
PLANNING COMMITTEE 03.02.14

Present: Councillor Gwen Griffith – Chair
Councillor Michael Sol Owen – Vice-chair

Councillors: Councillors Endaf Cooke, Louise Hughes, Anne Lloyd Jones, Dyfrig Wynn Jones, June Marshall, Dafydd Meurig, Eirwyn Williams, Hefin Williams, Owain Williams, Eurig Wyn

Others invited: Councillors Anwen J. Davies, Lesley Day, Eric Merfyn Jones, Llywarch Bowen Jones, W. Gareth Roberts and R. H. Wyn Williams (Local Members).

Also present: Aled Davies (Head of Regulatory Department – for planning application number C13/0403/39/LL), Gareth Jones (Senior Manager Planning and Environment Service), Cara Owen (Development Control Manager), Rhun ap Gareth (Senior Solicitor), Gareth Roberts (Senior Development Control Officer – Transport) and Ioan Hughes (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Elwyn Edwards, William Tudor Owen and Siân Gwenllïan (local member).

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

(a) The following members declared a personal interest for the reasons noted:

- Councillor Dyfrig Wynn Jones, in item 5 on the agenda (planning application number C13/1089/11/LL) as a relative of his was the applicant's agent.

The member was of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and he withdrew from the Chamber during the discussion on the application noted.

(b) The following members declared that they were local members in relation to the items noted:

- Councillor Eurig Wyn (a member of this Planning Committee) in relation to item 5 on the agenda (planning application number C09A/0412/26/LL);
- Councillor R. H. Wyn Williams (not a member of this Planning Committee) in relation to item 5 on the agenda, (planning application number C13/0403/39/LL);
- Councillor Anwen J. Davies (not a member of this Planning Committee) in relation to item 5 on the agenda (planning application number C13/0880/33/LL);
- Councillor Lesley Day (not a member of this Planning Committee) in relation to item 5 on the agenda (planning application C13/1089/11/LL)
- Councillor Eric Merfyn Jones (not a member of this Planning Committee) in relation to item 5 on the agenda (planning application number C13/1246/17/R3).

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

2. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 13 January 2014 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 aspects of the policies.

1. **Application No. C09A/0412/26/LL – Land Adjacent to Hen Gapel, Ffordd Waunfawr, Caeathro**

Erection of 12 dwellings together with creating a new access and drainage works.

a) The Senior Planning Service Manager expanded upon the background of the application. Members were reminded that this application had been deferred at the previous meeting in order to allow time for the Joint Planning Policy Unit to assess the language and community statement submitted by the applicant.

The Joint Planning Policy Unit's observations were now part of the written report submitted.

(b) It was further noted that the planning officers did not consider that the development would have a detrimental impact on the community or the language.

(c) It was confirmed that the site had been designated for housing in the UDP and that the principle of developing houses on the site had been established and was acceptable. Attention was also drawn to the observations of the Council's Strategic Housing Unit that stated that there was a need for affordable housing in the Caernarfon area and that Cymdeithas Tai Eryri had shown an interest in collaborating with the applicant in relation to the provision of four affordable houses.

(ch) Concern had been expressed in relation to residential amenities. However, the planning officers considered that there was enough space between the houses that would be built and the houses closest to the site's boundary.

(d) It was noted that there were issues regarding the capacity of the local school. The site was within the catchment-area of Ysgol Bontnewydd and the developer had agreed to contribute £61,000 to deal with issues involving the school's capacity.

dd) Taking advantage of the right to speak, the objectors' representative noted the following main points:

- The proposed two-storey houses would not be in keeping with the nearby dwellings;
- The development would be prominent and unsuitable in the rural landscape;
- Caeathro was a small rural village and such plans had previously been used in towns.
- Local residents appreciated the local landscape and the quality of life in Caeathro and they were of the opinion that the proposal would spoil this due to the size of the development and the unsuitable design.
- The residents did not oppose to the development, but they opposed to a heartless development.
- An effort should be made to protect the village landscape.

(e) From a personal point of view, the speaker said that his property included a conservatory where complete privacy could be enjoyed at present. He noted that there would be overlooking from five first-floor windows if the application was to be approved. One of the windows would be eight feet away from the boundary of his property, and the speaker noted that this was a reflection of heartless planning. He suggested that it would be better to develop the affordable units as bungalows and that this would deal with problems of overlooking.

(f) He called for a site visit to be arranged before the members made a final decision.

(g) Taking advantage of the right to speak, the applicant's agent said that Caeathro was a rural village and that the development, which included four affordable houses would create an opportunity for local people to remain in their local areas. He also noted that only four new houses had been built in the village in the past ten years.

(h) The local member (a member of this Planning Committee) said that floods were a cause for concern and he was grateful that this matter had been given full consideration.

He further noted:-

- that wide accesses to the site were needed in order to deal with difficulties that could arise due to traffic speed along the nearby road;
- Pont Refail Bach was a special feature and the development should not affect the bridge in any way;
- the proposal to erect four affordable houses was welcomed;
- the development meant that the children of the village had to walk approximately three quarters of a mile to the school in Bontnewydd and the Planning Department and the Education Department should hold discussions to address this;
- there was a need to ensure that the development would not have an impact on the network of public footpaths that existed.

(i) In response, it was noted that Pont Refail Bach had not been listed, but that the development would not have an impact on the feature anyway. In addition, the road through the estate would improve the network of public footpaths. It was noted that the Education Department and the Transportation Department would be dealing with the children's journey to Ysgol Bontnewydd as the matter was outside the planning system.

(l) A member emphasised that there was a need to consider whether or not there was a real need for the development and that evidence of the local demand should be obtained. The member also expressed concern in terms of floods.

(m) In response to further enquiries and observations, it was noted:-

- that the landing windows of the new house would be the closest to the existing houses;
- there was quite a distance between the existing houses and the new houses;
- there were houses of various designs, including two-storey houses in the area and the new houses would not be out of character;
- the policy called for 35% of housing developments to be affordable houses and the 33% included in this plan was reasonable, especially given the site's infrastructure problems;
- the financial contribution in terms of the catchment-area's school was in accordance with the policy;
- the estate road would be developed to a standard to be adopted by the Council.

RESOLVED to delegate the right to the Senior Planning Manager to approve the application subject to the applicant signing a Section 106 agreement relating to the educational financial contribution and to ensuring that four of the 12 houses are affordable houses for general local need and to relevant conditions relating to:

Five years;
 In accordance with the plans;
 Highways;
 Natural Resources Wales;

Welsh Water/infrastructure;
 Flood Risk and Coastal Erosion Management Unit;
 Landscaping;
 Biodiversity mitigation measures;
 Materials/slates;
 Removal of permitted rights for the affordable houses.

2. Application number C13/0403/39/LL – White House Hotel, Abersoch

Demolition of existing hotel, construction of a mixed-use structure incorporating a spa facility and a 42 bedroom hotel, a restaurant/bar and 18 residential apartments with associated car parking, servicing areas and landscaping.

(a) The Senior Manager Planning and Environment Service noted that additional information relating to costs and viability had been submitted by the applicant during the past few days. As the information was so important and crucial in terms of the application's recommendation, the planning officers recommended that the application should be deferred so that thorough consideration could be given to the additional information received.

(b) Members agreed that the application should be deferred, but the members were eager to emphasise the need to provide affordable housing as part of the development in accordance with the Council's policies and the need to increase the supply of affordable housing in the Abersoch area.

(c) The local member (not a member of this committee), said that he supported this deferral and that he hoped that a sustainable plan could be obtained.

RESOLVED:

a) To defer the application as consideration needs to be given to the important and crucial information received. It is noted that the proposal is acceptable, to a vast degree, with the exception of the lack of affordable housing.

3. Application number C13/0702/20/LL – Land near Oaklands, Penybryn, Felinheli

Erection of a three-story dwelling.

(a) The Development Control Manager elaborated on the background of this application and noted that the site was within a residential area and that the houses in the area varied in terms of layout, depending on the location.

She further noted that the Tree Report submitted as part of the application was acceptable. In addition, she noted that the design and the materials were acceptable and that the proposal was not likely to have any detrimental impact on amenities and that it was not contrary to any of the relevant policies noted in the report.

b) Taking advantage of the right to speak, the applicant's representative noted the following main points:

- the applicant's family had owned the land in question since 1953;
- the land had been used by the family since then with every right of access etc.;
- the applicant had lived in Felinheli for the vast majority of her life and she was now eager to return to the area with her young family to be closer to other relatives;
- existing houses in Felinheli were beyond their financial reach;
- three-storey houses had already been built near the site;

- the Transportation Unit had no objection;
- a standard drainage system would be installed prior to commencing the development;
- the applicant was eager to return to her roots and this was an important matter in terms of safeguarding the language and the continuation of the village structure.

(c) It was confirmed that no observations had been received from the Community Council or the local member.

RESOLVED to approve the application.

Conditions:

Five years;

In accordance with the plans;

Slate roof;

Sustainable homes code;

Welsh Water;

Ensure that public footpaths are safeguarded;

Ensure that the trees protected under a Tree Preservation Order are protected during the work in accordance with the recommendations within the tree report;

Agreement required on any external lights prior to them being installed on the site;

Two parking spaces within the curtilage must be ensured.

4. Application number C13/0880/33/LL – Glandwr, Rhydyclafdy, Pwllheli

Create an agricultural vehicular access.

Members of the Committee had visited the site prior to the meeting.

(a) The Development Control Officer elaborated on the background of the application and emphasised that the agricultural vehicular access was the only matter in question, rather than any allegations regarding any other further use of the land.

(b) It was explained that the proposal involved creating the access in order to serve a section of land, extending to eight acres without creating tracks across the fields.

It was noted that the Transportation Unit was happy with the design of the access and that they had no objection to the proposal.

The planning officers did not consider that the new access would have a significant detrimental impact on the area or the Landscape Conservation Area.

Objectors referred to loss of privacy, but in response it was noted that the road, where the access would be created, was a public road and that there was no substantial privacy to be had there at the moment. In addition the planning officers did not consider that an agricultural access would have an excessive impact on privacy.

(c) Taking advantage of the right to speak, the applicant's agent said that the applicant had worked closely with the Planning Department in order to ensure that the access was acceptable in terms of its location and scale.

He added that work had already commenced to improve the land; work that had been ignored in the past and that the development would create a convenient direct access to the land. He noted that the applicant had been advised to apply for a licence to carry materials to the land for drainage works but he emphasised that waste materials would not be transported to the site.

(ch) The local member (not a member of this Planning Committee), noted that she had received several complaints in relation to the proposed development.

She elaborated and referred to the complaints she had received and noted the following main points:-

- an appropriate hard surface already existed for machinery to travel along the land;
- a licence had already been issued by Natural Resources Wales in relation to transporting materials to the land;
- transporting the materials would create additional traffic with large lorries travelling along the rural roads;
- the lorries and agricultural machinery would damage the surface of the road;
- the heavy vehicles would have an impact on the nearby river and would cause flooding;
- local roads were already busy, particularly when there was flooding in Penrhos and the traffic had to travel through the village;
- the rubble that would be carried to the land was a cause for concern as there was no mention of this in the original application;
- trees would certainly be felled in order to create the access;
- a second access to the land already existed;
- a flood risk assessment should be undertaken prior to approving any further development as problems had already occurred in the area;
- the land was marshy;

(d) The following observations were made for refusing the application:-

- the access would lead to wet land
- there was reference to an 8 metre wide access but an agricultural access did not need to be of this size;
- a vast number of lorries would be travelling to the site to transport the waste to the site;
- two accesses to land measuring only eight acres were not needed,
- the access would be in the centre of the village near a junction;

(dd) The following observations were made in favour of approving the application:-

- an agricultural access was the only matter in question;
- another application would have to be submitted if there would be an intention to use the land for other purposes;
- the gate for the access would measure four metres wide;
- there were no sufficient planning reasons for refusing the application;
- the application for an agricultural access had been blown out of all proportion;

(e) In response to observations made, it was noted that policies relating to visibility did not relate to an agricultural access. It was added that the size of the access had been slightly reduced given its location and so as not to have an excessive impact on the parking spaces along the side of the road.

In terms of the size of the access being in accordance with the land, it was noted that the design was in accordance with the standard patterns for an agricultural access in the area.

RESOLVED to approve the application

Conditions:

Commence the work within five years;

Work to be completed in accordance with the amended plans received on 14 October 2013.

5. Application number C13/1089/11/LL – The Ship Launch, 83 Garth Road, Bangor

An application for the conversion of an existing public house into four self-contained living units.

(a) The Development Control Manager elaborated on the background of the application and noted that the application was in accordance with the policies and that the proposal would not involve external changes to the building and therefore would not have any impact on its character.

(b) Taking advantage of the right to speak, the applicant's agent noted that there was no intention to develop the unit as a unit in multiple occupation for students.

Rather, although the costs were higher, the applicant intended to provide four high standard flats as they were very limited in Bangor. Consequently, it was hoped to attract professional people as long-term tenants.

He added that the proposal was not contrary to Policy CH14 of the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan 2009 (converting houses into flats, bedsits or houses of multiple occupation).

He also noted that the development would lead to less parking problems as there would be no delivery vehicles.

He noted that efforts had been made but that the property was no longer viable as a public house.

(c) The local member (not a member of this Planning Committee) expressed concern and noted that the proposal was contrary to a series of policies within the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan 2009 in relation to:- amenities, converting houses into flats, bedsits or houses of multiple occupation and private car parking facilities.

(ch) She elaborated, noting the following main points:-

- the flats would be very small;
- the proposal was an overdevelopment and developing two units would be more reasonable;
- there was no rear access to the property;
- there was no space outside the property to store bins;
- the property was in an area that could be established as a conservation area in the future and therefore this opportunity should not be jeopardised;
- the proposal was not in keeping with this historical part of Bangor;
- the development would have a negative impact on the social and environmental amenities of the area;
- parking was creating problems at present and the development would worsen the situation;

(d) The following observations were noted in favour of approving the application:-

- the situation in terms of waste was the same for the entire terrace as there were no rear accesses to any of the neighbouring properties;
- parking matters was not a sufficient reason for refusing the application as problems already existed there and there was a public car park nearby;
- there were two other public houses nearby and the business that was run at the property was not viable;
- a change of use was better than leaving the building to fall into disrepair;
- the flats would be suitable for young people who could not currently obtain units to live independently.

(dd) The following observations were noted for refusing the application: -

- reference had been made to providing the flats for professional people and they would be expected to be car users, therefore this would increase transport and parking problems;
- lack of sufficient parking spaces had been used as a reason for refusing applications in other areas;
- the proposal was an overdevelopment, as there were several small units in the area;
- work was being undertaken to improve the nearby pier and this would also increase the transport problems;
- the public house had been used by local residents when it was open, and as they walked there they had not had an impact on transport;
- the development would create problems in terms of refuse collections;
- two flats in the property would be reasonable.

RESOLVED to approve the application

Conditions:

Five years;

Finish the development in accordance with the plans submitted;

Welsh Water conditions.

6. Application number C13/1108/30/LL – Ship Hotel, Aberdaron

Demolish existing front extension and install a new frontage and alterations to existing windows.

(a) The Development Control Manager elaborated on the background of the application and noted that four letters/correspondences had been received objecting to the application along with one correspondence supporting the application.

Objectors expressed their concern in relation to noise being created as a result of the double doors that formed part of the development, particularly late at night. They suggested that a condition could be imposed to ensure that the new doors were closed at 9pm every day.

The officer noted that such a condition could not be controlled. She added that the site was quite busy at present and that the development would not have an additional substantial impact on the residential amenities of nearby residents.

(b) A member noted that the development would mean that the site would be safer as more room would be created outside the building along with bollards that formed part of the plans.

RESOLVED to approve the application

Conditions:

Commence within five years;

In accordance with plans;

Agree on the colour of the frame of the double doors;

Ensure that the bollards are placed in accordance with the plans.

7. Application number C13/1181/43/LL – Nant Gwrtheyrn Language Centre, Llithfaen

Create a new conference/wedding room as an extension to the main hall, build an extension to the café and create an additional dining area, build an extension to create a shop facility that is separate to the café, along with an extension to the rear of the existing kitchen to provide a storage area for catering facilities and construct a new separate bunk house

building for (40 people) and a common room to provide accommodation for schools/colleges who use the centre.

(a) The Development Control Manager elaborated on the background of the application and noted that the proposed development had been divided into three sections and submitted information individually on the three sections, namely:

- Creating a new conference/wedding room;
- Extending the café and shop;
- Building a new bunk house.

(b) She added that the plan was ambitious, and in principle, the officers had no objection based on the policies.

The planning officers were also of the opinion that:

- several discussions had been held prior to obtaining a plan of a standard that was in keeping with the unique site within the AONB;
- the materials were in keeping with the site;
- the materials for the bunk house reflected the farm buildings with a mixture of corrugated steel and slate roofs and timber and glazed elevations;
- specific attention had been given to the design as there were listed buildings nearby;

(c) Concern had been expressed in relation to the possibility of additional traffic, but the Transportation Unit noted that the development would not have a detrimental impact on any road or proposed road.

(ch) A member noted that Nant Gwrtheyrn was a traditional slate village and was concerned that the proposal was an overdevelopment and would have a detrimental impact on the nature and feel of the village.

He added that the village was visible from places such as Porthdinllaen and Morfa Nefyn. Although he appreciated the work undertaken at the Nant Gwrtheyrn Language Centre in terms of promoting the Welsh language, he added that the development would create competition with local businesses such as the village shop and Tafarn y Fic in Llithfaen.

Further concern was expressed by the member who was of the opinion that the red roofs would not be in keeping with the site and did not fit in with the quarrying atmosphere.

(d) The observations were reiterated by another member who referred specifically to his doubts in relation to the suitability of the red roofs.

(dd) The application was supported by other members who were of the opinion that the proposal was exciting and that the developments were in keeping with the site. It was also noted that old ideas had been adapted successfully for the development. It was added that it was possible to walk from the site and join the Coastal Path and that this was also welcomed.

(e) In terms of the colour of the roofs, it was noted that this could be discussed further and that these buildings were not visible from the sea as they had been placed behind the housing terrace.

RESOLVED to approve the application

Conditions:

Time;

Comply with plans

Slates;

Materials;
 Planning officers to reach an agreement with the applicant on the colour of the corrugated steel roofs;
 Holiday permission only / occupancy period;
 Landscaping;
 Preservation of existing trees;
 Bat precautionary measures.

8. Application number C13/1246/17/R3 – Ysgol Gynradd Groeslon, Lôn Garreg Fawr, Groeslon

Demolition of part of the existing school, erection of a new school and construction of new sports pitches.

(a) The Development Control Manager elaborated on the background of the application and reminded the members of the site visit that had been held the previous month.

She added that the Education Department, the architects and the Planning Department had had several discussions in order to obtain an acceptable plan and design. Also, the community had been part of the discussions regarding the proposed design and use of the building.

(b) It was explained that the largest part of the existing school would be demolished and the original Victorian school would be retained and a series of interlinked blocks would be erected to connect it in an open square format around an internal courtyard.

(c) In addition to the school building, reference was made to external developments and specific attention was given to the new access road with a drop-off / pick-up area, two bus stops, parking spaces and a roundabout to enable vehicles to turn within the site.

(ch) It was noted that the application met the needs of the relevant policies and specific reference was made to policies CH37 (Educational, Health and Community Facilities) and CH42 (Safeguarding open spaces of recreational value) of the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan 2009.

(d) The local member (not a member of this Planning Committee) noted that the proposal was to be welcomed. However, he noted that he sympathised with Carmel and Bron y Foel schools as they would be closing as a result of developing the new school.

He added that the planning work for the development had been made over a period of a few years so that different ideas and opinions could be given full consideration. Obtaining the opinions of teachers, within and outside Gwynedd had been an essential part of this work. The local member also noted that there was no objection to the development and that they had reached a point where the work could commence.

(dd) A member noted that there was an obvious need for the new school in Groeslon, but he also saw that closing two other schools was unfortunate, especially given that it was likely to lead to job losses.

The member welcomed the reduction in concerns in relation to transport as this had been a great concern in the past.

(e) The following main points were noted in support of the application:

- the school was a type of development that children needed and deserved
- the design was excellent and stemmed from detailed discussions.

(f) Another member drew further attention to two other schools in the area that would be closing as a result of the development. He noted that approximately 50 pupils attended Ysgol Carmel and that consideration should be given to things such as the lack of a bus to transport the pupils to the new school, and the fact there was no pavement along the road between the two schools.

RESOLVED to approve the application.

Conditions:

Time five years,

In accordance with the plans;

Materials and colours to be agreed;

Transportation conditions;

Landscaping / tree conditions;

Boundary conditions;

Biodiversity conditions;

Flood risk conditions / ensure suitable drainage;

Welsh Water conditions;

Protect the footpath.

The meeting commenced at 1pm and concluded at 3.30pm