therefore it is not considered that this development would cause any loss of POS. The creation of the open space for use by the public will therefore be a community improvement in this respect.
- 2.3 To the north-west of the site off Price's Lane, there is a community centre, skate park and area of open space. The western part of the proposed development, off Chester Road, will provide an area which will be accessible to the public and link well into this.
- 2.4 Along the southern boundary there is an existing boxing club which will be retained as part of the development. This is accessed from Westminster Drive and will be fenced off from the site.

Figure 2.1 Extract of aerial image identifying the application site in its wider context



- 2.5 As can be seen from the aerial image in Figure 2.2, there is an existing bus stop on Chester Road.

Figure 2.2 Extract of aerial image identifying the application site within its immediate context



3. The proposed development

- 3.1 The application is submitted in outline for with details of access and layout to be determined as part of this application. Details in relation to scale, appearance and landscaping would be reserved.

Use

- 3.2 The proposed development includes the following uses:
- 315 place new primary school (of which 45 places are within a nursery setting)
 - Hard surfaced play area adjoining the school to north and south
 - Two pitches suitable to accommodate Under 9 – Under 10 & Under 15 – Under 16
 - Forest School Area
 - Open space for use by the public
 - Coach parking - with dual use as Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)
 - Parent parking (78 no. spaces)
 - Staff car park (37 no. spaces)
- 3.3 The proposed building design is based on Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFA) baseline designs for 315 pupils (including 45 nursery children) to provide the required shared accommodation.
- 3.4 The play areas have been designed to provide for 'learning through play' for the foundation years. The proposal offers the best balance between providing effective education in efficient and environmentally sustainable buildings. Developing a robust and stable learning community is core to providing children with the best opportunities. A stable context will allow head-teachers, teachers and support-staff to focus on developing a curriculum that provides all children with the best opportunities.
- 3.5 The proposals envisage the development of community-based focus for every school in the area. 21st Century Schools need to provide services that draw both the community and school together, promoting lifelong education for adults, before and after school clubs, access to wider services and other community-based activities.
- 3.6 The sports pitches may be able to be booked outside of school hours, to provide a wider community benefit, however, this will need to be agreed and managed by the school governors.

Amount and scale

3.7 As previously stated, the school and nursery would provide 315 school places including 45 nursery places and associated play areas. Scale is a reserved matter however, the approximate ground floor gross floor area would be 1,250 m² and the approximate first floor gross floor area 1,130 m².

3.8 The indicative dimensions of the building are:

- Length 69.5m
- Width 20.5m
- Height 9.0m

Appearance

3.9 The following extracts of the 3D visuals show the proposed appearance of the school. The application is in outline, so the design and final materials have not yet been confirmed. However, the materials will be of colours and textures to complement the character of the surrounding area. They will also be used to soften and incorporate the development into the site, complementing the number of trees proposed to be retained and planted.

Figure 3.1 Extract of 3D visual showing indicative view from The Beeches (houses), off Rhosnesni Lane



Figure 3.2 Extract of 3D visual showing view from the proposed open space for use by the public, off Chester Road



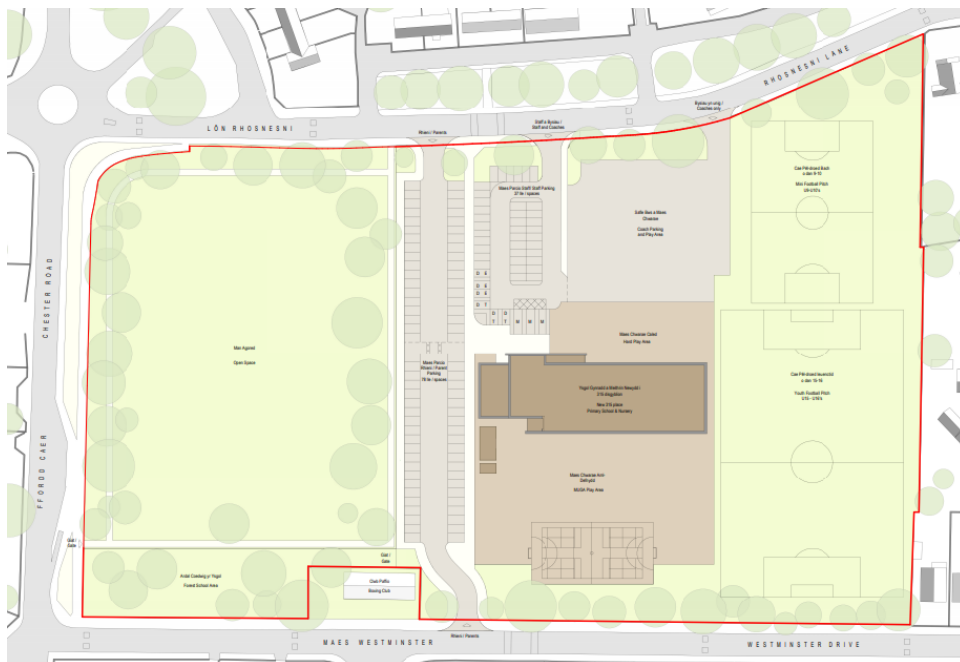
Figure 3.3 Extract of 3D visual showing view from vehicular access, off Rhosnesni Lane



Layout and access

- 3.10 The proposed school and nursery building has been positioned in the eastern two thirds of the site with the playing fields and car parking areas immediately surrounding it. The proposed open space for use by the public is on the western third of the site and links well to the other open space and community centre off Price's Lane.

Figure 3.4 Extract of the proposed layout plan



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- 3.11 The site layout has been amended slightly following comments made at the PAC stage and effectively provides access from each side of the site, and also creates separation between vehicles and the playground areas. The changes include:
- The parking layout amended to accommodate the required number of spaces for parents, staff, taxis and coaches
 - Additional accesses off Westminster Drive and Rhosnesni Lane, with the use of one-way systems to ensure congestion is minimised
 - The school bus bays have been moved from Chester Road to a designated bus drop off area on the school site to improve safety and minimise congestion of Chester Road and the roundabout to the north
 - The addition of traffic calming measures
- 3.12 It is noted that a travel survey was conducted, and this showed that 55% of children arrive by car and many are car-sharing or arriving by minibus. The scheme now provides 78 parent parking spaces, 37 staff parking spaces and coach parking.
- 3.13 The site is flexible with multiuse areas such as the coach parking area also having a dual use as a Multi-Use Game Area (MUGA). There will be three vehicular accesses off Rhosnesni Lane which will provide separate accesses to the coach parking area, staff parking area and parent parking areas respectively. There will also be a separate pedestrian access to the side of the staff parking and parent parking accesses. There are large footpaths on both sides of Rhosnesni Lane and therefore the pedestrian link into the site will be safe and convenient. The site layout and parking areas will ensure convenient flow of traffic and has been designed to ensure that there are sufficient parking spaces to allow cars to easily be able to pull into the site with no need for backing up on the main highway.
- 3.14 Signage will be used to ensure the flow of traffic around the site so that drivers are concentrating on their surroundings, and it is anticipated that a one-way system will operate.
- 3.15 There will be pedestrian access to the south of the school from Westminster Drive. The range of pedestrian entrances ensure that the site is easily accessible from all sides, and they are well spaced so that persons accessing the site should be in close proximity to one of the pedestrian accesses from whichever way that they are approaching the site.

Landscaping

- 3.16 The existing site comprises very open, flat fields with no landscaping within the inner limits. The outer limits of the site benefit from a number of existing mature trees. Landscaping is a reserved matter and whilst it is proposed that the majority of the existing trees will be retained and protected, the accompanying arboricultural report does identify that four trees will need to be removed along Rhosnesni Lane in order to provide the accesses to the site. The trees identified are one young oak, two low quality saplings and one shrub, and replacements will be planted on the site. A number of additional new trees are also proposed along the boundaries, and also within the open space for use by the public.
- 3.17 Other soft landscaping will be used within the site, and this will be detailed as the scheme progresses. Sustainable drainage is likely to form part of the design with porous / permeable hard surfaces likely to be incorporated for car parking areas etc. If this does form part of the scheme, then only approximately 4% of the Nine Acres site will be covered by buildings and only 5% in hardscaped materials.

4. Policy context

- 4.1 National and local planning policy guidance considered relevant to the principle of this development is set out in this section.

National planning policy and guidance

- 4.2 The proposal relates to a proposed new build educational building and main relevant national planning policy is set out in:
- Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 11, (2021);
 - Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5 'Nature Conservation and Planning';
 - Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12 'Design' (2016);
 - Technical Advice Note (TAN) 18 'Transport' (2007); and,
 - Technical Advice Note (TAN) 20 'The Welsh Language'.
- 4.3 National planning policy which has been taken into consideration includes Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 11, 2021, Technical Advice Note 12 (TAN12) – Design, Technical Advice Note 18 – Transport (TAN 18).
- 4.4 PPW aligns national planning policy strategy with the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which is centred around achieving sustainable development.
- 4.5 Relevant national planning policies are listed in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Summary of national planning policy and guidance

Document	Summary of policy
Planning Policy Wales 11 (2021)	<p>In relation to sustainable development, paragraph 2.27 advises that:</p> <p><i>“Planning authorities should ensure that social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits are considered in the decision-making process and assessed in accordance with the five ways of working to ensure a balanced assessment is carried out to implement the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Sustainable Development Principle. There may be occasions when one benefit of a development proposal or site allocation outweighs others, and in such cases robust evidence should be presented to support these decisions, whilst seeking to maximise contributions against all the well-being goals.”</i></p> <p>Paragraph 2.28 goes on to advise that the key factors in an assessment relate to social considerations, economic considerations, cultural considerations and environmental considerations.</p>

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	<p>Section 3 of PPW relates to design and Placemaking In Action. It considers that Good Design Making Better Places. Paragraph 3.3 advises that;</p> <p><i>“Good design is fundamental to creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise. Design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and between people and places. To achieve sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, economic, environmental, cultural aspects of the development, including how space is used, how buildings and the public realm support this use, as well as its construction, operation, management, and its relationship with the surroundings area.”</i></p> <p>Paragraph 3.4 goes on to state that;</p> <p><i>“Design is an inclusive process, which can raise public aspirations, reinforce civic pride and create a sense of place and help shape its future. For those proposing new development, early engagement can help to secure public acceptance of new development. Meeting the objectives of good design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and applied to all development proposals, at all scales. These objectives can be categorised into five key aspects of good design”.</i></p>
TAN 5 Nature Conservation and Planning	<p>Technical Advice Note 5 ‘Nature Conservation and Planning’ provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation.</p> <p>Paragraph 1.6.1 states that;</p> <p><i>“Biodiversity conservation and enhancement is an integral part of planning for sustainable development. The planning system has an important part to play in nature conservation. The use and development of land can pose threats to the conservation of natural features and wildlife. Past changes have contributed to the loss of integrity of habitat networks through land-take, fragmentation, severance, disturbance, hydrological changes and other adverse impacts. But development can also present significant opportunities to enhance wildlife habitats and the enjoyment and understanding of the natural heritage.”</i></p>
TAN 12 Design	<p>The guidance in TAN 12 has been considered in formulating the proposal and in reporting on the Design and Access issues. The Welsh Government is strongly committed to achieving the delivery of good design in the built and natural environment which is fit for purpose and delivers environmental sustainability, economic development and social inclusion, at every scale throughout Wales. Paragraph 5.5.1 of TAN 12 identifies that an understanding of landscape and townscape quality, including its historic character, is fundamental to the design process.</p> <p>The relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment. To create sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, environmental and economic aspects of the development, including its construction, operation and management, and its relationship to its surroundings.</p>

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	<p>Good design is also inclusive design. The principles of inclusive design are that it places people at the heart of the design process, acknowledges diversity and difference, offers choice where a single design solution cannot accommodate all users, provides for flexibility in use, and provides buildings and environments that are convenient and enjoyable to use for everyone.</p> <p>Paragraph 5.5.1 of TAN 12 states; <i>“The distinctive settlement patterns which characterise much of Wales have evolved in part in response to the country’s diverse landscape and topography. The way in which development relates to its urban or rural landscape or seascape context is critical to its success. Because of this, an understanding of landscape quality, including its historic character, is fundamental to the design process.”</i></p> <p>Paragraph 5.8.1 states; <i>“The special qualities of the rural landscape and coastline of Wales should be recognised. The qualities should be enhanced through conservation of the character of the countryside and by achieving quality in new development.”</i></p> <p>Paragraph 5.8.2 states; <i>“Policies and guidance should take account of the need to steer activity to avoid negative impact on distinctive rural landscapes and the best agricultural land and to conserve and enhance diversity of species and habitats. Managing change by means of a landscaping strategy based on a thorough landscape assessment is one means of safeguarding a rural sense of place. This should analyse key issues and put forward guidelines for design themes, palettes of materials, and briefs for specific sites.”</i></p>
TAN 18 Transport	<p>TAN 18 has also been taken into consideration. The main aim of TAN 18 is ensuring that new development is located where there is, or will be, good access by public transport, walking and cycling thereby minimising the need for travel and fostering social inclusion.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.4 of TAN identifies that the inter-relationship between land use planning and transport is complex and varied. The development of land is dependant, in part, upon transport infrastructure and services to function efficiently. By influencing the location, scale, density and mix of land uses and new development, land use planning can help reduce the need to travel and length of journeys, whilst making it easier for people to walk, cycle or use public transport.</p> <p>TAN 18 also considers people with disabilities. TAN 18 identifies that it is important to consider their needs in terms of parking, ensuring that adequate numbers of suitably designed parking spaces are provided in appropriate locations.</p> <p>TAN 18 expands on the importance of accessibility in future developments. TAN 18 provides guidance on providing good accessibility with objectives such as; <i>‘ensuring new development is located where there</i></p>

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	<p><i>is, or will be, good access by public transport, walking and cycling thereby minimising the need for travel and fostering social inclusion;</i>’ and; <i>“ensuring that new development and major alterations to existing developments include appropriate provision for pedestrians (including those with special access and mobility requirements), cycling, public transport, and traffic management and parking/servicing;”</i></p> <p>TAN 18 focuses on ensuring future developments consider the importance of the relationship between land use and transport. TAN 18 places an emphasis on reducing the need to travel and the need to provide sustainable modes of transport such as cycling, walking and public transport.</p> <p>TAN 18 also considers people with disabilities. TAN 18 identifies that it is important to consider their needs in terms of parking, in particular ensuring that adequate numbers of suitably designed parking spaces are provided in appropriate locations.</p>
TAN 20 Planning and the Welsh Language	<p>TAN 20 provides guidance on how the planning system considers the implications of the Welsh language when preparing LDPs and making decisions. The LPA should consider the needs and welfare of the Welsh language, and in so doing, contribute to its well-being. Changes introduced in the current version of TAN 20 are as a result of bringing into force provisions contained in the Planning (Wales) Act 2015.</p> <p>The main changes relate to the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The link between planning for the Welsh language through land-use planning and community planning;• Providing clarification that decision makers may take the language into account where it is material to the application;• Allow language impact assessments in certain specified circumstances.

Local planning policy and guidance

- 4.6 The adopted development plan consists of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 (UDP), which was adopted on the 14th February 2005. Table 4.2 provides a summary of local planning policy which is of relevance to the proposed development.
- 4.7 In addition to the UDP, there are Local Planning Guidance Notes (LPG) which expand on the planning policies within the UDP and provide guidance on the design of development within the County.
- 4.8 Wrexham County Borough Council are in the process of preparing a Local Development Plan, but this has yet to be adopted and the development plan for the area remains the UDP. It is noted however that the LDP Deposit Plan policies support the provision of well sited community services and open space, and the Council are

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committed to their delivery to meet the shortfall through commuted sums to provide the right level of facilities in the right place.

4.9 Other relevant adopted local guidance is contained within the following Local Planning Guidance Notes:

- Guidance Note No 6 – Access to and use of buildings (2004)
- Guidance Note No 7 – Landscape and Development (2003)
- Guidance Note No 16 – Parking Standards (2018)
- Guidance Note No 17 – Trees in Development (2012)
- Guidance Note No 23 – Development of Sites with Land Contamination (2013)
- Guidance Note No 24 – Designing Out Crime (2003)
- Guidance Note No 26 – Landscape and Industrial Developments (2003)
- Guidance Note No 27 – Developer Contributions to Schools (2018)
- Guidance Note No 30 – Design (2009)
- Guidance Note No 31 – The Welsh Language and Welsh Communities (2011)
- Guidance Note No 32 – Biodiversity & Development (2011)

4.10 The Council has also produced a Tree and Woodland Strategy (2005).

Table 4.2 Summary of local planning policy and guidance

Policy	Summary of policy
Policy GCP1 Development Objectives	<p>All new development should:</p> <p>a) Ensure that built development in its scale, design and layout, and in its use of materials and landscaping, accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality.</p> <p>b) Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public / private spaces.</p> <p>c) Make the best use of design techniques, siting and orientation in order to conserve energy and water resources.</p> <p>d) Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and in the nearby locality.</p> <p>e) Ensure that built development is located where it has convenient access to public transport facilities, and is well related to pedestrian and cycle routes wherever possible.</p> <p>f) Ensure the safety and amenity of the public and safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land or air,</p>

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	<p>hazards from industry and quarrying, and associated noise, odour or vibration arising from development.</p> <p>g) Secure public services (e.g. gas, water, electricity) to development at minimum public cost.</p> <p>h) Safeguard sites and areas of nature conservation and wildlife interest, and to provide new habitats where there is an unavoidable loss of existing habitats and areas of wildlife interest.</p> <p>i) Ensure that development does not result in, or is subject to, flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination, either on or off the site.</p> <p>j) Have regard to the need to safeguard those areas that possess a strong Welsh cultural and/or linguistic identity from development that could harm this identity.</p> <p>k) Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.</p>
Policy CLF2 New Facilities	<p>Land will be safeguarded for the provision of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a health centre and a day psychiatric hospital (10 places) adjacent to Primary School, Rhosymedre. 2. a community theatre, adjacent to the Library and Arts Centre, Wrexham. 3. a community centre, School Lane, Bronington 4. a primary school on 4.5 hectares of land within the housing portion of the Ruthin Road Development Area, Wrexham. <p>Additional facilities may be provided during the plan period.</p> <p>The application site is not listed within this policy, however, due to the age of the adopted plan (which is time expired) this site would not have been anticipated as being required for a new school. However, the proposal is in accordance with the spatial strategy and the anticipation that additional facilities would be brought forward within the plan period.</p>
Policy CLF3 Dual Use Facilities	<p>The extension of dual community and school use of existing leisure facilities will be favoured / encouraged.</p> <p>The explanatory text goes on to state that:</p> <p>Some facilities, such as leisure centres or golf courses, provide for the needs of the County Borough as a whole, or at least a substantial part of it: other facilities such as playing fields, children's play areas or community halls satisfy demand from the immediate population. Often, additional facilities can be provided by more intensive development or use of existing sites and buildings or can be accommodated on plots of land whose size, shape, or</p>

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	<p>physical characteristics render them unsuitable for other uses. The Sports Council for Wales has indicated that 61% of expected demand for sports halls and 15% of expected demand for swimming pools in the County Borough is unsatisfied by existing facilities. Optimising the use of existing sports and swimming facilities is therefore a priority. The opening up of existing school facilities as dual community and school use can substantially reduce local unsatisfied recreational demand, maximise existing infrastructure, and increase land use economy, and will be encouraged.</p>
<p>Policy CLF4 Playing Fields, Children's Play Areas and Open Space</p>	<p>The redevelopment of sports grounds, playing fields, children's play areas and informal open spaces and allotment gardens for uses other than sport and recreation will not be permitted unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) redevelopment of only a small part of the site would allow the retention and enhancement of that existing facility; or b) the long-term requirement for the facility has ceased and it would not lead to, or increase an existing shortfall of that facility in the immediate locality; or c) the loss can be replaced with an equivalent or greater provision in the immediate locality. Alternative sites should be within settlement limits or, in exceptional circumstances, adjacent to settlement limits provided that associated buildings, lighting, and parking facilities are not intrusive in the landscape and user accessibility is not reduced.
<p>Policy T8 Parking</p>	<p>Policy T8 relates to parking and states that:</p> <p>Development granted planning permission will be required to provide vehicle parking spaces either on site or nearby, in accordance with the Council's current parking standards. Special regard will be paid to the following factors, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the availability of public transport nearby, b) proximity to public car parking, c) proximity to local services and facilities, d) road safety hazards and amenity considerations arising from on-street parking in the vicinity of the site. <p>Where implementation difficulties arise in making parking provision on-site or nearby, the Council will require a developer to make financial contributions for measures to assist public transport, or walking and cycling as appropriate.</p> <p>The explanatory text goes on to state that:</p> <p>The Council's guidance on parking standards, which is updated from time to time, ensures that development does not adversely affect road safety or local amenity. Occasionally, however, full compliance with these standards</p>

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	<p>may neither be practicable nor appropriate (e.g. where there may be insurmountable access, amenity, space or layout constraints) particularly where key urban regeneration or building conservation objectives are denied. Such circumstances are likely to apply in Wrexham town centre and the larger district shopping centres. If there is no space available on the site, suitable parking provision will need to be made elsewhere in the area. The Council operates a policy of allowing a developer to buy parking spaces for non-operational parking or to finance public transport improvements or measures for walking and cycling in lieu of on-site provision. Such arrangements can be advantageous to both developer, in saving valuable space on site, and to the general public, which in the long term will benefit from increased public car parking provision, particularly targeted at short stay spaces to protect the vitality and viability of the Wrexham town centre, or improved public transport facilities and services. Supplementary policies on car parking are set out in the Parking Strategy contained in the Council's Local Transport Plan 2001-2006 (see Appendix III). The Council recognises that the management of car parking may be used in the future as a means to encourage the use of public transport, footpaths and cycleways, where this is appropriate."</p>
<p>Policy T9 Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding Routes</p>	<p>Policy T9 relates to walking, cycling and horse-riding routes and states that:</p> <p>Development proposals will be required to provide walking and cycling routes, where feasible and appropriate, that link with existing or proposed walking and cycling routes and integrate with the public transport system. Opportunities for horse riding along these routes will be secured where appropriate.</p> <p>The explanatory text goes on to state that:</p> <p>Road improvements, traffic management measures, and pedestrian schemes will create safer and more pleasant areas for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders. The County Borough contains many public rights of way that fulfil an important recreational role. However, opportunities for regular walking or cycling for employment, shopping, educational or leisure purposes are limited by the lack of safe and convenient routes between settlements. The provision of dedicated and segregated cycling routes, and parking facilities, linked to the public transport system will be a material consideration in the evaluation of development proposals. The provision of dedicated and segregated cycling, walking, and horse-riding routes and parking facilities, linked to the public transport system, will be a material consideration in the evaluation of development proposals. All such routes should be open and benefit from a high degree of natural surveillance, where appropriate, to ensure that they remain safe and convenient for users. It is essential that walking, including the use of canal towpaths, and cycling become practical alternatives to the car.</p>

5. Main considerations

Principle of development

- 5.1 The principle of the erection of a new primary school and nursery in this sustainable location within the settlement boundary is considered acceptable. The site is well connected to a large residential area and is accessible by sustainable transport routes. The site is also served by a footpath and cycle route.
- 5.2 The design and layout of the site has been designed to make the best use of the site in terms of managing residential amenity, but at the same time to also ensure that the site is safe and convenient to get to by foot or cycling.
- 5.3 The application site is currently used as private sports pitches and leased out to Wrexham Football Club as their training facility. The background papers for the Unitary Development Plan confirm that the site has never been classified as POS, and therefore the introduction of open space for use by the public on the western third of the site will provide a net increase in POS in the area. This space amounts to approximately 34% of the land within the application site and there is the possibility of this area being made available for community ownership in future. The principle of development of the site for a community use with accessible open space for use by the public is therefore considered to be acceptable.
- 5.4 The application site is not listed as safeguarded or allocated for a school within UDP policy CLF2. Due to the age of the adopted plan and the time period it covered, this site would not have been anticipated as being required during the plan period. However, the proposal is compatible with the UDP overall spatial strategy. In addition to this, in line with policy UDP policy CLF3, the plan encourages dual community and school facilities as proposed within this scheme through the delivery of open space for use by the public and the potential shared use of sports pitches. This will provide a wider community benefit.

Site selection

- 5.1 The application site has been selected as the most suitable site for the new school for the following reasons:
- Nine Acres is already in the ownership of the Local Authority.
 - Nine Acres sits within the Education and Early Intervention portfolio.

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- The Nine Acres site is the only available site located within the town centre area that is owned by the Local Authority, within the Education & Early Intervention portfolio that is large enough to provide adequate accommodation and sufficient play area as per the relevant building bulletin/ specifications.
- There would be scope for growth within the site if required in the future to fit in with sustainable objectives.
- The Nine Acres site is in a primarily residential area.
- There is good accessibility and connectivity to the Nine Acres site by bus, car, foot or cycle.
- There are no constraints on the site that would create issues for this development.
- The site will provide additional benefits such as the ability to provide open space.
- The development will bring the site back into a beneficial use.
- Wrexham CBC have previously reviewed sites within the town centre for a primary school but no other sites were available or suitable.
- The Nine Acres site is already held for education purposes and the use of the land for a primary school is permitted by virtue of the deed (subject to planning permission).

6. Other design considerations

Materials

- 6.1 Whilst the final design has not been completed and appearance is a reserved matter, the proposed development will be distinctively designed, whilst sympathetically reflecting the character of the area and with the needs of people in mind, providing ample playing and natural areas as well as distinct parking areas.
- 6.2 It is not considered that the proposal will disrupt the rhythm and grain of development within the vicinity of the site as the proposed development has been designed to complement the design of other buildings in the vicinity of the site. The materials will be similar to the materials used in the local vernacular. They will also use natural materials to incorporate it into the wooded setting.
- 6.3 The proposal will not cause any detriment to any adjoining land use or neighbours as the proposed development has been carefully designed to overcome any issues of overlooking with the positioning and size of fenestration being carefully considered. The playing pitches will generally be used during the weekdays and only during daylight hours. This should not cause any impact upon the amenity of the neighbouring residential dwellings.
- 6.4 The overall appearance of the proposed development is considered to be compatible with the local area. The local area is characterised by two storey dwellings which are set back from the road. The proposed school will also be a two-storey building which is set back from the roads, within a well landscaped site. Careful consideration has been given to ensure that the proposed development integrates into its surroundings. It was a key part of the development that development is set back and buffered away from Chester Road.
- 6.5 The additional landscaping will also enhance the suburban character of the area which is particularly green. The site can comfortably accommodate the proposal without appearing cramped or overdeveloped. The total site area is 36,434m² and the proposed 1,250m² ground floor area of the building therefore only covers 3.5% of the overall site. 23,670m² (65%) are proposed for playing pitches and associated playgrounds and parking areas. 11,514m² (36.6%) is proposed for open space for use by the public.

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- 6.6 As can be seen from the 3D visuals in Figures 6.1 and 6.2, the proportions of the buildings are complementary to the height of the surrounding buildings and would not be overbearing.

Figure 6.1 Extract of 3D visuals (view to northwest)



Figure 6.2 Extract of 3D visuals (view to southwest)



Environmental sustainability

- 6.7 In terms of environmental sustainability, consideration has been given to the effect of the proposed development on the environment by ensuring that the location is accessible to its users without the need to use a private car.
- 6.8 In considering the principles of the energy hierarchy, reducing energy demand and maximising energy efficiency, a reduction in carbon emissions that are required by Building Regulations will be achieved by the school.

- 6.9 The proposals are considered to offer the best balance between providing an effective education environment and delivering efficient and environmentally sustainable buildings. The Council envisage the development of a community-based focus for every school in the area in line with the Welsh Government 21st Century Schools programme. This is a Welsh Government Scheme intended to provide services that draw both the community and school together, promote lifelong education for adults, before and after school clubs, access to wider services and other community-based activities.

Community safety

- 6.10 The proposed development has been designed with the safety and well-being of future users being a key consideration as well as taking into account the need to protect and enhance the safety of the surrounding community. The proposal has been designed to allow for natural surveillance from the surrounding residential dwellings whilst promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility. The school's governing body will ensure that the site is well managed throughout the day and night to prevent antisocial behaviour.
- 6.11 The proposed development will not have any detrimental effect on community safety or on the amenity of the residents of the surrounding residential properties.
- 6.12 The proposed open space for use by the public will be well landscaped and laid out to ensure good visibility through the area.

7. Accessibility

Planning policy

- 7.1 The relevant national policies and guidance relating to accessibility are set out within:
- Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11, (2021); and
 - Technical Advice Note 18 'Transport' (2007).
- 7.2 The relevant planning policies within the adopted UDP are as follows:
- T8 Parking
 - T9 Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Routes

Movement to, from and within the development

- 7.3 In terms of design, the proposed site layout has been carefully designed to ensure that all of the site's future users can effectively access the site and the proposed new school/nursery and have safe access to the wider pedestrian, cycle and highway network.
- 7.4 The proposal includes the formation of new vehicular accesses off Rhosnesni Lane which will provide access to the coach parking area, the staff car park and parent parking. There will also be a separate pedestrian access to the side of the two of these accesses. There are large footpaths on both sides of Rhosnesni Lane and therefore the pedestrian link into the site will be safe and convenient. The car parking areas and site layout will ensure the convenient and safe flow of traffic and have been designed to ensure that there are enough car parking spaces to allow cars to be able to easily pull onto the site with no need for backing up on the main highway.
- 7.5 Signage will be used to ensure the flow of traffic around the site and make it clear where vehicular traffic can go so that drivers are concentrating on their surroundings and the safety of pedestrians. It is anticipated that a one-way system will operate.
- 7.6 There will also be a new vehicular and pedestrian access to the south of the school off Westminster Drive.
- 7.7 This range of entrances ensure that the site is easily accessible from all sides and spaces them out well so that persons accessing the site should be in close proximity to one of the pedestrian accesses from whichever way that they are approaching the school.

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- 7.8 The internal access road will ensure that the site users will be able to enter and leave the site in a safe manner. All accesses will be kept clear and maintained through the use of formal planning conditions and the management of the site.

Sustainability

- 7.9 As can be seen from the extract of Wrexham's Active Travel Route Map in Figure 7.1, the site is well connected to active travel routes. There is an opportunity to improve the connections through the open space for use by the public and incorporate the paths and cycle routes to this standard when configuring the coach parking.

Figure 7.1 Extract of Active Travel Route Map

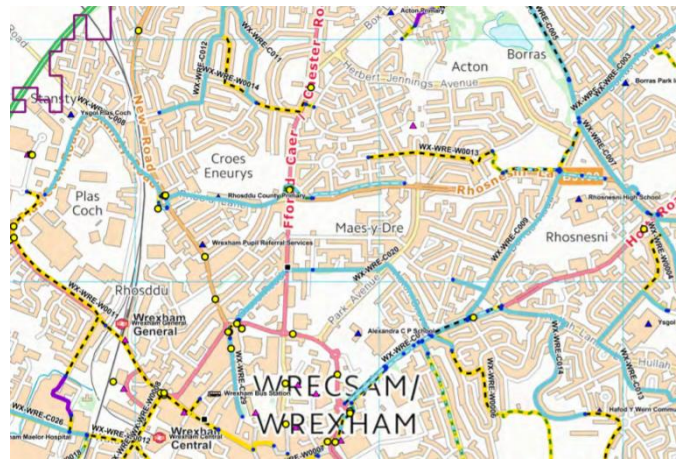


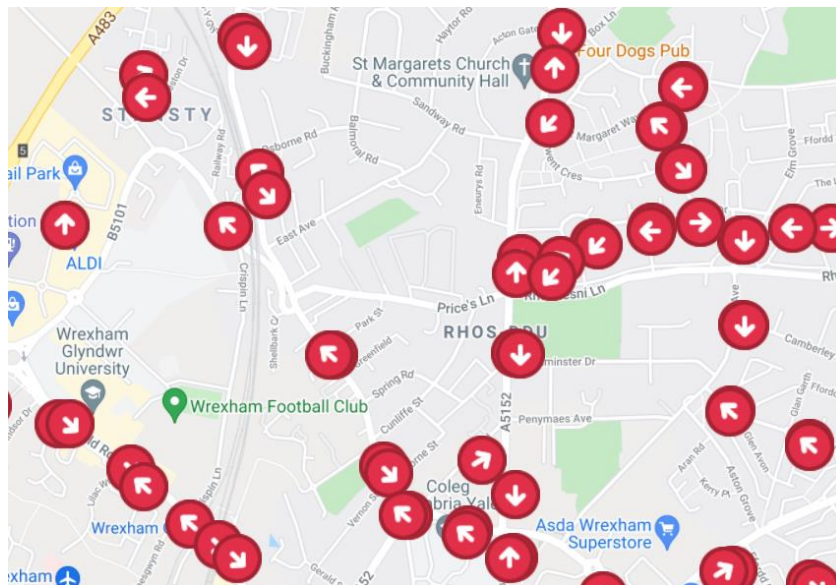
Figure 7.2 Extract of Active Travel Route Map Legend



Design, Access and Planning Statement

- 7.10 As identified in Figure 7.3, the application site is located in close proximity to several bus stops, with the closest being along Chester Road. These buses provide links on services 1 and 35 between Wrexham Bus Station and Chester Railway Station. Both provide onward links to other locations via rail and bus (Wrexham and Chester Stations), including coach services. Services on this bus stop are regular and throughout the day (circa every 15 minutes) from 05:45 -23:30.

Figure 7.3 Extract of Traveline Cymru Bus Stop Locator



Parking

- 7.11 The proposed development includes:
- coach parking with dual use as a Multi-Use Game Area (MUGA)
 - parent car parking (78 no. spaces)
 - staff car parking (37 no. spaces)
- 7.12 Local Planning Guidance Note No 16 contains the maximum standards for each land use category and states that for schools there should be 2 parking spaces for cars plus 1 car parking space per 25m² gross floor space. The indicative floor space is going to be 2,380m² which equates to 95.2 spaces. There is more than adequate provision against these standards with 115 car parking spaces provided. In order to make the best and most efficient use of land the coach parking area is also multi-purpose as it can be used as an outdoor play area / MUGA when not in use.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 This proposal is for outline planning permission for the erection of a new school, car and coach parking, playground, sports pitches, forest school area and open space for use by the public on land off Chester Road, Wrexham, LL12 7AU, and is considered to be acceptable in principle and compliant with both local and national planning policies and guidance.
- 8.2 This statement has addressed the relevant material planning considerations, including design and access matters. This educational development would complement the character of the surrounding settlement and help meet the requirement for additional school and nursery places locally.
- 8.3 The site is located in a sustainable location which will be easily accessible by new pupils and nursery children via a range of transport methods. The proposed development would be compliant with the advice and strategy set out within the Active Travel Wales Guidelines.
- 8.4 In view of the foregoing, it is considered that the proposed development can be supported.

CADNANT

PLANNING

Conwy | 20 Connaught House, Riverside Business Park, Benarth Road, Conwy LL32 8UB
| 01492 581800

Chester | 1 Aldford House, Bell Meadow Business Park, Pulford, Chester CH4 9EP
| 01244 621007

www.cadnantplanning.co.uk