
PLANNING COMMITTEE 23/9/19

Present: Councillor Elwyn Edwards – Chair
Councillor Eric M. Jones - Vice-chair

Councillors: Stephen Churchman, Simon Glyn, Louise Hughes, Anne Lloyd Jones, Berwyn Parry Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Huw G. Wyn Jones, Dilwyn Lloyd, Edgar Wyn Owen, Gareth A. Roberts, Eirwyn Williams, Gruffydd Williams and Owain Williams.

Others invited: Councillors Nia Jeffreys and Dafydd Meurig (Local Members).

Also in attendance: Gareth Jones (Environment Assistant Head), Cara Owen (Planning Manager), Gareth Roberts (Senior Development Control Officer - Transportation), Rhun ap Gareth (Senior Solicitor) and Bethan Adams (Member Support Officer).

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND PROTOCOL MATTERS

- (a) Councillor Eirwyn Williams declared a personal interest in item 5.1 on the agenda, (planning application number C18/0520/44/LL) as he owned a guesthouse.

The member was of the opinion that it was not a prejudicial interest, and he did not withdraw from the meeting during the discussion on the item and he voted.

- (b) The following members declared that they were local members in relation to the items noted:
- Councillor Nia Jeffreys (not a member of this Planning Committee), in item 5.1 on the agenda (planning application number C18/0520/44/LL);
 - Councillor Dafydd Meurig (not a member of this Planning Committee), in relation to item 5.2 on the agenda, (planning application number C19/0556/21/LL).

The Members withdrew to the other side of the Chamber during the discussion on the applications in question and did not vote on these matters.

2. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee, that took place on 2 September 2019, as a true record.

3. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee considered the following applications for development.

Details of the applications were expanded upon and questions were answered in relation to the plans and policy aspects.

RESOLVED

1. Application number C18/0520/44/LL – Tŷ Moelwyn, Britannia Terrace, Porthmadog

Application for the demolition of existing building and erection of hotel with ancillary restaurant and bar together with alterations to the access, creation of parking spaces and landscaping and provision of bin store (revised scheme).

- (a) The Planning Manager elaborated on the background of the application and noted that the hotel would have 80 bedrooms over three/four storeys, with a restaurant and bar on the

ground floor with associated facilities, together with 56 parking spaces and bicycle storage. She noted that the site was in a prominent location on the outskirts of Porthmadog, and the building that was previously a tax office, was visible when travelling over the Cob towards Porthmadog. Some members had visited the site prior to the meeting.

Attention was drawn to the additional observations that had been received.

She noted that the principle of the development was acceptable as developing on brownfield land and serviced-accommodation provision were supported by national and local policies.

She highlighted that there were a variety of buildings in the vicinity of the site and some buildings had historical features. It was not considered that any specific form existed within the nearby area. She explained that the existing building was fairly substantial in size with three storeys and a hip slate roof, however, it had no architectural features of interest. She noted that the proposal indicated a building situated further back from the public highway with the car park to the front. She elaborated that the development as a whole would create a prominent visual change, however, this was not considered to be unacceptable. It was important to note that there were landscape and conservation designations close to the site, however, the context of the site on the outskirts of a busy town had to be considered. The proposal was not considered to be a significant change to the existing situation and it was likely that the most impact would only be local. She noted that it was considered that the impact of the development was not unacceptable considering the area's nature, the existing building and the nature of the development.

She explained that the site was located close to the residential terraced housing of Tros y Bont (Britannia Terrace and Britannia Place). She noted that there was no doubt that there would be a change to what existed on the site, however, having considered the location, form and size of the existing building with what was proposed, it was deemed that the change would not be unacceptable.

She noted that the matters that concerned local residents most were the local impact of the development due to the proposal's size and what was seen as a lack of parking provision within the site. She highlighted that a Transportation Statement has been submitted with the application as well as detailed plans indicating transportation routes in and out of the site. Due to the concerns highlighted, a thorough assessment of the proposal was conducted by the Transportation Unit and they confirmed they had no objection to the proposal.

She drew attention, following the receipt of the Language Statement, that the Language Unit had stated that the proposal was likely to have a positive impact on the town and the Welsh language. She highlighted that the Tourism Service stated that this type of hotel provision was scarce bearing in mind the number of visitors to the area.

The development was acceptable in terms of relevant local and national policies for the reasons given in the report.

- (b) Taking advantage of the right to speak, the applicant's agent noted the following main points:-
- The application had been submitted by the landowners Mapeley Steps and Premier Inn;
 - The proposal would support the local economy with an investment of approximately £6 million and would create up to 30 direct jobs;
 - It was expected that the majority of jobs would be for local people with employment opportunities supporting sustainable communities where the Welsh language can continue to thrive;
 - That research and evidence showed that there was significant need for serviced accommodation of a high standard in Porthmadog. There was only one other national chain hotel in Porthmadog;

- The proposal would improve the profile of visitors to Porthmadog and would attract new visitors without having a direct impact on other hotels in the town, as could be seen with the hotel in Victoria Dock in Caernarfon;
- Discussions were conducted regarding the number of parking spaces and they were confident that parking provision on the site was sufficient considering the location and accessibility of the development close to the town centre and a number of nearby public car parks;
- It was hoped that the Committee would support the proposal that would be a huge boost to the economy of Porthmadog.

(c) The local member (not a member of this Planning Committee) noted the following main points:-

- The majority of the community supported the application and welcomed new jobs, additional rooms and the development of the site. However, a small number noted concerns regarding the development but did not object it.
- The main concern of the residents of Britannia Terrace, Britannia Place and Surveyor's Place was the parking provision on the site as parking was already a problem in this area of Porthmadog;
- That older and disabled residents had an agreement with the previous owners regarding parking on the site and they were disappointed that the arrangement had ended;
- That it was important for the company to come to an arrangement with the Council in terms of validating parking and that signage and marketing on the internet should encourage guests to park at Llyn Bach or Heol y Parc car parks.
- To encourage the developer to consult further with local residents about car parking in order to come to an understanding.
- That some residents had requested that building work hours be restricted to between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday;
- Local builders and workers should be used during the construction period and where possible eco-friendly materials and methods;
- 87% of people in the Porthmadog ward understood or could speak Welsh. Therefore, it was vital that the Welsh language was prominent in all aspects of the hotel and that it was the natural language within the hotel from the start, as it was in the town of Porthmadog;
- That it was necessary to ensure that fans and ventilation units were set far enough away from nearby housing.
- Generally, there was strong support for the development, however, it was important that local concerns were considered;
- That the development was a statement of confidence in the town of Porthmadog;
- Encourage the company to support the town's local businesses in terms of supplying produce. That it was important that a large company such as this supported small businesses and the benefits were kept locally.

(ch) It was proposed and seconded to approve the application.

During the ensuing discussion, the following main observations were noted by members:

- The application offered an excellent opportunity for Porthmadog especially in terms of jobs the development would create;
- No objection to the proposal in principle, the site was in an excellent and convenient location for a hotel, however, concerns regarding parking provision on the site for guests and staff needed to be considered. Train services were not very frequent and the development may mean more parking difficulties in the town bearing in mind the existing parking situation. It may be possible to either increase the parking provision or reduce the number of rooms in the hotel to overcome the problem.

- The building would be located back with a softer design than the existing building, therefore it would be less intrusive. Wanted to see the provision of electric car charging points at the site;
- The existing building was empty and this type of development was needed in Porthmadog. Concern regarding parking provision. It was hoped that staff would be local and the Welsh language would be a natural part of the business and it should be ensured that signage was bilingual. The local member asked the applicants to buy local produce, this was a good idea however national hotels bought in bulk and unfortunately no pressure could be brought to bear on them to buy locally. The development would create jobs which was extremely important;
- If the application was approved, could a condition be imposed in the context that the Welsh language is used by staff, especially reception staff?
- The applicants should be requested to use the colours of Wales on the signage;
- There was access to a public car park via the rear of the site, that visitors were likely to stay for two to three nights and the development would be beneficial to shops in the town and would bring work into the area;
- Supportive of the application with the agents' comments confirming the developer's awareness of the importance of the Welsh language in the area. Parking provision on the site was sufficient with a train link on the Cambrian Coast Railway and public car parks nearby. The working times recommended under condition 13 were reasonable hours. There was a real need for such a development in the area.

(c) In response to the above observations, the officers noted:

- That the transportation assessment had concluded that 56 parking spaces was sufficient provision for the site considering the sustainability of the site. The site was located on the outskirts of the town, there were public car parks nearby, train and bus links as well as a cycling path behind the site. In considering that this was an application for a hotel and the tendency of guests to park and leave their cars overnight, the car parks could cope with the additional requirement. There were over 400 parking spaces in nearby car parks and therefore the development was unlikely to create parking problems on nearby streets;
- That the wish to ensure that the Welsh language was a natural part of the hotel from the start was extremely important. It was difficult to have conditions regarding who would be employed and their language. It was recommended that a condition be imposed to ensure that signage was bilingual and a note could be attached, if the application was approved, to note the importance of contacting Hunaniaith (the local Welsh Language Initiative) prior to developing the site to get further understanding about the area's Welshness;
- A discussion could take place with the applicants regarding the design of signs on the site.

RESOLVED to approve the application.

Conditions:

1. Time
2. Compliance with plans
3. All materials to be agreed prior to being installed
4. Natural slate
5. Landscaping
6. Highways/Parking
7. Welsh Water
8. Biodiversity
9. Protect the footpath/cycle path
10. Archaeology
11. Natural Resources Wales
12. Construction environmental management plan

13. Construction method statement / working time
14. Bilingual signage
15. Agree on details to restrict opening of windows/ opaque glass
16. Lighting plan
17. Keep bin/service area clear
18. Boundary treatments (especially considering the listed buildings) of the site on the town's outskirts.
19. Agree on type/form and location of solar panels before installation
20. Sustainable Drainage note.

Note: The importance of contacting Hunaniaith (the local Welsh Language Initiative) prior to developing the site to get further understanding about the area's Welshness

2. Application number C19/0556/21/LL – Fferm Talybont Uchaf, Tal y Bont, Bangor

Change of use of agricultural building into a boat engine mechanic workshop (Use Class B1)

- (a) The Planning Manager elaborated on the background of the application and noted that it was a retrospective application. She explained that the site was near the buildings of the former Tal y Bont Uchaf farm, these comprise a substantial house, annexe and outbuildings and a (Grade II) listed building. She noted that the building was in a rural area approximately 1.2km east of the development boundary of the Local Village of Llandygai, as defined by the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan (JLDP).

She noted that Strategic Policy PS 13 of the JLDP aimed to facilitate economic growth by supporting many aspects of the local economy including supporting the economic prosperity of rural communities by facilitating growth on an appropriate scale by re-using existing buildings in rural areas. She explained that the proposal met with criteria in Policy CYF6 of the JLDP which encourages the approval of proposals to re-use and convert rural buildings for business use.

She drew attention to the two main elements of the development that may have an impact on the amenities of neighbours namely noise and transportation. She noted that a noise report was submitted with the application and concluded that the workshop did not cause significant harm to neighbours' amenities in terms of noise. She explained that the applicant was in the process of buying Fferm Tal y Bont Uchaf and the associated buildings and if this went through, it would be a matter for the owner to control the noise in order that it would not have an impact on his own property. It was recommended, if planning permission was approved, that a condition should be imposed to tie the planning permission to the owner/resident of Fferm Tal y Bont Uchaf only.

She highlighted that the Transportation Unit had no objection to the proposal, however, there was some objection by the local community who claimed that the increase in traffic was already harmful to road safety and local amenities. She noted that when considering the previous use of the site for agricultural purposes, there was nothing to prevent substantial agricultural vehicles/machinery from coming and going to the site for that purpose.

She noted that Natural Resources Wales had withdrawn their objection to the application. The development was acceptable in terms of relevant local and national policies for the reasons noted in the report.

- (b) Exercising the right to speak, the applicant's agent noted the following main points:-
- That the business was a specialist one that employed nine full-time members of staff;
 - The lease of the business's previous site had ended, discussions were conducted with Council officers and others regarding a suitable alternative site but none were available;
 - The business had to re-locate at short notice. Therefore, unfortunately the application was retrospective;
 - The family now owned the entire site;

- The machinery were hidden and this was important as there had been problems with theft in the past;
- The site was convenient for Porth Penrhyn in Bangor, Felinheli and Conwy Marina and was close to the A55;
- That a detailed noise assessment had been submitted as part of the application, this confirmed that there was no detrimental impact on local residents;
- The applicant was content with the working time condition between 8.00am and 4.30pm and to the condition to tie the use to the owner/resident of Fferm Tal y Bont Uchaf;
- The applicant was willing to meet the local member and nearby residents to discuss their concerns.

(c) The local member (not a member of this Planning Committee) noted the following main points:-

- No objection to the proposal in principle and supported the business that was creating jobs;
- The member was before the committee to present the concerns of residents who were local to the site;
- That Llanllechid Community Council had presented observations on the application, many were not planning issues but concern was noted regarding the increase in traffic movements since the business had re-located to the site. The applicant appeared to recognise the traffic problem as the use of large vehicles was discouraged. The road to the site was part of the bicycle network and there was no room to walk on the road when a van or lorry was travelling on it. Disagreed that the site was accessible and that there had been a significant change in transportation;
- At one time a lorry had hit its mirror on the house near the access adding to the family's concerns. Vehicle drivers were angry because of the difficulties. The turning for the gatehouse lane was a sharp turning and drivers had to back up and go forwards several times to take the turning breaking up the green area;
- An observation had been received from a resident that new businesses developed organically and grew but as the business was already established, it had impacted the residential amenities of local residents;
- There was a change in the type of vehicles, with tractors in the context of the former agricultural use able to look over hedgerows. Now goods vehicle drivers were unfamiliar with the area and used the narrow road;
- The Committee should consider refusing the application on the grounds of Policies PCYFF2 and PCYFF3 of the JLDP;
- If it was intended to approve the application then a site inspection visit should be conducted prior to determination.

(ch) A proposal to undertake a site inspection visit was made and seconded.

During the ensuing discussion, the following main observations were noted by members:

- If a site inspection visit was conducted, would it be possible to receive information regarding what type of transport, size of vehicles that carried goods to the site and their frequency, in order to see what the impact would be?
- That the business existed and had re-located. It would be appreciated if a site inspection visit could be conducted to assess the situation;
- The Transportation Unit did not object to the proposal. The agricultural use had ended and the current business employed nine full-time members of staff. Would it be possible to make improvements to the road?
- Did not disagree in principle, however, the concerns of the local member worried her in terms of heavy transport on rural roads. Supported a site inspection visit;
- That the Community Council strongly objected to the proposal. The change of use from agricultural use meant a change in transportation. Attention needed to be given to local concerns.

RESOLVED to conduct a site visit.

3. Application number C19/0687/14/LL - Redline Go-Kart Centre, Lôn Cae Ffynnon, Cibyn Industrial Estate, Caernarfon

Full application for change of use of building from use class D2 (indoor karting centre) to use class B2 (general industrial use)

- (a) The Planning Manager elaborated on the application's background and noted that this was to bring the building back into business use within use class B2, that was more in keeping with its location at Cibyn Industrial Estate, than the current use.

She explained that the Cibyn Industrial Estate had been designated as a Sub-regional Strategic Site for land uses within use classes B1, B2 and B8. The proposal was acceptable in principle.

It was highlighted that there were no concerns regarding amenities or transportation. Attention was drawn to the additional observations received and it was noted that a Language Statement had been submitted and the Language Unit considered that the impact would be positive and offered local employment opportunities.

The development was acceptable in terms of relevant local and national policies for the reasons noted in the report.

- (b) Exercising the right to speak, the applicant's agent noted the following main points:-
- That the use as a karting centre had ended. The proposal would change the business use back to business use B2 in compliance with the Cibyn Industrial Estate designation as a protected site for employment use;
 - The applicant was Welcome Furniture, who employed 190 staff on another site at Cibyn, and the majority were local people. Expanding the business would create up to an additional 20 jobs;
 - No objection had been received and the Town Council supported the application.
- (c) It was proposed and seconded to approve the application.

A member noted that the development would be beneficial to the area with an established company bringing the site back into use.

In response to an enquiry from a member if the previous company had received public funding and the sum, the Senior Solicitor noted that he would pass the enquiry on to the Economy and Community Department to answer the member directly. It was stressed that this was not relevant to the determination on this application.

RESOLVED to approve the application.

Conditions:

1. Time
2. Compliance with the plans
3. Welsh Water Note

Note: this permission does not grant permission for any signs or ventilation/extraction units.

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 2.05pm.

CHAIR