

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 08/12/2025
REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	

Number: 3

Application Number: C25/0755/14/LL

Date Registered: 15/10/25

Application Type: Full

Community: Caernarfon

Ward: Peblig

Proposal: Change of use of the former VOSA testing station to form a Timber and Builders' Merchants

Location: Vehicle Inspectorate, Lôn Cae Ffynnon, Cibyn Industrial Estate, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 2BD

Summary of the Recommendation: RIGHT TO ACT - TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS SUBJECT TO THE RECEIPT OF CONFIRMATION THAT WELSH WATER IS WITHDRAWING ITS OBJECTION

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1 Description:

- 1.1 Full application for the change of use of a VOSA MOT testing station which is a unique use, to a timber and builders' merchants, in association with an existing site to the rear with the exact same use. The proposal does not include any alterations to the building, yard or access. The building is of a significant size and measures 50 metres long and 17 metres wide.
- 1.2 The site is situated within Cibyn industrial estate and a safeguarded area as a principal employment site for employment use (B1, B2 and B8) and is within Caernarfon Town development boundary as defined in the LDP. The site is served by the estate's service road.
- 1.3 The following documents have been submitted as part of the application:
 - Green Infrastructure Statement
 - Drainage Statement
 - Welsh Language Statement
 - Planning Statement
- 1.4 A revised landscaping plan has been submitted to alleviate Welsh Water's concerns.

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 Local Development Plan.
- 2.2 The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 places a duty on the Council to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet the 7 well-being goals within the Act. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the 'sustainable development principle', as set out in the 2015 Act. In reaching the recommendation, the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

2.3 Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011-26, adopted 31 July 2017

PS 1: The Welsh Language and Culture

PS 4: Sustainable transport, development and accessibility

TRA 2: Parking standards

TRA 4: Managing transport impacts

PS 5: Sustainable Development

PS 6: Alleviating and adapting to the effects of climate change

PCYFF 1: Development Boundaries

PCYFF 2: Development Criteria

PCYFF 3: Design and Place Shaping

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PS 13: Providing opportunities for a flourishing economy

CYF 1: Safeguarding, allocating and reserving land and units for employment use

PS 19: Conserve and where appropriate enhance the natural environment

AMG 5: Local Biodiversity Conservation

SPG Change of use of community facilities and services, employment sites and retail units (2021)

SPG Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities (2019)

2.4 National Policies:

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11 - February 2021)

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 23: Economic Development (2014)

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 18: Transportation

3. Relevant Planning History:

3.1 C07A/0767/14/LL - EXTENSION TO CREATE A CANOPY Approved on 23.11.2007

C05A/0761/14/C3 - DEMOLISH EXISTING BUILDINGS AND RE-ERECT NEW TESTING STATION TOGETHER WITH AN ADDITIONAL ACCESS - Approved on 29.11.2005

C03A/0122/14/C3 - TEMPORARY BUILDING FOR VEHICLE EXAMINER - Approved on 17.03.2003

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: Support the application with the observation that the council is pleased to see a local company making use of existing infrastructure (Unanimous).

Transportation Unit: No response

Welsh Water: The site is crossed by a public sewer, public watermain and an abandoned public watermain with their approximate positions being marked on the attached statutory public sewer and watermain records. In accordance with the Water Industry Act 1991, Dŵr Cymru Welsh

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Water requires access to its apparatus at all times in order to carry out maintenance and repairs.

Having regard to the proposed plans, it appears a new tree is proposed to be planted above and within the protection zones of our assets when measured 3 metres either side of the centrelines. We would advise that it is not permissible to locate any building, structure, trees, SuDS features, ecological mitigation, the raising or lowering of ground levels above or within the protection zones of our assets. Please note, the distance specified for this protection zone is indicative and based on industry standard guidelines. However, the depth of the asset will need to be verified on site which may infer a greater protection zone. For completeness, we recommend the developer refer to their title deeds to confirm if there are any covenants or restrictions associated with the asset(s) crossing the proposed development site.

In this instance, it appears there is sufficient space and scope to re-position the proposed planting outside the protection zones of the assets. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the proposed site plan is amended to take into account the location of the assets crossing the site and we respectfully request we are re-consulted on receipt of this information. It is also recommended that the developer contact our Plan and Protect team (PlanandProtect@dwrcymru.com) to carry out a survey to verify the location of the assets and establish their relationship to the proposed development.

Accordingly, for the reasons outlined above, we offer a Holding Objection until such time as additional/amended information has been submitted and request we are re-consulted on receipt of this information.

Biodiversity Unit: This development avoids significant impact to biodiversity by utilising unused but already developed land. The biodiversity enhancement measures proposed in the GIS are suitable to achieve a net benefit for biodiversity.

Language Unit: Not received

Public Consultation: A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. No responses were received.

5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

The principle of the development

- 5.1 The site is situated within the development boundary of Caernarfon as defined in the Joint Local Development Plan and within a 'site safeguarded as a principal employment site' for employment

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use (B1, B2 and B8) in accordance with Policy PS13 (Providing opportunities for a flourishing economy) and Policy CYF 1 (Safeguarding, allocating and reserving land and units for employment use) in the Joint Local Development Plan.

- 5.2 The proposal relates to the change of use of an existing site which has been used as an MOT testing centre by VOSA to a timber and builders' merchants linked to the applicant's existing site immediately to the rear. This site would operate separately, but by the same company. The use of a building or warehouse with a counter for trading falls within use Class B8 (Storage and Distribution). To this end, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policies PS13 and CYF 1.

Visual amenities

- 5.3 Policy PCYFF 3 states that proposals will be approved, including extensions and changes to existing buildings and structures, if they comply with a number of criteria including that the proposal adds to or improves the character or appearance of the site, the building or the area in terms of setting, appearance, scale, mass, the height and elevation treatment; that it respects the context of the site and its place in the local landscape; that it uses materials that are appropriate to their surroundings and incorporates soft landscaping; that it improves a safe and integrated transport and communications network; that it limits the risk and danger of flood water run-off and prevents pollution; that it achieves an inclusive design that allows access for all and helps to create healthy and vibrant environments taking into account the health and well-being of future users.
- 5.4 The site is situated within the town's industrial estate at Cibyn. The existing building is substantial and prominent within the estate and is positioned as part of the wider site when viewed from a distance. The application includes the use of the site and the existing building. The applicant states that there is no intention to make external alterations to the building or yard, and as such there would be no greater impact on the landscape than the existing situation. To this end, the application would meet the objectives of PCYFF Policy 3 within the LDP.

General and residential amenities

- 5.5 The application was advertised at the site and nearby residents were notified. No response was received. The site is located within an industrial estate in the middle of commercial uses, and is approximately 100 metres away from residential houses to the north. While the proposal would be probably lead in an intensive use of the site, it is not considered that it would have a significant negative impact on the amenities of the residents of the nearest houses. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposal is contrary to the objectives of Policy 2 within the LDP.

Transport and access matters

- 5.6 The site is served by an existing access to the estate's service road. The applicant states that there would be no change to the access and that there is sufficient space for parking within the yard. The site previously operated by VOSA as an MOT testing centre, and therefore the current arrangement is suitable for large vehicles. The proposed site's change of use is not considered to cause harm to road safety and although no observations have been received from the Transportation Unit, due to the location and nature of the site and the proposal, it is considered to be acceptable and complies with the requirements of policies TRA 2 and 4.

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Biodiversity matters

- 5.7 The application involves the use of an existing yard without disturbing green land and is therefore unlikely to adversely affect the site's biodiversity. A green infrastructure statement has been submitted as part of the application and the Biodiversity Unit's observations have been received stating no objection to the proposal. It is noted that the proposed planting of a tree at the front of the site has been amended due to an objection from Welsh Water, but a revised plan has been submitted with the location of the proposed tree having changed. This is considered to be acceptable and therefore the proposal complies with the requirements of policies PS 19 and AMG 5 of the LDP and Chapter 6 of PPW.

Language Matters

- 5.8 In accordance with the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, it is a duty when determining a planning application to consider the Welsh language, where it is relevant to that application. This is reiterated further in para 3.28 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024), along with Technical Advice Note 20. The Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 'Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities' (adopted July 2019), provides further guidance on how it is expected for Welsh language considerations to be incorporated in each relevant development. It is noted that there are some specific types of development where it will be required for the proposal to submit a Welsh Language Statement or a Welsh Language Impact Assessment. The thresholds in terms of when it is expected to submit a Statement/Report have been highlighted in Policy PS1 of the Joint LDP, along with Diagram 5 of the SPG. It appears that the thresholds for producing a Welsh Language Statement (area and number of employees) have been met with this application and therefore a Welsh Language Statement will be required.
- 5.9 A Welsh Language Statement has been submitted as part of the application stating that the applicant is a local company with an existing site adjacent to the application site. The company's existing sites include bilingual signage, and it is intended for job advertisements to be bilingual and available to local people of working age. Observations from the Language Unit have not been received at the time of writing the report but based on the content of the statement together with planning conditions to ensure bilingual signage, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and is not contrary to the requirements of policy PS 1 and the SPG.

Welsh Water Matters

- 5.10 It is noted that Welsh Water's comments confirm an objection to the proposal on the grounds that it is intended to plant a tree within the protection zone of pipes crossing the site. A revised plan that moves the proposed tree away from the pipe protection zone has been submitted in response to the objection. At the time of writing, no response has been received from Welsh Water to the second consultation on the revised plan, but the proposal is deemed to be acceptable subject to positive comments from Welsh Water withdrawing its objection on the basis that the location of the proposed tree is moved.

6. Conclusions:

- 6.1 Having given full consideration to all material Planning issues, it is considered that the application can be supported, and it is recommended that it should be approved subject to the following conditions.

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7. **Recommendation:** Right to act - To approve with conditions subject to receipt of confirmation from Welsh Water withdrawing its objection.

7.1 Conditions:

1. Five years.
2. In accordance with plans and documents.
3. To restrict use of the site to use class B1, B2, B8 within the proposed Use Classes Order 1987.
4. Biodiversity enhancements