

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 27/11/2017
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICE MANAGER	PWLLHELI

Number: 8

Application Number: C17/0826/17/LL

Date Registered: 13/09/2017

Application Type: Full - Planning

Community: Llandwrog

Ward: Groeslon

Proposal: Extension to existing boat and caravan storage area

Location: Crud y Nant, Bethesda Bach, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL54 5SF

Summary of the Recommendation: TO REFUSE

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1. Description:

- 1 This is a full application to extend the current boat/caravan storage site on part of an open field opposite the property known as Crud y Nant, in order to increase the number of touring caravans from 10 to 50. The storage site would be set at a right angle to the existing site, and would measure 61m in length and 33m in width, with pitches for 40 caravans laid out in three uniform rows. A livestock safeguarding fence would be erected along the site's periphery with a hedge of evergreen trees planted on the northern and eastern boundaries of the application site. There would be an opening of approximately 3m in width between the existing site and the proposed site.
- 1.2 The storage site and associated landscaping was originally granted permission in 2000, with a later retrospective application increasing the number of boats from 20 to 40 in 2003. In 2010 an application was approved, contrary to the officers' recommendation, to store up to 10 touring caravans in addition to the 40 boats that had previously been approved, and this current application would increase the number of storage units to 90 between both sites (40 boats and 50 touring caravans).
- 1.3 The site is located on an open hillock which is visible from the north (along the unclassified county road) and from the east and open countryside, and is accessed from a private driveway which serves a number of nearby residential dwellings. The site is located 0.2km to the east from the settlement of Bethesda Bach, and is served by a narrow and winding unclassified county road with no formal lay-bay along it.
- 1.4 The applicant has submitted a planning statement in support of the application, which refers to the following matters:-
 - It confirms that this application is for 40 additional units and not 55 units as referred to in the original site plan (the candidate has now submitted an amended site plan showing 40 units).
 - Although there would be an increase in movement in and out of the site, the increase would not be substantial and would not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of the area and nearby residents. Currently, the compound stores 50 units that produce a maximum of 2-4 movements weekly, and from October to Easter next year there will be no movements whatsoever apart from exceptions.
 - The caravans are collected on specific days and are returned some days later, some return months later, and from time to time some caravans and boats remain for over 12 months - 90 units does not equate to 90 regular movements.
 - There have been no accidents during the 14 years of running the business from Crud y Nant.

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 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

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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 Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026 (LDP) adopted 31 July 2017:-

Policy TRA4 - managing transport impacts.

Policy PCYFF1 - development boundaries.

Policy PCYFF2 - development criteria.

Policy PCYFF3 - design and place shaping.

Policy PCYFF4 - design and landscaping.

Policy PS13 - providing opportunities for a prosperous economy.

The Anglesey, Gwynedd and Snowdonia Sensitivity and Capacity Study (March, 2014) document produced by Gillespies as a material planning document for Anglesey, Gwynedd and the National Park.

2.4 National Policies:

Technical Advice Note 23 Economic Development (2014).

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 9 (2016), Chapter 7 Economic Development.

3. Relevant Planning History:

3.1 Application number C09A/0382/17/LL - application to vary condition 4 of planning permission C03A/0441/17/LL in order to store up to 10 touring caravans (in addition to the 40 boats which benefit from planning permission to be stored) approved contrary to the officers' recommendation.

3.2 Application no. C03A/0441/17/LL - amend condition no. 4 and 5 of planning permission ref. C00A/0065/17/LL so as to use the land as a permanent base for the storage of boats and to increase the number of boats from 20 to 40 approved in August 2003.

3.3 Application no. C03A/0298/17/LL - amend condition no. 4 and 5 of planning permission C00A/0065/17/LL so as to use the land as a permanent site for the storage of boats and to increase the number of boats from 20 to 80, refused in July 2003 on the grounds of road safety, detrimental impact on the visual amenities of the countryside and detrimental impact on the residential amenities of the nearby residents on the grounds of general disturbance and noise.

3.4 Application no. C00A/0065/17/LL - amend condition 5 on permission no. C99A/0595/17/LL so as to store 20 small boats on site on site, approved in March 2000.

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3.5 Application number C99A/0595/17/LL - change of use of land to store pleasure/fishing boats together with landscaping, approved in January 2000.

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: No objection.

Transportation Unit: Recommendation to refuse the application on the grounds of road safety as the proposal would be a substantial increase in the number of units to be stored on the site, with a resulting increase in the number of towing vehicles likely to use the narrow road between the site and the A499 in Bethesda Bach.

Natural Resources Wales: From the submitted information, NRW is not of the opinion that the development affects the matters listed in the *Natural Resources Wales and Planning consultations* checklist.

Biodiversity Unit: No biodiversity concerns.

Public Protection Unit: No response.

Public Consultation: A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. The advertising period has expired and letters were received from nearby residents objecting on the following grounds:-

- The narrow road is totally unsuitable for a substantial increase in traffic of this type i.e. trailers with boats and caravans. Vehicles have already collided with the boundary walls of the property adjacent to the narrow road.
- There is inconsistency in the application regarding the additional numbers requested. The site plan refers to an additional 55, and the access statement mentions 30 in addition to the 10 that already exist. The small narrow road would be unsuitable with respect to both these numbers.

In response to the above, it is noted that the applicant has now submitted an amended site plan that includes an additional 40 touring caravans, not 55 caravans as was originally mentioned.

5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

The principle of the development

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5.1 In this specific case, it is considered that this current proposal is unacceptable in principle for a number of valid planning reasons:-

- Extending the existing storage site farther into the open landscape would have an unacceptable impact and would create an incompatible feature in this part of the landscape. The site is located within an area which is defined by the Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment as an agricultural rolling landscape that includes small scale fields, with both undulating and irregular field patterns with vast views of the landscape itself. Approving this current application would have a detrimental impact on the pattern and character of this landscape.
- Increasing the number of touring caravans from 10 to 50 (in addition to the 40 boats that have already been approved at Crud y Nant) would substantially increase the impact on road safety, due to the narrow width, lack of passing places/lay-bys and the winding nature of the unclassified county road that serves the site. The combination of these elements would undermine the principles of good road safety along this section of the local roads network.
- Increasing the number of touring caravans would have a detrimental impact on the amenities of local residents who live opposite the unclassified county road and the private driveway, on the grounds of an increase in noise and disturbance.
- It is considered that there are more suitable sites available locally for storage purposes (Class Use B8) with an application approved recently for the storage of touring caravans and vehicles within Penygroes Industrial Estate under reference C17/0869/22/LL. Locating this type of use within an industrial estate would be acceptable on the grounds of road safety and on the grounds of impacts on visual amenities and residential amenities.

Visual amenities

5.2 As referred to above, the existing storage space would be extended by 60m at a right angle on a hillock that slopes downwards to the east, which makes it more open and visible from this direction and from the north. Touring caravans have a uniform nature due to their similar size, colour and length that makes them more visible to the eye from nearby public spaces (the unclassified county road) and from further afield (e.g. the outskirts of Carmel village). In truth, the light coloured roofs of the current caravans can be seen clearly as a white line (despite the fixed hedge that surrounds the existing site) from the village of Carmel.

5.3 It is considered that adding up to 40 additional caravans on the site of this latest application would make the development more prominent in the rural landscape, when considering (i) the uniform layout of the proposed caravans within the site; (ii) the lay of the land to the east; (iii) the creation of an evergreen hedge extending 60m to the open field would create a formal and unnatural feature in this part of the landscape (i.e. the proposal would not integrate with its surroundings) and (iv) due to the seasonal nature of the use made of touring caravans, the majority of the proposed caravans would be stored on the application site during the winter when there is least vegetation.

5.4 As referred to above, the application site and the surrounding area has been included in the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (Gillespies, 2014) which was

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prepared for Anglesey, Gwynedd and the National Park as a material consideration for sustainable developments such as wind turbines, solar panels and static caravan/chalet parks and extensions. Although the current proposal does not involve the siting of a static caravan park in itself, it is believed that storing up to 40 touring caravans in addition to the 50 mixed units that exist opposite the application site would be tantamount in its impact to static caravans, especially during periods when the caravans would be stored on the site for lengthy periods during the winter season when there is least vegetation. The Assessment concludes that there is capacity for similar small-scale, well-designed developments on the condition that they are well integrated and located close to the urban landscape/built environment. It is considered that the location of the proposed site in open countryside does not conform to the advice contained in this document due to its impact on the visual amenities of this part of the landscape.

- 5.5 To this end, therefore, it is believed that this application does not comply with the requirements of Policy PCYFF3 and PCYFF4 of the LDP on the grounds of its substantial impact on the visual amenities of the open landscape.

General and residential amenities

- 5.6 A number of residential dwellings are located opposite and around the site, served by narrow roads. An increase of 40 additional caravans would be a substantial increase to the 50 units that have already been permitted, and it is considered that these additional movements along the narrow and winding roads would have a detrimental impact on the general and residential amenities of local residents on the grounds of noise and disturbance. In this respect, it is considered that the proposal does not comply with Policy PCYFF2 of the LDP that states that proposals should be refused if they have a significant detrimental impact on the health, safety or amenities of the occupants of local property, due to an increase in activities, disturbance, and noise.

Transport and access matters

- 5.7 In response to the statutory consultation, the Transportation Unit has stated that it objects to this current application on the grounds of a substantial increase in the number of units that are to be stored on the extended site. This increase would lead to an inevitable increase in the number of vehicles towing trailers/touring caravans along at least 227m of the unclassified county road that serves the site, and a greater use of the junction with the A499 county road at Bethesda Bach.
- 5.8 In considering that this road is sub-standard due to its narrow and winding nature, the lack of passing places/lay-bys along its length (The width of entrances to the existing houses opposite the county road have been reduced by boulders due to the damage that the vehicles and trailers have made to the boundary walls of these properties), vehicles coming face to face in opposite directions would have to undertake substantial manoeuvres (involving reversing), creating an inconvenience to the users of the county road that serves the site, including the junction to the A499 class I county road.
- 5.9 Regardless of the applicant's comments in the planning statement on the numbers and the flow of traffic being dispersed throughout the year as a result of approving 40 additional units, the concerns about road safety remain, as there would be an increased likelihood of collisions between vehicles on this part of the local roads network especially during popular holiday periods. This concern becomes evident when considering that approving this application would mean that 90 units would

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have the right to traverse the county roads that serve the site at any time during the year.

- 5.10 In this respect, it is considered that the proposal is unacceptable in relation to the requirements of Policy TRA4 of the LDP that states that proposals that would cause unacceptable harm to the safe and efficient operation of the highway, including pedestrian and cycle routes and public rights of way, will be refused.

Planning history

- 5.11 Paragraph 3.3 above states that a historical planning application (ref. C03A/0298/17/LL) which included increasing the numbers from 20 to 80 boats was refused in July 2003 on the grounds of road safety, detrimental impact on the visual amenities of the countryside and detrimental impact on the residential amenities of the nearby residents on the grounds of general disturbance and noise.
- 5.12 Considering that (i) this latest application would involve increasing the numbers of touring caravans from 10 to 50, that would correspond to 90 units if it were to be approved (10 more than the number requested, and refused, in 2003) and (ii) that the planning situation has not changed since 2003 in respect of road safety and the duty to safeguard residential amenities and visual amenities, it is considered that the Planning Committee's decision to refuse a similar application in 2003 cannot be ignored, and that it continues to be a material planning consideration when considering this current application.

The Economy

- 5.13 Under this heading, criterion 4 of Policy PS13 of the LDP (providing opportunities for a prosperous economy) is relevant to this current application. This policy states the aim of supporting economic prosperity and sustainability of rural communities by **facilitating appropriately scaled growth of rural enterprises**, extending existing businesses and diversification by supporting the re-use of existing buildings, the development of 'live work' units, working from home, and by encouraging the provision of sites and premises **in appropriate accessible locations** consistent with the Plan's Spatial Strategy and in line with Strategic Policies PS5 and PS6.
- 5.14 The appearance of a proposed development, its scale and its relationship with its surroundings and its context are material planning considerations in the context of the above policy, and local planning authorities have a duty to refuse poorly designed buildings and buildings that undermine their context. In relation to the above assessment, it is considered that the proposal to extend the existing external storage undermines the character and integrity of this part of the open landscape on the grounds of its scale and design. It is also considered that the site is unsuitable for intensifying the current storage use due to its accessibility as there are more suitable sites available for these types of use, such as industrial estates. In this respect, therefore, it is believed that the proposal is contrary to criterion 4 of Policy PS13 of the LDP.

6. Conclusions:

- 6.1 Having considered the above assessment, it is believed that this proposal is unacceptable on grounds of principle, location, scale, materials, road safety, residential and visual amenities, and that it is contrary to the requirements of relevant local and national planning policies.

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7. Recommendation:

7.1 To refuse – reasons:

1. The proposal is contrary to Policy TRA4 of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan as it is considered that the access road serving the site together with its junction with the A.499 at Bethesda Bach are sub-standard to cater for an additional 40 touring caravans and this, in turn, could create conditions along the local highway network to the detriment of its users at the expense of highway safety.
2. The proposal is contrary to the requirements of Policy PCYFF3 and PCYFF4 of the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan as it is considered that the proposal would create a discordant and prominent feature in the landscape by encroaching into open countryside at the expense of the area's visual amenities.
3. The proposal is contrary to the requirements of Policy PCYFF2 of the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan as it is considered that the proposal would detrimentally affect the general and residential amenities of occupants of residential properties situated along the highway serving the site by reason of increased disturbance and noise nuisance.
4. The proposal is contrary to the requirements of Policy PS13 of the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local development Plan as it is considered that the scale of the proposal is unacceptable in its rural setting and the site is not sustainable in terms of extending the existing storage use as there are other more appropriate sites locally for such a use.