
PLANNING COMMITTEE 20-03-23

Present:

Councillors: Edgar Owen (Chair)
Elwyn Edwards (Vice-chair)

Councillors: Louise Hughes, Delyth Lloyd Griffiths, Elwyn Jones, Gareth T Jones, Huw Wyn Jones, Anne Lloyd Jones, Cai Larsen, Gareth Coj Parry, Gareth A Roberts, John Pughe Roberts, Huw Rowlands and Gruffydd Williams

Officers: Gareth Jones (Assistant Head of Planning and the Environment), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Keira Sweeney (Planning Manager), Idwal Williams (Development Control Team Leader) and Lowri Haf Evans (Democracy Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Elin Hywel and Rheinalt Puw (Local Member).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND PROTOCOL MATTERS

a) The following member declared that he had an interest in relation to the item noted:

Councillor Cai Larsen (a member of this Planning Committee), in item 5.3 (C22/0256/13/LL) on the agenda as he was a Member of the ADRA Board.

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

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note

4. MINUTES

The Chair accepted the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, held on 27 February 2023, subject to noting:

- that Cllr Louise Hughes was present
- that the reason for refusing planning application C21/1038/41/LL Tŷ'n Lôn, Afonwen, Pwllheli, Gwynedd, LL53 6TX in the English version of the minutes corresponded to the reason for refusal in the Welsh version
- that a registered vote had been held on the proposal to approve planning application C21/1038/41/LL Tŷ'n Lôn, Afonwen, Pwllheli, Gwynedd, LL53 6TX

According to Procedural Rules, the following vote on the motion was recorded:

In favour (6) Councillors:- Louise Hughes, Elwyn Jones, Huw Wyn Jones, Anne Lloyd Jones, Edgar Owen, John Pughe Roberts

Against (7) Councillors:- Elwyn Edwards, Delyth Lloyd Griffiths, Gareth Morris Jones, Cai Larsen, Gareth Anthony Roberts, Huw Rowlands, Gruffydd Williams

Abstaining (0)

The Chair noted that the proposal to approve has failed.

5. 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

5.1 APPLICATION NUMBER C18/0238/11/LL Former Dickies Boatyard, Beach Road, Bangor, LL57 2SZ

Full application to redevelop an empty site for the construction of 55 living units together with the creation of a new vehicular access, estate road and associated footpaths, parking spaces and landscaping.

THE APPLICATION WAS WITHDRAWN BY THE AGENT PRIOR TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

5.2 APPLICATION NUMBER 5.2 C22/0950/11/LL 340 High Street, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 1YA

Change of use of former night club to 9 self-contained one-bedroom flats

The Planning Manager highlighted that the recommendation to approve the application had now been amended to defer the discussion until the next meeting (17-04-23) as correspondence had been received from a third party noting that they were not aware of the application and were a tenant on the ground floor of the building of the application. It was highlighted that the ground floor of the building was a vacant shop. It was recommended to defer in order to re-consult.

The Monitoring Officer reiterated that it would be appropriate to defer in order to consult in full.

a) It was proposed and seconded to defer the application.

RESOLVED: TO DEFER IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THE PUBLICITY PROCESS PROPERLY

**5.3 APPLICATION NUMBER 5.3 C22/0256/13/LL
Brig Y Nant, Coetmor New Road, Bethesda, LL57 3LU**

Erection of 18 dwellings, new road and landscaping

- a) The Development Control Team Leader highlighted that this was an application to erect 18 affordable homes, a new estate road and landscaping on a dormant site in Bethesda. The application was split into the following elements: -
- Providing 18 affordable, two-storey residential units to include 12 two-bedroom houses; 4 three-bedroom houses and 2 four-bedroom houses - varying in surface area and adhering to Welsh Government Design requirements.
 - Providing parking spaces within the curtilage of each house and off-road.
 - Access to the site would be a shared access with a more traditional plan for the estate road itself.
 - Landscaping within the site and on its periphery.
 - Biodiversity improvement plan to include boxes/roosts for bats and planting trees and shrubs to support local biodiversity.
 - Use of materials that reflected local materials for the external elevations of the houses to include natural slates, stonework, painted render and energy efficient UPV-c windows.
 - Installation of solar panels on the roofs.
 - The houses had been designed based on the design principles for preservation.

It was reported that the site was located on a plateau on the northern peripheries of the town and was within the Bethesda Local Service Centre development boundary as contained in the Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan, 2017 (LDP). The site would be served from a nearby class III county road (Coetmor New Road) and would utilise the existing access.

It was explained that the principle of constructing houses on the site was based in policies CYFF 1, CYFF 2, TAI 2, TAI 15 and PS 5 of the LDP. Policy PCYFF1 stated that proposals would be approved within development boundaries in accordance with the other policies and proposals in the LDP, national planning policies and other material planning considerations.

As the Bethesda Local Services Centre had seen its expected growth level on windfall sites through units completed in the period from 2011 to 2021, the applicant had submitted additional information outlining how the proposal would meet the local community's needs:

- That the mix of units proposed was based on the demand for local needs for the local area and they were of a flexible tenure. Although the development would not be the subject of Welsh Government's Social Housing Grant and was not in Cyngor Gwynedd's Housing Action Plan at present, the need for this type of housing remained strong within the local community.
- That the Gwynedd Local Housing Market Assessment (2018) document noted there would be a demand for 707 additional affordable units between 2018 and 2023 in order to meet the need for this type of accommodation. The housing mix would respond to factors such as the features of the site, the need for social housing in Bethesda and local demography.
- Provide 18 residential units that were 100% affordable on an accessible brownfield site within the development boundary with the units designed to the

requirements of the Wales Development Quality - Beautiful Places and Homes (2021).

- The Strategic Housing Unit had confirmed that the proposal met the need for affordable housing in the area given there were 72 applicants on the Tai Teg waiting list for intermediate housing and 402 applicants on the waiting list for social housing in Bethesda.
- Although the area included a number of sites with registered social landlord developments, this in itself confirmed that the need for affordable homes was high in the local community in Bethesda. Social landlords would not be interested in this particular site unless it was anticipated that the need for affordable homes would remain high in Bethesda.

It was highlighted that Policy TAI 15 stated that as Bethesda was within 'Y Mynyddoedd' housing price area in the LDP, that providing 10% of affordable housing was viable - the proposed development offered an increase of 18 units and therefore met the threshold. Attention was drawn to Criterion (2) of Policy CYFF 2 which sought to ensure the most efficient use of land, including achieving densities of a minimum of 30 living units per hectare - the density of this proposal (18 units) across the site was 37 meaning that it complied with the needs of the policy.

Reference was made to Policy PS5 which stated that developments would be supported if it could be demonstrated that they were consistent with the principles of sustainable development, including reusing sites located in appropriate locations. It could be considered that the application site was a previously developed site (brownfield) and was suitable for residential use - located in an area which included high density residential dwellings that were accessible to alternative modes of transport to using a private car.

In the context of visual matters, it was explained that the site was located on a plateau that was dormant although it could be described as a brownfield site. It was noted that the housing plan was laid out in a "U" formation with gardens/amenity spaces located to the rear of the houses and to the front of the houses which also had parking spaces. It was reiterated that the design was of a domestic appearance which reflected the developed pattern of the nearby area. Considering the design details submitted, it was considered that the proposal was acceptable in terms of the impact on visual amenities and the proposal would create a positive contribution to the built character of this section of the streetscape.

In the context of general and residential amenities, objections had been received from some occupants of nearby dwellings in terms of amenities relating to overlooking, loss of privacy and noise disturbance.

- Overlooking and loss of privacy for the dwellings of Cysgod y Graig (on land lower down) and Stad Rhos y Coed (adjacent to Coetmor Road). Considering elements of the application, such as the distance between the existing houses and the proposed houses; the layout of the proposed houses within the site in relation to the layout of Coed y Rhos houses; mitigation measures to include planting trees, shrubs and erecting fencing along the rear boundary of the site and the design and setting of windows in houses on plots number 1 to 6 (which also include opaque glass windows for bathrooms on the first floor), the proposal would not involve losing privacy or create substantial or significant overlooking to the rears of the houses of Rhos y Coed.

'The Bungalow' property was situated to the south of the site but given the layout of the dwelling within its curtilage along with vegetation located between the application site and the curtilage, it was not considered that the proposal would have a significant effect on the general or residential amenities of the occupants of this property.

- Noise disturbance - it was acknowledged that there would be some increase in noise and disruption deriving from this development, but that it would be no different to any noise disruption deriving from general residential areas, e.g. Stad Rhos y Coed located above the application site. Such noise would emanate from associated domestic and transport activities, which was normal disruption already associated with residential areas. It was noted that conditions could be imposed to restrict working hours and the applicant had already confirmed that any contractor would work in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Building Control Plan.
- Land stability - the applicant had confirmed that it was intended to commission a Land Survey Part 2 prior to commencing any work on the site to ensure that there was no risk of landslip during the construction work.

It was therefore considered that the proposal was acceptable and would not have a substantial unacceptable impact on the residential or general amenities of nearby occupants.

In the context of transport and access matters, a Transport Statement had been submitted in response to concerns raised on road safety grounds, along with additional information and evidence from transport consultants and the author of the Statement. Consequently a second consultation was held with the Welsh Government and a response was received confirming that they were withdrawing their original guidance stating that the junction was acceptable. Despite concerns regarding the suitability of Coetmor New Road to accommodate additional transport, they also stated that this part of the local roads network was beyond their statutory jurisdiction.

The Transportation Unit was also re-consulted which also noted that they no longer had concerns regarding the suitability of the existing access to cope with additional transport (subject to including appropriate conditions) and they had no concerns regarding the increased use of Coetmor New Road.

Although acknowledging there were substantial concerns regarding the suitability of the existing access and the junction with the A5, it was considered that the applicant had dealt with and responded to these concerns by submitting further information and evidence. Consequently, it was considered that the proposal was acceptable based on the safety of roads and pedestrians and the policies TRA 2 and TRA 4 of the LDP.

In terms of educational matters, it was reported that the Education Department's Information Officer had stated that Ysgol Gynradd Llanllechid was already exceeding capacity, but there was sufficient capacity available at Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen. Therefore, there was justification to ask for a contribution to meet the lack of capacity in the primary school by contributing a specific sum for every pupil that may derive from the development (i.e. 7 pupils x £10,096) - the applicant had agreed to an educational contribution of £70,672.00.

In terms of open spaces, a contribution of £5,626.83 would be needed towards improving, maintaining or creating suitable play areas off the site rather than a direct provision within the development site itself and the applicant had agreed to this financial contribution.

It was considered that the proposal would improve the visual appearance of the currently dormant site and the fact that 100% of the units would be affordable would make a significant contribution to the town's affordable housing needs - the proposal was therefore acceptable.

b) Taking advantage of the right to speak, the applicant's agent noted the following observations:

- As the officer recommended approving the application and all statutory consultees supported the application, that he would focus on the contentious areas in order to address the concerns.
- That the impacts of access and transport were the main objections to the application with a suggestion that the impact of the proposal on Coetmor New Road and that the junction with the A5 was unacceptable.
- With the support of the Local Transportation Unit and the Trunk Road Authorities it appeared with traffic surveys and detailed assessments undertaken, that the junction with the A5 operated safely and that the proposed development would create less than a 1% increase in vehicle movements on the junction. The impact of this additional traffic on the local highways network during peak hours would be negligible and would be even less outside these busy periods.
- That Cyngor Gwynedd's Transportation Unit had agreed with the findings and had confirmed that the plan would not have a significant impact on the number of pedestrians or vehicles that would use the road and junction.
- That there was an alternative footpath and walking route to Coetmor New Road - pedestrians could use the path in the park and the nearby woodland which provided a safe and effective route to and from the A5, away from Coetmor New Road, and they were supported by the Transportation Unit.
- The Transportation Statement confirmed that the shared access to the site was safe without causing harm to the operational capacity or safety of the local roads network or to pedestrians using them. Although recognising that the access includes a narrow section, the access was wide enough to enable access and egress for vehicles at the same time and from both directions. This part of the access also provided good visibility levels.
- Although Bethesda had already met its indicative growth level of 99 units over the plan period, in terms of houses completed and planning permissions - only 72 units had been completed thus far; this alongside the shortfall of 291 units across the Local Service Centres during the plan period showed a deficit across the County - the proposed development would be able to meet some of the need.
- There was immense need for more social housing; there was clear evidence of this in local and national policy, and also within local media. The shortfall was highlighted best on the Council's waiting list (Tai Teg) for affordable housing in Bethesda. It appeared that 478 applicants were waiting for 2 and 3 bedroom social and intermediate housing in Bethesda. This was the current waiting list and the best evidence to demonstrate the local demand for affordable housing;

Bethesda had a population of 4750 - the waiting list for affordable housing accounted for around 10% of the town's population.

- There was a need to approach the proposed development with a proactive attitude towards delivering it, rather than looking at it as a restricting situation that limits affordable housing
- Were the application approved, planning conditions would be included to regulate and there would be restrictions on the site that would ensure that all the impacts and mitigating concerns, prior to and during the construction work, would be addressed in addition to being subject to a 106 agreement and financial contributions.
- The proposal offered benefit to the local community - the existing site did not do this.

c) The Chair read a statement received from the Local Member, Councillor Rheinallt Puw, noting the following observations:

- That the site had been vacant for several years and several planning applications had been submitted in relation to the site; An application for 6 houses several years ago and more recently an application had been submitted for 12 houses, but to his knowledge, they had not obtained planning permission
- An application for 18 houses on an entirely unsuitable site for a development of the proposed volume. Grŵp Cynefin had participated in a consultation with the public for the site, but it ended as there was so much opposition from local residents. The current applicant had not consulted with the public.
- That a development of 18 houses was far too great for a site in this location. Coetmor New Road was a busy and dangerous road as things stood let alone having more traffic there - the road was used by children walking to the local schools.
- The site access was very narrow and there was no room for two cars to pass each other. The developer's solution was to 'steal' the public footpath to enable two cars to pass each other. This was a safe path that was used by children, but it would not be safe if this development received the go-ahead - a public footpath shared with traffic
- Welsh Government had originally objected to the application as the increase in traffic would place additional strain on the Coetmor New Road junction with the A5 (which was nigh on impossible for two vehicles to pass each other here also); there had been an accident on the junction recently and the wall of a house on the junction had been smashed when two lorries were trying to use the road.
- In terms of the development, the Community Council, local residents and himself were concerned about the size of the development and the Senior Development Control Engineer had noted "*I would consider the increase from 12-18 as significant rather than a slight increase*".
- He asked the Committee members to visit the site, particularly at 8.45 and 15.20 to see the dangerous road, the narrow access and the size of the site

ch) It was proposed and seconded to conduct a site visit, to consider;

- the impact of the number of houses on nearby amenities,
- the suitability of the development for the site
- the size of the development and visual impacts

- d) During the ensuing discussion, the following observations were made by Members:
- That 18 was too many houses for the site
 - The size of the gardens was not adequate
 - The slope was steep and the access was narrow
 - Remove two houses and offer a play area as part of the development
 - Why offer a play area for children off-site? - needed to ensure that play areas were included within the site rather than squeezing more houses in the site.

RESOLVED: TO DEFER IN ORDER TO CONDUCT A SITE VISIT

The meeting commenced at 13:00 and concluded at 13:45

CHAIR