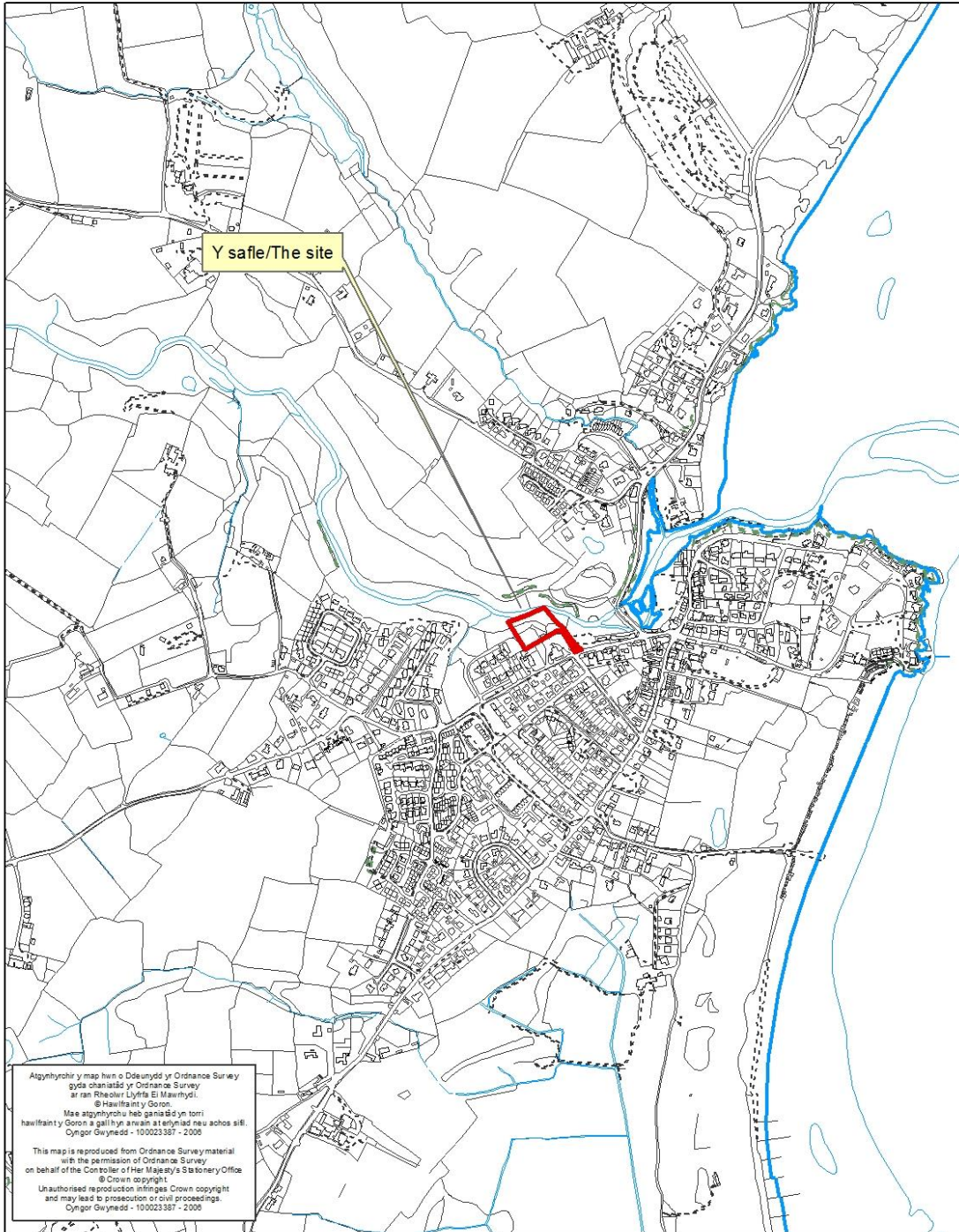


Number: 5



Rhif y Cais / Application Number : C15/0246/39/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: C15/0246/39/LL  
Date Registered: 16/03/2015  
Application Type: Full - Planning  
Community: Llanengan  
Ward: Abersoch

Proposal: CONSTRUCT FOUR RESIDENTIAL HOUSES WITH ANCILLARY WORK INCLUDING ACCESS METHOD AND DETAILED LANDSCAPING (UNIT 13 OF PERMISSION C13/0736/39/LL TO BE RELOCATED WITH THIS APPLICATION AND THEREFORE THE PROPOSAL INCLUDES THREE ADDITIONAL HOUSES)

Location: HARBOUR HOTEL, ABERSOCH, PWLLHELI, LL537HR

**Summary of the Recommendation:**

TO DELEGATE THE RIGHT TO APPROVE

**1. Description:**

- 1.1 This is a proposal to build four residential houses and associated works including access method, landscaping, construction of a gabion wall and parking spaces. This application forms the second phase of the development of the Harbour Hotel site. The first phase received planning permission under application C13/0736/39/LL to construct 13 houses four of them bound by a 106 agreement as affordable homes. The development work for phase 1 has commenced. The current application is for four houses, however one of those houses has received permission under the previous application and it is intended to relocate that house from where it has previously been permitted and to construct three additional houses. The four houses in this application would be 3 bedroom, four-storey semi-detached houses and their ground floors would include parking spaces. The development's external walls would be finished in a combination of render and timber and the roofs would be covered in slate. All of the units of this application include two parking spaces (garage and on the drive). The application has now been amended to include a gabion style retaining wall and to include the parking spaces in a linear form on top of the wall. This would create 14 parking spaces and these would be for the use of all of the houses that are to be built. It is intended to plant ivy, grass, foxgloves and bracken to grow in the gabion wall and it is proposed to replant parts of the slope near the retaining wall which will be affected by the development.
- 1.2 The proposal does not include any additional affordable houses to the four that have been secured through a 106 agreement as part of the previous application C13/0736/39/LL. These four affordable homes would equate to 25% of all of the houses that are being developed namely a total of 16.
- 1.3 Part of the application site is located within the Abersoch development boundary while the remainder is located on the outside. The part of the development that contains the residential units would be located inside the boundary. The site lies within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and within a Landscape of Outstanding Historical Interest. There are houses to the west of the site. Lôn Engan is to the south of the site, which is a third class road and the section below towards the junction with Lôn Garmon is a first class road. Lower down to the east is the site of the Riverside hotel. The part of the site that is more towards the north and which is closer to the river Soch lies within a C1 flood zone.
- 1.4 The following documents were submitted as part of the application; design and access statement, planning and affordable housing statement, ecological report, reptile report, building demolition survey and its impact on otters and water voles, an update to the ecological assessment and method statement, method statement, townscape and visual evaluation, Japanese Knotweed survey, transportation assessment.

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1.5 The application is submitted to Committee following receipt of three or more objections to the proposal.

**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:**

**B8 - THE LLŶN AND ANGLESEY AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)** - Safeguard, maintain and enhance the character of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the recognised features of the site in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

**POLICY B12 – PROTECTING HISTORICAL LANDSCAPES, PARKS AND GARDENS** - Safeguard landscapes, parks and gardens of special historical interest in Wales from developments which would cause significant damage to their character, their appearance or their setting.

**POLICY B20 – SPECIES AND THEIR HABITATS THAT ARE INTERNATIONALLY AND NATIONALLY IMPORTANT** - Refuse proposals which are likely to cause disturbance or unacceptable damage to protected species and their habitats unless they 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 protecting 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 must conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features and amenities 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 B27 – LANDSCAPING SCHEMES** - Ensure that permitted proposals incorporate high quality soft/hard landscaping which is appropriate to the site and which takes into consideration a series of factors aimed at avoiding damage to recognised features.

**POLICY B29 – DEVELOPMENT ON LAND AT RISK OF FLOODING** - Manage specific developments in the C1 and C2 flood zones and direct them towards suitable land in zone A unless they conform to a series of criteria that are relevant to the features on the site and to the purpose of the development.

**POLICY B35 – AVOIDING THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES** - Ensure that measures are taken to deal with invasive species where the development involves the disturbance of soil that is contaminated by invasive species.

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POLICY C1 – LOCATING NEW DEVELOPMENT - 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.

POLICY C7 – BUILDING IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER - Proposals for new developments or for adapting and changing the use of land or buildings will be refused unless consideration is given to specific environmental matters. Proposals must conform to specific criteria relating to building in a sustainable manner, unless it can be demonstrated that it is impractical to do so.

POLICY CH4 – NEW DWELLINGS ON UNALLOCATED SITES WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES OF LOCAL CENTRES AND VILLAGES -Approve proposals for the construction of new dwellings on unallocated sites within the development boundaries of Local Centres and Villages if they conform to criteria aimed at ensuring an affordable element within the development.

POLICY CH10 – SECOND HOMES - Refuse proposals for new dwelling(s) which would lead to an increase in the number of second homes within a community where they already constitute a high percentage of the housing stock.

POLICY CH30 – ACCESS FOR ALL - Refuse 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.

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. Consideration will be given to the accessibility of public transport services, the possibility of walking or cycling from the site and the proximity of the site to a public car park. In circumstances where off-street parking is needed and where the developer does not offer parking facilities on the site, or where it is not possible to take advantage of the existing parking provisions, proposals will be approved provided the developer contributes to the cost of improving the accessibility of the site or providing the necessary parking spaces on another nearby site.

- Supplementary Planning Guidance – Planning obligations
- Supplementary Planning Guidance – Affordable housing
- Supplementary Planning Guidance – Landscape character
- Supplementary Planning Guidance – Housing developments and open spaces of recreational value
- Supplementary Planning Guidance – Planning and the Welsh language
- Supplementary Planning Guidance – Planning for sustainable building

**2.3 National Policies:**  
 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7, July 2014)  
 Technical Advice Note 2 – Planning and Affordable Housing

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Technical Advice Note 12 – Design  
 Technical Advice Note 15 – Development and Flood Risk  
 Technical Advice Note 18 – Transport  
 Technical Advice Note 20 – The Welsh Language  
 Technical Advice Note 22 – Planning for sustainable buildings

### **3. Relevant Planning History:**

- 3.1 2/19/225 – Additional parking provision including a new access onto Lôn Engan – Harbour Hotel, Abersoch – Approved 8 November 1976.
- 3.2 2/19/225A – A hotel extension to include an indoor swimming pool (outline) – Harbour Hotel, Abersoch – 26 October 1993.
- 3.3 2/19/225B – An extension for a restaurant and bar – Harbour Hotel, Abersoch – Approved 7 December 1994.
- 3.4 C06D/0390/39/LL – A retrospective application to retain a door instead of a window on the gable-end of the hotel – Harbour Hotel, Abersoch – Approved 13 October 2006.
- 3.5 C07D/0411/39/LL – A front balcony on the first floor level – Harbour Hotel, Abersoch – Approved 10 September 2007.
- 3.6 C13/0736/39/LL – Development of 13 residential dwellings including 4 affordable houses and associated infrastructure and landscaping - Approved 8 April 2014.
- 3.7 C14/1094/39/DA - Application for a unmaterial amendment to an application approved under reference C13/0736/39/LL to relocate the access door of house number 5 with a connected retaining wall, exchange single doors to rear gardens of houses 6-12 with double glazed doors, reduce the width of kitchen windows of houses 6-12 from 1200mm to 900mm and relocate them slightly, add skylights to the front and rear roof pitches of houses 5-12 - Approved 24 November 2014.
- 3.8 C15/0147/39/LL – Install four 2000 litre underground calor gas tanks for domestic heating – Approved 20 March, 2015.
- 3.9 C15/0555/39/DA – Application for an unmaterial amendment to an application approved under reference C13/0736/39/LL to remove balconies on third floor levels to the rear of houses 9,10, 11 and 12 and add roof lights to the rear of the same houses – not yet determined at the time when the report was prepared.

### **4. Consultations:**

Town Council: Agree with the proposal of keeping the houses rather than affordable flats in accordance with permission on application C13/0736/39/LL. Also, in favour of the four houses seeking permission in this application provided that one of the houses is affordable in accordance with the Council’s policies.

Transportation Unit: No objection to the proposal. A proposal is shown to provide specific parking spaces for each additional unit and it is proposed to have the same entrance as was approved under the previous planning application. Therefore, it is believed that the increase in the number of houses will not have a detrimental effect on the local roads network.

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Welsh Water: Conditions need to be imposed on any planning permission in relation to foul water, surface water and land drainage.

Natural Resources Wales: Observations 10/4/15  
 Object to consenting to the proposal unless additional information is submitted which shows that it will not have a detrimental effect on protected species. Needs to comply with the recommendations of the bat survey submitted on application C13/0736/39/LL. There is a need to complete the mitigation measures of the previous application, namely, installing a cowl over the entrance to the bat roost. There is a need for a map showing the location of the bat roost in relation to the proposed development before an assessment can be made of the possible impact of the two developments on bats.

The proposed development lies within the boundary of the AONB where the main aim is conservation and to enhance its natural beauty. As a result of the scale and nature of the proposed development, it is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the protected landscape.

Observations 09/06/15  
 No objection to the proposal in principle but recommend that further information is needed prior to determining the application and that conditions are imposed. Note that updates have been undertaken of the ecological surveys and assessments and the report concludes that the development together with mitigating measures will not have an adverse impact on bats or reptiles. However, it states that paragraph 4.1 of the statement refers to loss of the maternity/hibernation roost of the lesser horseshoe bat but acknowledge that this could be a misunderstanding on their part but a further explanation is needed. Reference is also made for the need to secure a European Protected Species licence and to the circumstances when such a licence can be issued and the need to submit a method statement with the application for a licence. It is concluded that the details regarding the proposal continue to need confirmation in writing following an emergence survey in terms of an explanation to paragraph 4.1 of the statement. It is also stated that any permission should be the subject of planning conditions that no work is commenced which could have an impact on existing roosts or until the protected species licence has been issued and also that all the points in the method statement are adhered to.

Observations 16/06/15  
 Grateful for the further explanation of including the Ecological Statement and Method Statement by Greenman Ecology (April 2015). It was previously understood that there was a lesser horseshoe bat roost on the application land. Natural Resources Wales note the explanation for the loss of the lesser horseshoe bat roost and that it was on adjoining land (application C12/0441/39/LL) and not on the application site (C15/0246/39/LL). Therefore, Natural Resources Wales does not object to the application provided that the points in the method statement are adhered to, thus avoiding any adverse effect on bats. If bats are found there may be a need for a protected species licence.

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Biodiversity Unit

An updated mitigation statement has been submitted for the ‘Harbour Hotel, Abersoch: C13/0736/39/LL and C15/0246/39/LL update to Ecology and Method Statement: 29 April 2015.’ As the title suggests, the report provides an update and incorporates the latest mitigation measures with those of the previous application in a logical way. I am satisfied with the information detailed in this report. I would like to impose a condition that the measures detailed in part 6 of the report (6. Updated Mitigation Method) is followed exactly as described.

Part 9 of the report refers to producing a management plan which will ensure that habitats and ecological features, including bat roosts, are maintained correctly (Site Management Post-development and Mitigation Monitoring). I wish to include a condition that this management plan is submitted to the department for approval within 6 months of receipt of planning permission (or whatever period the planning department considers appropriate).

Trees Unit:

The trees on the site have been cut back. Therefore it would not be appropriate to submit a report now.

AONB Unit:

In terms of the impact on the AONB, several concerns were expressed regarding the original application to develop 13 houses on the site (C13/0736/39/LL). Some of those concerns are again relevant to the current development. Including a garage on the lower floor has resulted in a four-storey building of substantial height which would be obtrusive in the streetscape of Abersoch. The design of the front and side of houses is modern and alien in the context of the historical village centre of Abersoch. The large skylights on the rear elevation, although less prominent, are an alien feature. The design does not seem to comply with the Gwynedd Design Guidelines. There is concern that there will be 3 additional living units in a village where the percentage of holiday homes is already high and the language and local culture are under pressure.

Public Consultation:

A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. The re-advertising period ends on 23 June, 2015 (which is before the date of the Committee and after the date of preparing this report). Whilst preparing the report, two objections were received in response to the original consultation.

- There were objections to the original application on the grounds of the impact on the landscape and the proposal would be far more dominant than the previous hotel and a smaller scale for the plan was sought and we continue to object. With phase 2 of the project, there is a risk of making the development even more out of character with the village.
- Building on land that has not been designated as brownfield land or building land.
- Object to the incremental planning method where the full effect of the project is not made clear from the beginning.
- Getting closer to the edge of the cliff and a further change to the aesthetic nature of the village.
- Overlooking

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- Adding to the traffic on Lôn Engan.

In addition to the above objections, objections were received that were not valid planning objections which included:

- Need for the proposal to ensure public access along the riverside from the village to Coedwig Fach.

## 5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

### The principle of the development

- 5.1 The site is partially located within the development boundary of the village of Abersoch as indicated on the GUDP proposal maps. All the residential units that are the subject of the application are located within the development boundary. The remainder of the site lies outside the boundary but immediately nearby the boundary. No part of the site has been specifically designated for housing in the GUDP. Policy C1 of the GUDP states that land within town and village development boundaries and the developed form of rural villages will be the main focus for new developments. Furthermore, the policy states that new buildings, structures and ancillary facilities in the countryside (i.e. outside development boundaries and outside the developed form of rural villages) will be refused with the exception of development that is permitted by another policy of the Plan.
- 5.2 Policy CH4 relates to housing developments within development boundaries. This policy approves, in principle, proposals to build new homes on unallocated sites within the development boundaries of villages provided that a proportion of the units on each site (which will vary from site to site) are affordable units to meet the general local need determined for affordable housing, unless it can be proven to the satisfaction of the local Planning Authority that, having considered all the relevant factors, it would be inappropriate to provide affordable housing on the site.
- 5.3 Consequently, and subject to assessment of the following issues: affordability, visual, general and residential amenities, transportation, biodiversity, sustainability and flooding, the principle of the proposal is considered acceptable.

### Affordable Housing Matters

- 5.4 As part of the application a Planning and Affordable Housing Statement was submitted. This document outlines the options put forward in discussions prior to submitting the application for providing affordable housing. The following were the three options considered:
- Option 1 – Develop the site for 16 residential units with 12 of them being open market houses and keeping the four affordable houses (25%) approved under application C13/0736/39/LL.
  - Option 2 – Develop the site for 18 residential units, namely 12 open market houses and 6 affordable flats/apartments.
  - Option 3 – A community sum of £400,000 instead of the housing provision on the site.
- 5.5 In accordance with the policy, the priority is a provision of affordable units on the site and this is the first choice and, therefore, option 3 was discounted as we had already ensured a provision of affordable houses on the site by means of a 106 agreement on application C13/0736/39/LL. Both the other options were discussed. During discussions prior to submitting the application, officers stated that they considered that local need in Abersoch would be met and better served by keeping to four affordable houses rather than exchanging these for additional affordable flats. It was suggested to the applicant that it would be a good idea for him to contact housing associations to receive their opinions regarding this. It is



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understood from the information that was submitted on the application that the applicant's representatives had contacted several housing associations – Grŵp Cynefin, Cartrefi Gwynedd, North Wales Housing Association and Cartrefi Conwy. Of these, the only association that had no interest in the site was Cartrefi Conwy. The remainder showed an interest in the houses, although Cartrefi Gwynedd noted that they would give the first refusal to Grŵp Cynefin. Of these three, Grŵp Cynefin stated that houses would be a better choice than flats/apartments. The Community Council's observations also states that it agreed with the proposal of keeping to houses rather than affordable flats. The affordable houses would be three-bedroomed with a floor area of approximately 99m<sup>2</sup>, compared with the proposed flats which would have a floor area of approximately 49m<sup>2</sup> each. It was also understood that the Tai Teg list showed a waiting list of 35 for three bedroom houses compared with 14 looking for two bedroom flats/apartments. As a result of the above, it is considered that in this case keeping to four affordable houses (25% of the houses on the site as a whole), would meet the local need better, rather than having a larger number of flats/apartments (33% of the houses on the site as a whole). Consequently, it is considered that four affordable houses bound by a 106 agreement is sufficient and acceptable as a percentage of affordable houses for the site as a whole and therefore it meets the requirement in terms of securing a percentage of affordable houses on development sites in accordance with Policy CH4 of the GUDP.

#### **The issue of second homes**

- 5.6 From a community perspective, Policy CH10 of the UDP which deals with second homes is relevant to the application. However, it is essential to note that the Planning Inspectorate affords very little weight to this policy when determining appeals that are based on this policy. What comes over in the appeals is that it cannot be proven with robust evidence that the residential units would be holiday homes or second homes. Although there are a substantial percentage of second homes in Abersoch, an appeal on the site of the Power Boat Club has been approved, contrary to the decision of the Council. The appeal related to deleting a condition which restricted the occupancy of the open market housing to be developed on the site for use as permanent homes only. As a result of such appeal decisions, we cannot lend much weight to this policy when considering planning applications.

#### **Visual amenities**

- 5.7 The design of the houses which are the subject of the current application reflects and follows on from what was approved in the previous application (C13/0736/39/LL). Although there was no consultation on the current proposal with the Wales Design Commission, there were considerable discussions with them as the first phase of the development evolved. Over a period of time several matters were considered and adapted in the first phase, including:-

- The scale and form of the development.
- Taking advantage of the topography of the land.
- The suitability of the types of houses and gardens being proposed for families.
- The architectural form of the design, where it was suggested to consider a contemporary design rather than attempting to recreate Victorian-style buildings.
- Consideration to the landscaping.
- Access down to the river.
- The location of the access.

In their latest observations on the proposal the Wales Design Commission noted that it was an interesting design and that the simplicity of the houses was welcomed.

- 5.8 The design of the residential units in the current application reflects what has received permission in phase 1 of the development. The units would face down towards the river and the harbour. It is proposed for the four units which are the subject of the application to be semi-detached houses and they are located on the land in a way which makes use of the various levels found within the site. The units are of a contemporary design and although they

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are four-storey, they would appear to be three-storey from the rear (due to the slope of the land) and they would also be stepped down in line with the slope of the land, therefore the roof ridges will not be the same height across the house frontages. Also, the units are not positioned in a straight line, but are stepped back every two houses. They will also be stepped back from the houses that have been approved in the first phase of the development. This is considered to be a means of breaking up the development, thus lessening its impact. Also, although they are four storey units, the rooms on the fourth floor would be located in the roof space. The development is divided up into blocks of buildings, therefore there are spaces between the buildings and this is considered to minimise the proposal's impact on the landscape and the street scene. The proposal would be finished with slate roofs and external walls in a combination of timber and render. It is considered that these materials would be acceptable for use on the proposal.

- 5.9 All the houses will have private gardens and also the use of a communal garden which formed part of the previous application. In addition to this, a large band of green land would remain on the slopes between the buildings that are on elevated ground and the river, which is on lower ground. As there will be gardens and green land around the buildings it would be possible to landscape the site quite extensively. It is not considered that the proposal will have a detrimental impact on the area's visual appearance.
- 5.10 The proposal has now been amended to include construction of a retaining wall in the form of a gabion wall near the eastern boundary of the site on the highest part of the slope where the existing trees and shrubs grow. This gabion wall will replace the cribblock wall system (a wall in the form of a timber grid) which was shown on the landscaping plan and application C13/0736/39/LL. The gabion wall would allow planting on it and the information submitted shows a proposal to plant a mixture of ivy, grass, foxgloves and bracken in the wall. It is also understood that the wall would form a habitat for reptiles and possibly some species of bats and birds. Atop the gabion wall, it is proposed to locate 14 parking spaces in linear form. Officers had concerns over the rigid and uniform form of these parking spaces. However, following the inclusion of further landscaping and also an understanding that only cars would be parked there, those concerns have been alleviated. The applicant intends to instigate steps to ensure that vehicles such as boats, jet-skis, caravans, motor homes will not park outside. However, it is considered appropriate to impose a condition to ensure this also. In addition to the planting that will be undertaken in the wall, it is proposed to plant around the base and also on the slope near the retaining wall that is being affected by the development.
- 5.11 Due to the above, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of policies B22, B25 and B27 of the GUDP.
- 5.12 The site lies within the AONB and therefore the impact of the proposal on this designation must be considered. In this respect the requirements of Policy B8 of the GUDP must be considered. The aim is to protect, maintain and enhance the character of the AONB and to refuse proposals that would cause significant harm to the landscape and the coast (including views in and out of the area), wildlife, historical remains and buildings, language and culture and the quiet and unpolluted nature of the area unless there are very exceptional circumstances where the following criteria can be met:-
- that a very significant national, economic or social benefit has been established in favour of the development and that refusing permission would be extremely detrimental to the local economy;
  - that consideration has been given to the cost and the possibility of providing the development outside the area or of meeting the need for it in some other way;

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- that consideration has been given to limiting any detrimental effect on the area's character and that measures to achieve this have been included as part of the application.

Paragraph 5.3.5 of Planning Policy Wales also states that development plan policies and development control decisions affecting AONBs should favour conservation of natural beauty, although it will also be appropriate to have regard to the economic and social well-being of the areas.

- 5.13 The observations of the AONB Unit were received regarding the proposal. These observations have expressed several concerns regarding the original application to develop 13 houses on the site (C13/0736/39/LL). Some of those concerns are again relevant to the current development. Including a garage on the lower floor has resulted in a four-storey building of substantial height which would be obtrusive in the streetscape of Abersoch. The design of the front and side of houses is modern and alien in the context of the historical village centre of Abersoch. The large skylights on the rear elevation, although less prominent, are an alien feature. The design does not seem to comply with the Gwynedd Design Guidelines. There is concern regarding 3 additional living units in a village where the percentage of holiday homes is already high and the language and local culture are under pressure. It appears that one of the main concerns of the AONB Unit is the fact that the units are four-storey, which they consider to be obtrusive in the streetscape of Abersoch. It also refers to rooflights in the rear elevations of the houses. Since submitting the application, the rear elevation has been amended with the large rooflights which operated as balconies having been deleted from the plans and smaller rooflights included to replace them at a higher level. In terms of design an attempt has been made to create a development with character and some interesting architectural features have been included to prevent a monotonous and uniform development. Although the design is contemporary in nature, this does not necessarily mean that it would cause significant harm to the AONB.
- 5.14 As noted above, the development reflects the design of the houses that have already received planning permission and this will ensure continuity throughout the development. The site is located near the built form of the village of Abersoch and it is not a stand-alone site in open countryside. It is likely that one of the main views of the site will be that from Lôn Pont Morgan by the bridge when entering Abersoch. The land where it is intended to build is on elevated ground, and consequently it is fairly prominent in the landscape from this location. A large band of green land would remain on the slopes around the site and there would be spaces between the building blocks along with a combination of private gardens and a communal garden for the residents of the proposed units, which would be a means of contributing to the character of the area. In light of this, it is considered that people looking upstream from Pont Morgan would still be able to enjoy views which would include greenery and open spaces. It is not considered therefore that the proposal would cause significant harm to the AONB, and it is therefore acceptable in respect of Policy B8 of the GUDP. It is not considered that the proposal will have more than a local impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and that therefore it is acceptable in terms of Policy B12 of the GUDP.

**General and residential amenities**

- 5.15 The nearest residential properties to the site are located to the west. Those houses are on a higher level than the site of the application. Because of these differences in ground levels and the distances between the nearby houses and the proposed houses, it is not considered that the proposal would cause overlooking or loss of privacy for the occupants of these houses in a way which would cause significant harm. Also, in terms of Policy B23, it is not considered that adding three houses to what has received planning permission previously will add substantially to traffic or noise associated with traffic in a way that will cause significant harm to local amenities. The proposal is considered acceptable in terms of Policy B23 of the GUDP.

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### **Transport and access matters**

- 5.16 The proposal will use the current vehicular entrance to the site and the estate road which received planning permission under application C13/0736/39/LL will be extended to gain access to the four houses which are the subject of the current application. These four houses include a garage on the lower floor and a parking space on the drive. There would also be 14 general parking spaces created within the site as a whole. There would also be pedestrian access from the development down to the river. The Transportation Unit was consulted and they had no objection to the proposal. The Transportation Unit's observations note that it is proposed to provide specific parking spaces for each additional unit and it is proposed to use the same entrance as was approved under the previous planning permission. Therefore, it is believed that the increase in the number of houses will not have a detrimental effect on the local roads network. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in respect of policies CH33 and CH36 which relate to road safety and parking.

### **Biodiversity Matters**

- 5.17 As part of the proposal, an updated mitigation statement was submitted for the site, namely 'Harbour Hotel, Abersoch: C13/0736/39/LL and C15/0246/39/LL update to Ecology and Method Statement: 29 April 2015.' This is a statement which provides an update and incorporates the latest mitigation measures with those of the previous application in a logical way. The observations of the Biodiversity Unit were received on the application and they are satisfied with the information which is detailed in this statement. The Biodiversity Unit suggest imposing conditions on any permission. One condition would involve ensuring that the proposal is implemented in accordance with part 6 of the statement which deals with mitigation measures. Part 9 of the mitigation measures included in the statement refers to producing a management plan which will ensure that habitats and ecological features, including the bat roost, are maintained correctly. The Biodiversity Unit has also suggested that this management plan is submitted to the department for approval within six months of receiving planning permission.
- 5.18 The observations of Natural Resources Wales were also received on the proposal. Following receipt of an explanation that the lesser horseshoe bat roost referred to in part 4 of the Ecological Statement and Method Statement by Greenman Ecology (April 2015) is located on land in close proximity to the application site, namely land of the Riverside Hotel, which received planning permission for redevelopment under application C12/0441/39/LL, Natural Resources Wales does not now object to the proposal. Natural Resources Wales, like the Biodiversity Unit, recommend a condition that the points within the method statement are adhered to, thus avoiding any adverse effect on bats.
- 5.19 The observations of the Biodiversity Unit and Natural Resources Wales consider that the proposal is acceptable if appropriate conditions are imposed on the planning permission. It is, therefore, considered that the proposal is acceptable in relation to Policy B20 of the GUDP.
- 5.20 Japanese knotweed, an invasive plant which is difficult to eradicate is present on part of the site. The section where the Japanese Knotweed is located forms part of the previous application on the site and a condition was imposed that the work of eradicating the Japanese Knotweed is undertaken in accordance with part 6 of the Japanese Knotweed Management Plan, dated 23 October 2013 which provides details of the chemical treatment programme to eradicate the Japanese Knotweed. This document is submitted as part of the current application and it is considered, to avoid any doubt in terms of eradicating this invasive plant, that a similar condition be imposed on the current application. If treatment to eradicate Japanese knotweed is undertaken, it is considered that the proposal would be acceptable in the context of Policy B35 of the GUDP.

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### **Sustainability matters**

- 5.21 When the application was submitted for phase 1, national guidelines required that the houses reached at least level 3 of the Sustainable Homes Code. Since then, the national guidelines have been amended and the requirements of the Sustainable Homes Code no longer fall within planning requirements. However, the Design and Access Statement states that the design of the houses will continue to achieve level 3 of the Sustainable Homes Code. It is considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of Policy C7 of the GUDP which relates to building in a sustainable manner.

## **6. Conclusions:**

- 6.1 This is a proposal for the second phase of the redevelopment of the Harbour Hotel site for four residential units. Three of the units will be completely new and the fourth unit would relocate plot 13 of what received planning permission in application C13/0736/39/LL. As part of that application, a 106 agreement was signed, binding four of the houses as affordable homes. As part of the current application, it is not proposed to increase the number of affordable houses. When discussions were held with the applicant prior to submitting the application, a proposal was put forward to exchange the four affordable houses for six flats/apartments but officers were of the opinion that the need was for houses rather than flats in the Abersoch area. Following discussions with housing associations it appears that they were also of the opinion that the need is for houses in Abersoch. When the previous application was submitted to the Committee the report stated that it was heartening to see that what was being proposed were four houses with gardens to satisfy the need for family homes. As a result of the above, it is considered that in this case keeping to four affordable houses (25% of the houses on the site as a whole), would satisfy the local need better, rather than having a larger number of flats/apartments (33% of the houses on the site as a whole). Consequently, it is considered that four affordable houses already bound by a 106 agreement is sufficient as a percentage of affordable houses for the site as a whole and therefore it satisfies the requirement in terms of securing a percentage of affordable houses on development sites in accordance with Policy CH4 of the GUDP.
- 6.2 Having considered and assessed all the relevant matters, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in respect of local and national policies, and that there are no other material planning matters that state otherwise, and that consequently, the application should be approved subject to the end of the re-consultation period.

## **7. Recommendation:**

- 7.1 To delegate powers to the Senior Planning Manager to approve the application, subject to the end of the re-consultation period and the following conditions -
1. Commence within five years
  2. In accordance with plans.
  3. Slates on the roof
  4. Agree details for external walls.
  5. Agree on natural local stone for the gabion wall.
  6. To implement the development in accordance with part 6 of the 'Harbour Hotel, Abersoch C13/0736/39/LL and C15/0246/39/LL update to Ecology and Method Statement: 29 April 2015.'
  7. Within six months of the date of the permission, the Local Planning Authority must receive and approve the management plan outlined in point 9 of the mitigation measures in the 'Harbour Hotel, Abersoch: C13/0736/39/LL and C15/0246/39/LL update to Ecology and Method Statement: 29 April 2015.'

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8. The work of eradicating Japanese Knotweed to be completed in accordance with part 6 of the Japanese knotweed Management Plan, dated 23 October 2013 prepared by Ben Lindley from Japanese Knotweed Ltd.
9. Surface and foul water discharge to drain separately from the site.
10. Not to permit surface water to link directly or indirectly with the public sewerage system unless agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
11. Not to permit surface water land drainage to be discharged either directly or indirectly to the public sewerage system.
12. Prior to the residential units being occupied for the first time, the parking area must be completed in accordance with the plans and this area will not thereafter be used for any other purpose.
13. The use of the communal linear parking spaces to be restricted to cars only and the parking of boats, jet-skis, caravans and motorhomes is forbidden.
14. Complete the landscaping plan in accordance with the details submitted.