

Planning Reference No:	10/4610N
Application Address:	Wrenbury Fishery, Hollyhurst, Marbury, Cheshire
Proposal:	Siting of 20 Timber Clad Twin Unit Caravans for Holiday Accommodation & Erection of Administration Building.
Applicant:	Mr Spencer, Marcus Brook Ltd.
Application Type:	Full Planning Application
Grid Reference:	358810 345845
Ward:	Chomondeley
Earliest Determination Date:	6 th January 2011
Expiry Dated:	22 nd February 2011
Date Report Prepared:	1 st February 2011
Constraints:	Wind Turbine Development consultation area

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

Approve with conditions

MAIN ISSUES:

Principle of development

Impact on the character and appearance of the open countryside

Existing trees and hedges

Residential amenity

Ecology

Highway matters and parking

Sustainability

Drainage

1. REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is referred to the Strategic Planning Board because the site area is 7.2 hectares in extent. Members visited the site in 10th September 2010 in connection with planning application 10/1776N.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application area is an irregular shaped piece of gently undulating land in which fishing pools have been constructed under a previous planning permission. A single island is present in each pool which is joined to the bank by an isthmus of land. The site is approached on an unmade access track located to the west of the application area with an access point on Hollyhurst Road. The track serves a poultry unit and other activities. Adjacent land was subject to an application for a water bottling facility which was withdrawn.

The site is enclosed by established hedges, trees and fences. An unmade track with a mature hedgerow on one side passes through the middle of the application area.

The site is located within open countryside in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This is a re-submission following refusal of application 10/1776N for the stationing of 34 twin unit caravans on the site. The application seeks to address the reason for refusal of the previous planning application.

That application was refused for the following reason:-

The proposed use of the land for the siting of 34 twin caravan units to provide a chalet development with associated roads, hardstandings, lighting, cycle parking and an office/ shop building will result in the erosion of the character of this rural location, creating visual intrusion, away from any established settlement. To allow the development would be detrimental to the rural tranquillity of this area of open countryside and would erode the physical character of the location, detrimentally impacting on the appearance of the area, contrary to policies NE.2 (Open Countryside) and RT.6 (Recreation Uses in the Open Countryside) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011.

This application seeks permission for the stationing of 20 timber clad, twin unit caravans and the erection of an administrative office on the site of the approved Wrenbury Fishery. The supporting information states that each unit will be a single storey structure with a pitched roof and measure a maximum of 6.8m x 20m in length with an internal ceiling height no greater than 3.05m. This complies with the definition of caravans as given in the Caravan Sites Act 1968 and amended by Statutory Instrument 12374:2006. The 80 space car park approved under the planning permission for the fishery is to be provided together with one parking space for each of the caravans. Under the previous planning application the car park for the lake would have been enlarged to 93 spaces. The toilet block which received planning permission under the consent for the fishery will be provided at the northern end of the car park. The former building denoted as shop/ warden's office in the previous application is referred to as an administration office or warden's office. There is no reference to a shop within the application details. This application also includes the provision of a cycle store.

The application has been modified by the reduction in the overall number of units proposed and the removal of caravans from the north side of the site, around Lake 2 (the western lake) and from all the islands. Whereas the previous application proposed the retention of the unauthorised land bridges linking the islands, within the lakes, to the bank these land bridges are to be removed.

The twenty caravans to be provided would be placed to the south of Lake 1, and around Lake 3, the largest of the lakes.

A separate access from the main access track which ran along the northern side of Lake 2 and gave access to small car park is no longer proposed.

The landscaping scheme submitted with the application retains the existing hedgerows and trees around the site and on the road frontage to Hollyhurst Road. In addition the trees and hedgerow along one side of the original farm track located centrally through the site and those on the southern and eastern site boundaries are retained. The landscaping scheme submitted with the previous application has been modified prior to submission of the current application and further modifications have been introduced as a result of consultations with the Landscape Officer. The scheme now includes blocks of buffer planting whether as woodland mix and/ or hedgerow mix around Lake 1 (except where the four caravans are to be provided), to the north, east and west of Lake 2, around the car park for the fishery, along the southern site boundary and the south eastern corner of Lake 3. There are also two smaller areas of hedgerow/ woodland mix along the eastern boundary of Lake 3 between groups of caravans. In addition new tree groups will be provided to define the spaces between caravans. A shrub mix of native species will be provided on the islands within the lakes.

The specific differences between the planting in the previous application and this application based on the plan received on 4th February are:-

- The loss of planting adjacent to the access road
- The loss of planting to the north of Lake 2 some distance from the water's edge
- The addition of planting where caravans 4 & 5 in the previous scheme were to be provided i.e. the north side of Lake 1.
- The addition of planting close to Lake 2 on the north and western sides.
- More hedge /woodland planting in the south eastern corner of the site.
- Planting on the islands in the lakes.

4. RELEVANT HISTORY

10/1776N Siting of 34 Timber Clad Twin Units Caravans, Access works, Car Parking, Administration Building, Cycle Store and Landscaping. Refused 27th September 2010.

P06/0771 Fishing lakes. Approved 25th August 2006.

5. POLICIES

The development plan for this area includes the North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy 2021 (RSS), Cheshire Replacement Waste Plan and the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 (LP).

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

RDF2 Rural Areas

W6 Tourism and the Visitor Economy

W7 Principles for Tourism Development

Local Plan Policy

NE.2 Open Countryside
NE.5 Nature Conservation and Habitats
NE.9 Protected Species
NE.20 Flood Prevention
BE.1 Amenity
BE.2 Design
BE.3 Access and Parking
BE.4 Drainage Utilities and Resources
TRAN.3 Pedestrians
TRAN.5 Provision for Cyclists
TRAN.9 Car Parking Standards

Cheshire Replacement Waste Local Plan

Policy11A Development and Waste Recycling.

Other Material Considerations

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
PPG13: Transport
PPS25: Development and Flood Risk.
Good Practice Guide on Tourism

6. CONSULTATIONS

Strategic Highways Manager: No objections. The access point should be constructed to Cheshire East Highway Standards.

Environmental Health: Do not object to the application but request an informative advising that it is the developer's responsibility to assess the condition of the land and its suitability for the end use in relation to potential contamination. Hours of construction and delivery to the site should be restricted to 08:00 hours to 18:00 hours Monday to Fridays and 09:00 hours to 14:00 hours on Saturdays with no working at any other time including Public Holidays. Details of any external lighting to be used at the site should be submitted to the Local Authority and approved in writing. If planning permission is granted a site licence will be required.

Environment Agency: The discharge from the development is to mimic that which discharges from the site. The discharge from the site to the existing ponds is acceptable in principle. During times of severe rainfall overland flow of surface water could cause flooding and the site layout should be designed to ensure that new buildings are not affected by such flooding and safe access and egress is provided.

The development will only be acceptable if conditions are imposed to secure:-

- a scheme to limit surface water run off generated by the development
- a scheme to manage flooding from overland flows of surface water run off to be submitted.
- a foul drainage scheme to be submitted and implemented.

Informatives should be attached to any permission in relation to the discharge of any proposed sewage or trade effluent to inland freshwaters, discharge to private sewage treatment plants, the disposal of effluent in relation to the adjacent Woodlands Brewery spring, protected species and use of the fishery.

Public Rights of Way: The development has the potential to affect public right of way number 6 and the developer should be advised of their obligations in this respect. If the development will permanently affect the right of way then a diversion order must be sought. If the development will temporarily affect the right of way then a temporary closure order may be necessary.

Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society: No representation to make in relation to the application but should the development be approved then request that the applicant be made aware of his obligations to keep the footpath open and walkable at all times.

Cheshire East Visitor Economy: - Visitor numbers to the Cheshire East area for 2008 was 16.7m. Day visitors are the biggest market to Cheshire East, accounting for 15.3m of the overall visits. When comparing this to the overnight market, this is significantly lower; in 2008 there were 1.5m nights spent. This highlights the potential of expanding that market with an improved destination offer.

- Total value of east Cheshire's visitor economy is worth £653m, however the accommodation sector only accounts for £69m, highlighting the potential for growth.

- Wrenbury falls within the South Cheshire area being promoted as part of Nantwich & South Cheshire. It is promoted as an area with historic houses, gardens, cultural attractions, world-class events and market towns. With regard to accommodation it seeks to highlight a range of accommodation types on offer, their quality and their style.

- Cheshire East Council Visitor Economy will strongly argue that the chalets are quality graded to 3* or above. Having the grading will also mean that VCC are able to promote the facility, as without grading this cannot happen

- Self catering holidays account for approx 15% of domestic holidays, 22% of nights spent away and 17% of the holiday expenditure. Self catering holidays are becoming less frequent than staying at a friends or relatives house, or using a serviced accommodation. However, self catering holidays tend to be longer and above the average for holiday expenditure.

- Self catering accommodation is of a much higher importance in rural areas. The expenditure in rural areas is over double for self catering than for serviced accommodation. This trend is even more noticeable when looking at longer holidays where self catering accommodation equates to almost 64% of expenditure. In the year 2000, over 70% of holiday camps and parks and 57% of all self catering accommodation was located in rural areas.

- Seasonality is a problem for holiday chalet owners as most rentals take place between Easter and the end of October, however Christmas family breaks are becoming increasingly popular.

- There is also a shift happening in holiday habits. The Sunday Times recently showed that 54% of Britons plan to take their main holiday at home in 2010. The continuing tight economic situation, coupled with the fact that families who chose to stay at home this year have been surprised about the quality, variety and value that a UK holiday now offers means that consumers are planning to repeat the experience in future years.

- There are not many real competitors with the South Cheshire area in relation to holiday chalets. However, it is worth noting that similar self-catering accommodation is readily available at 12 locations in the area. There is also a section in the Destination Management Plan for Visit Chester & Cheshire that states that one of their actions between now and 2012 will be to 'Assess the potential to develop the self-catering offer in Cheshire & Warrington, the most rapidly expanding form of visitor accommodation across the UK'.

Cheshire Wildlife Trust: No comments received.

Community Fire Protection: No comments to offer

CPRE: Object – even with the reduced number of caravans the development is still substantial and inappropriate in the rural area with inadequate access.

7. VIEWS OF PARISH COUNCILS:

Wrenbury Parish Council: Consider that this is only the first phase and if permission is granted a second phase for another 14 units would follow.

Object on the following grounds:-

-Policy NE.2 allows for essential development in the open countryside. Policy RT6 allows for recreational uses in the open countryside and policy NE.13 allows for diversification but the application does not meet the requirements of policies RT.6 or NE.13 and cannot be regarded as “essential”. The development will cause demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the open countryside by visual intrusion. In addition it is not sited close to a farm complex and will not re-use existing buildings.

-Policy RT.6 requires that development in rural areas has suitable access roads to accommodate the traffic generated. Policy BE.1 requires that development should not prejudice the safe movement of traffic on surrounding roads. The local highway network has narrow lanes often single track and is not adequate for the traffic which will be generated.

-The applicant has stated that units may be sold or sublet. The occupancy of these units will be difficult to control and long periods of occupancy or permanent residential use is not compatible with policies for the rural area.

-The Parish Council considers that the site is one planning unit and to develop the site under two separate permissions one for the fishery and one for the chalets may present difficulties enforcing the planning conditions. The description of the development should be changed to include reference to both the fishery and the holiday accommodation to allow future control by the Local Planning Authority.

- It is not clear whether the applicant knows if the proposal is commercially viable and there is an intention to sell to another developer. The viability should be tested in the same way that agricultural workers' dwellings are tested and that there is demand/ need for the accommodation.

- Representations indicate that the adjacent landowner who owns the track is not willing to give permission for the track to be used to access the development.

-Drainage arrangements are not clear and there could be a detrimental effect on the local watercourse.

- The site is not served by public transport and can only be accessed by car, coaches and HGVs over an inadequate highway network.

-As there is no policy support for the proposal the Parish Council hope the Borough Councils will heed the Coalition Governments' desire for local communities to take control over development as outlined in the Localism Bill.

Marbury Parish Council (Adjacent Parish Council)

- Express concerns about the suitability of local roads for the additional traffic which would be generated particularly bearing in mind the use by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- Potential negative impacts on wildlife.
- Concern that to deliver the "twin units" to site would require local road closures.

8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:

A petition has been received with 72 signatures from residents in Pinsley Green, Wrenbury, Marbury, Nantwich, Crewe, and other Cheshire addresses and 12 locations outside of Cheshire.

Letters of objection have been received from the following addresses:-

Eagle Hall Cottage Pinsley Green Rd Wrenbury
The Cottage, Pinsley Green, Wrenbury
Springfield, New Road, Wrenbury
1 Yew Tree Barns, 2 Yew Tree Barns, Hollyhurst Road, Wrenbury
Yew Tree Farm, Cholmondeston Road, Wrenbury
2 Frith Hall Cottages, 1 Lime Tree Barns, Frith Lodge, Frith Lane, Wrenbury
1 Holland House, 40, Nantwich Road, Wrenbury
2 Pinsley Green Cottages, Wrenbury
34 Oakfield Avenue, Wrenbury
7 Sandfield Court, Wrenbury
Oak House, The Green, Wrenbury
6 Oak Cottages, Nantwich Road, Wrenbury
3 Wrenbury Hall Drive, Wrenbury
Smeaton Wood Farm, Wrenbury
Smeaton Hall, Wrenbury
Pear Tree Farm, Norbury
3, 4 Hollyhurst Cottage, Marbury
1 Heath Lane, Marbury
Marbury Hall Farm, Marbury
Rowan House, School Lane, Marbury
Sandford Farm, Aston
Brook bank, Wrenbury Road, Aston
Ashville Wrenbury Road, Aston
Ashbourne, Heatley Lane, Broomhall
64 Moorlands Road, Malvern

Representation from Frith Lodge, Frith Lane, Wrenbury and Bottle Lodge, Hollyhurst offer comments on the application on the same grounds as the letters of objection.

The grounds of objection / comments can be summarised as follows:-

Principle of Development

- To allow the development with a reduced number of caravans would result in a further application for more caravans at a later date when the Council would be in a weaker position to refuse the proposal.
- The proposal is contrary to policies NE.2 (Open Countryside) and RT.6 (Recreational Uses in the Open Countryside), NE.13 (Diversification), BE.1 (Amenity) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan.
- Policy NE.2 allows for essential development but this is not essential.
- The reason for refusal of the previous application is still valid
- The barns have been converted at Yew Tree Farm and the planning application would have had to demonstrate that there was no demand for tourist accommodation at that time.
- There is no policy in the Local Plan for Permanent / static caravans under which this development should be considered.
- The development is not integrated with exiting visitor attractions and is not based on existing buildings, since there are none on site.
- It is not clear from the application whether the development is for “residential” use or holiday homes or 6-12 month tenancies.
- Once the development has taken place it could set a precedent for further sites and there are already two caravan sites in the area.
- Concerns about the loss of agricultural land.
- Twenty double units would result in 40 units of accommodation – who would control this?
- The village is well served by the local shop and another shop which could affect that one is not required.
- Local villages do not have businesses and facilities for an influx of visitors.
- The “caravans” could in time become replaced by permanent dwellings.
- The appeal decisions submitted with the application are not directly comparable with this site being either close to a main road or town or an extension to an existing park.

Impact on the Open Countryside

- The development even with a reduced number of caravans would irrevocably destroy the character and appearance of the open countryside.
- It would spoil the peace and quiet of the open countryside.
- Such areas should be protected from encroachment and increased urban sprawl.
- No details are provided of the timber clad units, and such chalets are not in keeping with the surrounding landscape.
- The development would be visible from Combermere Park, within the Area of Special County Value, as well as Hollyhurst Road, Pinsley Green Road and Public Footpath number 6.
- The proposal is totally out of character with the area with this highly scenic area. The area is typically scattered farms and cottages with a low density of population and a development of 20 family units could include 100 people. It is therefore out of scale with the locality.
- The development would have a detrimental impact on the local community.
- Impact on Wrenbury Conservation Area which is only 2.1km from the site.
- The site is 2.6 km from Marbury Conservation Area.

Ecological Matters

- Loss of habitat for birds, badgers, barn owls, foxes and Great Crested Newts.
- Impact on Sound Heath SSSI
- Barn owls need open spaces to hunt and the development would result in loss of habitat for barn owls.
- It is not proven that the development will not affect nature conservation interests. Great Crested Newts Presence and Absence surveys can only be completed in the spring.
- The fishing ponds may well already have had an adverse impact on wildlife in the area.

Issues relating to the Fishery

- The fishery with 113 fishing stations is such in name only and has not been provided.
- The application states that there are 80 car parking spaces on the site but the car park has not yet been provided.
- Question why the fishery has not yet been developed: is this because there is no demand in this area?
- There has been no landscaping in relation to the planning permission for the fishery so will the landscaping proposed with this development be provided maintained and if necessary enforced?
- The area has historically been rich in wildlife with badgers, barn owls and Great Crested Newts present but now has been spoilt by the construction of the fishing lakes with no landscaping whatsoever.

Need for the Development

- Humberts Leisure study omits several key factors. There are sites offering comparable visitor accommodation within a 20 mile radius at Chester, Congleton, Knutsford, Winsford and Delamere with 3 of these sites offering fishing. Most fishermen are self sufficient with night fishermen using a tent. The fishing link with the accommodation is a pretext for the larger development and will result in tourists who will visit north Wales, Chester and the Peak District. These areas are already served by their own accommodation.
- There is already a wide variety of leisure activities and accommodation in the area.
- There is no business case to support the application, there are plenty of fishing facilities within 5 miles of Wrenbury including the canal, rivers, lakes and ponds for both coarse and game fishing.

Sustainability

- Wrenbury village is 2.3km from the site with the public house being 2.5km and the station 2.6km from the entrance to the site.
- Tourists/ visitors are likely to travel out of the area for facilities.
- No environmental impact assessment has been completed for the development.
- There are no pavements and street lighting between the village and the site.
- It is not practical to use the footpaths over fields to walk between the station and the site, particularly with luggage.
- Public transport is not readily accessible and is not sustainable.
- The frequency of trains to Wrenbury Station is low.

There is no bus service from the site to the station, no taxi firms in Wrenbury, Marbury, or Aston. The nearest taxi service is based in Nantwich 4 miles away.

- There are no cycle hire facilities in Wrenbury Marbury or Aston.

Environmental Issues

- The development will result in light pollution adversely affecting the quality of the environment and the life of those nearby.

- Traffic will also increase noise and pollution

- Increased litter.

- Impacts on the area from noise.

- Security in the area.

- The flood risk assessment does not include adequate information in relation to the presence of the Barnett Brook. It fails to provide a site specific fluvial flood risk assessment in accordance with PPS25 and does not consider quantify the different types of flooding whether from natural or human sources and include joint and cumulative effects. No details of flood risk reduction measures are given to show assessments are fit for purpose. The submission states that drainage design will be formed at the detailed design stage but PPS25 requires all such assessments should be made as early as possible in the planning process. There is no assessment or quantification of the potential flood risk from potential embankment breaches at the lakes should they not cope with the increased surface water. There is no consideration of the effects of flood event on the development due to lack of detail about the drainage design and calculations. The FRA does not demonstrate that the remaining risk (known as residual risk) after risk measures have been taken into account is acceptable. It fails to assess the risk posed by the lakes themselves and to quantify how large the water bodies are and whether they are compliant with the Reservoir Act. It fails to detail surface water and foul water drainage for the site. It is not possible to determine from the information available whether there will be any resultant overland flows from the site to adjoining land, and to provide details of drainage design for the site. No infiltration tests have been carried out whilst the submission states that drainage may flow into the ponds these are designed to cope with a 1 in 100 yr flood event. However the drainage measures could fail if the 1 in 100 yr event occurred in wet weather.

- The brook at the southern end of the site floods frequently in winter and would not take additional water from the development.

- Sewage could potentially get into the stream at the bottom of the valley.

- The provision of 20 caravans will put affect water pressure in the area which is already low.

Highway and Parking Matters

- The road from the railway bridge to the site and access are narrow and accidents occur. It is used by milk tankers, feed lorries, tractors, farm vehicles and machinery.

- Roads in the area are narrow and cannot take additional traffic.

- Roads are in a poor state of repair and with further budget cuts will become increasing difficult to maintain.

- The roads will not accommodate construction traffic.

- The inclusion of a car park for 80 cars is indicative of the level of traffic which will be generated by the development.

- A530 and A525 cross roads in Aston is a notorious accident location. Additional traffic here is not required.
- Visitors to the development would not be aware of the condition and narrow width of the country lanes.
- The road to the village is already busy enough and to allow the development will create more traffic making walking along the road more dangerous.
- Verges have been broken up by cars trying to pass.
- Lanes are used by young children to get to school, walkers, joggers, people horse riding and cyclists the increased traffic will make the lanes much more dangerous for such pursuits.
- The Transport Study makes no reference to leisure users on the highway.

9. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Design and Access Statement (Prepared by Goodwin Planning Services and dated November 2010)

- The number of units has been reduced to address members' concerns, to retain spacious settings and to minimise the visual impact of the development.
- The caravans are sited further way from public vantage points and dwellings.
- Reception, administration / office facilities will be agreed at a later date and the car park will be shared with the approved fishery. An operational compound and recycling centre will be sited close to the administration building.
- The site of the units complies with the definition of caravans in the Caravans Sites Act 1968 as amended. The layout meets the requirements for a minimum separation of 5m and achieves separation distances between 6m and 30m.
- The internal roads and parking spaces will be constructed with gravel top.
- Support for holiday touring caravans and chalet parks is found in :-
 - o The Good Practice guide on Planning for Tourism
 - o PPS4 especially policy EC7
 - o Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan
 - o Developing the Visitor Economy: The Strategy for Tourism in England's North West 2003-2010
 - o North West Regional Economic Strategy
 - o Growing the visitor Economy: A Refreshed Framework for Cheshire and Warrington to 2015A visitor Economy Strategic Framework for Cheshire East (currently under development)
- The development will assist in improving the quality and stock of accommodation for visitors in Cheshire East and the drive to grow the visitor economy
- The development complies with policies in the Development Plan.

- The agent has submitted correspondence commenting that whilst the petition against the development includes 72 signatures only 13 signatories are from the locality.

Market Need Assessment (Prepared by Humberts Leisure dated April 2010)

The submission includes an assessment of the strategic policy setting of the site for tourist development, an evaluation of demand using numbers of visitors to the area and a drive time catchment analysis of the local population and a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the local holiday lodge market.

Support for the application is found in:-

- Developing the Visitor Economy: the Strategy for Tourism in England's North West 2003-2010
- Northwest Regional Economic Strategy
- Growing our Visitor Economy : A Refreshed Framework for Cheshire and Warrington to 2015
- An emerging visitor economy strategy for Cheshire East which will be formulated by the end 2010.

Location factors

The site is approximately 30 mins drive from M6 and is within reasonable reach of a number of regional airports

Trains to Wrenbury from Shrewsbury and Crewe are infrequent and this suggests visitors are less likely to rely on the train.

Discussions with lodge operators confirm that there is a growing demand for self catering accommodation for short breaks

In addition rental lodge holiday makers are generally willing to travel around 90 mins to reach their destination.

Within a travel time of 90 mins there is a resident population of 8,269,437 people.

This covers North and Mid Wales, Preston, Derby and Birmingham.

Within this population there is a slightly higher proportion of the 35-54 age group and this is a key group of holiday makers for lodge accommodation.

Tourism factors

Visit Britain suggest that due to the down turn in the economy people regard holidays as an essential rather than a luxury item of expenditure.

The down turn in the economy has also resulted in an increase in the interest of holiday park rental accommodation

Park Holidays UK Ltd report an increase in demand for holidays, with advanced bookings up two thirds on its 2009 figure.

Hoseasons have similarly announced that short break bookings were up 25% on 2009.

The appeal of the UK for holidays has increased as a result of the downturn in the economy.

Whilst visitor trips to Cheshire tend to be shorter breaks than regionally the spend per visitor per night is higher.

Visitor trips to Cheshire tend to be day trips but this may in part be due to the lack of suitable accommodation and the provision of accommodation may encourage people to stay for longer.

There are a wide variety of visitor attractions within the area particularly heritage attractions which fits well with the demographics of people attracted to holiday lodges.

The more rural parts of Cheshire attract the older holiday maker and the typical holiday maker in Cheshire is more likely to be staying in self catering accommodation or camping attracted by the "great outdoors" or heritage. There is clearly potential for visitor accommodation in rural Cheshire.

The age profile of the typical staying visitor in Cheshire fits well with the age profile of the lodge holiday makers and with the catchment demographics.

It is envisaged that the accommodation would initially be aimed at the holiday rental market with the possibility of selling homes coming later.

Nationally the holiday parks and lodges sector of regional and national tourism is growing and lodges are generally used by persons who appreciate freedom.

Holiday lodge accommodation has therefore grown over the last decade.

The use of the caravan has to some extent been replaced by demand for lodge type accommodation more recently and local statistics show that Cheshire has the smallest number of caravan and camping sites of the region which may suggest that the potential for holiday lodges is in its infancy and that there is opportunity for new growth.

There are just 6 lodge parks in Cheshire offering 35 lodges and planning permission for a further 106 lodges at these 6 sites. This is considerably lower than in adjoining areas. The majority of these lodges are owner occupied showing that there is potential for further rental development.

The closest of these sites is approximately 18 miles away /35 mins drive time.

By comparison with Denbighshire (15 sites / 194 lodges), Shropshire (17 sites/ 135 lodges) and Staffordshire (5 sites 58 lodges), Cheshire is under provided with holiday lodge accommodation.

Field research suggests that occupancy levels range from 75%-93% across the season which is considered to be very high. Normally 60% occupancy would be considered robust.

Whilst there is an abundance of angling facilities across the county few offer overnight accommodation and given the demographics of the population within 90 mins drive time and the profile of anglers it is considered that there is a strong synergy between anglers and holiday lodge accommodation.

There is clear evidence to indicate that there will be a good level of demand for the timber clad lodges at Yew Tree Farm.

Transport Statement (prepared by Singleton Clamp and dated November 2010)

- The site is 1.8km from the village of Wrenbury
- The site is accessed from the unmade track which serves farmland and the poultry unit to the south. This track will be provided with three passing bays as a requirement of the planning permission for the fishing lakes.
- With the removal of the northern access route all traffic will enter the site from the southern end of the development.
- Hollyhurst Road meets Wrenbury Road some 230m north of the access point to the site and a public footpath is located to the north of the application site.
- Lanes in the area are lightly trafficked and whilst there are no dedicated cycle facilities there are a number of signed cycle routes
- A speed survey at the access point on Hollyhurst Road showed that a total of 34 vehicles passed the point in 2.5 hours and the 85th percentile of eastbound traffic was travelling at 29.51 mph and 29.85 mph for west bound traffic.
- Traffic surveys on 9th and 10th July 2010 on the site access showed that the access road is very lightly trafficked between 0700-1900 hours on Friday 9th July there were 12 vehicles in and 13 out. Over the same period on Saturday 10th July there were 13 vehicles in and 11 out.
- Peak times for journeys were between 10am and 11 am on the Friday and 9am and 10am on Saturday.

- Visibility at the access point on Hollyhurst Road is 2.4m x 70m in both directions although road side vegetation will need to be trimmed to retain this visibility. Given that the 85th percentile is below 30mph it is considered that this level of visibility is acceptable.
- The site is 1.8km from the centre of Wrenbury, the railway station is marginally outside the 2km walking distance recognised in PPG13 using either local roads or the Public right of Way. The village store and post office, and some pubs also fall within this 2km distance.
- The site is well located for walking using the local public rights of way
- The villages of Aston, Marbury, Norbury and parts of Sandbach are within 5km the recognised distance for cycling in PPG13
- The nearest bus stop is in Wrenbury village approximately 2km from the site, and bus service 72 between Nantwich and Whitchurch stops up to 5 times per day in each direction Monday to Saturday.
- The Wrenbury railway station can be reached by walking or using the 72 bus. Trains run approximately every 2 hours to Crewe and Shrewsbury with 8 to 10 trains in each direction on Monday and Saturday
- A local taxi service based in Nantwich could also be used to link to the railway station
- The site operator could also provide a mini bus.
- Survey information based on surveys in September 2007 at Ribblesdale Park, Gisburn and Bassenthwaite Park, Keswick showed that for each occupied unit 2 trips were generated per day per unit at Ribblesdale Park and 1.69 trips for each unit at Bassenthwaite.
- TRICS data base shows that similar trip rates are generated by larger caravan sites
- Based on survey information from Ribblesdale Park it is estimated that the site for 20 units would generate 40 trips per day at full occupancy or 18 trips per day assuming 45% occupancy with 6 trips in the busiest hour at 100% occupation or 3 trips per hour at 45% occupation.
- With a Travel Plan for the site these trip rates can be reduced further.
- The lodges will be marketed for fishing breaks and there is therefore potential for these trips to be reduced further.

Interim Travel Plan

- Development improvements include the use of a minibus to transport visitors to the village or the railway station and also to collect and drop off staff depending on their origin/ destination.
- A welcome pack including bread milk and basic foods could be provided to reduce the need for guests to travel with a comprehensive pre-order service available for visitors on arrival.
- Information would be made available to visitors within the lodges about public transport links, PROW, cycle routes, details of cycle hire and cycle repair shops. The Travel Plan will be monitored by the Travel Plan Coordinator who will be the site manager.

Tree Survey and Assessment (prepared by FFC Landscape Architects and dated January 2010)

Identifies 52 trees on or close to the site. Some of which are in need of work to remove ivy and dead wood for their long term health. Some have potential bat roost

cavities. Root Protection Areas are shown. The majority of trees are in good to fair condition, only 4 on-site trees are identified as poor and of these only one is identified as potentially requiring felling if remedial tree works fail.

Landscape Visual Impact Study and Mitigation Proposals (prepared by FFC Landscape Architects dated October 2010)

The site is identified in the EWM1 (Estate Wood and Mere) category of The Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment. This is typically rolling countryside. Within the site land slopes from north to south with levels ranging from 74m AOD to 67 m AOD.

The site has been modified by the formation of 3 fishing lakes and hedgerows interspersed with Oak and other mature trees in a variety of conditions around the site. A north-south hedgerow divides the site into two areas.

The study identifies 3 character areas (1) Rolling countryside and small wetlands such as meres, heaths and mosses (2) Ornamental landscape features such as parkland and lakes and (3) Meres mosses and ponds some meres adapted for ornamental purposes.

Rolling countryside and small wetland area such as meres, heaths and mosses is typically a distinctive landscape with a strong sense of place and has features worthy of conservation. Some areas have large scale agricultural development and other ad-hoc features which form significant distraction to the setting reducing the overall landscape quality. The area is sensitive to inappropriate change

Ornamental Landscape features such as parkland and lakes – This characteristic is a distinctive and desirable landscape with a strong sense of place and generates landscape of ecological, amenity and conservation interest. It should be protected from intrusion as a result of need for farming diversification and should be protected from large scale agricultural features. The landscape quality is highly desirable and can be enjoyed by visitors and users. It is sensitive to inappropriate change.

Meres Mosses and ponds – The application site falls in this character area as a result of the construction of the lakes. This area has a distinguishable landscape characteristic though there is no particular sense of place. The fishery is in a state of development. Interest and demand for the sport will enable this to mature to an attractive feature for human use as well as for wildlife. Overall the current landscape value is low as it is being developed but there is scope for positive change.

24 view points (receptors) were initially identified. These were then reassessed taking account of landform and vegetation to 7 viewpoints as follows:-

Approach from the west on Hollyhurst Lane (site entrance)

Approach from north east from Wrenbury

View from A536 Marley Hall Covert

From Combermere monument

View from Pooles Riding Wood

View from Barn conversion

View from footpath along railway line

View from footpath by barns

View from railway

For views from the site entrance, and the approach from Wrenbury and users of the railway, the number of people affected by the development could be a significant number. For the other viewpoints there will be few occasions to view the development

because these are rural tracks or properties or rural footpaths which are only used occasionally.

With the reduction in the number of lodges, the proposals are now generally more centrally located away from outer areas reducing potential impacts.

No trees or hedges will be removed from the site. Landscaping will enhance the setting of the individual lodges. New buffer planting along the drive, to the north and along the existing hedgerows will strengthen existing planting. The new woodland cover will reflect the species present in the area.

Mitigation includes:-

- A buffer strip, a minimum of 8m wide, to the north end of the site, widening out at the ends – this will mitigate views from footpaths, the railway and the barn conversion.
- Planting strips alongside the site entrance road have been removed because caravans around Lake 2 have been removed from the scheme. However some planting is proposed on the northern, eastern and western sides of Lake 2.
- Planting blocks on southern boundary have been enhanced to strengthen boundary planting together with extensive planting around the fishery car park which will mitigate views from Combermere Monument and Pooles Riding Wood. These views are very distant from the site.

Bat and Barn Owl Survey (Prepared by UES and dated 19th August 2010)

- Five species of bats were found to use the site, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelles, Daubentons Bat, Noctule and Brown Long Eared Bat.
- Six trees were identified as having suitable features for bat roosts. One of these was found to be used by a Soprano Pipistrelle, (T9 on the tree survey).
- It is recommended that T9 is retained with its deadwood to avoid disturbing bats and their roosts. (Tree survey recommended minor deadwooding only)
- The management of trees T5, T13, T19, T22, and T23 which have suitable features for bat roosts can go ahead without the need for further survey or licence provided the advice in relation to mitigation, compensation and management is followed. No bats were seen to emerge from these trees.
- Mitigation includes tree works to take place in the presence of and following advice from a licensed bat ecologist. Any branches removed with cavities suitable for use by bats should be carefully lowered to the ground and left for 48 hours to allow bats to escape if present.
- Compensation includes the provision of 10 bat boxes.
- Management includes planting proposed in the landscaping scheme which will improve the site for use by bats, barn owl, hirundines and other wildlife. Areas of grassland and rough habitat at the edge of the site should also be retained.
- No signs of the presence for cavity roosting or nesting were found the survey on 15th and 16th August.
- During the dawn survey on 16th August one Barn Owl was found perching on tree T13 which then moved to T22.
- A Little Owl as noted perching on the farm barn gable next to Yew Tree Cottage.
- Barn Owl boxes were noted in the adjacent field.
- Records from the South Cheshire Barn Owl group do not record any breeding attempts or roosting records from these boxes.
- Provided the advice on evaluation and recommendations is followed there should be no negative effect on the local bat population and the correct management of the

trees and hedges with the provision of bat boxes could improve the quality of the habitat for bats.

Great Crested Newt Assessment mitigation and ecological update (Submitted with application 10/1776N - Prepared by UES and dated 15.07.10)

- The 2006 Great Crested Newt Survey for the fishery inspected 7 ponds within the locality and found small sized populations in three of the 7 ponds.
- The development is unlikely to affect any protected species or habitats
- Three new ponds have been created one was dry at the time of the inspection.
- It is recommended that a new pond is formed on the site of an offsite scrape and 3 bat and 3 bird nest boxes are provided to offset any ecological impacts.
- The aquatic habitats provide good habitats for invertebrates birds and foraging bats.
- If development commences in the bird nesting season then a breeding bird survey should be undertaken to ascertain the presence of nesting birds.

Flood Risk Assessment (Prepared by Betts Associates, dated November 2010)

- The site falls from north to south towards the Barnett Brook which approximately 100m south of the site. Levels across the site range from 75.0m to 67.5m. AOD.
- The site is located outside of any area at risk from flooding (within Flood Zone 1).
- The development would result in 11% of the land (0.82ha) of impermeable surfaces which would include caravans, the administration building, cycle store, and roads/paths.
- The British Hydrological Events website shows no record of past flooding within the Yew Tree Farm area.
- The site is located outside of any area at risk from flooding on Environment Agency's website.
- Barnett Brook is Main River and does not pose a significant flood risk to surrounding areas. Therefore the Barnett Brook would not pose a threat to the development site.
- PPS 25 confirms that this use is appropriate for Zone 1.
- Surface water run off from the impermeable surfaces and grassed areas will be drained to the man made ponds already present within the site which will have the capacity to store water from 1 in 100 year flood events.
- The development generates a maximum volume of run off for a 1 in 100 year event, 6 hour duration of 103.1 metres.
- Emergency access and egress would not be affected in times of flooding since the level of the land is above that level at risk from flooding.

Climate Change Statement (Submitted by Stephen Goodwin undated)

- The location of the accommodation and development in association with the fishery will reduce potential vehicle movements
- The site is located on a public footpath, within 1.8km of the centre of Wrenbury Village, which has a shop and post office and a number of local pubs within 2km of the site.
- The local road network is suitable for cycling and Aston, Marbury, Norbury and parts of Sandbach are within cycling distance (5km in accordance with PPG13) of the site, as is Wrenbury railway station.
- The development includes a secure cycle store.

- The number 72 bus route passes through Wrenbury village and passes the railway station.
- A travel plan will be produced.
- Timber for the lodges will be from sustainable sources.
- All lodges will have double glazing, heating and sound insulation, and low energy light fittings.
- The landscaping scheme provides details of native planting.
- Facilities will be put in place for waste recycling for glass, aluminium cans and paper.
- Surface water run off from the site will drain to the lakes to control run off from the site.

10. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

At the time the previous application was submitted government advice to local authorities in the form of a letter stated that policies in the RSS should not be taken into consideration when determining a planning application. Case law has since confirmed that RSS policies are still a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Policy RDF2 of the Regional Spatial Strategy notes that in rural areas innovative and flexible solutions are needed towards supporting a more diverse economic base whilst maintaining support for agriculture and tourism. It is noted that tourism is an important factor in diversifying and strengthening the rural economy but needs to be sustainably located. The RSS also notes that the majority of rural areas are used for agriculture, forestry and various other land based industries including fisheries. It states that such activities should be supported where they are sustainable in nature and contribute to the rural environment and economy. Policy W6 notes that development for tourism should seek to deliver improved economic growth and quality of life, through sustainable tourism activity in line with the principles of Policy W7 and RDF2. Development should be of an appropriate scale, and be located where the environment and infrastructure can accommodate the visitor impact. Policy W7 states that plans and strategies for tourism development which improves the region's overall tourism offer, promote facilities which extend the existing visitor season, harness the potential of sport and recreation and improve the public realm and developments which are viable in market and financial terms. The maintenance and enhancement of existing tourism development will be supported where proposals meet environmental and other development control criteria. There are no specific policies in relation to the provision of holiday accommodation in the RSS.

This application is for the provision of 20 chalets (twin unit caravans) for use as holiday accommodation and not the fishery which was the subject of an earlier planning permission. Comments in relation to the suitability and condition of the fishery are not therefore relevant to the consideration of this application. The caravans are described as twin units to allow for larger units of holiday accommodation, not an increase in number of units occupied.

Policy NE.2 (Open Countryside) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan allows for “essential” development for agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, essential works undertaken by a public service authority or statutory undertaker, or for other uses appropriate to the rural area. Policy RT.10 (Touring Camping and Camping Sites) allows for touring caravan and camping sites where a number of criteria are met. However this application is for timber clad holiday accommodation not touring accommodation. Policy RT.7 (Visitor Accommodation) in relation to visitor accommodation allows hotel or guest house accommodation within settlement boundaries or for the change of use of existing residential accommodation in the open countryside to guest houses.

Policy RT.6 (Recreational Uses in the Open Countryside) allows for recreational uses in the open countryside. It is considered that the provision of the lodges is not specifically a recreational use but is recreational accommodation. The justification to the policy refers to Stapeley Water Gardens and Bridgemere Garden World hence the fact that this policy is aimed at attractions rather than visitor accommodation. Policy NE.15 (Re-use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings) also allows the conversion of existing buildings to visitor accommodation where specified criteria are met.

There is therefore no specific policy which permits development for holiday accommodation in the open countryside although policy NE.2 allows for development which is appropriate in the rural area, where this can be regarded as “essential”. Under such circumstances the application has been advertised as a departure to the adopted Local Plan.

It is therefore necessary to look at Government guidance to ascertain whether there may be grounds for allowing the development based on such advice.

Policy EC7 of PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth states that Local Planning Authorities should support sustainable rural tourism which benefit rural businesses, communities and visitors and which utilise rather than harm the character of the countryside. It notes the need to support the provision and expansion of tourist facilities in sustainable locations where possible and also recognises that facilities may be required in other locations where they are provided in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction. This policy therefore supports tourist accommodation away from a village or settlement where this is related to an existing tourist facility. The policy notes that new or expanded holiday accommodation, including chalet sites, should not be prominent in the landscape and any visual intrusion should be minimised by effective high quality screening.

Policy EC12 of PPS4 notes that when determining planning applications for economic development in rural areas, sites which are remote from local service centres may be an acceptable location for development, even if not readily accessible by public transport.

Further support for the provision of rural tourist accommodation is found in The Good Practice Guide on Tourism. The Guide notes that holiday parks are the largest providers of rural bed space and that the provision of tourist accommodation can help to support the local economy and provide for rural

diversification. It advises of the need to balance concerns to protect the landscape and minimise environmental impacts with the need to provide adequate facilities.

The site is no longer in agricultural use but has the benefit of an extant permission for the use of the land as a fishery therefore concerns about the loss of agricultural land do not fall to be considered.

Representations make reference to the fact that prior to the conversion of Yew Tree Barns for residential development the application submitted would have needed to demonstrate that there was no requirement for the buildings for tourist accommodation. However the economics of provision mean that unless a relatively high rate of occupation can be achieved, the cost of converting barns to tourist accommodation is often prohibitive.

Whilst PPS 4 (Policy EC7: Planning for Tourism in Rural Areas) notes the need to carefully weigh the objectives of providing adequate facilities or enhancing visitors' enjoyment or improving the financial viability with the need to protect the landscape, it does not require the authority to test the viability of the proposal. Policy W6 of the RSS refers to plans strategies, proposals and schemes whereas policy W7 refers solely to plans and strategies. Policy W7 states plans and strategies should ensure high quality environmentally sensitive well designed tourist attractions should be viable in market and financial terms.

The provision of the chalet accommodation with the fishing lakes will allow visitors to use the fishing lakes or the chalet accommodation or both and in that sense therefore provides a wider economic base for the proposed business.

The accommodation at the existing caravan park at Wrenbury offers a different type of accommodation and whilst some people may be attracted to both the chalet accommodation and the caravan park others may prefer the more spacious accommodation of a chalet.

The Parish Council request that the application be determined in accordance with the coalition government's desire for local communities to have more control of development in their area as outlined in the Localism Bill. However there is no legislation in place for decisions to be taken on this basis and no local policies in the form of a neighbourhood plan on which to base such a decision.

In summary the policy in PPS4 (Policy EC7)also notes that new chalet developments may be acceptable where they are not prominent in the landscape and high quality screening is provided to minimise the visual impact. For reasons explained in detail later in this report it is considered that the proposed development meets these requirements and that the development complies with this policy. It is therefore considered that the more recent policy in PPS4 presents a reason to allow the application contrary to the development plan policies in the Replacement Local Plan which are in place at this point in time. Whilst the policy support for tourism development in the RSS is largely for sustainably located development it is not considered

that it excludes all rural development which is not sustainably located. The RSS notes the developments may be “sustainable in nature and contribute to the rural environment and economy”. PPS4 states at paragraph 3, in the introduction to the PPS, that “The development management policies in the PPS can be applied directly by the decision maker when determining planning applications.”

Impact on the character and appearance of the open countryside

The application is for 20 chalets on land varying in height from 67m AOD at the southern edge of the site to 74m at the northern end. The chalets would be timber clad and stand between 3.5m and 4.5m high depending on the manufacturer supplying the units. The supporting statement confirms that the caravans will be a maximum of 6.8m x 20m. This complies with the definition of a caravan. However the landscape plan and site layout are based on units with dimensions of 6m x 13m. If the caravans were provided at the maximum size then the planting which is relatively close to the caravans would not be able to grow to maturity and the screening would therefore be less effective. It is therefore recommended that a condition be attached to any permission to ensure that no units are larger than 6m x 13m. This is particularly important since licences require a gap of 5m between units.

The Landscape Visual Assessment has been completed in accordance with the “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment” produced by the Landscape Institute and the “Landscape Character Assessment Guidance” produced by the Countryside Agency.

From an initial 24 potential receptors following site survey only 7 were identified as being of high or medium sensitivity. These were:-

Site entrance from the west (on Hollyhurst Lane)

Site entrance from the north east (from Wrenbury direction)

Marley Hall covert

Poole's Riding Wood

Footpath Number 5 alongside the railway line

Footpath Number 6 alongside the barn conversion

Railway line.

The Assessment recognises that for the first two and last of the above receptors the number of people affected could be significant as a result of passenger numbers / traffic in the area.

The remaining receptors are considered to offer low sensitivity due to the fact that they are rural properties, tracks or footpaths which are not heavily used.

The Assessment notes that the roadside hedges together with hedgerows and trees on the eastern site boundary, the eastern part of the southern site boundary and the hedgerow with trees located centrally within the site would all be retained.

Views from Hollyhurst Lane, from the direction of Wrenbury, the footpath north of the site / by the barns and the railway will benefit by the removal of the caravans from the northern side of the site and around the western lake (Lake 2).

Mitigation includes:-

- An enlarged buffer strip to the north, east and west sides of Lake 1 (the north end of the site). This will mitigate views from footpath north of the site, the railway and the dwellings at Yew Tree Barns.
- Planting alongside the site entrance road and north of Lake 2 have been removed. A revised planting area on the slopes on the northern, eastern and western sides of Lake 2 is now proposed. This will help screen the caravans from Marley Hall Covert.
- Planting on southern site boundary and around the fishery car park which will mitigate views from Combermere Monument and Pooles Riding Wood. These views are very distant from the site.
- Wood and hedgerow planting at points along the eastern site boundary will also provide screening for views from public rights of way located some distance from the eastern site boundary.
- A limited amount of tree and shrub planting on the islands will also provide general screening to the site helping to break up views.

Whilst the loss of planting adjacent to the access road and on the north side of Lake 2 (at a distance from the water) is noted, this does mean that larger areas of grassland can be retained in the site as a suitable habitat for small mammals and provide areas for barn owls to hunt.

The planting schedules provide a better mix of native species, based on those growing in the area, planted at wider planting centres which is considered preferable for good landscape management. The planting would therefore provide an enhanced setting to the area to mitigate the effects of the development on the receptors.

Whilst it would take time for the planting to grow and become fully effective it is considered that the proposed planting would provide good screening to mitigate the effects of the development. Views of the development would continue to be present for some time while the planting takes effect from the site access, a gate on Hollyhurst Road, the public footpaths in the area and the railway line. With the exception of the public footpaths in the area and the railway line there are no large open expanses of land where the public have access and from which the site is clearly visible. There are locations along Hollyhurst Road from which the site would be seen but these are gateways and entrances rather than long areas of open views. The existing landscape infrastructure and the fall of the land provide immediate mitigation to some extent. With the reduction in number of caravans, their removal from the islands, the northern site boundary and the western lake leaving the majority of caravans further from the dwellings at Yew Tree Barn the railway and the public right of way, it is considered that the proposed planting will provide mitigation to ensure that the development would not adversely impact on the character and appearance of the open countryside.

Whilst no details of the appearance of the administration office have been submitted this would be a relatively small single storey structures measuring approximately 9m x 18m. It would be located on the car park with planting around the car park to provide screening. It is not therefore considered that this would have any significant impact on the landscape overall and it is considered that the details of the appearance can be submitted by condition.

Representations suggest that the development would have a detrimental impact on the Wrenbury and Marbury Conservation Areas. However the site is too remote from these locations to justify refusal of the application on the

grounds of adverse impact on the character, appearance or the setting of the conservation areas and is not visible from them.

Existing Trees and Hedges

The Council's Landscape Architect notes that the tree survey is now two years old and requests that an updated tree survey be provided prior to the commencement of development and any other site works. The development would retain all the trees and hedges around the site with the exception of one tree (T19 in the south eastern corner of the site) which may have to be removed if tree works are unsuccessful. The development would not therefore have any detrimental impact on existing trees and hedgerows. Tree works including the removal of ivy, deadwooding, selective thinning/branch removal and in one case major tree surgery (to T19) are proposed to some of the trees on the site. This work should be required to be completed by condition. Tree protection measures are also proposed and should be subject to a condition. No chalets would be positioned within Root Protection Areas although two chalets would abut the Root Protection Areas. Conditions should be included for no dig construction and for tree protection measures to be put in place and retained for the period of construction.

No details of hedgerow protection have been provided for the construction period and these should also be required by condition.

Amenity

With the removal of caravan units from the north side of Lake 1 and around Lake 2 the closest unit would be 155m from the converted dwellings at Yew Tree Farm and set at a lower level. At this distance there would be no adverse impact as a result of the presence of the caravan units as a result of overdomination, overlooking or loss of privacy.

A number of the dwellings at Yew Tree farm face towards the access route to the site. The planting alongside the access which formed part of the earlier application does not form part of this submission but it is not considered that this would result in a detrimental impact on residential amenity at these dwellings due to the comings and goings of vehicles on the access track. This is because the access track is a minimum of 145m from the closest dwelling and the proposal only relates to the provision of twenty caravans. In addition much of the access track is set below the level of the dwellings.

No details of external lighting have been submitted with the application but in reality some degree of lighting would be required to ensure the safety of people staying in the accommodation at night time. Therefore a condition should be attached to any permission for a scheme of lighting to be submitted, approved and implemented. Lighting should be predominately low level lighting, angled down, shielded and controlled by sensors so as to reduce light pollution. With these controls the lighting should not adversely impact on residential amenities at nearby dwellings. The fact that lighting would be required and no details have been submitted is not a reason to refuse the application.

The proposed chalets are to be developed in conjunction with a fishery and no social club, bar or café is proposed at the site. In addition the majority of the chalets would be well away from the existing dwellings at Yew Tree Barns. It is not therefore considered that the development would result in noise and disturbance for residents at the existing dwellings,

particularly since visitors staying at the site are likely to respect the need to be relatively quiet to ensure no adverse impact on the fishing.

Ecology

Although no Great Crested Newt Survey was submitted with this application the Council's Ecologist considers that the Great Crested Newt Survey submitted with the previous application can be used for this application. The Bat and Barn Owl Survey has been submitted.

The submitted ecological information notes that meta-populations of Great Crested Newts are likely to be decreasing and recommends the creation of a new pond at the site recorded as pond 3 in the survey. This is a damp area or scrape rather than a pond at present. However this land is outside the applicant's control and not within the application area. Whilst the applicant has indicated his willingness to create a new pond here, this will also need the agreement of the landowner. It is recommended that any condition for the formation of the pond is worded in such a way as to recognise that this is outside the applicant's ownership. The proposed site planting would enhance shelter and foraging areas for Great Crested Newts.

A condition in relation to the use of protective fencing to the off-site badger sett will ensure no damage to it.

A further condition should also ensure no tree or hedgerow works take place in the nesting season. Another condition should ensure that if development commences in the bird nesting season the site is inspected and no works take place within 4m of any nesting bird.

Trees have been subject to survey and one, T9 (close to the northern pond on the eastern side of the site) was found to be used as a bat roost. As a result, deadwooding originally proposed to this tree, will not now take place. Following the more detailed bat and barn owl survey the number of bat boxes proposed has been increased from 3 to 10. The Council's Ecologist therefore considers that subject to these provisions with tree works following the practice outlined in the survey, there would be no adverse impact on bats.

The submissions propose 10 Schwegler bat boxes and 3 Schwegler bird nest boxes to be provided but no details of the location are given. Conditions should be attached to any permission for details of the locations to be submitted, approved and then the nest boxes to be provided before the chalets are first occupied.

The presence of barn owls on the site and the provision of barn owl boxes on adjacent land are noted but it the Council's Ecologist does not consider that the development would be likely to have any adverse impact on this species. It is however recommended that two barn owl boxes be provided on site. Further with appropriate management of the landscaping, the retention of rough grassland within the site could improve the habitat for small mammals and promote use of the site by barn owls. A condition for a maintenance scheme is recommended and this can include the requirement to retain rough grassland.

It is not considered that the development would adversely impact on the water quality in the Barnet Brook or adversely affect Quoisley Mere SSSI or Combermere SSSI, since the application site is some distance away from these sites and the Brook.

With these measures in place it is considered that the development would not have any adverse impact on protected species and that it includes appropriate measures to enhance biodiversity at the site. The use of native species and additional tree and hedgerow planting with woodland blocks would in any event provide a new habitat on this land to enhance biodiversity.

Highway Matters and Parking

A Transport Statement and Interim Travel Plan have been submitted with the application. The Transport Statement reports the results of traffic surveys. The Strategic Highway Manager has raised no objections to the application. Bearing in mind the reduction in the number of units proposed, particularly since there are no changes to the access point on Hollyhurst Road it would be difficult to justify refusal of this application for a reduced scale of development. It is noted that the northern track leaving the main access track is no longer part of this proposal. However it is not considered that this will have any significant impact on vehicle movements since the caravans which would have been most likely to use this route are now excluded from the application. The survey demonstrated that the levels of traffic on Hollyhurst Road were low and that the speed of traffic was about 29 mph in both directions.

The site would be accessed down the track which is to be used by the fishery. This also serves two other holdings and is used by Woodlands Brewery to collect water.

A traffic survey on Hollyhurst Road found that over a 2.5 hour period a total of only 34 vehicles used Hollyhurst Road. Traffic is also light on the access road which would serve the development. In the event that the chalets were all occupied by comparison with traffic at other similar developments, 20 chalets would generate 6 vehicle movements during the busiest hour which is 12 midday to 1.00pm assuming 100% occupation. With a lower occupancy rate and at other times of the day the traffic would be less. There would in reality be very few occasions when the site is 100% occupied.

Average occupancy rates of around 45% would give 3 vehicles per hour which added to the existing traffic on the access track would generate 6 vehicles per hour. The Transport Statement does not calculate a figure for the fishermen's vehicles. It notes that the fishermen are likely to arrive early in the day or could stay at the lodges. Three passing places would be provided for vehicles to pass on the access track.

Representations express concern about the impact of the development on local roads which are narrow and winding country lanes. However the level of traffic generated by the development would not be sufficient to justify refusal of the application due to impact on the highway network in the area. A widening of the access track, immediately adjacent to the junction with Hollyhurst Lane, at the site entrance, allows vehicles to pass already. The application includes the formation of the two passing bays along the access track as shown on the plans submitted with the fishery. Therefore passing places are included to serve the development.

A visibility splay of 2m x 70m is proposed which is considered acceptable for the speed of traffic recorded on Hollyhurst Road.

The application includes one car parking space at each of the units. There is in addition a parking area proposed with the fishery which would hold 80 vehicles. This is not changed in the current application. The proposals include one additional parking bay with each caravan is therefore considered reasonable.

Whilst representations object to the application on the grounds of the number of people who walk, cycle and horse ride on local roads bearing in mind the level of traffic which will be generated this would not present a reason to refuse the application.

The submission includes an Interim Travel Plan which makes suggestions for improving the sustainability of the development. Measures proposed include the use of a mini bus to ferry visitors around, information about public transport, cycle hire etc, and the offer of a pre-ordered grocery box for visitors on arrival. A condition should be attached to any permission to require a full Travel Plan to be submitted approved and implemented prior to the occupation of the units and monitored and updated annually.

There is a public right of way through the northern section of the site for a distance of about 40m. With the removal of caravans from the north side of the development there are no direct impacts on the right of way and visual impact of the development, as discussed above, is reduced from the previous application.

Sustainability

The Transport Statement, submitted with the application, notes that the site is located 1.8km from the centre of Wrenbury and that the station is just over 2km from the site. Measurements on the Council's GIS show the distance from the site access on Hollyhurst Road to the post office in Wrenbury is slightly over 2km (2.07km). Whilst this is just over the distance of 2km which PPG13 recognises as the distance most people are prepared to walk it is not significantly over that distance. The GIS measurements show that the station falls within 2km of the site access, walking by road. Walking through the fields would reduce this distance slightly. The distance to the public houses at the Cotton Arms and Dusty Miller would be 2.4km from the site access. It is therefore considered that these facilities would be within walking distance of the site for people who were prepared to walk although there is no footway and no street lighting for most of the journey.

In terms of public transport the village and railway station are on the number 72 bus route which runs between Nantwich and Whitchurch. There are 6 or 7 buses per day Mondays to Saturdays which serve the village and station during the working day, although the Wednesday service is slightly different. The railway station has links to Nantwich and Whitchurch with about 10 trains running on week days in each direction from 06:00 hours to just around midnight. In reality very few visitors to the site would use public transport and the submitted application and supporting information acknowledge this. However the Travel Plan offers to provide a mini bus to help support visitors who want to use public transport.

Policy EC12 of PPS4 recognises that a site may be acceptable for economic development in the rural area where it is not readily accessible by public transport and in view of the fact that the site could be visited using public transport it is not considered that the limited links to public transport would justify refusal of the application.

The development would be constructed with measures to minimise energy usage both during construction through the use of sustainable timber and insulation and subsequently

through the inclusion of double glazing, insulation and low energy light bulbs. Measures would be provided for recycling where possible. Whilst the site is located away from any settlement and not on a bus route the provision of cycle parking would encourage the use of cycling as an alternative means of transport. The Interim Travel Plan also offers to provide groceries for holiday makers. An Interim Travel Plan has been produced and would be developed to a full Travel Plan to promote sustainable means of transport wherever possible together with the use of a mini bus.

The development therefore complies with policies which seek to ensure that measures for sustainable living are incorporated into new development. A condition should be provided to ensure that details of recycling facilities to be provided are submitted approved and implemented.

Drainage

An updated Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted to account of alterations in the site layout. Whilst objections are raised in representations to the FRA there are no such objections from the Environment Agency. At paragraph 10 PPS25 states that Flood Risk Assessments should be carried out to the appropriate degree at all levels of development. It is considered that the Assessment submitted is proportionate to the application proposed. The Environment Agency accepts the use of the fishing ponds for the storage of water on the site. It would be difficult to justify refusal of the application for such a reason when there are no objections from the Environment Agency.

Concerns about the impact of potential pollution from the site adversely affecting a nearby spring raised in the previous application are no longer an issue since the toilet block is now located at the north end of the car park to prevent this. The overflow from the fishery toilet block would pass through a package treatment plant and would be drained through adjoining land away from the spring and the application area to the Barnett Brook which lies some 100m to the south of the site. In addition the car park would be surfaced in tarmac and provided with oil interceptors to ensure that run off does not pollute the water supply to the spring. Whilst the Authority would not normally look for a tarmac surface to a car park of this size in the open countryside in this particular case it is required to protect the water quality.

Conditions can be attached as requested by the Environment Agency for a scheme to limit surface water run off generated by the development, a scheme to manage the overland flow of surface water run off and a foul drainage scheme. All schemes would need to be submitted approved and fully implemented before the chalets were occupied.

Need for Environmental Impact Assessment

Schedule 2 of the Environmental Impact Regulations 1999 (as amended) includes caravan sites which exceed one hectare. This site is 7.2 hectares. It is therefore necessary to consider whether the proposal is development for which an EIA is required. Annex A of the Circular to the Regulations indicates that EIA is likely to be required for developments exceeding 10 hectares and for holiday villages and complexes with more than 300 bed spaces or caravan sites with over 200 pitches. The application is for 20 chalets. Further the information submitted with the application indicates that the development will not adversely impact on protected species and will not significantly impact on the character and appearance of the locality. The proposals include mitigation to offset the visual impacts of the development and to enhance biodiversity.

The submission demonstrates that the development will only generate a low level of additional traffic and that the highway can accommodate this traffic. There will be no significant impacts as a result of noise, lighting, pollution or any other matter.

The site is not located in any sensitive area as defined by the Regulations. The development is of a scale such that it is only of local importance and it will not generate any potentially hazardous or unusually completed environmental effects. It is therefore considered that the proposal is not development for which an EIA is required.

Conditions

In order to ensure that the development is only used for holiday accommodation and not for permanent residential development conditions should be attached as recommended in the Good Practice Guide for Tourism and the Conditions Circular to limit the occupation of the chalets to holiday purposes only, not to be occupied as the persons sole or main place of residence, and for the operator to maintain an up to date register of names of all owner(s) and occupier(s) of each chalet and their main address. Further, the operators should be required to make this record available to the local authority at all reasonable times, upon request.

A condition should be attached to any permission for a scheme for the removal of the land bridges which link the islands to the banks to be submitted to the local planning authority approved and implemented. This is to ensure that when the bridges are removed the materials are spread in such a way as to blend in with the existing contours and not to adversely impact on the proposed landscaping. It will also help to ensure that the works do not adversely impact on adjoining residential amenities.

The Environmental Health Officer had initially requested a condition for a contaminated land survey to be completed. However no such condition was proposed in relation to the previous application and following further discussions, with Environmental Health, it is therefore recommended that an informative be added to any permission to remind the developer that it is their responsibility to assess the state of the land for the proposed development. In view of the fact that the land has previously been used for agriculture and excavated to form lakes the land is considered to have a low potential for contamination.

Other Matters

The comments of the Public Rights of Way Unit and Informatives in the Environment Agency's response should be forwarded as an informative to the applicant. The applicant should also be advised of the Strategic Highway Manager's wish to see the hedgerow on Hollyhurst Lane trimmed to improve visibility at the access.

11. CONCLUSIONS

There are no policies in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan to allow the provision of holiday chalets within the rural area. The application has therefore been advertised as a departure to the Development Plan. However the RSS is supportive of development for tourism in rural areas. PPS4 is supportive of new or expanded chalet development sites which are not prominent in the landscape and where any visual intrusion is effectively minimised by high quality

screening. The development has been reduced from 34 units as proposed under application 10/1776N to 20 units with the caravans closest to the dwellings at Yew Tree Farm and around Lake 2 being removed from the scheme. In addition those caravans on islands within the lakes are no longer part of the scheme. The Landscape Visual Impact Study demonstrates that the site is not prominent from large open areas and the landscaping scheme shows that the site would be effectively screened by high quality planting. The retention of the existing planting around the site together with the proposed landscaping would mitigate the effects of the development on the landscape.

Whilst the site is accessed via narrow winding roads the transport submission has demonstrated that the level of traffic generated by the development would be low and can be accommodated on the highway and the proposal would not adversely impact on highway safety. Adequate parking would be provided within the site to accommodate the needs of the fishery enterprise and the parking requirements for the chalet development.

The submitted Ecological surveys indicate that there would be no detrimental effect on protected species and that the measures proposed would ensure that biodiversity is enhanced by the provision of bird, barn owl and bat boxes and the proposed landscaping. Measures would be adopted to protect nesting birds.

Whilst the site would be seen from nearby dwellings until such time as the planting is established it is not considered that the proposed units would be so close to the dwellings as to justify refusal of the application.

The site is not located particularly close to the village, nevertheless PPS4 acknowledges that facilities involving new development may be acceptable where they are related to another countryside attraction therefore the location of the chalets at the site of the fishery is considered acceptable.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:-

- 1. Commence development within 3 years.**
- 2. Development in accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Details of external appearance of chalets together with coloured samples of external materials to be submitted, approved and implemented.**
- 4. The caravans permitted shall not exceed 6m x 13m in dimension.**
- 5. Details of external appearance and materials, including colours and finishes, for wardens office administration building to be submitted approved and implemented**
- 6. Revised Tree Survey including hedgerows, Assessment and Tree and Hedgerow Protection Plan in accordance with BS5837: 2005 to be submitted prior to any site works, approved and implemented.**
- 7. No trees, except T19, to be removed from the site until the development has been fully implemented and then trees only to be removed in accordance with management and maintenance scheme for the site.**
- 8. No dig construction within root protection areas.**

9. No deadwooding or other works to T9, otherwise completion of tree works to trees on site as per Tree Survey and Assessment prior to the occupation of any chalets.
10. No tree or hedgerow works to take place in the bird nesting season.
11. Full details of the numbers of tree to be planted to be submitted prior to the commencement of development. Implementation of proposed landscaping in the first planting and seeding season following the commencement of development.
12. Management and maintenance scheme for 1, 3, 5 and 10 year activities to be submitted approved and implemented for landscaping. Scheme to include the provision of rough grassland on the site to promote small mammal habitats.
13. Service plan to be submitted to show the location of all service relative to existing trees, hedges, proposed planting and the proposed units. Services only to run along the approved lines.
14. Scheme for the removal of the land bridges which link the islands with the bank to be submitted approved and implemented prior to the occupation of the first unit.
15. Scheme for the reinstatement of pond 3 as identified in GCN Assessment and implemented. Scheme will need to landowner's agreement.
16. Badger protective fencing to be provided before development commences and retained throughout development.
17. No site works/ development to commence in nesting season unless the site has first been surveyed and no works within 4m of any nesting bird.
18. Details of location of 3 bird nest boxes and 2 barn owl boxes to be submitted, approved and boxes provided.
19. Details of location of 10 bat boxes to be submitted, approved and boxes provided.
20. Provision of main car park before occupation of the first unit and thereafter retained.
21. Provision of one parking space for each chalet and no more before that chalet is first occupied. Parking to be retained as originally laid out.
22. Submission of full Travel Plan, approval and implementation and annual monitoring and updating according to the needs of the development.
23. Formation of passing places before first chalet occupied.
24. Foul drainage scheme to be submitted approved and implemented.
25. Scheme to limit surface water run off be submitted approved and implemented.
26. Scheme to manage the risk of flooding from the overland flow of surface water run off to be submitted approved and implemented.
27. Chalets to be occupied as holiday accommodation only.
28. No chalet shall be occupied as the persons' main or sole residence.
29. The site operator shall maintain an up to date register of the names and postal addresses of all owners and all occupiers and shall make this record available to the local authority at all reasonable times, upon request.
30. Scheme for external lighting to be submitted approved and implemented. All external lighting to be controlled by sensors, and be predominately low level lighting, shielded, angled and controlled by sensors so as to minimise light pollution and impacts on wildlife.
31. Details of secure covered cycle parking to be submitted approved and implemented.

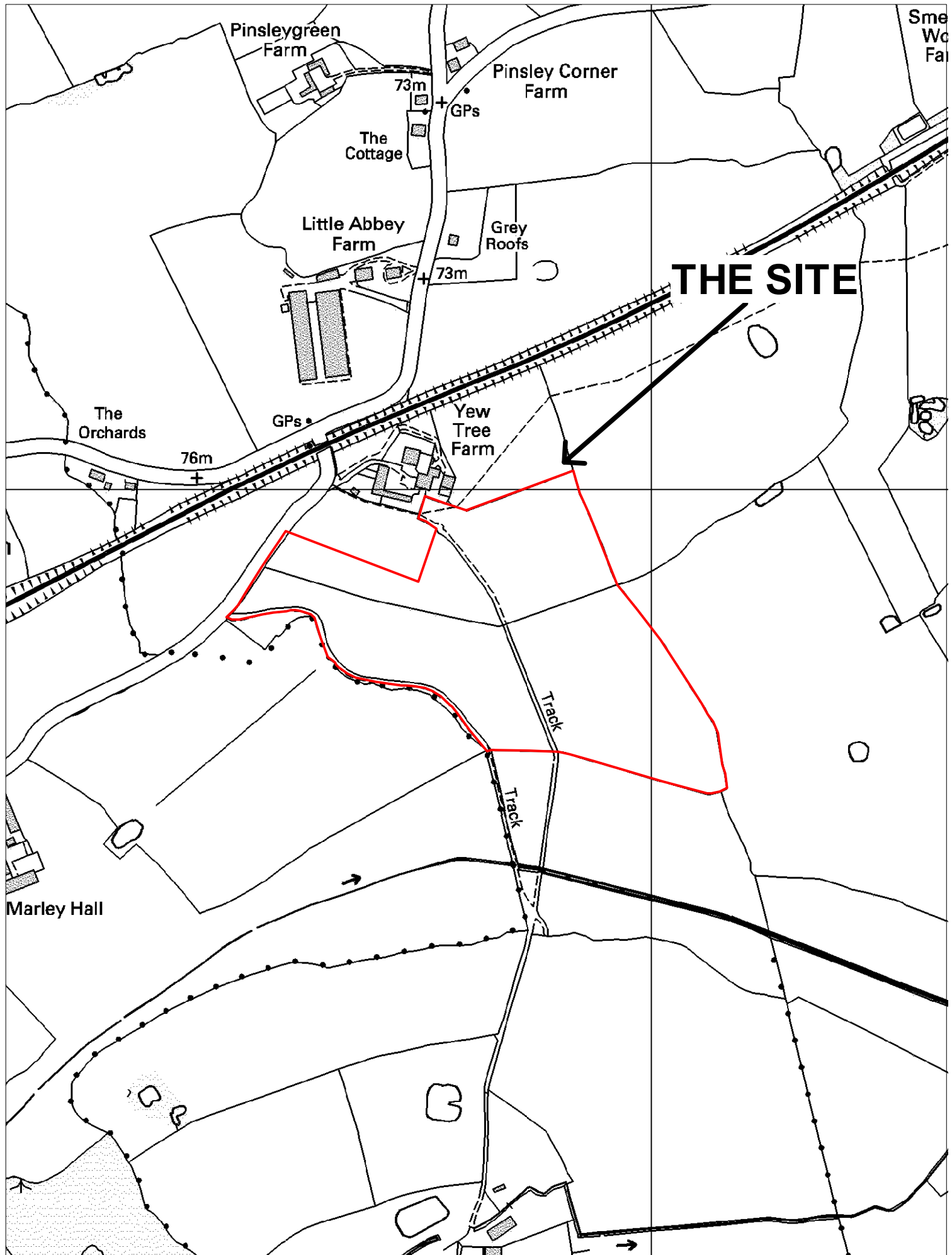
- 32. Details of recycling facilities/ waste storage to be submitted approved and implemented.**
- 33. Development to be provided in accordance with the measures to reduce energy consumption in accordance with the principles of sustainable development as detailed in the submitted Climate Change statement.**
- 34. Access to be constructed to CEC specification.**
- 35. Details of surface materials to be submitted approved and implemented.**
- 36. Hours for construction and deliveries to the site.**

INFORMATIVES

Contamination

Environment Agency requirements

Public Right of Way requirements.



10/4610N - WRENBURY FISHERY HOLLYHURST MARBURY
N.G.R; 358.850 - 345.850

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