
Planning Statement

Pre consultation for the erection of a Budget Hotel (C1) and Drive Thru Restaurant (A3/A5) improvements of an existing vehicular access and all associated works

Buttington, Welshpool

Impero (Development Management)
Ltd



land & property
professionals

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1. Introduction

1.1 This statement has been prepared in support of a pre consultation submitted by Roger Parry and Partners on behalf of Impero (Development Management) Ltd for the erection of a new budget hotel and drive thru restaurant on a 0.65 Hectare site at Buttington, Welshpool.

1.2 The proposal comes forward as the developer has been in detailed discussions with end occupiers. The Budget Hotel and Coffee chain are both national recognised brands. The companies have recently been undertaking a thorough review of their portfolio of properties and are seeking to increase their representation in certain key locations and both have identified a requirement for the Welshpool area.

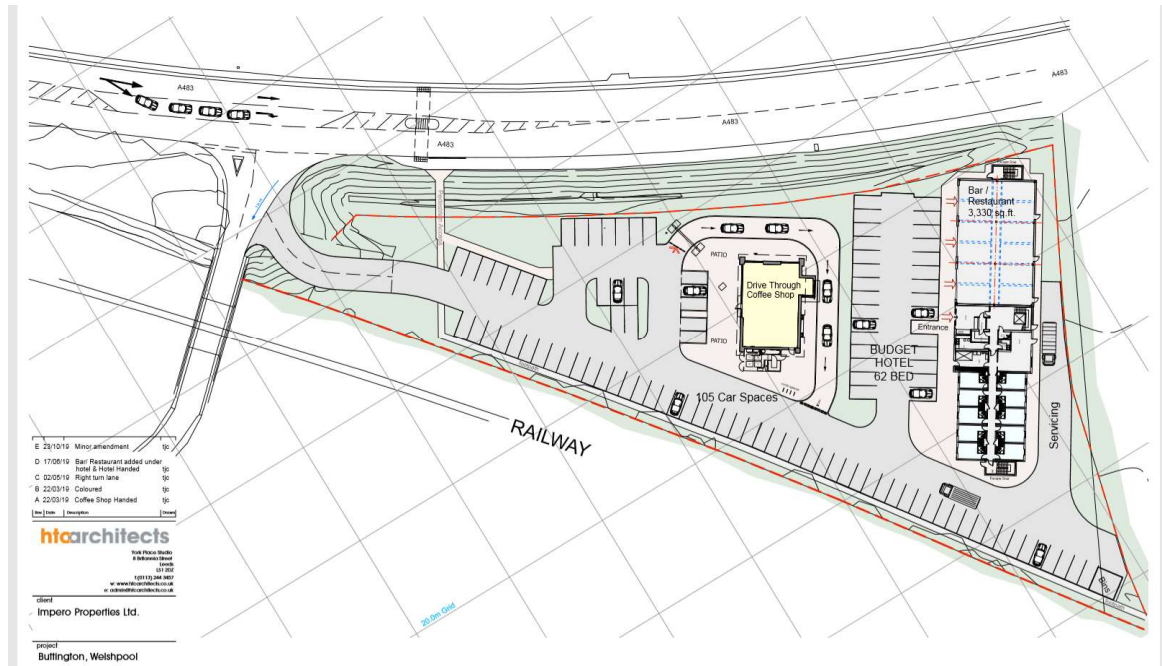
1.3 In this case, the application is for a free standing budget hotel and drive thru restaurant with associated works to the site. The proposal, which is for both Hotel accommodation (class C1 of the Use Classes Order 1987) and the sale of food and drink for consumption on and off the premises (classes A3 & A5 of the Use Classes Order 1987).

1.4 At the start of the development process in December 2017 the client and planning consultant met with Powys Chief Planning Officer to discuss this outline proposal and were encouraged to bring forward a more detailed proposal for consideration and this submission is the next more formal stage.

1.5 The site fronts and needs improved access from the A483 trunk road which is managed by Highways Wales. In April 2019 an on site meeting took place with the Local Highway Manager who confirmed subject to submission of detailed Traffic Assessment that there was no objection in principle to utilising an improved access in the current location. The solution discussed is shown on the site plan.

2. Application Site

2.1 The site is located on the Eastern side of the A483 to the South of Buttington Cross Enterprise Park. The surrounding area comprises of commercial properties, with recently erected petrol filling station and convenience store, with offices above (P/2016/0637).

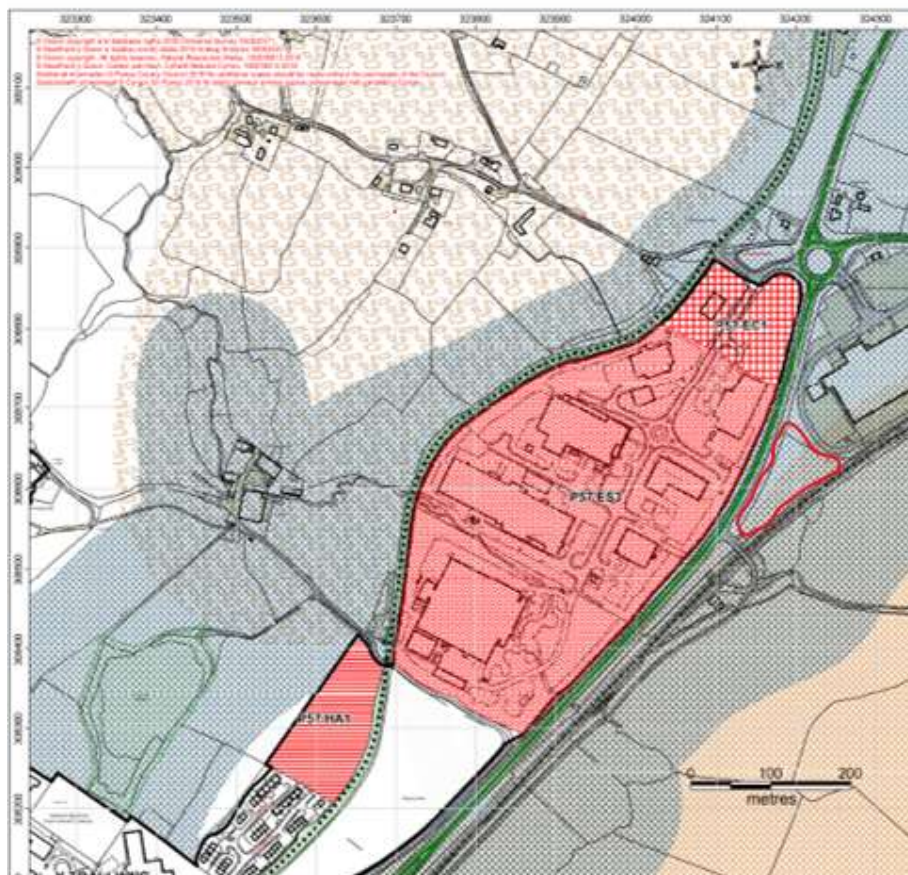


The site and surrounding area

2.2 The Buttington Cross Enterprise is an allocated site, which is strategically located in the regional context to offer medium to large scale employment opportunities for primarily B1/B2/B8 Uses and characterised by a high-quality environment. In line with policy, this scheme will offer an appropriate ancillary use, which compliments the sites role.

2.3 The proposed site sits opposite to Buttington Cross Enterprise Park and adjacent to the livestock market. The site contains the characteristics to run a successful drive thru facility and hotel accommodation without affecting the vitality and viability of the town centre, the proposed development would include joint trips to the surrounding commercial and wider area, rather than additional trips, thus complying with policy.

2.4 The associated companies demonstrate that they run highly efficient business models and that the footprint and plot size requirements are the minimum necessary to deliver the hotel and drive thru facility.



3. The Proposal

3.1 The proposal is for a budget hotel and drive thru restaurant to be situated on the edge of the development boundary of Welshpool, immediately adjacent and opposite to the existing livestock market and petrol filling station and convenience store.

3.2 At this time, only the principle for development on the site for C1 and A3/A5 uses which will enable occupation by the prospective end occupiers for a budget hotel and drive thru coffee shop is being sought. Full details will be provided on submission of a full application.

3.3 This section seeks to explain and justify the design and access principle and concepts on which the development proposed is based and how these are reflected in the individual aspects of the scheme.

The Design Process

3.4 In considering the design principles for this development, Impero (Development Management) Ltd design team have taken into account the site specific design background of the local environs; the proposed uses of the buildings as a Hotel and as a drive thru restaurant; the amount of development proposed in relation to the surroundings; how the layout proposed fits within the urban grain; how the scale of the proposal sits within the site and relates to the urban form in the surroundings; and the overall appearance of the scheme including the existing tree belt and soft landscaping proposed.

3.5 The footprint of the building has been designed to meet operational requirements as a freestanding Hotel and Drive thru restaurant, both for customers to eat within or outside of the building, or to take away from the premises.

3.6 The proposed developers will employ local contractors to maintain and manage both hard and soft landscaped areas on a regular basis. The overall external appearance of the store is an important element and maintains and adds to the customers' experience, and ultimately to the success of the restaurant.

Layout of Development

3.7 The indicative development layout is shown in site plan. It is located in a way that suits the proposed site. The nature of the proposal requires an 'off the road' location, which is easily accessible, with ample room for the hotel, drive thru and parking areas.

3.8 The "amount" of development proposed, (based on the operational characteristics of the specific restaurant) is then tailored to the site-specific circumstances and where relevant, the retail hierarchy of the surrounding commercial developments, all of which results in the final "amount" and volume of the proposed development.

The layout of the site is again partially controlled by the operational requirements of the new hotel and drive thru, but of course the local circumstances and location of the site in relation to the surrounding area is key to the success of this proposal.

Scale of Development

3.9 The specific scale of development is not finalised, however the site plans accompanying this statement show the desired scale and site plan.

Appearance of the Development

3.10 The specific appearance will be subject to a full planning permission, but the indicative design has made to integrate with the surrounding environment as best as possible, without impacting too much on the visibility of it from a business sense. Plans will be finalised for the full planning application.

3.11 Around the building there will be hardstanding areas for the access, roads, parking and drive thru layout, which will again be designed in a way to reduce its visual impact.

Landscaping

3.12 Landscaping is a full planning matter, however we envisage for the site to be landscaped well, to integrate the unit well within the landscape.

Drainage

3.13 Full drainage details will support a full planning application. Ample land is owned by the applicant which will allow a suitable SUDS system to be implemented with no concern

Noise

3.14 The proposal is for a budget hotel and drive thru restaurant with limited noise emanating from the unit or its proposed use. There is only 1 dwelling 100m of the proposed site. The noises associated with the roads and adjacent commercial activities will be much higher than the proposed noises from the unit.

Lighting

3.15 A lighting design scheme can be appropriately conditioned.

Utilities Provision

3.16 Electricity and Telephone services are available adjacent to the site boundary. More lengthy connections will need to be made to bring gas, water and sewage services to the site. These on costs are manageable in the context of the premium Commercial

usage sought but with the cost of improved access would make use of the site unviable for standard employment B1/B2/B8 uses.

4. Planning Policy

4.1 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10) confirms that the planning system manages the development and use of land in the public interest, contributing towards achievement of sustainable development. Local Authorities are required to ensure that the economic benefits associated with a proposed development are understood and that these given equal consideration with social and environmental issues in the decision-making process.

4.2 PPW emphasises the need for the planning system to promote viable urban and rural retail and commercial centres as the most sustainable locations to live, work, shop and socialise.

4.3 The sequential test is used by the Welsh Government whereby they operate a 'town centre first' policy in relation to the location of new retail development. The first option for any new retail development should be town centre, and then work itself out of centre is justification leads to this.

4.4 If a use or building is not available within a retail centre of a Town, then consideration should be given to edge of centre sites and then if these are not available out of centre sites, that are accessible by a choice of travel modes. Out of centre sites should not be of a scale, type or location that is likely to undermine the vibrancy and viability of those retail centres within the town.

4.5 PPW goes onto say that some types of retail uses are not suitable for town centre locations because of their very nature, and therefore out of centre locations is the only option.

4.6 Technical Advice Note 4 (2016) is an advice note by Welsh Government that fully considers retail and commercial development. The tests of retail need is the first step in considering the actual need of that use in that location.

4.7 The sequential test is then emphasised again to choose the location and suitability of that use. Retail impact assessments are mentioned, but these are rarely required for developments of this nature, as the threshold is for retail applications with over 2500 sqm floor area.

4.8 Powys' Local Development Plan is very succinct with its retail policies, with only one retail allocated site in the whole of Powys, and then hoping that other retail needs will be accommodated by vacant premises in Town Centre areas.

4.9 The Local Development Plan retail policies are informed by Nathaniel Lichfields Retail Study which says nothing at all about A3 Uses and in reality as normal has not considered at all the roadside drive thru market.

4.10 Welshpool is designated as a “Key Settlement” to which employment land, any retail growth (e.g. supermarkets), public services and developments which generate large numbers of trips should be directed.

National Planning Policy

Technical Advice Note

TAN 4 – Retail and commercial Development

TAN 5 – Nature Conservation and Planning

TAN 11 – Noise

TAN 12 – Design

TAN 13 – Tourism

TAN 18 – Transport

TAN – 23 – Economic Development

Local Planning Policy

Powys Local Development Plan 2011-2026

SP2 – Employment Growth

DM4 – Landscape

DM7 Dark Skies and External Lighting

DM13 Design and Resources

DM15 Waste within Developments

E2 Employment Proposals on Non allocated Employment Sites

T1 Travel, Traffic and Transport Infrastructure

R3 Development within Town Centre Areas

TD1 Tourism Development

4.11

The allocated Employment land at Buttington Cross Enterprise Park is now fully developed.

4.12 The subject site is analysed in the Candidate Sites Register 2011 which informed the Local Plan (site ref 343)

“A relatively small level site, currently agricultural grazing/vacant land to the rear of the Cattle Market. Accessed off the Welshpool by-pass.

Plot has been isolated by new development and lies sandwiched between rail and road. It appears logical to re-develop considering the adjacent land use and the site's proximity to Welshpool and nearby transport links. After further consideration it has been determined that a land allocation is not required on this parcel of land. Given that access must be achieved through the cattle market site, any proposals that may come forward will be determined by a Policy approach and through the planning application process (as an extension to existing commercial premises/use).”

The reason for not allocating the site appears to be the incorrect conclusion/wrong advice received that the site can only be accessed via the Auction Mart. This is not the case as outlined in the Access section below. However bringing the site forward via the application process is foreseen and this is what we are now doing.

5. Access

5.1 The site fronts and needs improved access from the A483 trunk road which is managed by Highways Wales. In April 2019 an on site meeting took place with the Local Highway Manager. The improvement and widening of the access into the site was discussed and confirmed appropriate. The provision of a right turn refuge on the trunk road by a mixture of white lining and provision of a traffic island was discussed. The officer not only saw this as in principle acceptable for the development but thought this could improve road safety in the immediate area as it would act as a traffic calming measure as there is a perceived danger of high speed overtaking due to the width of the carriageway. The discussed highway solution is shown on the site plan. Full detail and Highway Assessment will be included in a detailed planning application.

5.2 Pedestrian Access from Welshpool and the adjacent Buttington Enterprise Park were also discussed. There is an existing footpath on the western side of the highway this will be linked into the site by an informal crossing with Central kerbed pedestrian refuge as indicated on the Site Plan.

5.3 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) seeks to avoid discrimination against people with impairments and disabilities and for instance ensures that work premises do not disadvantage someone with a disability.

5.4 The access arrangements have adopted an inclusive approach and aims to ensure that all users will have equal and convenient access to the site and buildings. The design of the application will have full consideration for ease of access for disabled pedestrian use.

5.5 All of the measures detailed above will be maintained in such a way that will allow all people access to / from and around the building. Also, the facilities within the building will also be constructed and maintained in such a way to ensure people's access within the development.

6. Tests of Retail Need

6.1 PPW (Edition 10) and TAN 4 stipulate that the starting point for planning for new retail development is the test of retail need. It explains that this needs to be a quantitative needs test and a qualitative needs test, and normally this is based on forecasting expenditure of a certain type of retail good over a period of time.

6.2 These tests refer to major retail proposals such as supermarkets and other A1 retail uses which would take trade from town centre retail markets. The proposal in front of you is for a C1 Budget hotel and A3/A5 Drive Thru restaurant), with a limited footprint. The type of C1 and A3/A5 use proposed, is not available within the Town Centre or within miles of the site, and therefore the need is quite plain to see without considering any statistical measurements.

6.3 There are no C1 Budget hotels or A3/A5 drive thru restaurants within the town centre of Welshpool, or nearby, with the closest restaurants being in other towns such as Shrewsbury, Newtown and Oswestry (in similar out of town main road network locations). The type of hotel is again very different from the minimal existing hotel provision that are in town which cater to a more premium market. The existing town centre hotel offer being of a Low volume high margin style of trade with prestige “evening out” style dining whereas the budget hotel is high volume low margin taking this into account we believe the project will not impact on them the slightest, given the different nature of proposal.

6.4 This proposal will be approximately 15 miles from the budget hotel in Oswestry and 19 miles from one in Shrewsbury. This clearly shows the lack of availability of this certain use within this area. Welshpool is defined as an ‘Area Retail Centre’ where new retail development which would be of a scale and design appropriate to the settlement will be supported.

6.5 It is acknowledged that this site is technically not within the development boundary of Welshpool, however we would refer again to 4.12 and this is considered further within the sequential test covered in the next section.

7. Sequential Test

7.1 Wherever The sequential test supports the Welsh Government’s policy objective of promoting centres identified in the retail and commercial centre hierarchy, as the most sustainable locations to live, shop, socialise and conduct business.

7.2 The sequential location of planning applications should be considered in the following order:

- Firstly, within retail and commercial centres identified in the retail hierarchy where suitable sites, or buildings for conversion are available. Where this relates to a development plan allocation, they must be available for development within the plan period. Local planning authorities should ensure that any development plan allocation or planning application is of an appropriate scale in relation to the role and function of the centre.
- If no suitable sites are available in retail and commercial centres then edge-of centre locations should be considered, with preference given to brownfield sites that are or will be well connected to the existing centre and accessible by a variety of means of transport, particularly walking, cycling and public transport.
- Only when retail and commercial centres and edge of centre locations have been considered and found to be unsuitable can out-of-centre options within, and then outside, a settlement area be considered. Where out of centre sites are concerned preference should be given to brownfield sites which are or will be well served by a choice of means of transport and are close to an established retail and commercial centre.

7.3 It is clear that the general location of this proposal in Welshpool an Area Retail Centre/ Key Settlement is deemed acceptable. The question comes to the location of the proposal in terms of Welshpool Town.

7.4 The sequential test and tests of retail need is more specifically based on major supermarket proposals, which can have a degree impact on existing shops within a town centre. This proposal is for a hotel and drive thru restaurant that will bring and retain additional tourism and business to the area.

7.5 The preferred option would to have all retail developments within the Town, however it is acknowledged that some retail uses are not suitable or cannot be accommodated within Town Centres and therefore edge of centre or out of centre locations need to be considered.

7.6 The proposed site is technically edge of centre, given its adjoining nature to the development boundary of Welshpool, and is not considered totally out of centre. Welshpool Town is constrained for uses such as a hotel and drive thru, given the space it requires in terms of traffic movements.

7.7 As the Local Planning Authority and residents of Welshpool would acknowledge, siting a new hotel and drive thru restaurant in the town centre is not practical, viable or safe.

7.8 The only location within the development boundary of Welshpool we feel that would have the space to accommodate the development would be one of the Council Car Parks, however the highway infrastructure, accesses and one-way system makes the scheme unviable in these locations.

7.9 Consideration has been given to Welshpool's designated centre, however no sites have been identified as suitable for the hotel and drive through style restaurant. Much of the town centre retail core is Victorian age, and constructed to the back edge of the footway. The centre has dense urban grain and affords limited development opportunities other than for traditional retail style units. Whilst there are a number of car parks, there are all currently well used and provide little opportunity for development.

7.10 In considering the wider out of town areas, one of the principle considerations is accessibility. The area outside of the edge of the centre is predominantly residential in character, with pockets of commercial uses to the north and south of the town. There are a number of commercial sites in the southern bounds of Welshpool, however the area to the north appears more prominent and accessible with the existing petrol filling station and shop.

7.11 Granting planning on this site will not set a precedent of creeping development. The site is bounded by the already developed Auction Mart to the north and is the only plot on the Eastern side of the A483 as the rail line abuts the trunk road for the rest of

its length south into the central area of Welshpool. It therefore is actually a natural infill site

7.12 The proposed uses primarily cater for long distance travellers/tourists on the trunk road network. Giving a facility to rest, feed and visit a WC is acknowledged as important in road safety terms.

7.13 Through route users will not readily divert into the Town Centre they will continue on until the next come across a suitable facility presently Shrewsbury, Oswestry or Newtown depending on the direction of travel. Spending that could occur here is lost to those locations not diverted from the Town centre.

7.14 It is clear from other authorities' decisions, that budget hotels and drive thru's are better situated to roadside locations on the main arterial highway network at edge of centre locations adjacent to existing uses on the edge of town. This is no different, and the good accessibility of the site ensures its conformity with the overarching objectives of the retail policies.

8. Conclusion

8.1 The proposal is an economic development that is supported by both local and national policy; it amounts to sustainable development that will improve the economic resilience of this area.

8.2 The edge of centre location and use of an almost 'infill' site fits in with the overarching national and local retail planning policies, and will not have any detrimental impact on the immediate surroundings. The site coming forward by the planning process was envisaged in the Register of Sites.

8.3 The proposal is of an appropriate location, scale and type so as not to be detrimental to the amenities of any nearby existing residential properties.

8.4 This proposal has significant merit, fits within the policies of the development plan and national planning guidance, and it is respectfully requested that the submitted planning application be approved.

8.5 In our view the application site is the only available, suitable and viable site in the wider area. During the course of this assessment, we have been unable to find any other alternative sites which do not extend the built area of Welshpool beyond the Town Boundary and northwards beyond Buttington Cross roundabout.

8.6 The proposed developments will provide a significant number of new jobs all of which will be available to and filled from the local community while increasing and supporting tourism to the area

8.7 We trust that this proposal shall meet with Officer support and look forward to receiving your advice to enable us to move speedily to a Full application with a suite of agreed accompanying documents.