

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 03/09/2018
REPORT OF THE PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICE SENIOR MANAGER	PWLLHELI

Number: 5

Application Number: C18/0409/11/LL

Date Registered: 12/06/2018

Application Type: Full - Planning

Community: Bangor

Ward: Deiniol

Proposal: Change the use of a former chapel into five living units on the ground floor and office use on the first floor

Location: Pendref Chapel, High Street, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 1NS

Summary of the Recommendation: TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

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1. Description:

- 1.1 This is a full application to change the use of a former chapel into five living units on the ground floor and office use on the first floor. Conversion work is mainly proposed internally, by installing a new floor above the existing gallery to create an internal two-storey building. It is proposed to create five self-contained living units on the ground floor, with four located within the main chapel, and the fifth unit in the rear vestry. The conversion work would mean constructing new partitions, as the building was last used as a chapel, and the seats and the pew are still there. Each unit will include an open plan living room and kitchen, a bathroom and one bedroom. The application form states that it is proposed to allocate one of the units as an affordable unit for social renting, and each unit will measure between 48m² and 51.5m².
- 1.2 It is proposed to use both existing front doors as the main entrance to two living units and the office on the first floor. The entrance to the three other units would be through existing doors on the sides, where units 4 and 5 would share an entrance. An old sub-standard building is located on the side, which was used as a kitchen in the past, and it is proposed to adapt it for office use for the manager and as a plant room. On the first floor, it is proposed to keep the entire space open, but to create separate rooms out of glass within this space. Both existing staircases will serve the office on the first floor. The existing gallery will remain in place, but it will be covered with the new floor being installed above it.
- 1.3 It is proposed to create waste and recycling provision on both sides of the building, enclosed with a 1.8m high timber fence
- 1.4 The site lies on Bangor City High Street, outside the main shopping area. An unclassified road runs in front of the site, with a public footpath nearby. The building is a grade II listed building.
- 1.5 The application is submitted to Committee as it is a development for five living units.

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 Local Development Plan.
- 2.2 The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 places a duty on the Council to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet the seven well-being goals within the Act. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the 'sustainable development principle', as set out in the 2015 Act. In reaching 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.
- 2.3 **Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan 2011-26 adopted 31 July 2017**

PCYFF1 - Development Boundaries
PCYFF2 - Development Criteria
PCYFF3 - Design and Place Shaping

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PCYFF4 - Design and Landscaping
 PS5 - Sustainable development
 TAI9 - Sub-dividing Existing Property to Self-contained Flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation
 TRA2 - Parking standards
 TRA4 - Managing transport impacts
 ISA2 - Community Facilities
 PS20 - safeguard and enhance heritage assets.
 TAI1 - housing in the Sub-regional Centre and the Urban Service Centres
 TAI8 - appropriate mix of housing
 TAI15 - threshold of affordable housing and their distribution
 PS13 - providing opportunities for a prosperous economy
 PS19 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 AMG5 - local biodiversity conservation
 PS1 - The Welsh Language and Culture

2.4 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9, November 2016)
 Technical Advice Note 12: Design 2016
 Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment

3. Relevant Planning History:

3.1 No previous planning history.

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: No objection

Transportation Unit: No objection - although there is no parking provision attached to the development, it is assumed that there are sufficient parking opportunities on the local streets and car parks.
 The site is central in the city and is in close proximity to many local facilities and other modes of travel, e.g. public transport and train.

Natural Resources Wales: No objection to the proposal - satisfied with the survey submitted, and to follow the recommendations proposed in part 5 of the report in order to avoid detrimental impacts on bats.

The applicants' attention should be drawn to the fact that it is their responsibility to ensure they obtain the relevant licences/permissions for their development, in addition to planning permission.

Welsh Water: Standard conditions

Public Protection Unit: Not received

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Biodiversity Unit: The Greenman Ecology survey showed that no bats use the building. To further reduce the risk for bats, the Reasonable Avoidance Measures listed in part 5 of the Report should be followed (5 Mitigation Method 5.1 Reasonable avoidance measures).

Bangor Civic Society: Support – The proposal is a practical and sustainable use of the building going forward and offers it the ability to remain in good maintenance as a Listed building in the High Street scene with little encroachment or modification. The proposals are commendable

Public Consultation: A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. The advertising period has ended and no comments were received on the application.

5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

The principle of the development

- 5.1 Policy PCYFF1 supports appropriate developments within development boundaries, and this site lies within the development boundary of the city of Bangor, which is a Sub-regional Service Centre. Policy PCYFF2 states that proposals should make the best use of land and comply with other policies of the plan and national guidelines. The second part of policy ISA 2 is also relevant in terms of safeguarding community facilities - in this case, the chapel has already closed and has been sold. This is a reflection of the general pattern with large chapels where facilities are combined locally to respond to the change in the method of congregating, and the fewer number of people who attend chapels.
- 5.2 In terms of the principle of the proposal, policies TAI1 and TAI9 are relevant with housing within a sub-regional centre and sub-dividing existing properties into flats. This is a proposal to convert a building, which is in-keeping with the requirements of TAI1. Criterion TAI9 expects proposals to be within development boundaries; suitable for conversion to the number and type of units proposed without the need for significant extensions and external adaptations; will not have detrimental impact on residential amenity; will have adequate car parking and refuse storage space; where dedicated car parking cannot be provided the proposal must not exacerbate existing parking problems in the local area.
- 5.3 The principle of converting the first floor into an office is assessed against strategic policies PS13 - 'Providing opportunities for a prosperous economy' and PS5 - 'Sustainable development'. In principle, the policy supports creating an additional office space provision, especially in criteria 3 and 10 that support various employment opportunities and investment in centres and villages.
- 5.4 Given the above policies, it is considered that the element of mixed use of residential units and an office is acceptable in principle and ensures an appropriate use for a substantial and prominent building on the High Street in Bangor.

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Visual amenities

- 5.5 Proposals to change existing buildings are permitted if the relevant requirements can be conformed to, which includes adding to and enhancing the character and appearance of the site, the building or the area in terms of setting, appearance, and scale. Bearing in mind that this proposal is for the conversion of an existing building, not many of the above-mentioned factors are relevant. However, there are no extensive external adaptations as part of the proposal, only minor modifications on the side of the building. The building is a former chapel and is a very striking building on the High Street, and it is not proposed to make any adaptations to the front elevation, only to the small area to the rear where it is proposed to use it as a plant room and an area for refuse and recycling storage. In terms of the visual amenities of the building and the area, it is not believed that the proposal would be likely to impair the amenities as the property's visual character will remain in terms of its appearance, and the refuse areas will be out of sight. It is not proposed to undertake any work to the land surrounding the site, which also contributes to the amenities of the area. The building will still be a striking building in the streetscape, even with the new use. In this case it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policy PCYFF 3 of the LDP.

General and residential amenities

- 5.5 The site is located on higher ground on the High Street within its own independent curtilage. There is a public house on one side, a dentist on the other side, and residential buildings opposite. Generally, this area of Bangor has a varied use which means that it can be a lively area day and night. On this basis, it is not considered that the change of use is likely to impair the amenities of any nearby residents to an extent that it would be considered unacceptable as there are already similar uses in the surrounding area. The new use is likely to cause fewer visitors to the site (if the chapel was used to its full potential), and bearing in mind that the site is on Bangor high Street, where there are many shops and flats, the new use would not be out of character with the area. As mentioned above about the location of the building in a large curtilage, it is not believed that there would be excessive overlooking of the nearby buildings or any impact on privacy, as the openings will remain as they are, and the building is between 13m and 15m away from the adjacent buildings. In this case it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policies PCYFF 2 and 3 of the LDP.

Affordability matters

- 5.6 Policy TAI8 is relevant to the application and involves ensuring an appropriate mix of housing - in this case, the proposal will provide five one bedroom living units. Given the size of the centre and the different uses within the City, there is no doubt that there is a need for various units of different sizes within the boundary. However, there is evidence of a substantial need for one bedroom units in the City and, given the nature and location of the proposal, it is considered that a provision for five one bedroom units in this location is acceptable as it is unlikely to appeal to families and those in need of larger units.
- 5.7 Due to the small size of the units (each unit measures between 48m² and 51.5m²), it is considered that they would be affordable in any case. Nevertheless, the agent has stated that one of the units would be an affordable unit for social renting, and information was submitted by the agent stating that the rented unit would be unit no. 5, along with confirmation that discussions with housing associations have already taken place, but there is no confirmation of who would control this at present. Policy TAI5, which involves affordable housing, states that 20% of the units should be affordable, which is

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the equivalent of one unit. Given the above, one of the five units is offered as an affordable unit, which meets the requirement for a 20% contribution - but additionally, it is considered that all units are affordable in any case, based on their size and location. To ensure the long-term affordability of the one proposed unit, it is considered that this could be achieved by imposing an appropriate condition.

Transport and access matters

- 5.8 The Transportation Unit had no objection to the proposal, bearing in mind that the site is located in Bangor City centre, with nearby public car parks as well as the train station. In light of this, it is considered that the proposal is suitable for approval in accordance with the requirements of policies TRA2 and TRA4 of the LDP.

Biodiversity matters

- 5.9 A wildlife report was submitted with the application, and the Biodiversity Unit was consulted, and it had no objection to the proposal. However, it was suggested that the avoidance measures listed in part 5 of the report should be followed. By ensuring this, it is considered that the proposal would be acceptable and would meet the requirements of policy AMG5 of the LDP.

The effect of the proposal on the Listed Building

- 5.10 Paragraph 5.13 of Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: The Historic Environment states that Local Planning Authorities should consider the following matters:

- The importance and grade of the building and its intrinsic architectural or historic interest
- The physical features of the building which justify its listing and contribute to its significance, including any features of importance such as the interior, which may have come to light after the building's inclusion on the list
- The contribution of curtilage and setting to the significance of the building, as well as its contribution to its local scene
- The impact of the proposed works on the significance of the building
- The extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial community benefits for example, by contributing to the area's economy or the enhancement of its local environment

Policy PS20 of the LDP adds to this in addition to the requirements of chapter 6, Planning Policy Wales.

- 5.11 Internally, it is proposed to convert the ground floor into five living units by removing the existing seats, the pew and the pulpit. It is intended to place new partitions that will be in-keeping with a new mezzanine floor to create the units. The original pillars will remain as part of the units as a feature in addition to the bottom of the gallery, which will be on display. The units are designed so that they will not impair the original windows, and it is proposed to restore them as part of the proposal. It is proposed to use the existing main doors as the entrances to two of the living units and the office on the first floor, and this means that the original stairs will also remain.
- 5.12 On the first floor, it is intended to install a new floor above the gallery, but there is no intention to remove the gallery. Most of the first floor will be an open office, with some partitions to create small rooms, but these are light partitions that can be removed and moved easily. Unusually for a chapel, there is a semi-circular gallery on the first floor,

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which is open to the roof. It is intended to keep this as a meeting room and place a clear glass partition to keep the open element. There will be no structural work to the existing ceiling or the original windows.

- 5.13 Externally, restore the building with maintenance work, and also place two new steel doors on the side for security purposes. These openings already exist and therefore there is no work required to create new openings. It is also proposed to place a bin area beside the building with grey painted timber cladding to cover it, located within the former kitchen.
- 5.14 The proposal in its entirety is a suitable use of the building without excessively impairing the character of the building. The main change is the new floor, but it is believed that installing it above the existing gallery and retaining it is acceptable and a reasonable compromise. In addition to this, the proposal to convert the first floor into an office by retaining the open space again is acceptable, as there is no loss of ceiling or open space, and the special feature of the semi-circular gallery is retained. It is considered that the proposal works with the building, without losing any historic or architectural features, and it is considered that the proposal meets the requirements of policy PS20 as well as TAN24. It should be noted that the matters that are specific to the listed building status have been considered fully as part of the listed building application form that has already been approved.

6. Conclusions:

- 6.1 Having considered the above and all the relevant matters including the local and national policies and guidance, it is believed that this proposal to convert a building into five living units and an office is acceptable and satisfies the requirements of the relevant policies as noted above.

7. Recommendation:

- 7.1 To approve – conditions:
1. Five years
 2. In accordance with the plans
 3. Highways
 4. Welsh Water Condition
 5. Photographic record condition
 6. Colour of the windows and doors to be confirmed beforehand
 7. Details on preserving and reusing the seats and the pulpit must be submitted and agreed in writing beforehand by the Local Planning Authority
 8. Ensure a bin/recycling storage area and agree on the details before commencing any work
 9. Ensure that one unit is affordable in the long-term
 10. Biodiversity conditions