
Former Spectrum Garden Centre Mold Road Cefn Y Bedd Planning Statement

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Kingscrown Land & Commercial Ltd (the Applicant) in a support of a full planning application for residential development comprising 30 dwellings, arranged as a mixture of houses and cottage flats (Class C3), including car parking, landscaping and a new access ('the Proposed Development') on 2.25 acres of land on the site of the former Spectrum Garden Centre, Mold Road, Cefn Y Bedd, Wrexham LL12 9UR ('the Application Site').
- 1.2 The application is driven by the desire to utilise a vacant brownfield site within a predominantly residential area to help to diversify the housing stock.
- 1.3 This Planning Statement provides a background to the Proposed Development, covering the Application Site and its surroundings, the policy context and the technical assessments. These assessments have considered the potential effects of the Proposed Development upon the Application Site and its surroundings.
- 1.4 The Planning Statement has been prepared to assist Flintshire County Council (the Local Planning Authority) in its determination of the application and should be read in conjunction with the suite of supporting material.
- 1.5 The structure of the Planning Statement is as follows:
- Introduction;
 - Application Site and Surroundings;
 - Pre- Application Consultation;
 - Proposed Development;
 - Planning Policy Context;
 - Compliance with Planning Policy;
 - Technical Considerations; and
 - Conclusions.
- 1.6 A number of technical reports have been prepared to support this application and should be read in conjunction with the Planning Statement:
- Design and Access Statement;
 - Flood Consequence Assessment and Drainage Management Plan;
 - Ground Engineering Desk Study;
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal;
 - Landscape Plan;
 - Transport Statement; and
 - Tree Survey.
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2.0 Application Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The Application Site covers an area of approximately 2.25 acres and is located on Mold Road (A541) in Cefn Y Bedd, Wrexham. The Site is vacant and comprises a range of derelict buildings of cement block construction. The site is largely covered in hardstanding with limited areas of vegetation apart from those fringing the rear boundaries of the application site and abutting the adjacent watercourse, River Cegidog.
- 2.2 The site is bound by the River Cegidog and semi natural broadleaf woodland to the north, south and west with Mold Road to the east. The Fadyn Joint County Bridge is situated just south of the site where the River Cegidog meets the River Alyn; a small number of private residential plots feature to the immediate north and south. Within the wider context, Cefn Y Bedd village centre is located to the north, residential housing and light industrial units are located to the south and agricultural land bounds the site to the east and west.
- 2.3 The site sits within an area of mixed character with various architectural designs and periods of construction in Cefn y-Bedd. There are a range of material palettes used within the village, from brickwork, to render and pebble dash. There is not a precedent design style or type of construction that dominates the landscape or village.
- 2.4 The surrounding townscape contains a mix of uses, including residential, commercial and industrial uses. The surrounding area contains a mixture of one and two storey developments, with the Application site set back from the surrounding commercial and residential land uses.
- 2.5 The site is considered to sit within a sustainable location with good access to public transport and the wider highway network via Mold Road.
- 2.6 The site itself is not formally designated within the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan and thus is not allocated for a specific use nor protected from development.
- 2.7 The A541 (Mold Road) is a major bus route in to Wrexham with a service every 30 minutes and regular buses in the opposite direction towards Mold and Hawarden. The site is a short walk to the train station which provides links to the wider area.
- 2.8 The Application Site is moderately level with a general fall from the north to south and east to west.
- 2.9 Vehicular and pedestrian access is currently taken from Mold Road to the east, using the existing accesses, included within the Application boundary.
- 2.10 Direct bus routes into Wrexham and Mold operate from Wrexham Road to the east of the Application Site. Cefn Y Bedd railway station is located 0.7 miles to the north. This station is on the Borderlands Line between Bidston (Wirral) and Wrexham.
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- 2.11 The Application Site is undesignated (historically, ecologically and/or environmentally) with no Listed Buildings within the immediate locale.
- 2.12 The Application Site is now shown to lie in Zone B as defined by the Development Advice Map referred to in TAN15: Development & Flood Risk as an area A known to have been flooded in the past evidenced by sedimentary deposits.
- 2.13 The Application Site is not subject to any environmental, ecological or heritage designations.
- 2.14 The site has a varied planning history:
- 053724 - Outline Application for 15 no. 3 storey detached units – Withdrawn (07.10.15)
 - 055430 – Outline Application with all matters reserved for residential development of 14 no. units with a mix of 2 storey semi-detached and 3 storey detached dwellings – Refused (13.7.18)
 - 061248 - Outline Application with all matters reserved for residential development consisting of 14 no. Units with a mix of 2 storey semi-detached and 3 storey detached dwellings – Approved (28.10.2020)
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3.0 Pre-Application Community Consultation

- 3.1 Community consultation will be undertaken as part of the Pre-application consultation (PAC) event, to allow for comments upon the draft proposals from those within an influencing distance of the Application Site.
- 3.2 A letter outlining the proposals will be delivered to properties within close proximity to the Application Site, with a link on to the consultation web page to allow residents to make comments and recommendations. A copy of the proposals were also sent to local councillors, community groups and members of the Planning Committee.
- 3.3 Full details of the community consultation will be detailed in the PAC Report which will support the planning application.

4.0 Proposed Development

- 4.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the development of 20 x one-bedroom cottage flats, 3 x two- bedroom houses and 7 x four-bedroom houses, with associated landscaping and vehicular access.
- 4.2 The Site Plan (Ref. C1101.003 Rev E), Floor plans (Ref. C1101.101; 102; 103; 104; 105; 106; 107; and 108) have been provided to show the layout of the Proposed Development within the Application Site.
- 4.3 The Site Elevations (Ref. C1101.105; 109) and Site Visuals (Ref. C1101.008; 009; 010; 011) have also been provided in support of the Application to illustrate the scale and massing of the Proposed Development.
- 4.4 The layout, scale, design and massing has been developed in response to the surrounding context. A thorough assessment of the site and its benefits has allowed a design which will maximise the sites opportunities and characteristics. This is presented in the Design and Access Statement accompanying this application.
- 4.5 The following headings provide further information on the proposed development and should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement and supporting planning application drawings:
- Numbers and Density.
 - Access and Parking.

Numbers and Density

- 4.6 The Site Plan and supporting floor plans detail how 10 houses and 20 cottage flats (Class C3) would be delivered on the Application Site. The proposed scheme has been developed in accordance with Policy D1 (Design Quality, Location and Layout) and Policy D2 (Design).
- 4.7 The design and massing of the development will respect the prevailing scale of the surrounding built form and is broadly aligned with the density and form of housing development within Cefn Y Bedd to the north and south. The proposed building height will be two and three storeys respectively.
- 4.8 It is considered that the drawings submitted in support of the Application demonstrate a high-quality design and one which accords with the prevailing development plan policy P10, which requires new development for buildings and spaces to be based on a thorough contextual analysis and provide good design that is appropriate to its location, scale and function.
- 4.9 Please see the submitted Design and Access Statement for further detail on the proposed floor plans, elevations and the indicative design layout of the commercial units and residential apartments.
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Access and parking

- 4.10 Vehicular access will be taken from Mold Road, along the eastern boundary of the site. The vehicular access has been designed to typical residential standards and will provide a 5.5m wide carriageway and 2m footways on both sides of the access.
- 4.11 The proposed site access arrangement is detailed on Drawing Number SCP/220600/D01, presented in Appendix C of the Transport Statement.
- 4.12 The maximum achievable visibility to the south of the site is 2.4m x 78m and the maximum achievable visibility to the north of the site is 2.4m x 87m. This is considered acceptable given that the achievable visibility from the proposed site access provides a betterment to the visibility spays recently approved by FCC
- 4.13 Swept path analysis has been undertaken of the site access and internal road layout, as shown on drawing SCP/220600/ATR01 Rev B presented in Appendix D of the Transport Statement, which demonstrates that a refuse vehicle can access the site, turn within the site and exit in a forward gear.
- 4.14 There is only one Public Right of Way (PRoW) within a close proximity to the site. This is located 200m to the north of the site (Ref. 306/5/10 – Llanfynydd) and connects the A541 to the B5102.
- 4.15 Local parking standards for new developments are found in FCC's Supplementary Planning Guidance note titled No.11 Parking Standards, adopted January 2017. The maximum parking standard for residential development is as follows:
- 1 bedroom house: 1.5 car spaces per unit;
 - 2-3 bedroom house: 2 car spaces per unit
 - 3+ bedroom house: 3 car spaces per unit
 - Flats: 1 car space per unit and 1 car space per 2 units for visitors
- 4.16 As shown on the site layout plan, the proposed development provides a level of parking broadly in accordance with the Council's maximum parking standards.
Landscaping and Open Space
- 4.17 The Landscape Plan (Ref. 3236 / 01) demonstrates the proposed landscape enhancements across the developed and undeveloped parts of the Application Site this includes areas of soft landscaping and the creation of an area of public open space, alongside tree and hedgerow planting in the back gardens and shared areas, to provide appropriate screening from any neighbouring views.
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Trees

- 4.18 A Tree Protection Plan (Ref. TPP.13524), Tree Constraints Plan (Ref. TCP.13524) and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Ref. AIA.13524) has been carried out by Godwins. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment considers the implications that the proposed development will have on trees within the site. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment also provides potential solutions to any implications on trees where possible.

5.0 Planning Policy Context

Introduction

- 5.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') and Planning Practice Guidance are material considerations in the determination of this planning application.

Adopted Development Plan

- 5.3 The Development Plan for Flintshire County Council consists of:
- Flintshire Unitary Development Plan 2000 – 2015 (Adopted 28/09/2011)
- 5.4 The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was the adopted development plan for the 15 year period 2000 – 2015, but still remains the adopted Development Plan for the Local Authority area.
- 5.5 The aim of the FUDP is to provide a framework for making rational and consistent decisions on planning applications and to guide development to appropriate locations. This identifies sites where new housing, employment and other development can take place, as well as setting out policies to protect important countryside, habitats, resources and heritage. Although the adopted UDP became expired at the end of 2015 it remains the adopted development plan for the County. Regard will need to be had to ensuring that the Plan is compliant with up to date Welsh Government guidance in Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Notes and any other relevant guidance.
- 5.6 Table 1 identifies the key policies from the Development Plan that the proposals will be assessed against.

Table 1- Relevant Development Plan Policies

Policy	Description
Flintshire Unitary Development Plan	
Policy STR1	New Development
Policy STR4	Housing
Policy GEN1	General Requirements for Development
Policy GEN3	Development in the Open Countryside
Policy D1	Design Quality, Location & Layout

Policy	Description
Policy D2	Design
Policy TWH1	Development Affecting Trees & Woodlands
Policy WB1	Species Protection
Policy AC13	Access & Traffic Impact
Policy AC18	Parking Provision & New Development
Policy HSG4	New Dwellings Outside Settlement Boundaries
Policy HSG5	Limited Infill Development Outside Settlement Boundaries
Policy HSG8	Density of Development
Policy HSG11	Affordable Housing in Rural Areas
Policy EWP14	Derelict & Contaminated Land
Policy EWP17	Flood Risk

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy

- 5.7 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11, February 2021) provides the overarching policy context and guidance for planning within Wales. The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation and resultant duties such as the Socio-economic Duty.
- 5.8 Paragraph 2.21 advises that 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.

- 5.9 Paragraph 2.22 goes on to advise that the key factors in an assessment relate to social considerations, economic considerations, cultural considerations and environmental considerations.
- 5.10 Section 3 relates to design and Placemaking In Action. It considers that Good Design Making Better Places. Paragraph 3.3 advises that 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.
- 5.11 Paragraph 3.55 states that previously developed (also referred to as brownfield) land (see definition overleaf) should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites where it is suitable for development. In settlements, such land should generally be considered suitable for appropriate development where its re-use will promote sustainability principles and any constraints can be overcome.
- 5.12 Paragraph 4.2.2 advises that the planning system must:
- identify a supply of land to support the delivery of the housing requirement to meet the differing needs of communities across all tenures;
 - enable provision of a range of well-designed, energy efficient, good quality market and affordable housing that will contribute to the creation of sustainable places; and
 - focus on the delivery of the identified housing requirement and the related land supply.
- 5.13 Paragraph 4.2.1 advises that new housing development in both urban and rural areas should incorporate a mix of market and affordable house types, tenures and sizes to cater for the range of identified housing needs and contribute to the development of sustainable and cohesive communities.
- 5.14 With regards to density paragraph 4.2.22 states that planning authorities will need to ensure that in development plans and through the development management process they make the most efficient use of land and buildings in their areas. Higher densities must be encouraged on sites in town centres and other sites which have good walking, cycling and public transport links.

Technical Advice Notes

TAN 5 – Nature Conservation and Planning

- 5.15 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.
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- 5.16 Paragraph 16.1 states that 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.

TAN 12 – Design

- 5.17 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.
- 5.18 Paragraph 5.5.1 of TAN 12 states that 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.

TAN 18 – Transport

- 5.19 TAN 18 has been considered as part of the design of the Proposed Development. The aim of TAN 18 is to ensure 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.
- 5.20 TAN 18 provides guidance on providing good accessibility with objectives such as:
- ensuring 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.
 - 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.
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6.0 Compliance with Planning Policy

Principle of Development

6.1 **Policy STR1** (New Development) from the UDP states that 'new development will be:

- a) generally located within existing settlement boundaries, allocations, development zones, principal employment areas and suitable brownfield sites and will only be permitted outside these areas where it is essential to have an open countryside location;
- b) required to incorporate high standards of design which are appropriate to the building, site and locality, maximise the efficient use of resources, minimise the use of non-renewable resources and minimise the generation of waste and pollution;
- c) required to create a safe, healthy and secure environment and protect standards of residential and other amenity;
- d) required to respect community identity and social cohesion including the adequacy and accessibility of community facilities and services;
- e) required to respect physical and natural environmental considerations such as flooding and land stability;
- f) required to minimise or negate pollution to air, water and land; and
- g) assessed in terms of a precautionary approach whereby development proposals that would have a significant and uncertain environmental, social, economic or cultural impact, will be refused, in the absence of the best available information which proves that the impact can be negated or mitigated through proper risk control measures.

6.2 The Principle of Development has been established with the approval of the previous planning application (Ref. 061248). Within the committee report the following was stated with reference to the principle of development of residential on a site outside the settlement boundary:

"It is acknowledged that the site is located outside the settlement boundary of Hope, Caergwrle, Abermorddu and Cefn y Bedd in the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan where new residential development is strictly controlled.

It is however considered that the site falls within the definition of Previously Developed Land (PDL) also known as 'brownfield land'. Paragraph 3.51 of PPW10 states its preference for the development of brownfield land in PPW which advocates that 'previously development (or brownfield land) should, whenever possible be used in preference to greenfield sites, particular those of high ecological or agricultural value....

The site has operated as a garden centre and DIY store for many years as well as accommodating a range of other uses in the associated peripheral buildings. Following its closure, the site has remained vacant and is now in a poor almost derelict condition. The immediate view of the site from Wrexham Road is unsightly and has been referred to as an eyesore. The proposed development would bring an immediate betterment to the site and the wider surroundings, providing a scheme that delivers housing to the area, affordable housing opportunities, removes sources of contamination, and provides for ecological enhancements.

The site is located on a key transport corridor between Flintshire and Wrexham, which is served by the A541, the Wrexham-Bidston railway line including proximity to the station at Cefn y Bedd. To the north are facilities in Cefn y Bedd and Abermorddu, whilst to the south are a range of facilities and services in Gwersyllt. Although the site is located outside a settlement boundary, it is within a semi urban corridor between a loose ribbon of predominantly residential development on the western side of the A541 stretching between the edge of Sydallt within Wrexham County Borough and Cefn y Bedd. The site is also located in close proximity to a number of employment centres that can be accessed by a range of sustainable transport options other than the sole dependence on the private car. As such it is my view that the site is located within a sustainable location.”

- 6.3 The Proposed Development has been designed to the highest standard, as demonstrated within the submitted planning application drawings. The site is currently vacant, vandalised and unmaintained, with no sense of place or landscape value, generally the site detracts from the overall aesthetic of the locale. Its development will make a positive impact on the locale by providing a landmark housing development on this gateway location.
- 6.4 The Application has analysed all technical, environmental, ecological and heritage considerations when designing the scheme to ensure it is compliant with the requisite legislation and planning policy considerations. A package of technical reports have been submitted in support of the Application to demonstrate in further detail that the Proposed Development is compliant.
- 6.5 The Proposed Development is therefore in compliance with Policy STR1.
- 6.6 **Policy STR4** (Housing) from the UDP states that the ‘Plan will seek to provide for the housing needs of the County through:
- a) the provision of 7,400 new dwellings over the Plan period;
 - b) distributing new housing across the County based on a settlement hierarchy comprising category A (urban centres), B (semi urban / main villages) and C (rural / small villages);
 - c) the provision of a range of type and size of housing sites including key sites at Flint, Mold, Buckley, Connah’s Quay, Penyffordd, and Broughton;
 - d) the provision of a range of housing including affordable and special needs housing where there is a demonstrable need; and
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- e) making the most efficient and effective use of housing sites and existing housing stock and facilitating, where appropriate, the residential conversion of existing buildings.
- 6.7 Appendix 1A from the Flintshire Local Development Plan 2015-2030 Background Paper 10A (Update re Housing Land Supply and Delivery – January 2021) signifies that the delivery rate of housing, both allocated and approved for development, is falling. This downward trend suggests that the total plan period number could come down to 6,395 total.
- 6.8 The Application Site is outside the settlement boundary but adjoins Cefn y Bedd which is part of the wider HCAC Local Service Centre where modest growth and new housing developments will be supported. This is a Tier 2 Settlement in the hierarchy and the most sustainable locations for new housing after Tier 1 locations.
- 6.9 The Proposed Development seeks to provide a policy compliant provision of affordable housing units – 9 in total (30%).
- 6.10 The Proposed Development is compliant with all the accessibility standards for Housing Development in Flintshire, with the dwellings compliant with the Welsh Housing Quality standard.
- 6.11 The development of housing on sustainable brownfield sites adjoining settlement boundaries should be supported to help ensure the Council meet their annual requirement for new dwellings.
- 6.12 **Policy GEN1** (General Requirements for Development) states that ‘Development that requires planning permission and is in accordance with the Plan’s other policies, should be located on land, or within suitable buildings, which satisfies the following requirements:
- a) the development should harmonise with the site and surroundings in terms of the siting, scale, design, layout, use of space, materials, external appearance and landscaping;
 - b) the development should take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public/private spaces;
 - c) the development should not have a significant adverse impact on recognised wildlife species and habitats, woodlands, other landscape features, townscapes, built heritage, features of archaeological interest, nor the general natural and historic environment;
 - d) the development should not have a significant adverse impact on the safety and amenity of nearby residents, other users of nearby land/property, or the community in general, through increased activity, disturbance, noise, dust, vibration, hazard, or the adverse effects of pollution;
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- e) the development should provide, where appropriate, safe and convenient access for pedestrians, cyclists, persons with disabilities, and vehicles, together with adequate and suitably located parking spaces and servicing/manoeuvring space;
 - f) the development should not have an unacceptable effect on the highway network as a result of problems arising from traffic generation, and should incorporate traffic calming measures where appropriate;
 - g) the development should have, where appropriate, convenient access to public transport, and wherever possible is well related to pedestrian and cycle routes;
 - h) the development must have regard to the adequacy of existing public services (e.g. gas, water, electricity), with new infrastructure capable of being provided in reasonable time and at minimum public cost;
 - i) the development should not result in/be susceptible to problems related to drainage, land stability, contamination, or flooding, either on or off site;
 - j) the development should not prejudice land or buildings safeguarded for other uses, or impair the development or use of adjoining land; and
 - k) the development should not result in the permanent loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land where either suitable previously developed land or land in lower agricultural grades is available.
- 6.13 The Design & Access Statement submitted in support of the Application demonstrates that the design and layout of the scheme harmonizes the site with its surroundings in terms of the siting, scale, design, layout, use of space, materials, external appearance and landscaping.
- 6.14 The scheme has been designed in accordance with the 'Secure by Design' principles. The reduction in opportunities for crime through the design of the proposed development is a key element in creating a secure sense of place. The layout is designed to create natural surveillance and sense of ownership of private areas for householders by the use of a clearly defined perimeter block structure. The aim is to ensure that every part of the scheme is easily identified as either being public or private space.
- 6.15 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal demonstrates that the Proposed Development can be delivered without detriment to any recognised wildlife species and/ or habitats.
- 6.16 The Application Site and adjoining area contains no landscape or heritage designations, so there is no perceived impact from the Proposed Development on these grounds.
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- 6.17 The Transport Statement, submitted in support of the Application, demonstrates that the Proposed Development will have a negligible impact upon the adjacent highway network. The Statement also confirm compliance with the relevant parking standards.
- 6.18 The Application Site is in a highly sustainable location and is accessible by various modes of public transport. For example, direct bus routes into Mold and Wrexham operate from Mold Road to the east of the Application Site. Cefn Y Bedd railway station is located 0.7 miles to the north. This station is on the Borderlands Line between Bidston (Wirral) and Wrexham.
- 6.19 The Flood Consequence Assessment demonstrates that the Application Site is not prone to flooding and will not exacerbate flooding off site.
- 6.20 **Policy GEN3** (Development in the Open Countryside) states that ' Development proposals outside settlement boundaries, allocations, Development Zones and Principal Employment Areas will not be permitted, except for:
- a) essential worker housing (policy HSG4);
 - b) small scale infill development, comprising one or two housing unit(s) within a clearly identified group of dwellings (policy HSG5);
 - c) conversion, extension, adaptation and re-use of buildings (policies HSG7, RE4, and RE5);
 - d) replacement dwellings (policy HSG6);
 - e) affordable housing exceptions schemes adjoining existing villages (policy HSG11);
 - f) small scale rural enterprise exception schemes adjoining existing settlement boundaries (RE4 and RE5);
 - g) development related to agriculture, minerals extraction, rural diversification, tourism, leisure and recreation, and existing educational and institutional establishments, provided there is no unacceptable impact on the social, natural and built environment;
 - h) essential works associated with statutory undertakers subject to the appropriate environmental considerations
 - i) the expansion of existing employment development (EM5); and
 - j) other development which is appropriate to the open countryside and where it is essential to have an open countryside location rather than being sited elsewhere.'
- 6.21 The Application Site has an extant planning permission for 14 dwellings, demonstrating that the principle of residential development on the Application Site has been considered appropriate.
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- 6.22 **Policy HSG4** (New Dwellings Outside Settlement Boundaries) states that ‘new dwellings outside settlement boundaries will only be permitted where it is essential to house a farm or forestry worker...’
- 6.23 The Application Site has an extant planning permission for 14 dwellings, demonstrating that the principle of residential development on the Application Site has been considered appropriate
- 6.24 **Policy HSG5** (Limited Infill Development Outside Settlement Boundaries) states that ‘outside settlement boundaries infill development for one or two housing unit(s) may be permitted, provided that the proposal is to meet a proven local housing need.’
- 6.25 The Application Site has an extant planning permission for 14 dwellings, demonstrating that the principle of residential development on the Application Site has been considered appropriate.
- 6.26 **Policy HSG8** (Density of Development) states that ‘new housing development will be permitted where the density of development:
- a) makes the most efficient use of available land;
 - b) reflects the characteristics of the site and surrounding area;
 - c) helps to meet the needs of Flintshire residents for a range of house types;
 - d) uses high quality design principles to maximise the density of development without compromising the quality of the living environment provided; and
 - e) makes adequate provision for privacy and space about dwellings.’
- 6.27 30 dwellings are proposed, 20 of which are 1 bedroom cottage flats, on the 2-acre site. This is considered an appropriate and efficient use of available land and will help to meet an identified need for 1 -3-bedroom units.
- 6.28 Further details on the design, layout, density are detailed within the submitted Design & Access Statement.
- 6.29 **Policy HSG11** (Affordable Housing in Rural Areas) states that ‘outside village settlement boundaries, proposals to develop affordable housing in rural areas will only be permitted, where:
- a) there is evidence of genuine local need for such provision;
 - b) there are no suitable alternative sites or properties within settlement boundaries to meet the need;
 - c) schemes abut settlement boundaries and form logical extensions to settlements, avoiding ribbon and fragmented development and incorporating suitable boundary treatment and landscaping measures;
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- d) the scale, design, and layout of the proposed development are sympathetic and appropriate to the size and character of the settlement and its landscape setting, and reflect the scale of need identified; and
- e) houses will remain affordable in perpetuity for those in need, managed by a housing association, the County Council, a bone fide trust or similar organisation.'

6.30 The Housing Strategy & Development Programme Team at Flintshire County Council have confirmed that there is demand for affordable housing in this location, with many people on the local housing register looking for accommodation.

Design and Layout

6.31 **Policy D1** (Design Quality, Location & Layout) states that 'all development must incorporate good standards of design. Development will be permitted only if:

- a) it respects the scale of surrounding development, its location, siting, and layout make the best use of land, minimise the need to travel, and provide a safe and attractive environment;
- b) it is of the highest net density appropriate to its setting and function;
- c) it relates well to local topography, aspect, microclimate, street pattern, orientation and views;
- d) it creates positive and attractive building alignments and frontages;
- e) adequate provision is made for space around buildings, setting of buildings, imaginative parking and landscaping solutions;
- f) maximises the efficient use of resources, minimises the use of non renewable resources and minimises the generation of waste and pollution; and
- g) it is accompanied by design information commensurate with the scale and type of development proposed.'

6.32 The submitted package of drawings and CGIs demonstrate the strong emphasis on a design which is in keeping with the local form, scale and layout of the immediate surrounding development, complementing yet no detracting from the overall character and aesthetic of the locality.

6.33 **Policy D2** (Design) states that 'development will be permitted only where:

- a) the proposed building and structures are of a good standard of design, form, scale and materials; and
 - b) it protects the character and amenity of the locality and adds to the quality and distinctiveness of the local area.'
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- 6.34 The Design & Access Statement submitted in support of the Application demonstrates that the design and layout of the scheme protects the character and visual amenity of the surrounding area in terms of the siting, scale, design, layout, use of space, materials, external appearance and landscaping.

Landscaping and Green Infrastructure

- 6.35 **Policy TWH1** (Development Affecting Tree & Woodland) states that ‘the Council will protect from development those woodlands and trees which are considered to be important local landscape, townscape and wildlife features. Where the principle of development affecting trees or woodland is acceptable, the County Council will require that:

- a) any tree, groups of trees or woodlands of value on or adjacent to the site are retained and that development is sympathetically incorporated around them;
- b) the pre-planning assessment of the trees and the development complies with the British standard, Guide for Trees in Relation to Construction (BS 5837) 2005; and,
- c) where the removal of trees is considered acceptable, suitable replacements that are appropriate to the character of the area shall be established elsewhere within the site.’

- 6.36 A Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been submitted in support of the Application, this verifies that two groups of self-seeded saplings have been recommended for removal to enable the construction of the proposed development. All the trees proposed for removal are considered to be unsuitable for retention (‘U’ category) all of which are self-seeded.

- 6.37 **Policy WB1** (Species Protection) states that ‘development which would have a significant adverse effect on important species or their habitats will not be permitted unless appropriate measures are taken to secure their long term protection and viability.’

- 6.38 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been submitted in support of the Application, this provides recommendations, with respect to works methods and the use of RAMS.

Transport and Parking

- 6.39 **Policy AC13** (Access & Traffic Impact) states that ‘development proposals will be permitted only if:

- a) approach roads to the site are of an adequate standard to accommodate the traffic likely to be generated by the development without compromising public safety, health and amenity; and
 - b) safe vehicular access can be provided by the developer both to and from the main highway network.’
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6.40 A Transport Statement has been submitted in support of this Application, this confirm that there should be no highway related reason to withhold planning permission and the scheme is therefore recommended for approval. Further detail can be found in Section 7 of this Planning Statement and within the supporting Transport Statement.

6.41 **Policy AC18** (Parking Provision & New Development) states that ‘all new development, including changes of use, must provide appropriate parking in accordance with Flintshire County Council Parking Standards, which will be applied as a maximum. Reduced requirements may be applied where:

- a) it is located in a town centre;
- b) it lies within 300 metres of existing public car parks which have sufficient spare capacity and are accessible by all users;
- c) on site parking is not required by the development;
- d) the developer has entered into an agreement with the Local Planning Authority to contribute a commuted sum equivalent to the current cost of provision of non-operational parking spaces; and
- e) alternative provision is made for the use of public transport, cycling and walking, or other arrangements such as formal car sharing or private bus services;
provided that surrounding residential or other areas would not suffer from an increase in on-street parking.’

6.42 The Proposed Development is compliant with the Flintshire County Council Parking Standards, this is detailed within the submitted Transport Statement.

Flood Risk

6.43 **Policy EWP17** (Flood Risk) states that ‘development which would seek to reduce the impact and frequency of flood risk to areas at risk of flooding will be generally supported provided:

- a) the design and character of the works is appropriate to the locality;
- b) the works do not adversely impact on interests of acknowledged nature conservation and recreation importance; and
- c) the works do not increase flood risk elsewhere

Other development within areas at risk of flooding will only be permitted where the Council considers that the development is justified and is satisfied that:

- a) the consequences of a flooding event can be effectively managed;
 - b) it would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere;
 - c) appropriate alleviation or mitigation measures have been incorporated into the proposal and will be available for the lifetime of the development; and
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- d) it would not have any adverse effects on the integrity of tidal and fluvial flood defences.'

6.44 The Flood Consequence Assessment submitted in support of the Application details the risk of flooding to the proposed development from all identified sources is assessed to be low, with some mitigation proposed.

Contaminated Land

6.45 **Policy EWP14** (Derelict & Contaminated Land) states that 'The reclamation and re-use of derelict and contaminated land will be permitted if:

- a) appropriate measures are taken to deal with any contamination which exists on the site:
- o ensuring that no residual risk remains on site for future receptors; and
 - o minimising as far as possible the off site disposal of contaminated waste material; and
- b) measures can be taken to identify and safeguard any significant nature conservation and historic interests which exist on the site.'

6.46 A Phase 1 Ground Investigation Engineering Report (Ref. has been submitted in support of the Application; this demonstrates that the Site ground conditions are considered to be reasonably well-characterised with intrusive investigation recommended to support further assessment of risk and support the design.

6.47 In conclusion, the Engineering Desk Study finds that the risk rating for the ground is generally 'low' with a 'moderate' or 'moderate to low' risks identified in relation to various geological hazards and potential contamination and potential pollution.

6.48 Further assessment is recommended to: confirm the ground conditions across the Site; confirm the foundation arrangements for the existing structures; confirm the geotechnical characteristics of the soils / rocks; and, where present, confirm the chemical quality of any Made Ground soils expected to either be removed (waste classification) or retained as part of the development.

6.49 Risk mitigation is recommended for radon. The requirement for further risk mitigation for other hazards should be confirmed through intrusive investigation.

7.0 Technical Considerations

Ecology

- 7.1 Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd were instructed to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) to assess the habitats on site, in response to the future clearance and redevelopment of the site.
- 7.2 Extensive findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented throughout the report; however the following key recommendations are provided:
- Habitats - The River Cegidog runs immediately adjacent to the application site. To avoid potential impacts to the river and the flora/fauna it supports, it is recommended that a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) is created and followed for the duration of the works. Additionally, during the original 2020 PEA areas of the site were identified as potentially having historically formed part of the wider woodland network which includes areas of Ancient Woodland. Indicative suggestions to re-establish a section of woodland have been provided within the PEA.
 - Vegetation - Four species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) (1981), namely Wall Cotoneaster, Montbretia, Chilean Giant-rhubarb and Himalayan Balsam, were identified within and adjacent to the site boundary. It is recommended that a precautionary working method statement is instated during construction to prevent the risk of spread of this species during the proposed works and any wider site management.
 - Breeding Birds - The site contains habitats suitable for nesting birds associated with rural and garden habitats, namely within the taller vegetation and buildings. All vegetation clearance and demolition works should occur outside of the breeding bird season of March to August unless it can be demonstrated by a suitable qualified, professional ecologist that breeding birds are absent beforehand.
 - Other Terrestrial Fauna - The site contains habitat suitable for a variety of terrestrial fauna, notably including Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) and common, robust amphibians such as Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*). No further surveys are required in relation to these species; however, a thorough program of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) will be detailed in a Method Statement created by a suitably experienced ecologist and strictly adhered to throughout the works, as per sections 8.12-8.17 of the PEA.
 - Biodiversity Benefit - A series of recommendations have been given within section 8.0 and Appendix III of the PEA which provide opportunities for net biodiversity benefit at the development site and within the wider area. Enhancement opportunities include recommendations relative to the provision of favourable planting and landscaping, with wildlife boxes.
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Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.3 The Flood Consequence Assessment submitted in support of the Application details the risk of flooding to the proposed development from all identified sources is assessed to be low.
- 7.4 The assessment demonstrates that the proposed development may be completed in accordance with the requirements of planning policy subject to the following:
- The development platform to be set no lower than existing site levels.
 - Finished floor levels to be set at a minimum of 65.58 m AOD and at least 0.15 m above adjacent ground levels following any reprofiling of the site, with ground levels sloping down from the dwellings.
- 7.5 Flood risk elsewhere is not expected to be impacted.
- 7.6 Surface water runoff from the redeveloped site can be sustainably managed in accordance with planning policy. The detailed drainage design should be submitted to and approved by the SAB prior to the commencement of development
- 7.7 Foul water is proposed to connect to the public foul water sewer located in Wrexham Road, adjacent to the site.
- 7.8 In conclusion, this report demonstrates that the proposed development may be completed in accordance with the requirements of planning policy.

Ground Investigation and Land Contamination

- 7.9 Soil & Structures were to instructed to undertake a Phase 1 Ground Investigations Engineering Study in support of the Application.
- 7.10 In conclusion, the Engineering Desk Study finds that the risk rating for the ground is generally 'low' with a 'moderate' or 'moderate to low' risks identified in relation to various geological hazards and potential contamination and potential pollution.
- 7.11 Further assessment is recommended to confirm the ground conditions across the Site; confirm the foundation arrangements for the existing structures; confirm the geotechnical characteristics of the soils / rocks; and, where present, confirm the chemical quality of any Made Ground soils expected to either be removed (waste classification) or retained as part of the development.
- 7.12 Risk mitigation is recommended for radon. The requirement for further risk mitigation for other hazards should be confirmed through intrusive investigation.
- 7.13 The anticipated low to moderate strength of the shallow soils may inform the adoption of a piled or rafted foundation solution for the new dwellings. It is considered likely that the existing structures are shallowly founded that may permit more traditional, strip foundations to be adopted.
- 7.14 A ventilated sub-floor void and 2000 gauge damp proof membrane will be required.
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Transport

- 7.15 SCP were instructed to produce a Transport Statement in support of the Application to assess the traffic and transport implications associated with the development proposals.
- 7.16 Vehicular access to the proposed development will be provided off the A541 Wrexham Road via a simple priority-controlled junction and both the existing accesses to the site will be closed with the footway reinstated. The proposed access has been designed to typical residential standards, providing a 5.5m wide carriageway which benefits from 6m corner radii and 2m wide footways on both sides of the road connecting to the existing pedestrian infrastructure on the A541 Wrexham Road.
- 7.17 The personal injury accident data for the most recently available 5-year period demonstrates that the area in the vicinity of the site does not have any recurring highway safety problems that could be affected by the development proposals.
- 7.18 It has been demonstrated that the development benefits from good levels of accessibility by sustainable modes. Access to the site on foot and by cycle is of a good standard and there are transport facilities within close proximity providing access to local destinations. These findings demonstrate that prospective residents will not be wholly reliant on the private car.
- 7.19 It is estimated that the scheme will result in a net decrease of 6 two-way vehicle movements in the AM peak hour and a net decrease of 40 two-way vehicle movements in the PM peak hour, when compared to the extant use. Having regard to this, the proposed development is not anticipated to result in a material intensification of the local highway network, when compared to the extant planning permission, and no further detailed assessment is required. The traffic impact of the scheme is therefore acceptable in planning terms.
- 7.20 Having regard to the analysis presented in this TS, it is considered that there should be no highway related reason to withhold planning permission and the scheme is therefore recommended for approval.

Trees

- 7.21 Two groups of self-seeded saplings have been recommended for removal to enable the construction of the proposed development. All the trees proposed for removal are considered to be unsuitable for retention ('U' category) all of which are self-seeded.
- 7.22 The formative pruning of tree T18 will be required to ensure sufficient clearance between the proposed building and adjacent branches. The proposed pruning works relate to the crown lifting/pruning of small tertiary branches. The overall shape of the tree from the proposed pruning works would not be affected. In addition, the proposed pruning works will have no adverse impacts on tree health and longevity.
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- 7.23 Several trees, particularly those on adjacent land to the north, would benefit from general arboricultural works as part of a practical post-development arboricultural management strategy; however, these works are not covered within the scope of this report.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Kingscrown Land & Commercial Ltd (the Applicant) in a support of a full planning application for residential development comprising 30 dwellings (Class C3) including car parking, landscaping and a new access ('the Proposed Development') on 2.25 acres of land on the site of the former Spectrum Garden Centre, Mold Road, Cefn Y Bedd, Wrexham LL12 9UR ('the Application Site').
- 8.2 The application is supported by a suite of reports and drawings which detail how the Proposed Development could be achieved on the Application Site in consideration of Flintshire County Council's relevant policies alongside national legislation, guidance and standards.
- 8.3 Sections 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that decisions on planning applications must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This has been demonstrated through the policy analysis which supports the proposals.
- 8.4 The Proposed Development will help to redevelop a vacant and unutilised site, which is derelict and in a state of disuse. The proposals will help bring forward a brownfield site for much needed housing.
- 8.5 In consideration of Paragraph 8 of the Framework, the Proposed Development is sustainable development across all three dimensions and should be approved without delay.
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