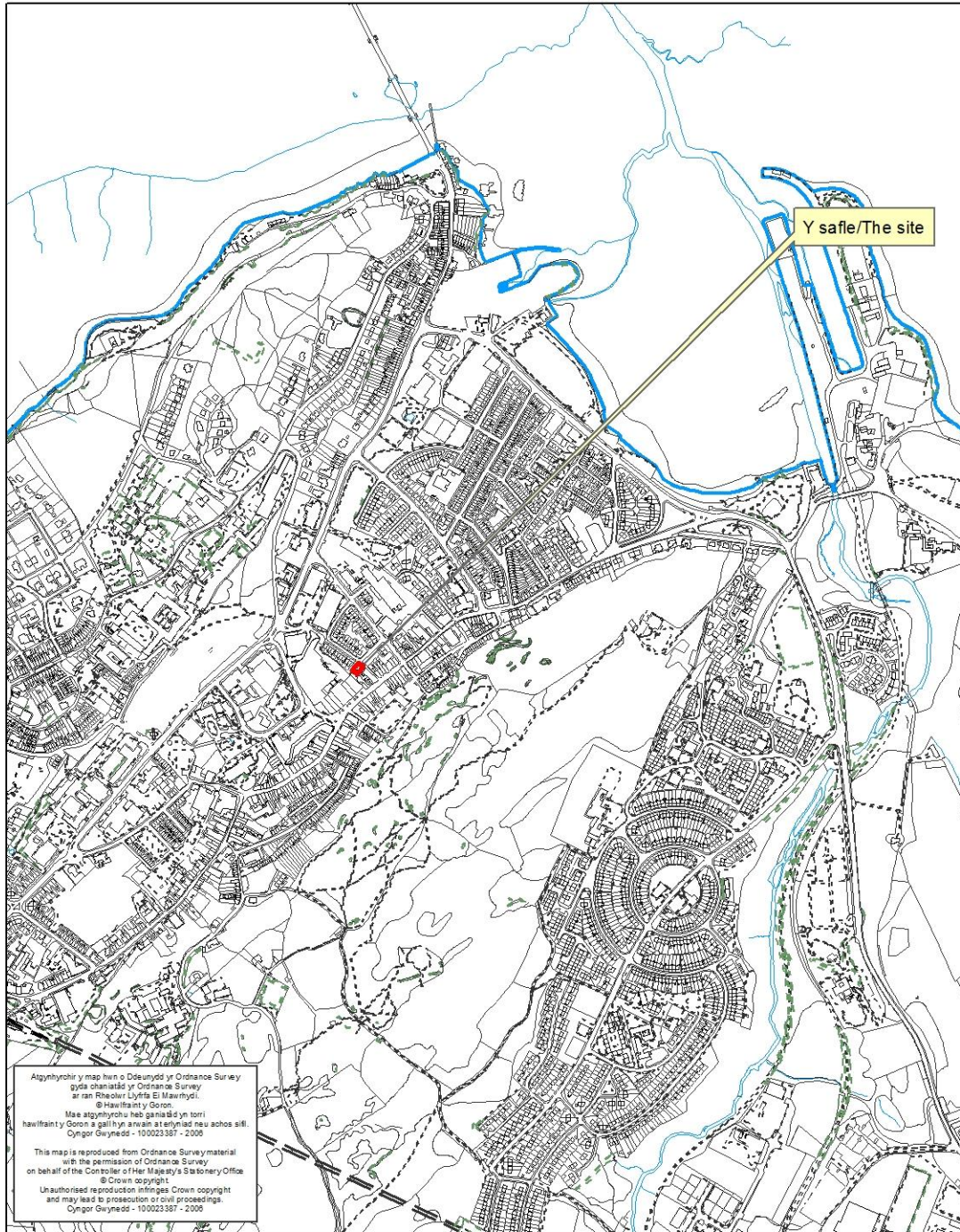


Number: 2



Rhif y Cais / Application Number : C15-0016-11-LL

Cynllun lleoliad ar gyfer adnabod y safle yn unig. Dim i raddfa.  
Location Plan for identification purposes only. Not to scale.



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Application Number: C15/0016/11/LL  
Date Registered: 21/04/2015  
Application Type: Full - Planning  
Community: Bangor  
Ward: Deiniol

Proposal: CHANGE OF USE AND EXTENDING THE EXISTING A3 PUBLIC HOUSE INTO 15 SELF-CONTAINED UNITS OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION  
Location: 'THE THREE CROWNS', 3, WELL STREET, BANGOR, GWYNEDD, LL57 1HB

**Summary of the Recommendation:**

TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

**1. Description:**

- 1.1 This application is for the change of use and to extend the existing public house (A3 class use) to create 15 self-contained units as student accommodation.
- 1.2 The existing building is fairly substantial and detached and is located at the back of the High Street in the City of Bangor on the outskirts of the Well Street residential area. It is a three-storey building with space in the roof. It stands within its own curtilage with the frontage on the pavement. In the past the building was used as a public house, however, it is currently empty following fire damage in the last few years.
- 1.3 The proposal entails erecting an extension above a section of the existing lower floor to provide additional floors with the design in keeping with the remainder of the building. The proposal also entails the change of use of the building and use of the proposed extension to create 15 self-contained living units for students. The living units would comprise an ensuite bathroom a kitchenette and the building would provide a utility room and additional shared kitchen. The proposal also includes alterations to the existing openings on the lower floor (on the rear elevation) together with provision of 3 parking bays at the rear of the building.
- 1.4 A Design and Access Statement and a Language and Community Statement have been submitted as part of the application.

**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 in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Unitary Development Plan.

**2.2 Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan 2009:**

**POLICY A2 – PROTECTING THE SOCIAL, LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL FABRIC OF COMMUNITIES**

Safeguard the social, linguistic or cultural cohesion of communities against significant harm due to the size, scale or location of proposals.

**POLICY B20 – SPECIES AND THEIR HABITATS THAT ARE INTERNATIONALLY AND NATIONALLY IMPORTANT**

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Proposals that are likely to cause unacceptable disturbance or harm to protected species and their habitats will be refused unless they can conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features of the site.

**POLICY B22 – BUILDING DESIGN**

Promote good building design by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features and character of the local landscape and environment.

**POLICY B23 – AMENITIES**

Safeguard the amenities of the local neighbourhood by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the recognised features and amenities of the local area.

**POLICY B24 – ALTERATIONS AND BUILDING EXTENSIONS WITHIN DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES, RURAL VILLAGES AND THE COUNTRYSIDE**

Ensure that proposals for alterations or extensions to buildings conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the character and amenity value of the local area.

**POLICY B25 – BUILDING MATERIALS**

Safeguard the visual character by ensuring that building materials are of a high standard and are in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area.

**POLICY C1 – LOCATING NEW DEVELOPMENT**

Land within the development boundaries of towns and villages and the developed form of rural villages will be the main focus for new developments. New buildings, structures and ancillary facilities in the countryside will be refused with the exception of a development that is permitted by another policy of the Plan.

**POLICY C4 – ADAPTING BUILDINGS FOR RE-USE**

Proposals to adapt buildings for re-use rather than demolition will be approved provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to the suitability of the building, visual considerations, design and the impact on the vitality of neighbouring towns and villages.

**POLICY CH30 – ACCESS FOR ALL**

Proposals for residential/business/commercial units or buildings/facilities for public use will be refused unless it can be shown that full consideration has been given to the provision of appropriate access for the widest possible range of individuals.

**POLICY CH33 – SAFETY ON ROADS AND STREETS**

Development proposals will be approved provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to the vehicular entrance, the standard of the existing roads network and traffic calming measures.

**POLICY CH36 – PRIVATE CAR PARKING FACILITIES**

Proposals for new developments, extensions to existing developments or change of use will be refused unless off-street parking is provided in accordance with the Council’s current parking guidelines, and having given due consideration to the accessibility of public transport, the possibility of walking or cycling from the site and the proximity of the site to a public car park.

**POLICY CH39 - DEVELOP FURTHER EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

Proposals for specific developments on a further or higher education site will be approved provided that specific criteria can be complied with relating to amenity and highway matters and in terms of the character of the area and the accessibility of the site to various modes of transport.

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### 2.3 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales 2014 (Edition 7)

TAN 12: Design

TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh Language 2013

### 3. Relevant Planning History:

C07A/0546/11/LL ERECTION OF SHELTER FOR SMOKERS (RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION) APPROVED 22-Aug-2007

### 4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: Object – overdevelopment and impact on the area's character and amenities.

Transportation Unit: Confirm that there is no objection to the proposal.  
The parking to bedroom ratio is 1 to 5 and is in keeping with the level agreed for other similar developments in the city.

It is recommended that conditions are included regarding parking and provision of a bullnose kerb but I also recommend a tenancy agreement to prevent tenants from being owners of vehicles unless one of the parking bays is designated for them as I originally recommended.

Natural Resources Wales: No objection – suggest that the Council's ecologist should be contacted.

Welsh Water: No objection – propose conditions

Biodiversity: The interior of this building has been damaged substantially by fire and the site is surrounded by buildings with poor ecological links. For these reasons there is only a low potential that bats are present. It will not be necessary to undertake a bats survey prior to determining the application.

Should bats be found during the work, the work should be stopped immediately and contact made with Natural Resources Wales.

Waste Management Sufficient bin provision for the development.

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Public Consultation: A notice was posted on the site and neighbouring residents were informed. The advertising period has expired and a number of correspondences were received objecting on the following grounds:

- overdevelopment
- parking

matters that are not relevant to planning

- land ownership

## 5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

### The principle of the development

- 5.1 Policy C1 of the Unitary Development Plan refers to the location of new developments, and states that land within town and village development boundaries and the developed form of rural villages will be the main focus for new developments. New buildings, structures and ancillary facilities in the countryside will be refused with the exception of a development that is permitted by another policy of the Plan. In this case, the proposal entails the extension and conversion of an existing building situated within the development boundaries of the Bangor city sub-regional centre; and therefore the proposal conforms with this specific policy.
- 5.2 Policy C4 of the UDP involves adapting buildings for re-use, and states that policies to adapt buildings for re-use will be approved provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to the suitability of the building, visual considerations, design and the impact on the vitality of neighbouring towns and villages. It is considered that the existing building is suitable for the proposed residential use and that the design, including the extension and the alterations, respect the structure, form and character of the original building and the surrounding area and will retain any traditional inherent features of merit. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with all the requirements of policy C4 above.
- 5.3 Although the property was used until recently as a public house, the site is situated within the boundaries of the Sub-Regional Centre, and to this end there is no relevant policy to safeguard the use of the property as a public house.
- 5.4 Policy CH39 of the UDP deals with further and higher education developments and approves proposals for new facilities or extensions to buildings provided specific criteria can be complied with relating to safeguarding the area's amenities and highway matters including accessibility of the site to various modes of transport. This policy refers specifically to further or higher education developments. In this case, the proposal is not located on a further or higher education site and there is no specific link between the University and the development, except for the fact that the proposal provides student accommodation. Although the policy is not entirely relevant, it is considered to be partly relevant because of the intention to provide student accommodation and to this end it is considered below.
- 5.5 The application area specifically forms part of the Bangor High Street, with various flats above shops and commercial buildings, there is also a residential area directly near the site which is popular with students, with many conventional housing units used by students rather than local families. The Joint Planning Policy Unit has been gathering evidence in order to facilitate the work of forming policy in the proposed Joint Local Development Plan. The following table provides information on the number of units being used by students, the number of houses in multiple occupation, and the number of purpose-built student

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accommodation existing in the Deiniol ward (where the site is located), namely the ward that includes the centre of Bangor City.

	Conventional Houses with students <sup>1</sup>	Houses in multiple occupation	Purpose-built student accommodation
Deiniol	130 (21%)	120 (20%)	96 rooms

- 5.6 The current University arrangements for student accommodation entails letting University halls of residence to undergraduates during their first year which entails that less accommodation is available for students in their second and third years. This means that the majority of second and third year students are totally dependent on houses bought or adapted by private sector landlords. In addition, by now several purpose-built halls of residence by the private sector also satisfy this need. According to the Student Accommodation Strategy (2012) fewer than a third of overseas students are able to find a place in the University's halls.
- 5.7 It is anticipated that the University will support approximately 9000 students in the future, although there might be changes in the type of students who attend the University (fewer undergraduate students and more post-graduate and overseas students). Currently, the University can offer accommodation to approximately 2400 students within the University's own purpose-built student accommodation. The University has a Student Accommodation Strategy which outlines how it intends to contribute to address student needs. According to the Student Accommodation Strategy, there is a need to provide up to 800 rooms from 2015-16. This means that the University itself can help to address the unmet need and contribute to the strategic plans for internationalism and post-graduate growth. This will enable the University to maintain its intention to provide halls accommodation for every first year student and to provide for more post-graduate and international students, and to provide some for second and third year students.
- 5.8 Having considered the above figures and given the University's possible plans to refurbish existing halls and erect new accommodation, it is therefore likely that the private sector is expected to continue to fill the gap. In addition, evidence shows that the need for student accommodation in Bangor will continue as the University does not anticipate that it will move from Bangor, and it continues to envisage that there will be a need to meet the needs of the same number of students in future years. It appears that the University does not intend to build its own purpose-built accommodation to address all of the need. Therefore, it seems that there will be a permanent role for the private sector to provide such accommodation.
- 5.9 Therefore, there is clear evidence to prove the need for purpose-built student accommodation and it is thought reasonable to consider that the provision of purpose-built accommodation with modern rooms, amenities, security arrangements, refuse collection arrangements etc., would mean that students will choose to live in purpose-built accommodation instead of conventional housing. In the end, this can enable houses to return to the rent market or for sale on the open market and kept full throughout the year. It is also considered that it is reasonable to consider that not approving the proposal would cause an imbalance in the local population, especially considering the central City location behind the High Street.
- 5.10 As a result of the above and given that the building is already there, and there is no direct impact on any other nearby property, it is considered that the development would not cause significant damage to the character or the amenities of the local area. The Transportation Unit has no objection to the proposal and therefore it is considered that the development is acceptable in terms of parking, traffic and road safety subject to relevant conditions. The site is located on the High Street and within a suitable distance to the University, bus sites, road

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and pedestrian networks and the railway station and therefore it is considered that the site is very accessible for different modes of travel. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with all the requirements of policy CH39 above.

### Visual Amenities

- 5.11 Policies B22 and B24 of the UDP deal with making alterations to buildings and also with building design. They promote good building design by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features and character of the local landscape and environment. It is necessary to ensure that proposals for adaptations or extensions to buildings conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the character and amenity value of the local area and that the approved proposals respect the scale, size, materials and the architectural style of the building and the local area.
- 5.12 Policy B25 relates to the assessment of external building materials, and safeguarding the visual character by ensuring that building materials must be of a high standard that complement the character and appearance of the local area.
- 5.13 The proposal comprises external alterations including an extension above the existing first floor and alterations to the lower floor openings in the back. The extension is situated on the side of the building facing the back of the High Street, and is in keeping with the original building in terms of size and design. It is proposed that the finish of the extension will match the existing property. On this basis it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policies B22, B24, B25 and B26 as noted above.

### General and residential amenities

- 5.14 Policy B23 concerns safeguarding the amenities of the local neighbourhood by ensuring that proposals must conform to a series of criteria aiming to safeguard the recognised features and amenities of the local area.
- 5.15 The proposal includes an extension on the first, second and roof levels. The extension includes additional windows on these levels facing the front and the back, which match the existing windows on the building. These windows face the rear of the Menai Shopping Centre and the highways on Panton Street. It is not considered that these windows have a detrimental impact on the privacy or the local neighbourhood's amenities or any nearby residents. It is not considered that the proposal is tantamount to an overdevelopment of a site in the centre of the city and every effort has been made to ensure that the site's plan reduces opportunities for individuals to act anti-socially.
- 5.16 The building was used in the past as a public house and is fairly substantial. It is considered that the proposal is unlikely to cause a significant addition in traffic or associated noise in a way that is likely to cause significant damage to local amenities. The plan entails parking provision for three vehicles and given the use of the building in the past as a public house, it is not considered reasonable in this case to set a condition for parking/traffic agreement to prevent the residents of the units from being vehicle owners. It is considered that the proposed parking spaces together with local public provision are sufficient in this case. The design and external plan of the development consider the needs of all possible users as much as possible.
- 5.17 As a result of the above, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policy B23 above.

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### **Transportation and access matters**

- 5.18 Policy CH30 deals with ensuring access for all, and refuses proposals for residential, business/commercial units or buildings/facilities for public use unless it can be shown that full consideration has been given to the provision of appropriate access for the widest possible range of individuals. It is not proposed to install a lift in the building because of its current structure. There is fairly level access into the building and although there are no specific units for the disabled, there are units available on the ground floor for people who need access on one level. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policy CH30 above.
- 5.19 Policy CH33 requires that safety on roads and streets can be ensured and policy CH36 also deals with providing private parking facilities. Bearing the site in mind in terms of its accessibility to public transport services, the ability to walk and cycle and the distance from a public car park as well as the intention to use an area directly behind the building as a car park for three vehicles, it is considered that the proposal meets with the requirements of these policies. This parking provision conforms with what is required for the proposal and although the Transportation Unit does suggest that a planning condition should be imposed to have an agreement to prevent unit residents from being vehicle owners, it is considered that this is not reasonable in this case, considering the past use of the property as a public house and the level of traffic associated with that. It is considered that the proposed use would be unlikely to have a significant impact on parking or road safety in the area. The Transportation Unit has no further objection to the proposal and therefore it is considered that the proposal conforms to all the requirements of policies CH33 and CH36 of the Unitary Development Plan.

### **Bio-diversity Matters**

- 5.20 The building suffered fire damage fairly recently and based on this the Bio-diversity Unit has confirmed that there is no potential use by a protected species. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposal will cause unacceptable harm to protected species or their habitats and, therefore, the proposal complies with the requirements of policy B20.

### **Language and Culture Matters**

- 5.21 Policy A2 of the Unitary Development Plan protects the social, linguistic and cultural fabric of communities by safeguarding social, linguistic or cultural cohesion within communities against significant harm due to the size, scale or location of proposals.
- 5.22 A Language and Community Statement has been submitted as part of the application and states that the proposal would not have a negative impact on the linguistic character or the community structure of the City. It is considered that the proposal will not attract additional population to the area as the students live within the Bangor area. If a favourable response is received from the Joint Policy Unit to the statement it is considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental effect on the social, linguistic and cultural cohesion of the area and the proposal therefore complies with the requirements of policy A2 above.

### **Response to public consultation**

- 5.23 It is considered that full consideration has been given to the correspondence received from the public and the points raised have received appropriate consideration as part of the above assessment. The original application comprised land that was not in the applicant's ownership; however, a revised plan (21.04.2015) has been received since then to confirm the situation.



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**6. Conclusions:**

- 6.1 Based on the above assessment, it is considered that the proposal is a development that ensures the future of a substantial building in Bangor and conforms with all the relevant policies in the Unitary Development Plan and the proposal is unlikely to have a significant detrimental impact on the amenities of the local area nor on any nearby property. It is not considered that there are any other relevant planning issues to state to the contrary.

**7. Recommendation:**

- 7.1 To delegate the right to the Senior Planning Manager to approve the application, subject to receiving a positive response from the Joint Planning Policy Unit on the Language and Community Statement and to the following relevant conditions:
1. Five years
  2. Ensure that the development is completed in accordance with the plans
  3. The extension finish to be in keeping with the existing property
  4. Slate
  5. Complete/provide parking spaces prior to commencement of use of the building
  6. Welsh Water conditions