

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 06/02/2023
REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	

Number: 2

Application Number: C22/1020/11/LL

Date Registered: 08/11/2022

Application Type: Full

Community: Bangor

Ward: Dewi

Proposal: Construction of a new single-storey 150 place primary school, 20 nursery and 30 *Cylch Meithrin* places and associated external works, including boundary treatments, new car parking arrangements and improved access provisions for the relocation of Our Lady's School on the former Ysgol Glanadda site.

Location: Old Primary School, Ysgol Glanadda, Llwybr yr Ysgol, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 4SG

Summary of the Recommendation: TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

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1. Description:

- 1.1 This application involves building a new school for 200 pupils, which would include a nursery and *cylch meithrin*. The development would enable the relocation of Our Lady's School from its current site near the railway bridge on Ffordd Caernarfon. The new school would be constructed on the former Ysgol Glanadda site, which closed in 2020 and has already been granted permission for its demolition. The proposal derives from the "Report of Education Provision in the Bangor Catchment Area" completed by Cyngor Gwynedd in 2017. Currently, Our Lady's School operates within a limited building and site, and this makes daily learning and teaching difficult. The existing building is coming to the end of its service life and there are continuous maintenance problems there.
- 1.2 This full planning permission seeks approval to:
- Construct a new primary school. (1337m² of surface area) - in single-storey form divided into five classrooms as well as one room each for the nursery class and the *cylch meithrin* and one large hall in the middle of the building, along with other sub-service rooms.
 - New external work, including hard and soft landscaping, Multi Use Game Area (MUGA), external service area and sports field.
 - New car park with 22 parking spaces for staff and visitors, including two disabled parking spaces, 2 electric charging points and improved path
 - Improved access to the site.
 - New boundary treatments within, and in the full perimeter, of the site which includes planting new trees.
- 1.3 The new building would be constructed in a rectangular form, and on the location of the former school with an increase of 734m² in the surface area (more than double). The building would have two gable ends and both roof peaks would run parallel across the building. The roof would be formed of dark grey metal and the front elevation of the building would be divided into three elements of different height with different materials, with the highest (10.7m) and most prominent part (location of the hall), clad with red Rhiwabon bricks restored from the former school with grey-fibre cement cladding on the front of the other sections (9.3m high). The gable ends of the building would also be finished with red Rhiwabon bricks to reflect the former building.
- 1.4 The grounds surrounding the school have been designed to incorporate a section of existing woodland, to plant indigenous trees and shrubs and eco-friendly draining facilities. A small part of the land is provided for a new School Garden where pupils can grow their own plants and learn simple horticultural techniques. There will also be a new outdoor amphitheatre for teaching and performance purposes.
- 1.5 The site is located in a mixed area of the Bangor Sub-regional Centre as defined by the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan. Most of the site, including the school building, is within the development boundary, although the site includes an area outside the boundary where it is intended to create an outdoor education area within an existing woodland. There is no specific designation to the site within the development plan although the outdoor education area falls within the Bangor Mountain and Minffordd Hinterland Special Landscape Areas and the Bryn Glas regional Wildlife Site, which is known for its neutral grassland and deciduous woodlands. The playing field in the north of the site has also been designated as an Open Plot that is to be Protected.

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1.6 This application, due to its floor area, is defined as a major development. In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (as amended), a Pre-application Consultation Report was received as part of the application. The report shows that the developer has informed the public and statutory consultees of the proposal prior to submitting a formal planning application. The report includes copies of the responses received.

1.7 In addition, the following documents were submitted to support the application:

- Initial Ecological Report and Bat Survey
- Trees Report
- Structural Report regarding the Retaining Wall
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy
- BREEAM Assessments (Sustainable Development)
- School Travel Plan
- Acoustic Design Report
- Zero / Low Carbon Technology Feasibility Report
- Whole Life Carbon Assessment
- Thermal and CO2 Analysis
- Passive Design Analysis
- Construction Period Plan
- Welsh Language Policy
- Environmental Noise Assessment
- Design and Access Statement

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 made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Local 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 also to 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 Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan. (July 2017)

ISA 2: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

ISA 4: SAFEGUARDING EXISTING OPEN SPACES

PS 4: SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT, DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESSIBILITY

PS 6: ALLEVIATING AND ADAPTING TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

TRA 2: PARKING STANDARDS

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TRA 4: MANAGING TRANSPORT IMPACTS

PCYFF 2: DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA

PCYFF 3: DESIGN AND PLACE SHAPING

PCYFF 4: DESIGN AND LANDSCAPING

PS 19: CONSERVING AND WHERE APPROPRIATE ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

AT 2: AREAS OF SPECIAL LANDSCAPE

AT 3: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS THAT ARE OF LOCAL OR REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

AMG 5: LOCAL BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

AMG 6: PROTECTION SITES OF LOCAL OR REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities

2.4 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11 (2021)

Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016)

Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk (2004)

3. Relevant Planning History:

C22/0507/11/HD: Demolish school structure following an arson attack.– Approved 01/07/22

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: Not received

Transportation Unit: Not received

Natural Resources Wales: No objection and proposed observations for the developer

Biodiversity Unit: No objection - the recommendations of the ecological report should be followed.

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Public Protection: There is a possibility that the site has been contaminated and conditions are requested to ensure that an appropriate investigation is undertaken before commencing the development.

Welsh Water: No objection in light of receiving amended drainage plans.
Standard advice for the developer.

Fire Officer: No observations to offer

Land Drainage Unit: The Flood Risk Survey shows that it is possible to develop the site in accordance with advice in TAN 15 Development and Flood Risk
Due to the size and nature of the development, an application will need to be provided to the SuDS Approval Body for approval before construction work commences.

Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service: There is potential for impact on archaeology and it is suggested to impose a condition to ensure a photographic survey of the existing building before its demolition.

Health Board: Not received

Public Consultation: A notice was posted on site and in the press, and nearby residents were informed. The advertising period has expired and correspondence was received stating concern regarding the possibility of staff and parents parking in spaces that would create an inconvenience for local residents.

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5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

The Principle of the Development

- 5.1 It is a requirement that planning applications be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless other material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan (LDP) is the adopted 'Development Plan' in this case. The application site is located within the development boundary of the Sub-regional Centre of Bangor and the entire application site is on land that is already being used for education purposes (D1 Class Use).
- 5.2 The main planning policy that relates to this application is policy ISA 2 of the LDP. This policy supports the provision of new community facilities provided they meet with five criteria. The assessment is assessed in the context of the following criteria:
1. The first criterion requires that a site is located within or adjacent to development boundaries and given that parts of this site, where construction work will take place, are within the Bangor development boundary, the proposal satisfies this criterion.
 2. Secondly, proposals should first look at making dual use of existing facilities or converting existing buildings. When considering the condition of the existing building, and indeed that permission has been granted for demolition due to its poor condition, it is believed that it is reasonable to seek to construct a new building that has been specifically designed for modern environmental and educational requirements.
 3. The third criterion requires, if the proposal is for relocating a facility, that it can be shown that the original site is no longer suitable for this use. The County Council's education assessment has identified that the current site of Our Lady's School is unsuitable for its modern use. Also, given that the land use would not change as a result of the development, it could be argued that this application merely involves replacing one educational facility with another and that use of the site remains as it is and that no relocation has occurred in terms of land use. Nevertheless, it is believed, when considering the problems with the current site of Our Lady's School, that it is entirely reasonable to change the location of the building to an appropriate site in order to meet the anticipated educational needs.
 4. The fourth criterion means that the scale and type of proposal is appropriate to the settlement in question. Given that this proposal derives from the recognised need to improve educational facilities in Bangor in order to meet the modern needs of the community, it is believed that the scale of this development is entirely appropriate for its location.
 5. The last criterion requires that the proposal is accessible to alternative modes of travel and given its urban location it is considered that the site is very convenient for parents who wish to walk, cycle or use public transport to reach school.
- 5.3 Given the above discussion it is believed that this proposal meets with all the criteria of Policy ISA 2 of the LDP. In addition, Policy ISA 4 designates Open Plots that are to be protected from development and the playing field in the north of the site has been protected under this designation. This field will remain as a playing field and, therefore, the application is consistent with the requirements of ISA 4.

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Visual amenities

- 5.4 Although the building's footprint will more than double, this is mainly due to more efficient use of space and the scale or mass of the building will not appear substantially larger than the previous building. As a result, it is considered that the submitted design offers a development on a scale and appearance that would be suitable for its urban site. The fact that features of the existing school's character, such as red Rhiwabon bricks, will be incorporated in the design emphasises the continuity from the current situation. Also, the design of the new building, with its pitched roofs, elevation finishes and the various heights of different elements, would create a development, although substantially larger than the current building, that would continue to be on a scale that assimilates with the scale and design of the surrounding residential area. It is therefore considered that the development respects the context of its site in accordance with the requirements of Policy PCYFF 3. In addition, when considering the urban location of the building, it is not believed that harm to the Special Landscape Area would derive from the development and, therefore, the application is acceptable under policy AMG 2.

General and residential amenities

- 5.5 Generally, policies PCYFF 2 and PCYFF 3 of the Joint Local Development Plan encourage the approval of proposals for new development provided they do not have a detrimental impact on the health, safety or the amenities of the residents of local properties or on the area in general.
- 5.6 When increasing the size of the school and encouraging use of external spaces, it is accepted that there may be an increase in noise for the residents of nearby dwellings. Having said this, the school will only be open for limited hours and the children will be inside the building most of this time. In addition, although there will be an increase in the number of windows at the front of the building and the front of the building will be approximately 3m closer to the rear of Ffordd Caernarfon houses than the current school, the school building will continue to be approximately 25 - 30m from the rear of those houses and, given that the use of the site will not change and that there is already inter-visibility between the school grounds and private properties nearby, it is not believed that significant additional overlooking from nearby houses and gardens will derive from this development. Similarly, although the building will be larger in terms of bulk than the previous building, it is not believed that it would be significantly different to the current situation in terms of dominating the properties in front of the site. Therefore, it is not believed that significant additional harm to the amenities of local residents will derive from a new school development on the site.
- 5.7 Due to the history of the site, the Public Protection Unit raised concerns that it may be contaminated; however, they were satisfied that the development could continue if a condition was imposed to further investigate that risk.
- 5.8 Generally, considering that there is no change to the use of the site, it is not believed that this development would cause significant harm to the amenities of the local area or its residents in the long-term, although inevitably there will be some noise and disturbance during the construction period. It is considered, by imposing appropriate conditions as a result of receiving the observations of the Public Protection Unit, that it could be ensured that the development's impact on amenities is acceptable. By implementing the above, it is believed that the development would be acceptable under policies PCYFF 2 and PCYFF 3 of the LDP.

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Biodiversity

- 5.9 The site is partly within the Bryn Glas Regional Wildlife Site and an Ecological Report was submitted with the application to assess the potential impacts on the habitats of the site and its vicinity. The Biodiversity Unit states that the recommendations of that report should be followed. A preliminary survey indicated that no bats used the school building and mitigation measures have been proposed, including installing special bricks to offer roosts for bats and on the new building.
- 5.10 By ensuring that an appropriate condition is imposed on the development, it is believed that this development meets the requirements of Policies PS19, AMG 5 and AMG 6 of the LDP, which encourage proposals to protect, and where appropriate, to enhance the area's biodiversity.

Highways matters

- 5.11 A Transport Assessment was submitted with the application and, although the site has previously operated as a school with a historical access arrangement, it noted that additional improvements were being proposed as part of this scheme, such as:
- Improved gradient to pedestrian ramp access to the site;
 - Cycle storage, lockers and changing facilities to encourage cycling;
 - Improved vehicular access route to car park and servicing areas;
 - Revised car parking provision to meet with staff occupation forecasts;
 - Electric vehicle charging points for 10% of parking spaces;
 - Disabled parking bays on site to aid those with reduced mobility;
 - Proposed 20mph zone along A4087 to reduce vehicle speeds close to the school entrance;
 - Recommissioned/new school hazard signage and associated amber flashing lights;
 - Pupil-related vehicles to utilise Maes Berea to minimise school's impact on local residences; and
 - Implementation of a School Travel Plan to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes in the future.
- 5.12 On the whole, it is likely that approving this scheme will have a very small impact on local residents. Some improvements would provide better accessibility to the site for all appropriate travel modes, including those with reduced mobility, pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport. The proposed safety improvements to the A4087 would be in addition to the measures that are already implemented; however, the agreement of the highways authority is not yet in place for this element.
- 5.13 When considering its urban nature and the site use history, it is not considered that there are any highway safety grounds for refusing the planning application. By acting in accordance with the submitted plans, it is believed that this application complies with the requirements of policies PS 4, TRA 2 and TRA 4 which aim to ensure provision for transportation that is sustainable and safe for all users.

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Drainage Matters

- 5.14 NRW's Development Advice Map indicates that the site is within Flood Zone A and it is considered that there is a minor or no risk of fluvial or tidal/coastal flooding. The surface water flood risk map notes that the site is at "Very low" risk of surface water flooding flowing over the land after exceptionally heavy rain. Other factors are also addressed in the Flood Impact Assessment such as existing sewers and ground water appearance, to ensure that the water drainage system has been suitably designed to provide appropriate mitigation measures. Policy PS 6 requires assurance there is appropriate evidence that full consideration has been given to the potential impacts of climate change and, in light of initial observations from Welsh Water, an amended Drainage Plan was received for the site. Welsh Water confirms that these arrangements are acceptable. Also, NRW and the Flood Unit are satisfied that there is no flood risk for the site. Therefore, it is believed that the proposal is acceptable under the requirements of policy PS6 and Technical Advice Note 15.

Heritage Matters

- 5.15 The Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service noted that Ysgol Glanadda is a building that dates from the end of the 19th century, which was originally built for the children of railway workers following the opening of Bangor station in 1848. The current school, despite various periods of change and damage, retains much of its original features and fixtures. The school once had an important role in the social fabric of the area, and its site is a prominent historical building in the area.
- 5.16 As noted above, permission has already been granted to demolish the school building and the proposed building will lead to the loss of the original fabric of the school, along with its fixtures and fittings. Accordingly, it is considered appropriate that a detailed record is made of the building prior to any changes, to mitigate the impact of the development on the historic integrity and character and to serve as a permanent archive record. It is therefore recommended to impose a condition to ensure that a detailed photographic survey of the building is completed prior to its demolition. This would be in keeping with the requirements of policy AT 3 as far as it involves the protection of heritage of local importance.

The Welsh Language

- 5.17 Supplementary Planning Guidance - Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities (SPG) notes that, in order to comply with policy PS1 of the LDP, an assessment of the impact of the development on the Welsh Language needs to be submitted when a community facility, such as a school, is being lost. However, in this case, there will be no change in use of the site and, therefore, no such assessment is needed. In essence, the school will operate in accordance with the school's adopted policies within the framework of the Education Authority under legislation that is beyond the planning field. Having said this, in accordance with policy PS 1, it is believed that it would be reasonable to impose a condition to ensure a Welsh name for the site and that all signs on the site are in Welsh only or bilingual, with priority given to the Welsh language.

6. Conclusions:

- 6.1 Given the relevant planning matters in this case, the proposed development meets with many objectives in the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan and proposes a development of high-quality, modern and suitable design for its location, that will make a significant contribution to improving local educational facilities by using the urban brownfield

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site. Consideration was given to all material matters and it is not believed that the proposal is likely to cause long-term unacceptable detrimental impacts on nearby residents or the community in general and it will be possible to manage any short-term impacts by imposing appropriate conditions on the development.

7. Recommendation:

7.1 To approve the application subject to conditions relating to the following matters:

1. Time (five years)
2. In accordance with the plans
3. Contaminated Land Condition
4. Must adhere to the Ecological Survey recommendations
5. A photographic survey must be completed
6. Ensure Welsh / Bilingual name and signs

Notes

1. Welsh Water
2. Natural Resources Wales
3. Land Drainage Unit