

Number: 1



Rhif y Cais / Application Number : C14/0831/11/CR & C14/0832/11/LL

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



PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 26/09/2016
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT MANAGER	PWLLHELI

Application Number: C14/0832/11/LL
Date Registered: 31/08/2016
Application Type : Full - Planning
Community: Bangor
Ward: Deiniol

Proposal: CHANGE OF USE PART OF THE EXISTING SHOP, INSTALLING A NEW SHOP FRONT AND CONSTRUCTION OF A TWO-STOREY EXTENSION ON TOP OF THE EXISTING REAR EXTENSION TO CREATE 2 SHOPS AND ACCOMMODATION FOR 65 STUDENTS
Location: CASTLE HILL ARCADE, 196 , HIGH STREET, BANGOR, GWYNEDD, LL57 1NU

Summary of the Recommendation: To REFUSE

1. Description:

- 1.1 This application is an application to change the use of part of the existing shop, namely the former Debenhams shop on the High Street in Bangor, installing a new shop front and construction of two-storey extension on top of the existing rear extension to create two shops and accommodation for 64 students.
- 1.2 The existing building is used as commercial units on the ground and first floors and the remainder of the building remains vacant. It is proposed to adapt the existing building and construct a two-storey rear extension, on top of the existing single-storey extension. The ground floor will continue with the commercial use for two separate units, with the remainder of the building, along with the new extension, creating living accommodation provision for 64 students. Twelve bedrooms will be located on the first floor of the existing building, along with six on the second floor. It is intended to undertake internal adaptations in order to restructure by removing old partitions and installing new partitions, along with the installation of secondary glazing on the original windows, however, it is not intended to carry out any exterior adaptations to the front of the existing building.
- 1.3 At the rear of the existing building there is a single-storey flat-roof extension which is modern and quite plain. This is located behind the main building and it is not visible from the High Street at all, it can only be seen from the rear of the site. It is intended to erect a two-storey flat-roofed extension on the existing flat-roofed single-storey extension, and it will have the same footprint and will be a three-storeys as per the original building. There would be 14 bedrooms on the first floor, 16 on the second and 16 on the third, namely a total of 46 student accommodation rooms within the new extension. There would be en-suite rooms with communal cooking facilities being provided in separate rooms - there would be one kitchen for every seven bedrooms. The new extension would have a flat roof and would be rendered to be in keeping with the existing building and it is intended to install aluminium windows.
- 1.4 It is also intended to install a new shop-front on the front of the building and this will mainly retain the existing appearance, but will change the access in order to create a separate entrance for the two commercial units, which will be manufactured from aluminium. The development also includes landscaping work to the rear along with a bicycle storage area (25 in total) and a bin area. No parking provision forms part of the proposal.

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1.5 The site is located on the High Street in the centre of the City of Bangor and in close proximity to the Cathedral. The building is a grade II listed building and it is also located within the Bangor Conservation Area.

1.6 A listed building application has also been submitted with the full application under reference C14/0831/11/CR.

1.7 The following statements / surveys have been submitted as part of the application.

- Linguistic and Community Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Bat survey
- Planning Statement
- Trees Assessment
- Drainage Assessment

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 considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Unitary Development Plan.

2.2 Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 the Council has a duty not only to carry out sustainable development, but must also take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet its sustainable development (or well-being) objectives. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the 'sustainable development principle', as set out in the 2015 Act, and in making the recommendation the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being objectives as a result of the proposed recommendation.

2.3 Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan 2009:

POLICY A1 - ENVIRONMENTAL OR OTHER IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Ensure that sufficient information is provided with the planning application regarding any environmental impacts or other likely and substantial impact in the form of an environmental assessment or assessments of other impacts.

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 A3 – PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

Refuse proposals if there is any possibility of serious or irreversible damage to the environment or the community unless it can be shown conclusively at the end of an appropriate impact assessment that the impact can be negated or mitigated.

POLICY B2 – ALTERATIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS OR BUILDINGS IN THEIR CURTILAGE

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Ensure that proposals do not cause substantial damage to the special architectural or historical character of Listed Buildings.

POLICY B3 – DEVELOPMENTS THAT AFFECT THE SETTING OF A LISTED BUILDING

Ensure that proposals have no effect on the setting of Listed Buildings and that they conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the special character of the Listed Building and the local environment.

POLICY B4 – DEVELOPMENTS IN OR AFFECTING THE SETTING OF CONSERVATION AREAS

Ensure that proposals within conservation areas, or proposals that affect their setting, are refused unless they aim to maintain or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting.

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

Refuse proposals that are likely to cause unacceptable disturbance or harm to protected species and their habitats 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 B33 – DEVELOPMENT THAT CREATES POLLUTION OR NUISANCE

Protect human amenities, the quality of public health and the natural or built environment from high levels of pollution.

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

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building, visual considerations, design and the impact on the vitality of neighbouring towns and villages.

POLICY CH3 – NEW HOUSES ON UNALLOCATED SITES WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES OF THE SUB-REGIONAL CENTRE AND URBAN CENTRES

Approve the construction of houses on appropriate unallocated sites within the development boundaries of the Sub-regional Centre and the Urban Centres.

POLICY CH6 – AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON ALL ALLOCATED SITES IN THE PLAN AREA AND ON SITES THAT BECOME AVAILABLE AND ARE UNALLOCATED WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES OF THE SUB-REGIONAL CENTRE AND THE URBAN CENTRES

Approve proposals for housing developments on sites allocated for housing or on windfall sites for five units or more within the development boundaries of the sub-regional centre and the urban centres, which provide the appropriate element of affordable housing.

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 - FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENTS

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.

POLICY CH43 – PROVISION OF OPEN SPACES OF RECREATIONAL VALUE IN NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Expect that new housing developments of 10 or more dwellings, in areas where the existing open spaces provision cannot meet the needs of the development, provide suitable open spaces of recreational value as an integral part of the development.

POLICY D23 – CHANGE OF USE OF GROUND FLOOR UNITS IN TOWN CENTRES – BANGOR, CAERNARFON, PORTHMADOG AND PWLLHELI

In order to maintain the attractiveness of existing town centres, ground floor units will be safeguarded for shopping purposes. Proposals to change the use of ground floor shops to non-retail uses (except hot-food takeaways) within the defined town centres of Bangor, Caernarfon, Porthmadog and Pwllheli will be assessed against all the following considerations.

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Supplementary Planning Guidance: Planning Obligations
 Supplementary Planning Guidance: Housing Developments and Open spaces of recreational value
 Supplementary Planning Guidance: Planning and the Welsh Language

2.4 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales (2016) (Version 8)
 The Welsh Office Circular 61/96 – "Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas".
 TAN 12: Design
 TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh Language

3. Relevant Planning History:

3.1 No relevant planning history.

4. Consultations:

Bangor City Council: Object - over-development of the site, a difficult access into the building and no need for more student units within the area (response was received on the basis of amended plans).

Transportation Unit: There is no objection to the proposal.

 Usually, by using the normal parking standards, namely the CSS Wales Parking Standards 2008, up to 10 parking spaces should be provided for student developments of this type.

It could be considered that this site is within a reasonable distance to a number of facilities, other modes of transport, pay and display car parks and a number of the University's buildings in Bangor. Therefore, it could be argued that there is no real need to provide parking spaces alongside the development. However, I believe that you can reasonably assume that the development would have an impact on the parking pressures on nearby streets at times; therefore, I recommend two measures to mitigate the impact.

I recommend measures outlined in the parking standards, namely impose a condition on the development which prevents students from bringing a vehicle within three miles of the development and the provision of a pre-occupation travel plan.

Welsh Water: No objection - conditions suggested

Bangor Civic Society: We ask you to DEFER this application, so that more information can be collected in order to give a fully informed decision for the following reasons.
 - Our information is that the current building dates back to 1831, and not the 1880s as the developers claim. As such it is late Regency, not late Victorian.

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- If this is indeed the case it requires more careful treatment, especially internally, than the developers are proposing
- The details of refuse collection and storage have yet to be sorted out, as admitted in para 3.2.6 of the Design and Access statement
- The Society wishes to know if any study has been made of student car ownership and use in Bangor. It is stretching belief to think that not a single one out of sixty-five students will not decide to park and use a car
- It is not clear to us whether Gwynedd Council really intends to support the provision of another 4,000 'purpose-built' units of student accommodation in Bangor, or how this can be achieved without serious social and civic problems

Public Protection Unit: No objection, but recommend that a condition is imposed to restrict construction work to between 8am - 6pm Monday to Friday and 8am - 1pm on Saturday and nothing at all on Sunday; ensuring compliance with the requirements of BS5228 regarding Noise and Vibration. It is also noted that it should provide the details of any mechanical equipment (e.g. air conditioning or air extraction units).

Biodiversity Unit: The applicant has provided a bat survey from Enfys Ecology, dated 29 June 2015. The survey includes a dusk survey and has been carried out to an acceptable standard. There was no evidence of bats in the building. There are no ecological concerns about this application.

Trees Unit: Confirm that the trees on the site are not of a satisfactory standard to retain. There is no objection. Propose a landscaping condition.

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

- Not required
- Impact on privacy.
- Impact of noise and antisocial behaviour.
- Overdevelopment
- Impact on wildlife.
- Parking/traffic
- Impact during the construction phase
- Land ownership issues

There was a further consultation on the amended plans which had been received showing the rear elevations.

5. Assessment of the relevant planning considerations:

The principle of the development

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- 5.1 The proposal relates to a substantial building on Bangor High Street and it is a Grade II listed buildings. A listed building application has also been submitted for the proposal. The building had been used until approximately 10 years ago as the former Debenhams store before it changed location, and more recently, the ground floor has been used as independent shops, with the upper floors standing empty. The site is within the development boundary of the City. This site has not been designated for any specific use however, it is located within the Town Centre and Main Shopping Area designation, and within the Conservation Area. Based on the building's location, it is considered that the proposal to re-use the site complies with the requirements of policy C1 and C4 of the GUDP.
- 5.2 The proposal relates to changing the use and extending the building, installation of new shop front and erection of a two-storey extension on top of the existing rear extension. The new use would create 2 commercial units (where the existing shop is located) and accommodation for 64 students. These would be en-suite rooms with communal cooking facilities provided in separate rooms - there would be one kitchen for approximately seven bedrooms.
- 5.3 There is no specific policy in the UDP which deals with a development of this type and the UDP's housing policies (policies CH3 and CH6 specifically) nor policy CH39 (Further and Higher Education Developments) that refer to developments on higher education sites, are not entirely relevant.
- 5.4 Consequently, there is a need to weigh up material considerations when determining whether or not the principle of the proposed development is acceptable in this particular location. Specifically, bearing in mind what is stated in Policy CH39, the reasoning for not locating the proposed accommodation on the University campus needs to be considered.
- 5.5 Looking at the student figures for 2014/2015, it is noted that there are 9186 full-time students at the University. The University states that 577 students have a home address on Anglesey and 970 in Gwynedd but there is no information on how many are undergraduates or graduates, or if they are living at home or in student accommodation in Bangor itself.
- 5.6 The University has 3,648 built bed-spaces, which includes the recent development at the St Mary's site that is currently being developed (602). In the private sector there are approximately 802 built accommodation units, and 49 are currently being built (137 High Street, Bangor). There are 140 additional units which have received planning permission, but have yet to be commenced (including 3 permissions through recent appeals - the Three Crowns Site for 15 units, the former Railway Institute for 27 units and the Lôn Bopty site for 18 units) and 83 units (including this application) are currently under consideration. This is a total of 991 private units that are either available or have already received planning permission.
- 5.7 The Joint Planning Policy Unit is currently updating the information dating from 2013 on houses in multiple occupation with 2016 data, but there are difficulties in relation to plotting the information on maps, which means that it is not yet available. The following information has been collected from the Council's Housing Department and Tax Department in September 2013, and these figures refer to the number of houses within different parts of Bangor that have been registered by the Housing Department as a HMO and/or those that do not pay Council tax. These figures do not refer specifically to the numbers of students living in private houses or houses in multiple occupation, it is only an indication from the available information.

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- 5.8 This information shows that there are 1,012 houses in Bangor that are either in multiple occupation or do not pay Council tax, as there are a total of 6,597 houses in Bangor, this is equivalent to 15.3% of the housing stock in the City.
- 5.9 The information also shows that around 168 houses in the Deiniol ward (where the application is located) are either houses in multiple occupation or do not pay Council Tax, and as there are a total of 606 houses in the Deiniol ward, this is equivalent to 27.7% of the ward's housing stock.
- 5.10 It therefore appears that the student accommodation currently supplied is a mix of purpose-built student accommodation (3648 university units and 991 private units available/approved), houses in multiple occupation (an estimate of 1012 houses) and private houses or home addresses (1547 - although it is possible that some of these are duplicated in the houses in multiple occupation information).
- 5.11 It also appears that there is a change in relation to the type of accommodation that students are seeking, and that there is an increase in demand for purpose-built accommodation. It also appears houses in multiple occupation will continue to be popular among students in the areas which are most convenient for the University.
- 5.12 It is acknowledged that some people are concerned about the number of purpose-built student accommodation that has been built in the Bangor area, and a suggestion that a number of the available rooms are empty. But, from the above figures, it appears that only a comparatively low percentage of the total provision available is supplied by this type of unit, and therefore it is not considered that it would be reasonable to refuse the proposal on the grounds of a lack of need for this type of accommodation. It appears that the demand for the different types of accommodation changes from year to year, especially in comparing different times within the same year (e.g. the beginning and end of the academic year).
- 5.13 Providing more purpose-built student accommodation and quality facilities for students which are managed more formally, could possibly lead to a more positive impact on the local housing market as it could release houses which are currently in multiple occupation to be changed into use by local households that require such houses (e.g. small units, one-bedroom flats etc). In order to ensure a satisfactory arrangement for letting the units and to establish a contact point for any amenities problems in future, and to ensure reasonable use of the units in accordance with the proposal (i.e. students), it is considered that it would be reasonable to include a condition to agree the accommodation contracts beforehand with the Local Planning Authority.
- 5.14 The proposal also involves the provision of two commercial units on the ground floor of the buildings instead of the existing commercial unit. As the site is located within an area that has been designated as a Defined Town Centre, policy D23 of the UDP is relevant. This policy protects ground floor units in order to maintain a town centre attraction and it is considered that the proposal to create 2 shops instead of 1 is in accordance with the purpose of policy D23 and maintains an attraction in the town centre rather than undermining it.
- 5.15 As a result to the additional documents and statements submitted as part of the application, it is considered that the proposal conforms with the requirements of policies A1 and A3 of the UDP that relate to ensuring that sufficient information is provided with the planning application so that its impact can be fully assessed. The

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content of these documents/statements are considered in more detail in the relevant parts of this assessment.

- 5.16 Based on the above, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with the policies noted and therefore it is acceptable in principle.

Design and visual amenities

- 5.17 Paragraph 68 of the Welsh Office Circular 61/96 – ‘Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas’ states that Local Planning Authorities should have particular regard for the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Policy B2 of the GUDP upholds this and states that proposals for external or internal alterations, additions or change of use of Listed Buildings will be approved provided that the proposal will not cause significant harm to the special architectural or historic character of the building. Policies B4, B22, B24 and B25 reiterates this by encouraging developments that respect the site and the vicinity.
- 5.18 It is proposed to adapt the front of the building slightly, namely the shop front, in order to create two separate accesses to the two commercial units and retain a separate entrance to the student units. The remainder of the building's front will be retained as it currently stands, including the retention and repair of the original timber windows on the first and second floors and the relatively modern existing shop front changed with new aluminium frames however a similar appearance will be retained. It is not considered that altering the front or internal adaptations would be likely to lead to the loss of any architectural feature as these have been safeguarded within the proposal. It is considered that this element of the proposal complies with conditions B2, B4, B22, B25 and B25 by imposing relevant conditions.
- 5.19 To the rear of the building, there is a modern red-brick flat-roof extension that is of no specific architectural value and it does not reflect the special character of the listed building. Nevertheless, it is located behind the main building and it is not visible from the High Street or from important public areas within the Conservation Area. It is proposed to erect a two-storey flat-roofed extension on top of the existing extension with a high number of window openings. The extension's design is simple and practical for its proposed use; however, the relationship between the proposed development and its surroundings is not clear.
- 5.20 There is a broad range of buildings in the area in terms of designs and finishes, in particular in the rear elevations of sites. Despite the variety, there are common aspects to the area's buildings such as slate pitched roofs, traditional elevations and rear extensions that are secondary to the main building it relates to.
- 5.21 The original part of the building extends out to the rear and is two-storey with a slate pitched roof. The new two-storey extension would be connected to this original part on top of the existing flat roofs and the side elevations and cross-sections show that the extension would dominate the original building and would form an extension that is not in keeping and of a low design standard that does not respect the original listed building. The Welsh Office Circular 61/96 states that modern extensions should not dominate the existing building in terms of scale, material or location.
- 5.22 Despite the existence of a flat-roofed building in the rear of the main building, this cannot be considered as a basis to justify the erection of a substantially sized two-storey flat-roofed extension of an insensitive design on top as it is considered that it

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would dominate the main building and would have a detrimental impact on its character. The explanation of policy B22 also explains the relationship between a proposed development and its surroundings as well as how the relationship between the individual features surrounding the site develops to create a completely fundamental character to create developments of a good design standard. Consideration should be given to the features of the site and the surrounding area every time before commencing to prepare plans for the features in question. The main advantage of this aspect is obtaining a design that is relevant to a specific site, and a design that either retains any character or overturns the past trends where development patterns in the past have not responded to the context.

- 5.23 Even considering that the proposed extension is in the rear of the site and is relatively concealed from nearby public spaces, this does not justify an extension of this scale, bulk, form and design as it is considered that it would have a substantial impact on the appearance and character of the listed building. Consequently, it is considered that the proposal is contrary to criteria 1 and 2 of policy B22, criterion 1 of policy B24, policy B2 of the GUDP and Circular 61/96.

The impact of the development on the setting and the character of the Conservation Area

- 5.24 Sections 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local authorities to give particular attention to the fact that it is desirable to retain or improve the character or appearance of conservation areas. Upon assessing the proposal, it is unlikely that the rear flat-roofed extension would be visible from public areas in close proximity to the site. It is likely that the proposal would open up the rear of the site up from the direction of Cae Llepa located behind; but due to the ground levels it is unlikely that the development would be harmful although it is acknowledged that it would not offer an improvement to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- 5.25 The Bangor Conservation Area is vast and includes many grade I listed buildings. The topography of Bangor means that parts of the city are visible from a distance, e.g. views from the main University building (which is a grade I listed building) from across the city. From the University, the area surrounding the application site shows many common elements in the area's architecture with slate pitched roofs and developments that follow the street patterns. The development will be visible from more elevated locations. Although the overall change to the Conservation Area will be relatively minor, it is considered that the flat-roof aspect will appear as an incongruous feature from views across the city which does not respect the listed building located in front of it, or the street patterns of the surrounding area. It is therefore considered that the proposal is contrary to policy B4 as the development would not enrich the character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting.

General and residential amenities

- 5.26 Commercial use will continue within the building as the existing shop will be adapted into two shops. It is not considered that this part of the proposal will have any negative impact in respect of amenities due to the site's existing use as a shop. However, the proposal also involves the alteration of the existing building and erection of an extension in order to provide accommodation for 64 students. The site is located within the city centre with a mix of shops and A3 uses (food and drink),

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also there are residential flats above business units as well as residential houses to the rear of the site and to the south-east and west.

- 5.27 It can be considered that bespoke student accommodation has the potential to create noise impact and disturbance that is more than can be expected from general housing. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that the site is located on the High Street in the City and within a busy and vibrant area of existing commercial activity where higher background noise levels than found in residential areas are expected. It is accepted that 64 students coming and going from this location will change the existing situation; however, it is not considered that the impact will be unacceptable considering the location of the proposal and nearby land uses.
- 5.28 Amended plans were received which removed the highest rear terrace which provided an outdoor seating area due to its close proximity to the rear of Cae Llepa terrace, and the external terrace (patio) that backed onto 168-170 High Street due to the potential for disturbance and the potential use of these areas late at night. The outdoor seating area has been kept to a low level by the rear of the building and it is not considered that this would have a negative impact on the residential amenities of nearby housing. It is not proposed to make any external alterations and, therefore, it is not considered that the proposal would be likely to have an impact on the setting of the conservation area in this case.
- 5.29 Objections were received based on overlooking from windows and gardens. As noted above, the site is located within a business area within the city centre but also other residential units area located nearby - specifically towards the rear and sides of the site. In addition, residential units are located above the commercial units adjacent to the site.
- 5.30 In order to assess the impact of the proposal, site cross-sections were received to show the extension's relationship with the buildings to the rear and front. The cross-sections show that approximately 26m would be located between the extension and the Cae Llepa housing and the extension's roof at its highest would be around the same height as the houses' rear gardens and consequently, it is not considered that the development would cause any overlooking or unreasonable loss of privacy to these houses.
- 5.31 To the front of the flat roofed extension (to the rear of the original building that faces the High Street), new windows would face the rear of 198-204 High Street. The rear of these buildings have a mix of different houses, including business uses and residential flats. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the proposal would change the current situation substantially with a two-storey extension on top of the existing single-storey extension with a total of 24 new windows facing the rear of the buildings on the High Street and therefore it is important to assess the impact of this and whether or not that impact would be acceptable.
- 5.32 Upon visiting the site, there was no evidence of any private rear gardens to the rear of the High Street buildings that were not already overlooked; the majority of them were used as a storage area and bins storage area for the businesses and one section had overgrown substantially. The cross-sections show that the buildings located closest to the site are approximately 6m from the site but when visiting the site it could be seen that a solid door is located on the gable end. Located behind that is a variety of extensions and windows with a mix of windows with opaque glass and security barriers and standard clear-glazed windows. The standard windows that reflect residential use are located further away at a distance of approximately 17m. The

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windows in the rear extension of 204 High Street look across the site towards the north and thus it is not considered that the development will cause direct overlooking into the windows of that building.

- 5.33 Despite the distances and the variety of windows, it is considered that the number of windows would change the existing situation substantially and would lead to an unacceptable scale of overlooking and loss of privacy. In addition, and due to the various different windows and the nature of student accommodation (living space all within one separate room with communal kitchens and dining rooms), it is not considered that the development would ensure sufficient privacy and living standards for the students facing 198 - 204 High Street.
- 5.34 Castle Hill houses are located to the west of the site and within 18m to its closest point. Due to the setting of the building and the distances involved, it is not considered that the proposal will affect the privacy of the windows of these houses. Nevertheless, it is considered that the development would have a detrimental impact on the privacy of the gardens (in particular numbers 3 and 4). The existing rear gardens are relatively concealed and enjoy a relatively high amenity standard considering their location in a city centre. The proposal would change the situation substantially due to the height and bulk of the building and the number of windows that will overlook the gardens.
- 5.35 Although the existing site is within a natural depression with relatively steep land rising towards the rear, the rear of 198-204 High Street face the south and currently enjoy substantial hours of natural daylight. The extension will lead to shadowing and a substantial reduction in the natural daylight that these buildings currently enjoy. The upper windows also enjoy a natural view above the flat-roofed extension of trees and vegetation on the sloping ground. Although this area is not of a high amenity value, it is considered that the proposed development will substantially reduce living standards. The rear of the High Street buildings would be closed in due to the combination of the mass and height of the extension, its setting and the site's boundaries. It is considered that this would cause an unacceptable oppressive impact that would be contrary to the requirements of policy B23.
- 5.36 As a whole, it is considered that the proposal is contrary to policy B23 as the development would have a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of nearby units and houses and that the development would not ensure a sufficient living standard for the occupiers of the development.

Transport and access matters

- 5.37 The proposal does not provide any parking spaces associated with the development. The site is located within the town centre and in close proximity to public car parks and parking spaces. The Transportation Unit does not have an objection to the proposal in principle, due to the location of the site, which is within reasonable distance of a number of facilities, other modes of transport, pay and display car parks and a number of the University's buildings in Bangor, therefore, it could be argued that there is no real need for parking provision associated with the development. However, it is therefore considered that it would be reasonable to ask for a condition that prevents students from bringing a vehicle to within three miles of the development and also asks for a pre-occupation travel plan for the development. In doing so, it is considered that the proposal could comply with the policy requirements of policies CH30, CH33 and CH36 of the UDP.

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Open Spaces

- 5.38 In accordance with the requirements of the Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Housing Developments and Open Spaces of Recreational Value', there will be a need to provide an element of an open play area for Youths and Adults associated with this development. In this case, the open play area cannot be provided within the site, however, it is currently reasonable to expect that student accommodation is able to depend upon the University's play provision and its relevant clubs and also that use is made of playing lands and facilities that are already available in the area. Therefore, for this reason, it is considered that the proposal conforms with the requirements of policy CH43 of the UDP and the Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Housing Developments and Open Spaces of Recreational Value'.

Biodiversity Matters

- 5.39 The bat survey submitted with the application showed that bats did not use the building, and therefore the Biodiversity Unit has no concern about this. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of Policy B20 of the UDP.

Linguistic Matters

- 5.40 A Linguistic and Community Impact Assessment was submitted with the application assessing whether the development will have a positive or negative impact, or no impact at all on existing communities and on the Welsh Language in particular.
- 5.41 The Joint Planning Policy Unit has confirmed that there is a fairly low percentage of Welsh speakers in Bangor, however, it does not believe that the scale of the proposed development is likely to cause a significant increase in the population that could have a detrimental impact on the Welsh language. Bangor has a high population, especially in terms of student population. As a result the size of the development and the subsequent growth in population is unlikely to have a significant impact on the Welsh Language. In addition, this proposal does not lead to any change in the City's population as students already exist and the availability of purpose built student living units is likely to release private housing on the open market and therefore to local residents.
- 5.42 Therefore, on the whole it is considered that the nature of Bangor, in terms of the size of the population, linguistic pattern, the variety of services and facilities available there mean that the development should not have a detrimental impact on the Welsh language. Therefore it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with policy A2 of the UDP and the SPG – Planning and the Welsh Language as well as TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh Language.

Response to the public consultation

- 5.43 Concerns were highlighted regarding the need, the impact on privacy, noise and antisocial behaviour problems, over-development, impact on wildlife, parking / traffic matters, impact during the construction phase and land ownership matters.
- 5.44 The submissions received during the consultations and from third parties were submitted for the attention of the Agent, and additional plans were submitted showing the rear elevations along with a new site plan and an amended application form confirming the land ownership issues. It is believed that full consideration has been

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given to the material planning matters in the above report. It is noted that it would be possible to impose a condition on the construction hours, as well as in relation to noise matters from the perspective of any extraction/air conditioning unit.

6. Conclusions:

- 6.1 Based on the assessment above, it is considered that the principle of converting the original building is acceptable, along with its use. It is considered that the proposal complies with the required criteria in relation to transportation, biodiversity and linguistic matters. However, it is not considered that the design, scale, bulk or form of the new two-storey extensions are suitable to the location as it would have a detrimental effect on the visual amenities of the area. The officers do not have an objection in principle to an extension of a suitable scale and design on this part of the site; however, the fact that the site is relatively concealed from public areas is not a sufficient reason to justify an extension of this scale, bulk, form and design. It is considered that the proposal is contrary to the requirements of policies B22, B23, B24 and B25 of the GUDP. It is also considered that the proposal is contrary to policy B23 as the development would have a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of nearby units and houses and that the development would not ensure a sufficient living standard for the occupiers of the development.
- 6.2 It is also considered, due to its scale, bulk, form and design that it would dominate the listed building and have a substantial harmful impact on its historic character and consequently, it is considered that the proposal is contrary to the requirements of policies B2, B3 and B4 of the GUDP, and the guidance seen in Circular 61/96 and chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales.

7. Recommendation:

- 7.1 To refuse
1. The proposal, due to its scale, bulk, form and design would have a significant detrimental impact on the appearance and setting of the Grade II listed building and the Conservation Area and, therefore, it is contrary to policies B2, B3, B4, B22 and B24 of the GUDP and the requirements of the Welsh Office Circular 61/69.
 2. It is considered that the proposal is contrary to policy B23 as the development would have a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of nearby units and houses, due to its scale, bulk, form and design as it would have a dominant impact, would lead to overlooking and loss of privacy, shadowing and a substantial reduction in natural daylight and it would not be possible for the development to ensure a sufficient living standard for the residents of the development.