

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

Number: 5

Application Number: C25/0428/14/LL

Date Registered: 17/06/25

Application Type: Full

Community: Caernarfon

Ward: Caernarfon Town Centre

Proposal: Change of use of offices to 5 residential flats, including a rear extension. Installation of an Air Source Heat Pump and door to the waste storage.

Location: Mona, 4 High Street, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1RN.

Summary of the Recommendation: TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

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1 Description:

- 1.1 Full application for the change of use of offices to 5 residential flats, C3 use, as a main residence (3 flats with one double bedroom and 2 flats with two double bedrooms), including a rear extension. Installation of an Air Source Heat Pump and a door to the waste storage.
- 1.2 Modification work includes internal changes and building a 3-floor extension within the property's back yard. The work would include the installation of 3 ground floor windows and 2 windows on the first floor for the back bedrooms. It is not proposed to change the front nor the side elevations that are prominent from the high street.
- 1.3 The substantial building is situated on the corner of the town's High Street and within 30 metres to Porth yr Aur. The design and size of the building make a positive and substantial contribution to the street's look and character.
- 1.4 The building is situated within Caernarfon Town's development boundary, the town's World Heritage Site, 500m from an ancient monument and amongst listed buildings.
- 1.5 The property is served by a Class 2 county road and an unclassified road.

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 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

PCYFF 1: Development Boundaries

PCYFF 2: Development criteria

PCYFF 3: Design and place shaping

PCYFF 4: Design and landscaping

PS 5: Sustainable development

PS 6: Alleviating and Adapting to the Effects of Climate Change

AMG 3: Protecting and improving features and qualities that are unique to the character of the local landscape

AMG 5: Local Biodiversity Conservation

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PS 19: Conserving and where appropriate enhancing the natural environment

PS 4: Sustainable transport, development and accessibility

TRA 2: Parking standards

TRA 4: Managing transport impacts

AT 1: Conservation Area, World Heritage Sites and Landscapes, Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

PS 20: Preserving and where appropriate enhancing heritage assets

PS 17: Settlement Strategy

TAI 1: Housing in the Sub-regional Centre and the Urban Service Centres

TAI 8: An appropriate mix of housing

TAI 15: Threshold of Affordable Housing and their Distribution

TAI 9: Sub-dividing Existing Property to Self-contained Flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation

PS 1: The Welsh Language and Culture

2.4 National Policies:

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11 - February 2021)

Technical Advice Note 12: Design

Technical Advice Note 18: Transportation

Technical Advice Note 24: The historic environment

3. Relevant Planning History:

- 3.1 C24/0865/14/LL - New main entrance to the building to improve accessibility, maintenance work to the external area of the building and close the current entrance and install a thin double-glazed window to be in-keeping with the existing windows. Approved 20-02-2025

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: Object as the information about use is not clear and there might be an over density of such developments should the use be clearer. (Unanimous).

Transportation Unit: I refer to the above application and I confirm that the transportation

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unit does not have any objection.

Natural Resources Wales:

We do not oppose the proposed development as submitted and we provide the following advice.

Protected Sites

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

The application site is located within 55m of the Menai Strait and Conwy Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

From the information provided, we are of the view that the proposal could have an impact on the SAC, and we have noted pollution as a possible impact path in terms of the site's characteristics.

However, we are of the view that the above path would lead to a detrimental impact should the developer adhere to the pollution prevention guidance, for further guidance refer to GPP 5 and GPP6 in the following link: [Guidance for Pollution Prevention \(GPP\) documents | NetRegs | Environmental guidance](#)

As the competent authority under the Habitat and Species Protection Regulations 2017 (as amended), it is your Authority which will undertake the Likely Significant Impacts test for the proposed development. Should you conclude that the proposal is likely to have a significant impact on the Special Area of Conservation, either in isolation or in conjunction with other plans or projects, a proper assessment of the project's implications for that site must be carried out taking into account its conservation objectives. You must, for the purposes of the assessment, consult NRW and have regard to any representations we make within such reasonable time as you specify.

Protected Species

We note that there is no information regarding protected species with the application and therefore we presume that your authority has screened the application and concluded that there is no reasonable likelihood of protected species being present.

Welsh Water:

We would request that if you are minded to grant planning consent that the following Condition and Advisory Notes are included to ensure no detriment to existing residents or the environment and to Dŵr Cymru /Welsh Water's assets:

Condition

No surface water from any increase in the roof area of the building /or impermeable surfaces within its curtilage shall be allowed to drain directly or indirectly to the public sewerage system.

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Public Protection Unit:

We have considered the planning application, and our comments/advice is as follows:

ASHP

Applications that include Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) are expected to increase significantly in accordance with the movement to decarbonise buildings. ASHPs are seen as one option in this process and the Public Protection Service does not wish to place unnecessary burdens on applicants when providing these solutions. However, ASHPs operate differently to existing oil or gas boilers and therefore can cause noise concerns.

I note that there are no details regarding the noise levels that will derive from the unit. There are no details in the report regarding noise mitigation measures and whether the unit conforms to MSC 020 standard.

The MCS has produced guidelines for registered installers (MICROGENERATION INSTALLATION STANDARDS): MCS 020 - Planning Standards for Permitted Developments to install Wind Turbines and Air Source Heat Pumps on Domestic Sites). Although these guidelines have been developed to enable installers to determine whether retrospective installation applications are permitted developments or not, they can be applied in the same manner to new applications as this will provide a basic level for each ASHP.

Required details - Domestic Air Source Heat Pumps:

Details of the MCS020 assessment will be provided to the Planning Department for the installation of any air source heat pump(s) for approval.

Where the MCS020 satisfies the noise criteria noted, then full details of the unit proposed, and details of the anti-vibration installations and other noise attenuation measures will be required. It is possible that the distance between the unit and the nearby property should be increased. The Plan will be implemented as approved and will then be maintained.

Details regarding the location of the assessment should be included to demonstrate how far the unit is from the nearest door/window (nearby property), photographs of the unit's location and the nearby area should be provided to the Authority.

If more than one unit is to be installed, a full noise assessment must be provided. I attach an information leaflet regarding noise assessments.

To safeguard the area's residents, any building work should be undertaken between the hours of 08.00 - 18.00 Monday to Friday, 08.00 - 13.00 on Saturday and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Additional Note:

Giving permission and/or any permitted development rights for any Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) does not indemnify any measures that may be required under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 for statutory noise nuisance. Should confirmed noise complaints be received in the future regarding operating and running an air source

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heat pump and that it is considered to be a statutory nuisance in a nearby property, a noise prevention notice will be issued. It is likely that insulation/noise attenuation measures would need to be set such as an enclosure and/or acoustic barrier to the unit to reduce the noise emissions to an acceptable level.

To avoid noise complaints, it is recommended that operational noise from the ASHP should not increase the existing background noise levels on the boundary of the development site and should be free of tonal or other obvious acoustic features. In addition, equipment such as Air Source Heat Pumps that use fans and condensers are likely to emit more noise as the units suffer from natural ageing, wear and tear. Therefore, it is important that the equipment is maintained/serviced satisfactorily and that any defects are rectified to ensure that the noise levels do not increase over time.

The development must also adhere to the guidance on noise insulation and ventilation in Approved Document E and F of the Building Regulations. Noise levels between flats must adhere to the levels included in these documents.

Biodiversity Unit

No objection.

CADW

Having carefully considered the information provided, we have no objection to the proposed development in regard to the scheduled monuments or registered historic parks and gardens listed in our assessment of the application below.

The national policy and Cadw's role in planning are set out in Annex A.

Assessment
Scheduled Monuments
CN034 Caernarfon Town Walls
CN079 Castell Caernarfon

World Heritage Sites:
The Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd -
Caernarfon Castle and Town Walls

The application area is located inside 500m of the above scheduled monument and is inside the identified essential setting of the Caernarfon Castle and Town Walls section of The Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd World Heritage Site.

The major elements of the proposed development are internal to the existing building except for the proposed flat-roofed two storey rear extension. This will not be visible from scheduled monument CN079 Castell Caernarfon but will be seen in views from a very small part of scheduled monument CN034 Caernarfon Town Walls, that currently cannot be accessed by the public. In these views the extension will not look incongruous to the area, given similar flat roofed extensions at the rear of other buildings and will be seen as part of the existing building. Consequently, the proposed change is

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so slight that any visual change will not have any impact on the way that the town walls are understood, experienced or appreciated. Consequently, the proposed development will not have any impact on the settings of the scheduled monuments or on the outstanding universal values of the World Heritage Site.

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 located within the town's development boundary and therefore the proposal complies with the objectives of Policy PCYFF 1 in the JLDP.
- 5.2 The site is within the development boundary of Caernarfon as noted in the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan (JLDP). Caernarfon is identified as an Urban Service Centre under Policy Tai 1. This policy supports housing developments to meet the Plan's strategy, through housing designations and suitable windfall sites located within the development boundary, based upon the indicative provision contained in the Policy.
- 5.3 The indicative supply level for Caernarfon over the Plan period is 415 units (including a 10% 'slippage allowance', i.e. the method of calculating the figure has taken into account potential unforeseen circumstances which could influence the provision of housing, e.g. land ownership matters, infrastructure restrictions, etc). During the period between 2011 and 2025, 271 units were completed in Caernarfon. The land bank, i.e. sites with extant planning permission, in April 2025, was 51 units (all on windfall sites). Please note that an indicative figure of 29 units has been designated for T26 (Behind Maes Gwynedd) that do not have planning permission. Taking into consideration all the above information collectively, it means there is currently adequate capacity within the indicative supply for Caernarfon.
- 5.4 In accordance with Policy TAI 8, consideration should be given to the proposed development and whether it is able to prove evidence of need and demand for housing recorded in a Market Housing Assessment and other relevant local sources of evidence. It is realised that it is proposed to adapt the building to 5 flats to include 3 flats with one double bedroom and 2 flats with two double bedrooms. Given the building's position, it is considered that the proposal is reasonable.
- 5.5 Policy TAI 15 of the LDP states that Councils will attempt to ensure an appropriate level of affordable housing in the plan's area. In Caernarfon, the threshold is two or more housing units. As the proposal is to provide 5 residential units, Policy TAI 15 is relevant and therefore an affordable element should be provided with the proposal.
- 5.6 Caernarfon is within the Larger Coastal Settlements Housing Price Area where it is expected that 30% of the provision will be affordable. Based on 5 residential units this would mean 1.5 affordable units. In accordance with the guidance in the SPG 'Affordable Housing', when the affordable housing requirement is calculated, a proportion of the total houses that need to be affordable is rounded-up to the nearest whole number (where half will be rounded upwards). This means that two of the proposed units will be expected to be affordable units.
- 5.7 In accordance with paragraph 4.2.30 of Planning Policy Wales, all the affordable units must meet the Welsh Government's development quality standards. In addition, consideration should be given

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to part 3.4 of the SPG Affordable Housing that highlights considerations in relation to the size of the affordable unit.

- 5.8 The proposal provides 1- and 2-bedroom flats. In accordance with the Welsh Government's Quality Requirements for affordable units, the 1-bed unit would need to be 53m² in size and the 2-bed unit would need to be 65m².
- 5.9 Additional information submitted as part of the application confirms that the property is in the ownership of Cyngor Gwynedd, and the proposed use will be part of the Council's statutory response to the duty to accommodate homeless persons (in accordance with the Housing Act (Wales) 2014). It is emphasised that the plan's target group are low risk homeless individuals, not accommodation with complex support or the type of use that would create a high impact on the community. The units would comply with the Welsh Government standards (WDQR/WHQS) for affordable units in terms of size and the proposed use would tackle an important social issue (homelessness) without overloading the local housing provision and would provide affordable units in accordance with the requirements of the planning policy.
- 5.10 To this end, and as the proposal would not be provided as social property under the Council's management within an Urban Service Centre to satisfy the need throughout Gwynedd, the proposal meets with the requirements within policy TAI 15 subject to an affordable unit condition to ensure that the proposal prepares affordable units in perpetuity.
- 5.11 Policy TAI 9 allows sub-division of current buildings to self-service flats as long as the building is suitable for conversion to the number and type of units without the need for significant extensions and external adaptations and will not have a detrimental impact on residential amenities showing that enough parking spaces and a place to store refuse can be provided. If designated parking spaces cannot be provided, the proposal should not exacerbate existing parking problems in the local area.
- 5.12 The proposal involves constructing a three-floor rear extension to create an acceptable layout for the flats. The extension would be at the rear of the building, and it would not create a prominent feature to the public. A space for litter is situated on the ground floor with direct access to the street but there is no parking provision. Given the location of the building and the public parking provision within the town, the proposal is not considered to greatly contravene the aims of the above policy.

Visual amenities

- 5.13 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 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 water run-off and flood risk 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.
- 5.14 The work involves adapting and extending a substantial building into 5 flats. The plans indicate that there is no change to the front elevation and the side that faces the street. The extension is located at the rear of the building, and it would not affect the front elevation or the building's character which is prominent to the public.

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- 5.15 It is considered that the proposal retains the building's character and meets with Policy objectives.
- 5.16 The Department consulted CADW due to the location of the building within a World Heritage Site and their observations were received confirming they had no objection. The proposal is also located within a Conservation Area, and it is not considered to have an unacceptable impact on this. In these circumstances, the proposal is not considered to be substantially contrary to policy AT1 or Policy PCYFF 3 in the LDP.

General and residential amenities

- 5.17 The application was advertised at the site and nearby residents were notified and no response was received. The largest external work entails the construction of a three-floor extension on the rear elevation with new windows (bedrooms) looking over the back yard and the depot. It is proposed to install an air source heat pump on the building; however, no details of the units were received with the application. The Public Protection Unit has stated that a condition would need to be imposed on any permission to ensure that details of the unit and location on the property must be submitted and agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to installation. It is not considered that the proposal would have a substantial detrimental impact on the amenities of nearby residents. The proposal is not contrary to the objectives of Policy PCYFF 2 in the LDP.

Transport and access matters

- 5.18 The proposal involves adapting and extending a building into 5 flats and although there is a vehicular path past the side of the building in the back, there is no parking provision for the proposal. Despite this, the building is in the town centre where there are on-street parking places and spaces in public car parks. Although parking provision would be ideal for such a development, it is considered that no parking space is not a sufficient reason for refusing the application. The Transportation Unit submitted observations stating that they had no objection to the application. It is not considered that the proposal is substantially contrary to policies TRA 2 or TRA 4 in the LDP.

Biodiversity matters

- 5.19 The plans show the intention to adapt the rooms within the existing building and observations were received from the Biodiversity Unit stating they had no objection, and the proposal is therefore considered to comply with the requirements of policy AMG 5 in the LDP. A Green Infrastructure Statement has been submitted as part of the application and includes the intention to provide biodiversity enhancements by installing nesting boxes on the building, bat boxes on the western elevation and one bee pot on the building's southern elevation. It is therefore considered that the proposal meets the requirements of chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales relating to green infrastructure and the step-wise approach.
- 5.20 The application site is located within 55m of the Menai Strait and Conwy Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Natural Resources Wales have confirmed from the information provided, that it is possible that the proposal could have an impact on the SAC, and they note pollution as a possible impact path in terms of the site's characteristics. However, it is not considered that the above path would lead to a detrimental impact should the developer adhere to the pollution prevention guidance. To this end, as the competent authority under the Habitat and Species Protection Regulations 2017 (as amended), it is not considered that the proposal would be likely to have a detrimental impact on the SAC subject to drawing the applicant's attention to the pollution prevention guidance. It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable in relation to this.

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Language Matters

- 5.21 In accordance with Diagram 10 of SPG 'Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities' when a statement is not required applicants are encouraged to present a record of how consideration was given to the Welsh language when drawing up the planning application. The method of recording the information needs to be tailored to the nature of the proposed development and the matters that require attention. The methods could include a letter accompanying the planning application, a Planning Statement, a Design and Access Statement or a Welsh Language Statement or a Report on the Welsh Language Impact Assessment. Part D of Appendix 5 of the 'SPG Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities' (July 2019) outlines the Welsh language matters that should be considered with a development of this scale.
- 5.22 A Language Statement was submitted to support the proposal, and states that there is a neutral to positive impact on the Welsh language and includes proposals that include the use of place-names with a link to the area, provision of bilingual adverts, together with promoting and learning the Welsh language. To this end it is considered that the proposal is acceptable and complies with the requirements of Policy PS1.

6. Conclusions:

- 6.1 Having considered all relevant matters to the application, it is considered that the proposal can be supported subject to the following conditions:
7. Recommendation: To approve
1. Five years.
 2. In accordance with plans.
 3. Agree details of the air source heat pump units
 4. C3 use only
 5. Affordable housing condition
 6. Biodiversity Enhancements.
 7. Working Hours

Biodiversity Note

Natural Resources Wales Letter Note