
LAND TO THE NORTH OF HANMER ARMS, HANMER SY13 3DE

Proposed touring caravan park (10 pitches), amenity building and ancillary works

Design and Access Statement

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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Client:
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Date:
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INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to support this outline planning application for a proposed touring caravan park (10 pitches), an amenity building and ancillary works on land to the north of Hanmer Arms. The applicants are also the owners of Hanmer Arms. They are seeking to extend the existing offer visitor accommodation.

The purpose of this DAS is to:

- explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development.
- demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account.
- explain the approach adopted as to access and how policies relating to access in the development plan have been taken into account
- explain how specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.

An assessment of the site and its surrounding area has been undertaken to demonstrate its suitability for the development of a touring caravan park and to establish the general principles particularly regarding siting, access and landscaping.

SITE ANALYSIS

The application site is in Wrexham District, to the north of the village of Hanmer and to the south-east of the A539. Hanmer is located approximately 9 miles south-east of Wrexham with main road access to the village from the A539 Whitchurch to Overton Road.

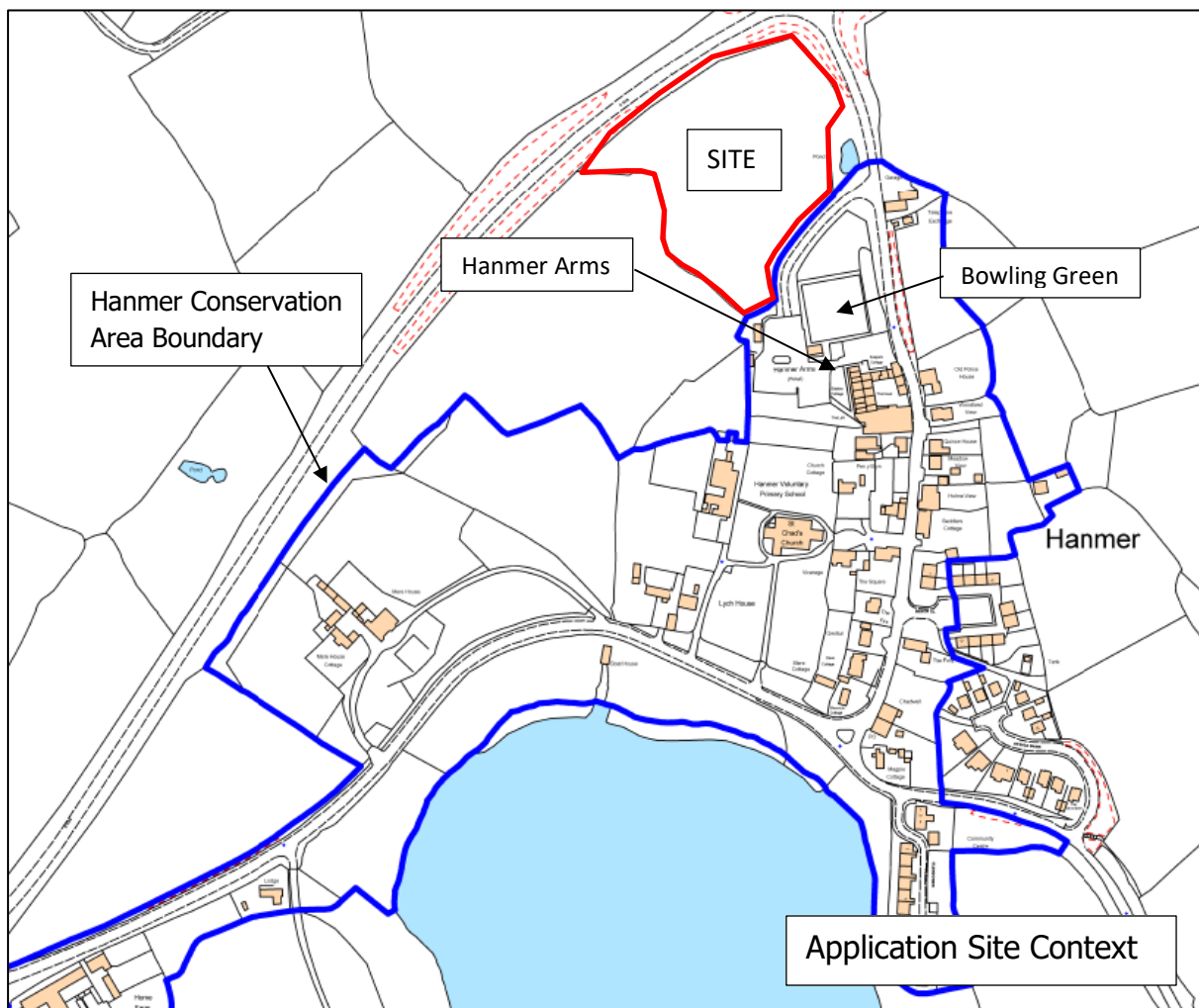
The site comprises a paddock which covers an area of 0.49 hectares. Its western, northern and eastern boundaries are marked by mature hedges with trees. The southern boundary set against the access road is fenced. The centre of the site is marked by a prominent grass-grown hillock. There is presently one vehicular access point to the site off the A539 on the site's northern boundary. To the south of the site lies a bowling green, Hanmer Arms, a school and the village of Hanmer. There are no public rights of way within the site.

Hanmer village comprises an early nucleated church settlement. Hanmer Mere lies to the south of the village. The bulk of the village is concentrated around The Square and The Hanmer Arms with some properties clustered to the south, close to the junction of Bettisfield and Overton. The A539 by-pass to the west means that through traffic avoids the village. Hanmer has some essential amenities with a

primary school, post office and village store, butchers' shop, garage and public house and hotel.

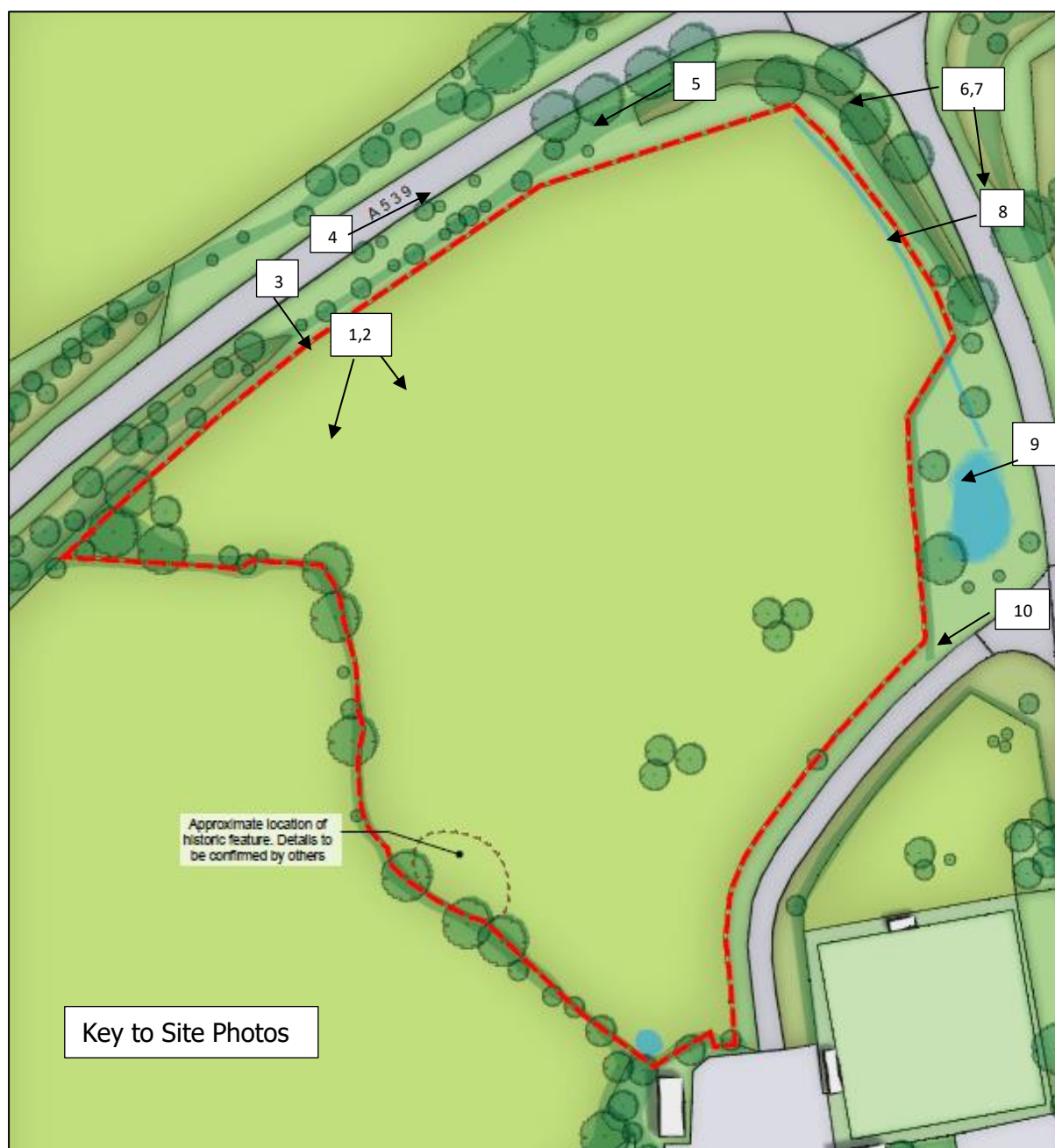
Modern expansion of the village has been limited to the eastern and southern edges with some infill development along the main street, otherwise the original pattern of development has remained largely unchanged particularly along the main street and the old Whitchurch to Overton Road. There are several later 'green' and roadside settlements in the surrounding area.

The village is located within the area known as "Maelor Saesneg" where the landscape is characterised by undulating mainly pastoral lowland farmland with well managed hedgerow trees and small woodlands interrupting the field pattern. The area has also been influenced by historic designed estates including the Hanmer Estate. The area is generally rural in character with farmsteads spread sporadically across the surrounding landscape. The landscape dominated by irregular field patterns and scattered farms.



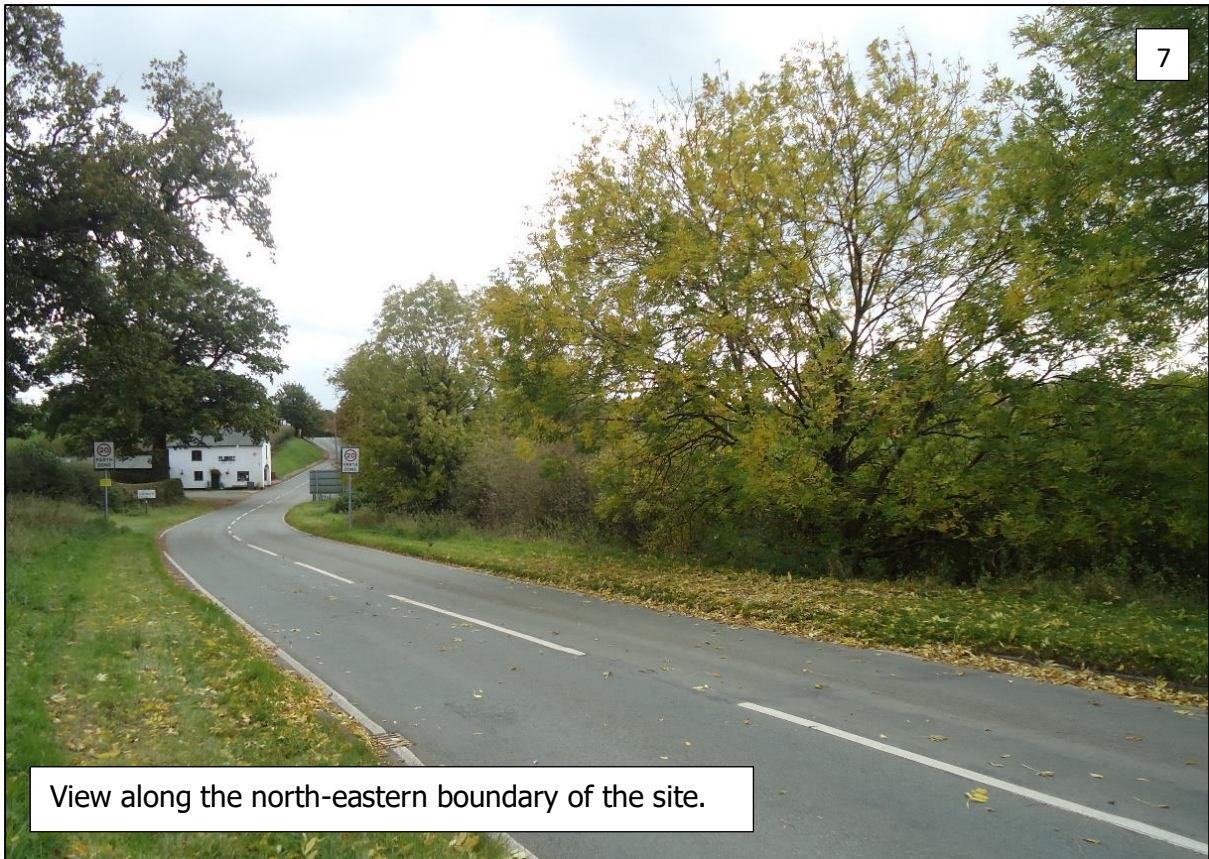
The application site lies outside the northern boundary of Hanmer Conservation Area. In view of the proximity of the Conservation Area and other heritage assets in the locality, a separate Heritage Impact Assessment & Statement of Significance has been prepared in order to inform the design of the scheme.

The Conservation Area covers the majority of the village with St Chad's Church located centrally, elevated above the surrounding domestic properties and facing onto Hanmer Mere. The surrounding open landscape provides views out of the Conservation Area complementing its mere-side position and contributing to the strong sense of place. The historic core of the settlement is governed by the natural topography.









View along the north-eastern boundary of the site.



View across the site from its eastern boundary

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View of waterbody adjacent to site's eastern boundary

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View towards site in northerly direction from Hanmer Arms access road

PLANNING POLICIES

The following planning policies are relevant and have been taken into consideration in developing the proposals for the touring caravan park:

UDP Policy PS2 advises that development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment. This forms part of the DAS assessment.

UDP Policy GDP1 requires that all new development should:

- a) Ensure that built development in its scale, design and layout, and in its use of materials and landscaping, accords to the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality.
- b) Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public / private spaces.
- c) Make the best use of design techniques, siting and orientation in order to conserve energy and water resources.
- d) Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and in the nearby locality.
- e) Ensure that built development is located where it has convenient access to public transport facilities and is well related to pedestrian and cycle routes.
- f) Ensure the safety and amenity of the public and safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land or air.
- g) Secure public services – Utility services are accessible from the site.
- h) Safeguard sites and areas of nature conservation and wildlife interest, and to provide new habitats where there is an unavoidable loss of existing habitats and areas of wildlife interest.
- i) Ensure that development does not result in, or is subject to, flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination.
- j) Have regard to the need to safeguard those areas that possess a strong Welsh cultural and/or linguistic identity.
- k) Secure the development of sustainable communities.

Emerging LDP2 Policy DM1: Development Management Considerations requires that all development must:

- a. Accord with or enhance the character, local distinctiveness and appearance of the site, existing building(s) and surrounding landscape/townscape in terms of its siting, layout, scale, height, design, density, use of materials and landscaping;
- b. Not have an unacceptable effect on the amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties/land by virtue of noise, disturbance and overlooking;

and provides a satisfactory standard of amenity for the occupiers/users of the development itself;

- c. Safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land, light or air arising from development;
- d. Take account of personal and community safety and security in its design and layout
- e. Be safely and conveniently accessible for all potential users/occupiers of the development on foot, bicycle, by public transport and by car;
- f. Not give rise to parking or highway safety problems on site or in the locality;
- g. Maximise sustainable travel choices first and then provides for car related needs;
- h. Contribute to low carbon communities through energy efficiency, be designed to minimise the use of non-renewable energy, water and the production of waste both during construction and when in use;
- i. Not increase the risk of flooding but makes adequate provision for sustainably dealing with foul and surface water drainage and not result in an unacceptable impact upon the water environment;
- j. Consider the needs of a diverse population including those with protected characteristics such as age or disability;
- k. On sites which have previously been developed, new development proposals should make use of existing suitable building materials wherever possible for appropriate uses in order to re-use recyclable materials and reduce the amount of imported materials; and
- l. Ensure that any risks arising from past coal mining, as indicated on the proposals map, can be adequately managed.

UDP Policy EC6 advises that development either within or close to sites of biodiversity interest will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the need for the development outweighs the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site. The accompanying ecology reports (including several new reports) address these points and provide mitigation advice. This has been used to inform the proposed development.

UDP Policy EC7 advises that near conservation areas, the priority will be to preserve and or enhance those buildings, structures, streets, trees, open spaces, archaeological remains, views, and other elements which contribute to the unique character of the area. The accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment and LVIA address these points and provide mitigation advice. This has been used to inform the proposed development.

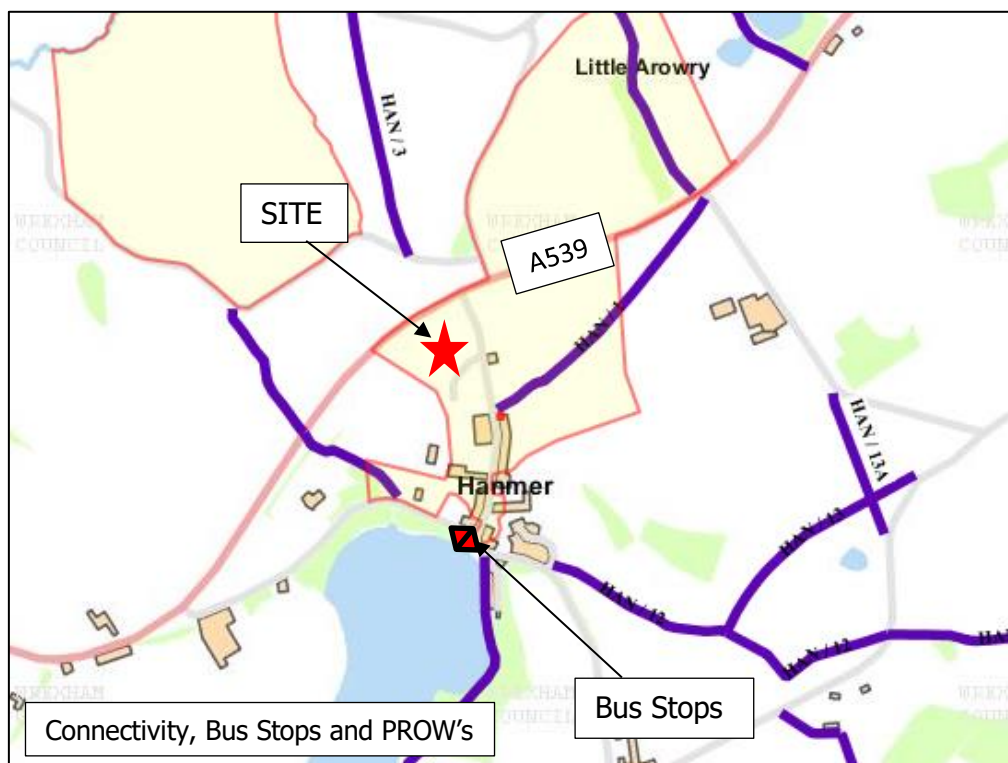
Careful consideration has been given to the above policies and the reasons for refusing the previous planning applications in developing the application proposal. These are further addressed within the Planning Statement.

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Principle 1 - Connectivity

To connect to the existing highway and footpath network and to create the opportunity for occupiers to access local attractions and facilities by:

- Provision of a pedestrian/vehicular connection to the road into Hanmer via Hanmer Arms access road.
- Encourage walking and cycling. Whilst there are no public rights of way within the site, there is good access to the PROW network providing alternative routes and for recreational use.
- Provision of sufficient on-site parking and turning.
- Integration of the development into the existing movement network.
- Bus service 146 - Wrexham – Whitchurch stops outside St Chad's Church approx 350 metres from the site.



Principle 2 - Circulation

To create a structured and legible vehicular circulation within the site. This will be based upon the vehicular access points from the Hanmer Arms access road. From this, an informal accessway and parking areas will be created.

Principle 3 - Character

- Consideration needs to be given to the setting of the Conservation Area and the surrounding countryside and the way in which the Conservation Area is experienced and appreciated.
- The site of the proposed development lies outside the northern boundary of the Conservation Area, which in this location is characterised by the modern Bowling Green, its flood lighting and Hanmer Arms access road. Based upon the LVIA and the Heritage Impact Assessment, and with mitigation by careful siting and additional planting, it is not considered that the proposed development would have an adverse impact on the Conservation Area and the surrounding landscape.
- The accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment, Statement of Significance and LVIA conclude that, within the local landscape context, the resultant effects of the proposal will be limited on the wider landscape and townscape, including the Conservation and Special Landscape Areas. No significant effects are predicted on the English Maelor Landscape Character Area. This can be further mitigated with additional landscape planting, particularly along the site's southern boundary with the Conservation Area.
- Respond to the existing site topography including consideration of views into and out of the site as per the LVIA.
- Retention and enhancement of existing landscape features.
- Use of materials that reflect the locality.
- Minimise impact of the development on its surrounds.
- Provide an efficient and sustainable use of the land.
- Use soft landscaping to enhance the environment.

Principle 4 - 'Development Form'

The nature of the proposal, the size and shape of the site, its constraints and rural location are factors that determine the form of development. Feedback from the previous planning refusals and the accompanying heritage and visual impact assessments are important factors in devising revised proposals in this context.

CONSULTATION

The application proposal has been devised in consultation with locally experienced development consultants. Prior to the submission of the previously refused planning application, pre-application consultation took place with relevant technical consultees and the local community. A report on consultation will be submitted with that application. The information contained within that report detailed the consultation undertaken on the development proposal and the responses received. Additional formal feedback on the previous proposals has already been received and was set

out in consultation responses and the planning refusal notices. This has been directly addressed within the accompanying Planning Statement and has provided the context to the approach adopted in preparing this current planning application and the supporting information.

OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

Following the assessment of the application site and its surroundings earlier in this statement, several constraints and opportunities associated with its proposed development have been identified. These are outlined and illustrated below. Each of these constraints and opportunities have been used to inform the design proposals for the site.

Opportunities:

- The roads in the immediate vicinity of the site are lightly trafficked and are of a sufficient width to accommodate visiting vehicles.
- Well established boundaries comprise existing mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees to the site's northern, western and eastern boundaries that provide screening from A539 and the road into the village which runs adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site.
- Good access to the PROW network which providing alternative routes and for recreational use.
- New visitor facilities to support the local economy.

Constraints:

- Impact on nearby residential amenity.
- The need to minimise the impact of the proposal on the existing, boundary hedgerow to A539 and road off A539
- The need to minimise impact on the area's rural character.
- Designated and non-designated heritage assets. Enzygo's HIA has identified designated and non-designated heritage assets within a 1 km radius of the site dating from the prehistoric period through to the post-medieval period. There are eleven listed buildings, associated features, and one Scheduled monument within the area. None of the designated buildings and features lie within the application site and it has been demonstrated within the HIA and LVIA that any visual impacts on any designated buildings arising from the proposal would be minimal.
- The assessment has identified a small earthwork of unknown date within the area of the proposal. It is proposed to maintain this feature in-situ.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The proposal is for 10 no. touring caravan pitches and the erection of an amenity building on land to the north of Hanmer. The layout below demonstrates how it is proposed lay out the site to accommodate the proposal.

Layout

Whilst the proposed site layout is illustrative at this stage, the foregoing analysis has determined the most appropriate way of laying out the proposed lodges and access road. It is largely screened from the public realm whilst giving a feeling of intimacy and security for visitors.



Access

The current access point to the site from the A539 is to be closed to vehicles. A new access is to be provided off Hanmer Arms access road, with a less formal accessway within the site to the pitches. Footways are to be provided along the Hanmer Arms access road thereby providing for interconnectivity beyond the site, the surrounding highway network and local facilities.

Each of the proposed pitches will be informally defined. Surface materials will be limited across the site to predominantly grass, with a stoned surface for the pitch, parking and the accessway. Parking provision will be adjacent to each pitch.

Scale

Touring caravans are typically 5-7 metres in length, up to 2.5 metres wide and 2.6 metres high. Each caravan pitch is therefore substantially smaller than the previously proposed holiday lodges. Furthermore, the proposed reception/amenity building will be single storey and smaller than that comprising the previous proposal, appropriate to the site and its surrounds.

Use & Amount

An assessment of the site and its surroundings has been provided earlier in this statement to demonstrate its suitability for the proposed use. The site is approx 0.49 hectares. The proposal comprises 10 no. touring caravan pitches. It is relatively small scale and low density, set within significant open areas and landscaping. It is considered appropriate to the area and the specific circumstances of the site: its shape, topography relationship to Hanmer, the Conservation Area and the area's rural character. It will not appear out of character with its surroundings.

Appearance

The proposed caravan pitches will be level and stoned with electric hook-ups, incorporating low level lighting. The design of the amenity building will be addressed at the reserved matters stage. It will respect the rural setting and the character of the Conservation Area. When the pitches are not in use, the site will retain its open appearance.





Landscape and Visual Impact

It has been demonstrated in the LVIA that the proposals will have a minimal impact both on the surrounding landscape and visually. The touring pitches will be level plots that will be cut into the ground. It is not proposed to significantly raise them above ground level. Considering recommended landscape mitigation measures, it is considered that the landscape and visual impacts of the proposal will be limited.

CONCLUSION

Every site is unique, raising a series of constraints and opportunities. Each development should be considered “in the round” in order to assess whether it meets the principles of good design. Given that this application is “Outline” with all matters except access reserved at this stage, these matters will be further addressed at the Reserved Matters stage.

The key components are:

- The scheme has been designed considering its rural and conservation area context.
- The site layout and scale of the proposal are low-key.
- Access to be taken off the Hanmer Arms access road.
- Additional structural landscaping to minimise the development’s visual impact on the surrounding countryside and conservation area.
- The layout has been designed to give legible structure to the site. It is distinctive, safe and secure.

In arriving at the Site Layout consideration has been given to the influence of the physical, social and economic aspects of the site. These have influenced the design of the scheme. It has been sensitively designed to respond to context of its surrounding area. It develops the site in a viable, positive and appropriate manner.