

PLANNING AUTHORITY	DATE: 26/02/2018
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICE MANAGER	DOLGELLAU

**Number: 14**

**Application Number: C17/1211/18/LL**

**Date Registered: 08/12/2017**

**Application Type: Full - Planning**

**Community: Llanddeiniolen**

**Ward: Penisarwaun**

**Proposal: Demolition of existing detached church hall and construction of church hall attached to the existing Santes Helen Church, Penisarwaun, and creation of parking on site for seven vehicles, including two spaces for the disabled. (amended plans to those that were considered under C17/0093/18/LL)**

**Location: St. Helen, Tai Newyddion, Penisarwaun, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 3BP**

**Summary of the Recommendation: TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS**

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## 1. Description:

- 1.1 This application involves the creation of a new hall for Santes Helen Church, Penisarwaun. The plan includes many elements:
- Demolish existing building used as a hall to serve the church
  - Create a new vehicular access and car park for seven vehicles (including two disabled spaces) on the site of the former parish hall.
  - Construct a two-storey extension to the side of the Church, extending 19.6m to the west. The extension would be 8.0m in height (1.0m lower than the roof of the existing church). The extension would have a slate pitched roof and slate walls with red sandstone features. A substantial element of the end elevation would be glass, with three substantial windows to the rear elevation, and one large window to the front elevation.
  - The extension would include spaces for activities, shop / café, vestry, storage and toilets
- 1.2 The site is located within the development boundary of the Penisarwaun Local Village as defined in the Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Development Plan. The site is on the outskirts of the village in a mainly residential area. The church is not a Listed Building; however, it is located within a Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest.
- 1.3 The plan shows an intention to create a speed bump on the public road near the site but this is not within the boundaries of this application and it would be a matter for the Transportation Unit to ensure appropriate provision under the highways legislation.
- 1.4 This application is an amended plan to the plan refused by delegated authority last year for design reasons and due to a lack of information about protected species (bats). The application is submitted to the Committee following the receipt of more than three items of correspondence that are contrary to the officer's recommendation.

## 2. Relevant Policies:

- 2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales emphasise that planning decisions should be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Development Plan.
- 2.2 Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 the Council has a duty not only to carry out sustainable development, but also to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet its sustainable development (or well-being) objectives. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the 'sustainable development principle', as set out in the 2015 Act, and in making the recommendation the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being objectives as a result of the proposed recommendation.

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2.3 **Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan. (July 2017) (as amended by the Inspector's Report, 30 June 2017)**

ISA 2: Community Facilities  
 PCYFF 1: Development Boundaries  
 PCYFF 2: Development criteria  
 PCYFF 3: Design and place shaping  
 TRA 2: Parking standards  
 TRA 4: Managing transport impacts  
 MAN 5: New Retailing Developments in villages  
 AT 1: Conservation Areas, World Heritage Sites and Landscapes, Parks and Registered Historic Gardens.  
 AT 3: Locally or regionally significant non-designated heritage assets  
 AT 4: Protection of non-designated archaeological sites

2.5 **National Policies:**

Planning Policy Wales - (Edition 9, November 2016)  
 Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning  
 Technical Advice Note 12: Design

3. **Relevant Planning History:**

C17/0093/18/LL - Demolish existing parish/community hall and construct a new two-storey parish/community hall attached to the existing hall: Refused 24/04/17

4. **Consultations:**

Community Council:	<p>Objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing hall is a church hall, and not a hall for the whole community</li> <li>• The development would change the character of the church, leading to a building that would be too large and not in-keeping with the neighbourhood</li> <li>• It would be detrimental to the view from the opposite houses</li> <li>• Concern regarding highway safety</li> <li>• Concern that the shop could deprive local traders of business</li> <li>• There is no need for another hall in the village - the existing community hall meets all the needs of the community.</li> </ul>
Transportation Unit:	<p>No objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need standard conditions and agree on the speed bump and relocate the signage at the cost to the applicant</li> </ul>

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- Public Protection: Not received
- Natural Resources Wales: No objection
- subject to conditions in order to ensure that the recommendations of the bat survey are implemented
  - standard conditions for the applicant
- Welsh Water: Comments
- Standard condition and advice for the applicant
- Cadw: No objection
- Biodiversity Unit: Comments
- Conditions should be placed in order to ensure that the recommendations of the bat survey are implemented
- Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service: Observations:
- The church was built in 1883 and it has not changed much since then
  - The proposal would involve modifications to the western elevation of the church but it is not believed that these would be detrimental to the character of the building.
  - A photographic record of the building would need to be completed before the modifications take place.
  - There is a strong possibility that there are graves in the land where it is intended to erect the extension and therefore an archaeological survey of the site would need to be completed before beginning the building work
- Public Consultation: A notice was posted on the site and neighbours were notified. The advertising period has ended and the observations below were received objecting to the proposal on the grounds of material planning matters:
- Concern that the parking provision will be insufficient and therefore problems will ensue on the nearby streets.
  - The entrance has not been designed appropriately as it is near a turn with limited visibility
- In addition, the following observations were received in support of the application:
- Safeguarding the future of the church is important to the future of the local community
  - The church hall to be demolished is in poor condition and it is unsuitable for modern purposes, including less able users
  - There would be much better facilities for church users, including being able to reach the toilets without having to leave the building

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- The proposed design is in-keeping with the church
- The new building would be more efficient in its use of energy.
- The parking spaces would help with removing parked cars from the highway
- The hall would provide a choice of locations for events and would extend the range of facilities available for the community
- The new hall would be a visual improvement compared to the existing hall
- This work will help with the repair of the existing church building

The following observations were received; these are not material planning considerations:

- There is another suitable community hall in the village
- If activities relocate to the new hall, there would be a threat to the viability of the existing facility
- There is a condition on a previous development preventing any parking or vehicular access from the highway to nearby developments.
- There has been no full local consultation

## 5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

### The principle of the development

- 5.1 The site is located within the development boundary of Pensiarwaun and Policy PCYFF 1 of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Development Plan states that land within development boundaries will be the main focus for developments.
- 5.2 Policy ISA 2 approves developments to maintain and enhance community facilities by approving the development of new community facilities subject to a series of criteria and it is believed that this proposal meets this criteria for the following reasons:
1. the site is located within the development boundary of Pensiarwaun
  2. it is believed that there is justification for constructing a new building as it would provide facilities that would be much more suitable for modern needs than the facility it would be replacing and it is not believed to be practical to provide facilities that are as good in the existing building, especially in terms of access for less able people.
  3. for accessibility reasons, it is considered that there is justification for relocating the facility in this case
  4. considering that this is a facility that would replace a building used for similar purposes and one that is larger in size, it is believed that the scale and type of this proposal are appropriate for the location
  5. the site is accessible without using a car, especially when considering that it is within a village boundary and a bus stop is nearby

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- 5.3 Given that Policy ISA 2 encourages the provision of new or improved multi-purpose community facilities in accessible locations, it is believed that this proposal fully conforms to the objective of this policy.

### Visual amenities

- 5.4 The proposed development site is in a prominent location near the highway in the centre of the village of Pensiarwaun. Indeed, the church and its bellcote especially, are important visual features in the village and the surrounding countryside. The Landmap register records landscape in this area as "Excellent" in terms of its cultural character and also its Historic landscape. The significance of this landscape is reflected in the fact that it is included in the Dinorwig Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest as defined by Cadw and Natural Resources Wales. While accepting that the size of the development is not especially large on a landscape scale, it would be in a prominent place in the village and within the wider landscape.
- 5.5 Policies PCYFF 2 and PCYFF 3 of the Local Development Plan require that the quality of the design and materials of new developments respect the site and its surroundings and that there is no detrimental impact on the visual amenities of the locality as a result of the development. In addition, Policy AT 1 seeks to ensure landscapes on the Register of Special Historic Landscapes are protected and enhanced.
- 5.6 A Landmap assessment of the area states:  
*"Few of the buildings are suitable for listing by their nature, which should not be taken to mean that they are historically insignificant. The whole pattern of these settlements represent extraordinary cultural survivals of the part rural, part industrial development at a turning point in British and Welsh history."*  
This highlights the fact that although the Church is not a Listed Building, the importance of its contribution towards the cultural and historic character of the village and its surrounding landscape should not be disregarded.
- 5.7 In relation to the proposed extensions and changes to the church, the building is in a prominent place, it is of a traditional design and it provides a visual focus to this part of the village. The previous planning application was refused mainly due to the proposed bulk and design of the proposed extension and the harm it would cause on the character of the original building and its surrounding area. It is now believed that the new design is much more in-keeping with the church and that the design is also appropriately in-keeping with its location in the landscape. It is believed that the fact that the new design shows the bulk of the hall separately, attached to the hall with a linking corridor, helps retain the appearance and character of the main building. In addition, it is believed that the details and the materials of the extension would reflect the character of the church in an appropriate way that respects its design but would remain inferior to the historic building.
- 5.8 In terms of demolishing the existing parish hall, it is acknowledged that although there is some historic interest to the building as an example of an Edwardian community building, there are no special architectural qualities to this building and it is in poor condition. It is not believed that there would be any significant visual impact from demolishing it and using the site for appropriate alternative purposes.

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- 5.9 On the whole, due to its size, design, materials and location, it is not considered that this proposal would either harm the appearance of the site or have a detrimental impact on the area's amenities in general. It is not considered that the developments would cause significant harm to the built quality of the site or the local neighbourhood or to the designated landscape and, consequently, it is considered that the development is acceptable under Policies PCYFF 2, PCYFF 3 and AT 1 of the LDP as they relate to these matters, and to Policy AT 3 which relates to the protection of locally or regionally significant non-designated heritage assets.

### **Residential Amenities**

- 5.10 Although an objection was received, expressing concern about the impact of the development on the views from nearby houses, the impact on private views is not a material planning consideration. It is not considered that significant overlooking would derive from the site, and the new structure would not dominate over any private property. Indeed, creating an off-road parking space could be an improvement to the amenities of local residents if the parking that currently takes place on the highway is relocated to this site. Given the above, it is not considered that there would be any significant harm to amenities deriving from the development and it is considered that the proposal is acceptable under Policy PCYFF 2 of the LDP as it deals with private amenities.

### **Retail Matters**

- 5.11 As the extension includes a shop element, the development must be considered in the context of the relevant planning policy, namely Policy MAN 5 of the LDP. This policy supports the provision of retail elements on accessible sites within village development boundaries if there is no harm to the amenities of residents. In this case, the proposal is to provide a small shop with a café facility as a meeting point for local people. There is currently no similar facility in the village. It is believed that the shop element of this development meets all the criteria of this policy.

### **Biodiversity Matters**

- 5.12 TAN 5 emphasises that information about the dangers to protected species should be considered before granting planning permission. The Protected Species Survey report was submitted and its content is acceptable to the Biodiversity Unit and Natural Resources Wales. It is, therefore, considered that by acting in accordance with the recommendations of the report, there would be no harm to protected species as a result of the development and therefore the development is acceptable under the requirements of NCT 5.

### **Archaeology**

- 5.13 Policy AT 4 of the LDP aims to protect non-designated archaeological sites. Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service highlighted the strong possibility that there are archaeological remains on the site where it is proposed to construct the extension. Historic records suggest that the land surrounding the church was once a cemetery and therefore it is likely that there are graves in the area where it is intended to construct the extension. The Archaeology Service suggests that conditions be imposed in order to ensure that an appropriate archaeological work programme take place before any

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construction work begins on the site. By imposing conditions to ensure this, it is believed that the development would meet the requirements of Policy AT 4.

### **Transport and access matters**

- 5.14 To ensure that the parking and access arrangements are completed in accordance with submitted plans, the provision would meet the requirements of the Transportation Unit and it is therefore considered that the development complies with Policy TRA 2 and TRA 4 of the LDP. It is proposed to undertake the work to erect a speed bump and move road signs but these matters are dealt with under highways regulations.

### **Response to the consultation**

- 5.15 Several objections to the scheme were raised; some of them, such as competition with an existing facility and matters about the relationship with the local community, were not material planning considerations. It is considered that the above discussion gives consideration to the material planning matters raised.

## **6. Conclusions:**

- 6.1 It is believed that the principle of demolishing the existing church hall and constructing an extension to the existing church with a broader provision of facilities, is acceptable under the policies of the LDP. It is believed that the proposal submitted with this application is in-keeping with its important historic location and would not be detrimental to the character of the existing church, the neighbourhood or the wider landscape.

## **7. Recommendation:**

- 7.1 To approve subject to conditions:
1. Time - Five years
  2. In accordance with the plans
  3. Slate roof and the external finish of the building to be in-keeping with the church.
  4. Highways / Parking Conditions
  5. Limit the surface floor area of the shop / café
  6. Work to be in accordance with the Bat Report
  7. Condition to limit the demolition and building work to 09.00 - 18.00 Monday to Friday, 09.00 - 13.00 on Saturday and not at all on Sunday or Bank Holidays.
  8. Archaeological conditions
  9. Welsh Water conditions

### Notes

1. Highways
2. Welsh Water
3. Archaeology Service
4. Natural Resources Wales

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