

# **SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

**Two cabins for farm-based holiday accommodation, with associated  
installation of package sewage treatment plant**

**At**

**Field belonging Caerau Farm, Llangammarch Wells, LD5 4UF**

**19<sup>th</sup> October 2022 – Our Ref: 4628**

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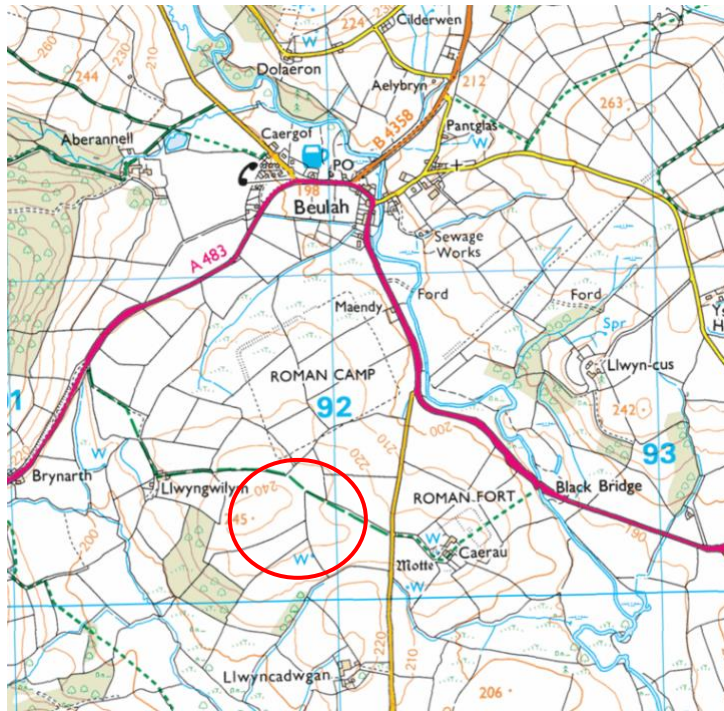
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## **1 Introduction**

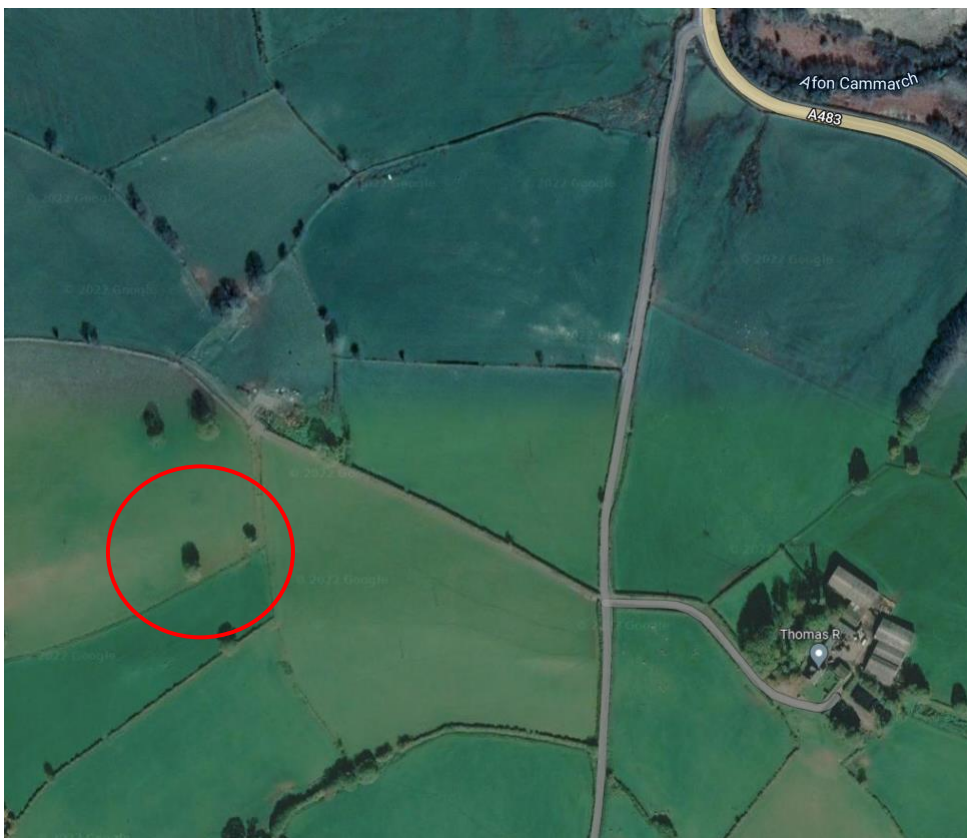
- 1.1 This statement has been prepared in order to support an application to Powys County Council Planning Authority for planning permission for two holiday cabins to be sited on a farm near Beulah.
- 1.2 The development is proposed as farm diversification, and the holiday cabins are proposed to be available for use at all times of year, to maximise viability.

## **2 Site Assessment**

- 2.1 The site lies on high ground 1km south of Beulah village, and is part of a family farm at Caerau. Around 550 acres are farmed on the typical traditional mixed farm, with cattle, sheep, and hay cropping. Caerau is the site of a Roman fort, and the route of a Roman road is preserved in the alignment of the modern road. The fort was only discovered in the 1950s, and investigations have taken place, with some more recent surveys finding traces of outlying buildings and structures ( see CPAT report 1179).
- 2.2 The development site was chosen because it is distant from any mapped Roman remains, but is accessed via an existing farm track. Electricity and water supplies are nearby. The site is also deliberately located away from the busy farmyard where large vehicles and animals could pose a danger to visitors. The site is a level area of pasture hidden from most surrounding area by the topography. Mature trees and views of the surrounding countryside mean the site is attractive yet fairly sheltered, and hidden from view from the road.
- 2.3 With regard to economic context, in order to maintain the viability of the farm in the long term, some diversification is needed, and tourism is a well-known successful supplementary activity. The buildings on the farmyard are all currently in use for agricultural purposes, and so the applicants researched low-key types of accommodation that would serve well to attract tourism without impacting on the landscape.
- 2.4 A further factor in deciding on site location was the introduction of guidance by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) on phosphate levels in rivers designated Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). The site lies in the catchment of the river Wye, and in order to avoid impact, NRW requires that any new septic tank or sewage treatment plant drainage field is more than 40 metres from any surface water feature, and 200 metres from any other drainage field. The drainage field should also be 50 metres from any borehole or well.
- 2.5 Access to the site is via an existing farm track off the highway, where reasonable visibility is achieved. See Access section below for more detail.
- 2.6 The site is less than a mile from Beulah, where some amenities are available, including public transport, shop and pub. Llanwrtyd Wells is 5 miles away, and Builth Wells, the area centre with most amenities available, is 8 miles away. Nearby access to the public footpath and bridleway network makes the area highly suitable for tourists wishing to explore the attractive countryside of Powys on foot, by horse, or by bike.



Approximate location of site (copyright Bing Maps, Ordnance Survey)



Satellite image copyright Google Maps





*View east from the site, farm sheds at Caerau are visible right hand side.*



*View south-west from the site of cabin 1.*



*View south down the existing farm track to the site.*

### **3 Proposal and Planning Policy**

- 3.1 The Powys County Council Local Development Plan (2018) has been examined and policies DM4 Landscape and DM13 Design and Resources, as well as the following detailed planning policy is relevant:

#### ***Policy TD1 – Tourism Development***

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

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

#### ***Policy E6 - Farm Diversification***

*Development proposals for farm diversification will be permitted where:*

- 1. The proposed diversification will be of an intensity of use appropriate to the location and setting and will have no significant detrimental effect on the vitality and viability of any adjacent land uses, either individually or through cumulative impact;*
- 2. Adequate provision is made for the parking of vehicles and the storage of materials/equipment; and*



*3. The construction of new, or conversions of existing buildings, that form part of the proposal lie within or immediately adjacent to the existing farm building complex.*

- 3.2 There is high market demand for accommodation which provides an alternative to camping and rental cottages in the countryside, but a lack of supply. In line with policy TD1 part 2(i), this farm diversification can meet that demand while supporting the farm business. The development will provide holiday accommodation for visitors which will promote enjoyment of the countryside through proximity to nature on the site itself, and the position within farmland and the surrounding open countryside, but of a scale suited to the surrounding infrastructure. The natural beauty and wildlife of the area will be conserved and enhanced through implementation of the landscaping plan, outlined in section 6 below. The development will also help to support the local economy, albeit in a small way, because of the limited size of the development, through increased visitor numbers.
- 3.3 In line with Policy DM13, the public rights of way network is fully integrated into the development, as footpaths and bridleways are easily accessed close by. National Cycle Route 43 is around 2 miles from the site.
- 3.4 Policy E6 allows farm diversification. Tourism is a tried and tested diversification which will work well at the site, as is rural and secluded yet within easy reach of Beulah village and tourist attractions.
- 3.5 With regard to E6 part 1, the small scale of development means it is clearly subordinate to the working farm and compatible with the existing highway network. The development will have no effect on the functioning of surrounding agricultural land as the field affected will retain a separate field entrance gate.
- 3.6 With regard to E6 part 3, the location for the cabins was chosen because the land immediately adjacent to the farm buildings has numerous buried Roman remains, and so the impact on archaeology could be significant. The site chosen is screened by existing topography and landscaping, and cannot be viewed from nearby roads or public paths. This ensures that policy DM4 is met.
- 3.7 With regard to policy DM4, the effect on the surrounding landscape has been carefully examined as the site lies in the valued landscape of mid Powys. The topography and existing trees and hedges mean it is not seen from nearby viewpoints, and any distant views of the cabins will be set against the backdrop of high ground behind.

## **4 Design and Character**

- 4.1 The aim of the development is to provide an attractive holiday destination where people can engage with the outdoors while benefitting from the convenience and comfort of beds, cooking facilities and bathroom facilities.
- 4.2 The design is modular and small-scale. Materials reference the colours and appearance of the surrounding agricultural landscape through use of timber cladding and grey corrugated sheeting roofs. The materials help to ensure the development is integrated with the landscape in accordance with policy.

## **5 Environmental Sustainability**

### **5.1 Sewage disposal**

There is no mains drainage within 30 metres, therefore non-mains drainage is needed. Composting toilets were investigated but discarded for several reasons. The main reason is that a septic tank is still needed for greywater treatment, as the use of soakaways or gravel beds for greywater is not acceptable to the local Building Control authority. Another main factor is that efficient operation of composting toilets requires certain rules to be followed. It is considered that visitors staying for short periods of time would have little concern for the proper operation of the toilets. Some will also be dissuaded by the presence of composting toilets, and the applicants are unwilling to limit the marketability of the units in any way, as this would affect the viability of the business. A package sewage treatment plant system is therefore proposed, with a drainage field proposed as shown on plan, where the land will be reinstated and agricultural use will continue. The location of the proposed tank follows guidance introduced by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) in January 2021 regarding phosphate levels in rivers designated as Special Areas of Conservation. The drainage field is more than 200m from other drainage fields in the vicinity, more than 40m from surface water features, and more than 50m from the well marked on the map.

### **5.2 Landscaping and biodiversity**

Currently the site has limited biodiversity habitats, mainly at the field margins and in mature trees at the boundaries. There is limited hedgerow in the vicinity of the site, so native-species hedging is proposed for both additional screening and biodiversity. The site will be separated from the agricultural field by stock-proof fencing, which allows view through and so from a distance the site will appear as part of the field. The grass within the site will be partly mowed, and partly managed as meadow, with just a few cuts per year. Further biodiversity enhancement is provided with bat boxes mounted in the large mature trees. Biodiversity will be protected through minimal lighting to avoid impact on wildlife. Visitors will be provided with torches if necessary, and fixed lights will be installed above the entrance doors to each unit.

## **6 Access**

6.1 The site is reached via a C class public highway which serves as a local link between Beulah and Llangammarch Wells. Traffic numbers on the road are therefore fairly low. Once on site, visitors will be encouraged to walk or cycle where possible.

6.2 The existing field access was improved for agricultural use several years ago, and affords good visibility for the estimated traffic speeds. Access to the units is via the existing crushed stone track, leading to an existing hardstanding area which will be used for parking and turning. From the parking area, the existing track will provide pedestrian access to the site.

## **7 Conclusion**

7.1 The development will generate much-needed extra income for the farmer, and will benefit the local area economically, using the resources available, i.e. the land. There will be minimal impact in planning terms due to the scale of the development, the appearance of the units and the well-screened site.