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# Planning, Design & Access Statement

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**Land at Gaerfechan  
Cerrigydrudion  
Corwen  
LL21 0RS**

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**Construction of a Cubicle  
Building, Access Track and all  
associated works**

SL & EW Owen

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**May 2025**

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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning, Design & Access Statement is prepared and submitted in connection with a full planning application made to Conwy County Borough Council (“The Local Planning Authority”) for the construction of a new cubicle building, access track and all associated works on land at Gaerfechan, Cerrigydrudion, Corwen, LL21 0RS (the “application site”).

1.2 The proposed agricultural building will provide modern and fit-for-purpose housing for the farm’s dairy herd; replacing the existing old-fashioned and increasingly dilapidated existing cubicle housing at Gaerfechan. The farm at Gaerfechan is owned and operated by the long-established agricultural enterprise – SL & EW Owen.

1.3 This Planning, Design & Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the other documentation submitted as part of the planning application, listed below:

- Completed Full Planning Application Form
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal [By: Arbor Vitae; Dated: April 2025]
- Green Infrastructure Statement
- Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report
- Dwg No: 79954 / RJC / 001 – Site Location Plan
- Dwg No: 79954 / RJC / 002 – Existing Block Plan
- Dwg No: 79954 / RJC / 003 – Proposed Block Plan
- Dwg No: 79954 / RJC / 004 – Proposed NBB Plan
- Dwg No: 73364 / RJC / 005 – Constraints Plan
- Dwg No: 79954 / GH / 100 – Proposed Floor Plan
- Dwg No: 79954 / GH / 101 – Proposed Elevations
- Dwg No: 79954 / GH / 102 – Drainage Plan

1.4 This Planning, Design & Access Statement provides a balanced overview of the planning issues associated with the proposed development and is designed to aid the Planning Officer in making their recommendation.

1.5 The information set-out within this statement confirms that the proposal can be delivered on-site without giving rise to any unacceptable or adverse impacts in planning-terms.

## 2.0 Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations

2.1 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (the “EIA Regs”) contain two development schedules (Schedule 1 development and Schedule 2 development). Schedule 1 contains a list of development where EIA is mandatory and Schedule 2 contains a list of

development, coupled with development thresholds, where EIA may be considered necessary. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) must screen every planning application falling under the Schedule 2 development thresholds to determine whether an Environmental Statement (ES) is required. Schedule 2 contains a list of development descriptions (categories) and applicable thresholds and criteria for the purpose of classifying development as Schedule 2 development.

2.2 Schedule 2, Category 1 of the EIA Regs relates to 'Agriculture and aquaculture' where the need for an ES should be considered if the area of the proposed agricultural development exceeds 0.5 hectares, or in the case of 'intensive livestock installations' the proposed floor area exceeds 500m<sup>2</sup>.

2.3 The proposed development has a total site area of approximately 0.37 hectares, and is therefore below the EIA threshold as per Schedule 2, Category 1(a). Whilst the floor area of the proposed cubicle building will be in excess of 500m<sup>2</sup>, it is not considered the proposal would comprise an 'intensive livestock installation' within the context of the EIA Regs. It would therefore not fall within the remit of Schedule 2, Category 1(c). In any case, as the proposed building would simply replace existing and increasingly dilapidated existing cubicle housing on the farm at Gaerfechan with modern and improved facilities (to improve animal welfare on-farm), when considering the scheme against the provisions of Schedule 3 of the EIA Regs, it is considered the development as proposed would not meet the thresholds to be considered EIA Development, and therefore no Environmental Statement has been produced.

### 3.0 The Application Site & Background

3.1 The application site lies in-between the two established farm complexes at Gaerfechan; an existing and long-established farming enterprise run by the Applicants. The application site itself comprises approximately 0.37 hectares of agricultural grassland located to the east of an existing large sheep shed and located to the west of the main farm complex at Gaerfechan, which is located at a higher elevation. An existing mature hedgerow lies to the south of the application site.

3.2 Gaerfechan hosts a large and long-established agricultural enterprise operated by the Applicants. In total it comprises 520 acres of agricultural land, with the following stock numbers at present on the holding:

- 240 dairy cows
- 900 breeding ewes
- 32,000 laying hens

3.3 As noted, the main farm complex at Gaerfechan lies to the east of the application site, atop a plateau, which currently hosts most of the dairy

housing and the farm's poultry unit. To the west of the application site lies an existing large sheep shed.

3.4 It should be noted that planning permission has recently been granted by the LPA for a development comprising the construction of a slurry store and silage clamp, on land adjacent to the application site. This planning permission was granted under planning application reference: 0/52209 in February 2025. The proposed development will be sited adjacent to the recently approved slurry store.

3.5 The application site is located within a rural location approximately 0.7km to the south-east of Cerrigydrudion. The site is located outside of any defined settlement/development boundary and therefore is located within the open countryside in planning-terms.

3.6 The application site is not subject to any protective landscape or heritage designations, and neither is it located within any identified flood risk zones. The site comprises a mixture of ALC Grades 3b, 4 and 5, and does not therefore comprise the best and most versatile agricultural land (BMV land).

3.7 An aerial view of the application site is provided below within Figure 1, with the location of the site denoted by the red star:



**Figure 1: Aerial view of the application site and its surroundings**

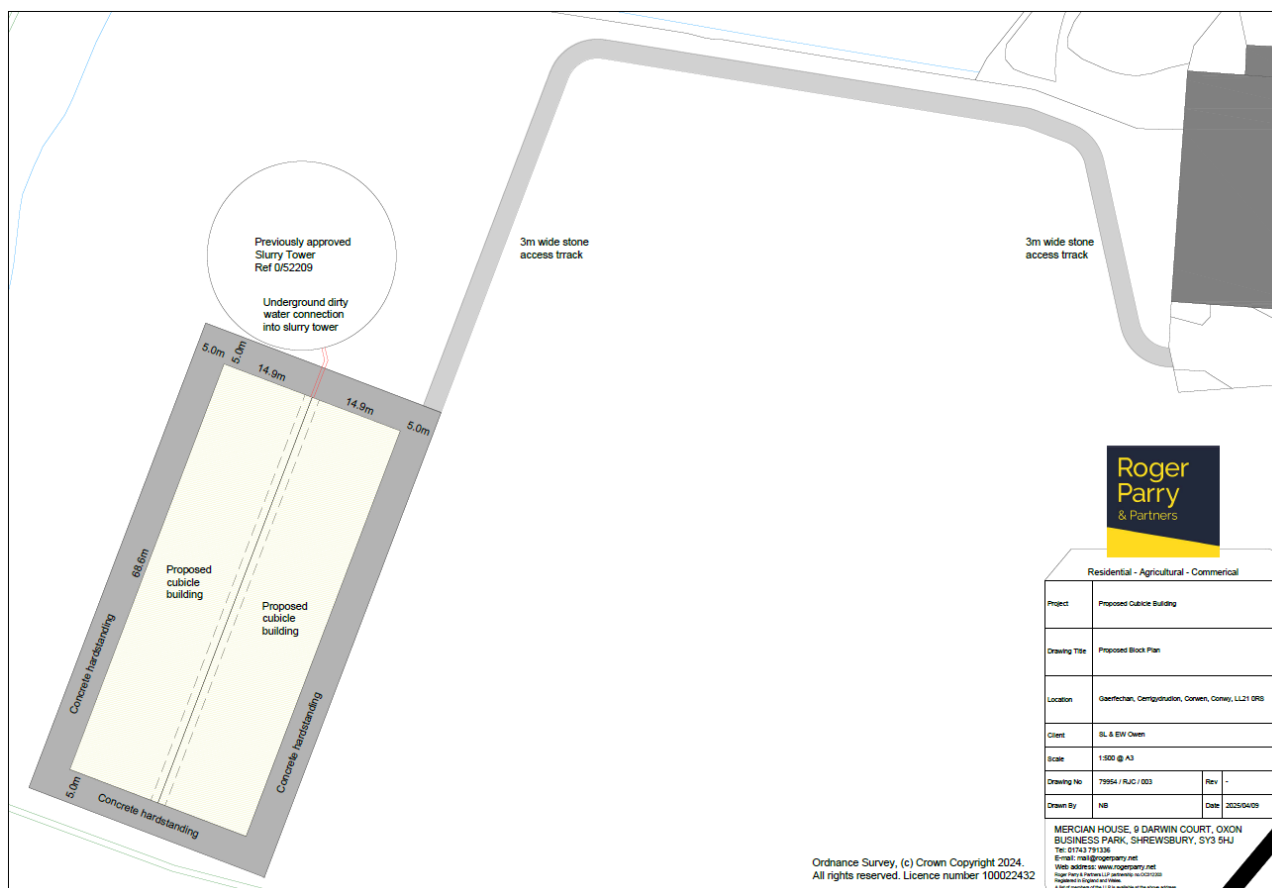
## 4.0 The Proposed Development

- 4.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the construction of an agricultural building to be used for cubicle housing as part of the existing dairy enterprise at Gaerfechan. The application also seeks consent for supporting infrastructure, to include a new stone access track between the new building and the main farm complex to the east, as well as an underground dirty water/slurry connection between the proposed cubicle building and the slurry store granted planning permission under planning application reference: 0/52209.
- 4.2 The proposed building will measure 29.8m in width and 68.6m in length. It will measure 4.8m to the eaves and 7.4m to the ridgeline. Internally it will contain two separate cubicle areas, with a feed passage down the building's centre. It's internal floor area, including the feed passage, will be approximately 2044m<sup>2</sup>. There will be four doors within each end elevation.
- 4.3 The proposed external materials will comprise concrete mass lower walls, with a mixture of timber Yorkshire boarding and 'juniper green' box profile cladding above. The roof will be finished with grey fibre cement sheeting.
- 4.4 The building will sit atop a concrete apron which will extend 5m around the perimeter of the building so as to ensure suitable access around the building for cows, machinery, vehicles and workers during all periods of the year.
- 4.5 A new underground dirty water/slurry connection is to be made to the adjacent slurry store which has already been granted planning permission. This will ensure a direct connection between the proposed cubicle building and the purpose-built slurry store. The proposed building and underground connection will be constructed in accordance with SSAFO Regulations and The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations (2021). The underground connection will be capable of lasting at least 20 years without maintenance.
- 4.6 A new 3m wide stone access track, linking the proposed cubicle building with the main farm complex at Gaerfechan, will also be constructed. At present there is no farm track linking the main farm complex with its 'satellite' complex, and as such the proposed track will ensure access can be provided across the land during all periods of the year, whilst also reducing farm traffic levels along the A5 by providing a direct route without needing to access the public highway network.
- 4.7 As already noted, the proposed building is designed to provide modern and fit-for-purpose cubicle housing for the farm's dairy herd. The farm's existing cubicle sheds at the main farm complex are becoming increasingly outdated and the proposed building will provide a purpose-built modern structure which will provide enhanced levels of animal welfare for the dairy herd. Given



that the proposal will be a replacement of the farm's existing cubicle buildings, with the aim being to increase animal welfare standards, it is important to note that stock numbers on the holding will not change or increase as a consequence of the proposed development.

4.8 An extract of the submitted Proposed Block Plan is provided below within Figure 2:



**Figure 2: Extract of Proposed Block Plan**

## 5.0 Planning Policy Context

5.1 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 12, 2024) advises at Paragraph 5.6.8 that ***“Planning authorities should adopt a constructive approach towards agricultural development proposals, especially those which are designed to meet the needs of changing farming practices or are necessary to achieve compliance with new environmental, hygiene or welfare legislation”***.

5.2 Technical Advice Note (TAN) 6 (Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities) also sets out the Welsh Government's support for agricultural development

proposals owing to the positive impact they can have upon the rural economy and rural communities.

5.3 At Paragraph 3.1.1 it confirms that ***“strong rural economies are essential to support sustainable and vibrant rural communities. A strong rural economy can also help to promote social inclusion and provide the financial resources necessary to support local services and maintain attractive and diverse natural environments and landscapes”.***

5.4 TAN 6 Paragraph 6.1.1 adds to this and states:

***“The Welsh Assembly Government’s objective is a sustainable and profitable future for farming families and businesses through the production and processing of farm products while safeguarding the environment, animal health and welfare, adapting to climate change and mitigating its impacts, while contributing to the vitality and prosperity of our rural communities. The planning system can play an important part in supporting the future sustainability of agriculture”.***

5.5 There are no directly applicable policies contained within the adopted Conwy Local Development Plan relating to proposals for new agricultural development. However, general support for new agricultural development and farm diversification proposals is expressed throughout the plan.

5.6 LDP Policy DP/1 requires all proposals to comply with the principles of sustainable development, whilst Policy DP/3 promotes high quality sustainable development which protects local character and the natural environment, and specifies criteria in relation to form, scale, massing, design, neighbouring amenity, ecology and landscaping. LDP Policy DP/6 requires all developments to be compliant with the relevant national Welsh Government policy contained within PPW and the TANs. LDP Policy NTE/3 encourages all proposals to conserve and protect biodiversity.

## 6.0 Review of Main Material Planning Considerations

### Principle of Development

6.1 The proposal comprises a form of agricultural development at an existing farm complex forming part of a legitimate and large-scale agricultural enterprise. The Applicants are currently undertaking a period of investment into the farm’s infrastructure and future, as can be evidenced by the erection of the poultry unit on-farm in recent years, the recently approved slurry store and silage clamp and indeed by the current proposals.

6.2 The proposal is required in order to provide modern housing facilities for the farm’s established dairy herd and to improve standards of animal welfare. The development will not lead to an increase in stock numbers on the holding.



6.3 As noted, the application site does not comprise the best and most versatile agricultural land and as such there is no conflict with the requirements of Paragraphs 3.58 and 3.59 of PPW nor LDP Policy DP/4.

6.4 The proposed development will be viewed within an almost entirely agricultural context and as such will not be out-of-keeping with the character of the site, its immediate context nor the wider landscape.

6.5 As such, in accordance with the provisions of PPW, TAN 6 and the Conwy LDP, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in-principle.

#### Design & Visual/Landscape Impact

6.6 In terms of LANDMAP, the application site is located within the ‘Merddwr and Ceirw Valleys’ aspect area. A visual and sensory evaluation of the aspect area confirms the land to be of moderate quality; with the visual and sensory evaluation reading as follows:

*“The area has some elements that are pleasing including the watercourses and riparian vegetation and small clusters of fields as well as views to the surrounding uplands. The area is in moderate/poor condition disrupted to an extent by the A5 corridor. The valleys have some areas of distinct character such as Hen Voelas and the watercourse corridors although there is some lack of visual unity. The area is typical of much marginal farmland”.*

6.7 The proposed development would be sited adjacent to the recently approved slurry store and existing sheep shed. It would be viewed within the context of the existing agricultural development on-site and the nearby main farm complex to the east. As such, the proposals would be in-keeping with the agricultural and rural character of the application site and its environs.

6.8 The proposed development is of standard modern agricultural appearance and design, and will be akin to that of recent agricultural developments within the area. Given that the host landscape is almost wholly agricultural in nature, such developments are a common feature of the locality and should be expected to be seen within the landscape.

6.9 Importantly, the proposals will be sited within very close proximity to the A5 corridor, which LANDMAP advises already degrades the quality of the host landscape.

6.10 Furthermore, as already noted, the development will also be viewed within the context of and against the backdrop of the existing agricultural built development forming part of the holding at Gaerfechan.

6.11 Whilst it is acknowledged the development will be visible within the host landscape, as noted, it is of an appropriate scale and design and will not form

an ‘alien’ feature within the area. In addition, as noted on Dwg No: 79954 / RJC / 004 a new area of native species tree and copse planting will be provided to the south of the proposed building to help provide additional screening when viewed from the A5 Trunk Road. This additional tree planting will greatly reduce the extent of views available of the proposed development from public vantage points and will ensure the development assimilates fully into the character of the host rural landscape. The proposed planting can be secured by way of suitably worded conditions and will add to the planting already secured as part of planning permission ref: 0/52209.

- 6.12 As such, it is considered the proposed development would not cause any adverse landscape visual impact on this occasion, taking account of the proposal’s suitable design, siting and scale.

#### Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.13 There are no third-party dwellings located within close proximity to the application site, and therefore no impacts upon neighbouring residential amenity will arise.

- 6.14 Therefore, the development would not result in any adverse impacts in terms of amenity on this occasion.

#### Ecology & Green Infrastructure

- 6.15 The application site currently comprises an area of improved agricultural grazing land. Owing to its improved nature and intensive agricultural use, the site is considered to be of low ecological value and is unlikely to host any protected or priority species. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) accompanies the planning application, which provides a comprehensive assessment of the potential ecological impacts of the proposals.

- 6.16 The submitted PEA sets-out that the loss of the area of grassland to facilitate the development will not lead to any adverse ecological impacts. The PEA also confirms that the proposals are unlikely to have any direct impact upon protected or priority species, however a set of general avoidance measures are provided in any case to remove any residual risk. Adherence to the measures contained within the PEA can be secured by way of condition.

- 6.17 The Corsydd Nug a Merddwr SSSI lies approximately 1.7km to the north-west of the application site. However, the proposed development does not have the potential to cause any adverse impact upon the statutory site owing to the fact the proposed cubicle building will simply provide replacement dairy housing which is fit for purpose as part of modern Welsh agriculture; replacing the old and deteriorating existing cubicle housing at Gaerfechan and improving standards of animal welfare. Indeed, as the development will not cause existing stock numbers on the farm to change, ammonia emissions from the farm will not increase.

6.18 It is acknowledged that the site does lie within the freshwater catchment of the Bala Lake and River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and therefore NRW's *Advice to planning authorities for planning applications affecting nutrient sensitive river Special Areas of Conservation (July 2024)* is of relevance. However, the development as proposed is unlikely to be a source of additional phosphorus or a pathway for additional impacts. The development can therefore be screened out as not likely to have caused significant effect upon the integrity of the River Wye SAC as it falls within the following criterion in the published advice:

- *Any development that does not increase the volume and phosphorus concentration of wastewater.*

6.19 In terms of green infrastructure and providing a net benefit for biodiversity (NBB), as per Dwg No: 79954 / RJC / 004 a new area of native species tree and copse planting will be provided on land to the south of the proposed building. In addition, Part 6.3 of the submitted PEA outlines the following additional NBB measures to be provided on the site:

- 1x Woodcrete 28mm nest box. To be installed onto the east facing side of the existing agricultural shed, on the ditch side.
- 2x Woodcrete bat box, to be installed on the west-facing side of the building away from the main entrance. The boxes should be at least 3m from ground level.

6.20 The NBB measures as outlined above will provide a substantial NBB effect over and above the application site's green infrastructure baseline, thus complying with the requirements of Chapter 6 of PPW. Please refer to the submitted Green Infrastructure Statement for further details.

6.21 In light of the above, the development would not cause any adverse ecological effects and would provide an NBB effect on-site. The requirements of PPW (Chapter 6) and TAN 5.

## Highways

6.22 The vehicular movements associated with the site will remain unchanged as a consequence of the proposed development.

6.23 Indeed, the proposed cubicle building will only be used by the existing farm business operating from Gaerfechan and will not be used as part of any other agricultural holding. Furthermore, as aforementioned, the development will not cause any changes in stock numbers on the holding. As such, given the proposal will simply provide replacement cubicle housing on the farm at Gaerfechan, there will be no appreciable increase in the number/frequency of vehicle movements to/from the farm complex as a result of the development.

6.24 As can be noted from the submitted drawings, a new private access track is to be provided between the site of the proposed cubicle shed, the recently approved slurry store and the existing sheep shed, and the main farm complex at Gaerfechan to the east. This means that access will be provided over the land between the main farm complex and the ‘satellite’ complex to the west during all periods of the year – meaning less farm traffic from Gaerfechan will need to utilise the trunk road; therefore improving highway safety within the area and reducing the likelihood of conflict between farm and non-farm traffic.

#### Historic Environment

6.25 There are no designated historic assets located within close proximity to the application site and therefore the development as proposed would not cause any impacts upon the historic environment.

6.26 It is also noted there are no archaeological implications for the proposed development in this location.

#### Flood Risk & Drainage

6.27 The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 of the Flood Map for Planning (FMfP) and is therefore within an area not at risk from flooding.

6.28 Surface water from the proposed structure’s roof would drain to a new rainwater harvesting tank, although full details with regards surface water drainage would be provided as part of a separate SuDS application submitted to the SAB.

#### Public Right of Way Network

6.29 As is shown on Dwg No: 79954 / RJC / 001, there is a public right of way (PRoW) within close proximity to the application site; specifically the route of the proposed access track.

6.30 However, noting the specific siting of the proposed development (as per the submitted planning drawings), the route of the PRoW will remain open and unaffected by the proposals on this occasion. Indeed, the proposed access track will not interfere with the route of the PRoW, which will remain open and useable during both the construction and operational phases of the proposed development.

6.31 The Applicant commits to ensuring the route of the PRoW network is maintained open and useable during the course of the construction phase of the proposed development.

## 7.0 Conclusion

7.1 The proposed development is needed for legitimate agricultural purposes and to provide the farm at Gaerfechan with modern and fit for purpose cubicle housing for the existing dairy herd. The development as proposed will not cause stock numbers on the holding to change, and the proposed building will improve standards of animal welfare and comfort. The proposals are of an acceptable scale, design and appearance – being of typical modern agricultural appearance and being in-keeping with the character of the host rural landscape. The development will not cause any adverse impacts upon the natural environment, neighbouring residential amenity nor upon highway safety and flood risks.

7.2 Therefore, the proposal is fully compliant with both national and local planning policy requirements, and it is respectfully requested that full planning permission be granted for the development without delay.