

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 16/04/2018
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION MANAGER	PWLLHELI

Number: 6

Application Number: C16/1430/44/LL

Date: 03/01/2017

Registered:

Application Type: Full - Planning

Community: Porthmadog

Ward: Porthmadog West

Proposal: Erection of a two-storey four bedroom residential dwelling in open countryside together with the installation of a septic tank and creation of a new vehicular access and access road

**Location: Land of the former Moelwyn Dairy,
Penamser Road, Porthmadog, Gwynedd,
LL49 9NY**

Summary of the Recommendation: TO REFUSE

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 16/04/2018
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION MANAGER	PWLLHELI

1. Description:

1.1 Members are reminded that this application was deferred at the Planning Committee dated 13 March 2017 in order to give the applicant an opportunity to submit further information regarding some specific aspects of the application.

1.2 Following the above deferral, the applicant was asked, via e-mail on 14 March 2017, for a detailed and comprehensive response as follows:

- In order to be able to assess the application against the requirements of specific policies and guidance, confirmation is requested regarding if it would be an agricultural property and what evidence do you have that it would be a property specifically connected to agriculture, in accordance with the requirements of Technical Advice Note 6.
- Similarly, confirmation is requested regarding if it would be a property for a rural enterprise, what evidence do you have that it would be a property specifically connected to a rural enterprise, in accordance with the requirements of Technical Advice Note 6.
- Confirmation is needed from Tai Teg as to whether a formal assessment has been undertaken in relation to affordable housing issues

1.3 Since this request for further information, no further information was received as requested in order to assess the application in accordance with the recommendation of the Planning Committee. There was occasional correspondence between the applicant and officers, namely requests from officers about the latest situation. However, no additional information was submitted for assessment.

1.4 Since the application was submitted and discussed originally, a clear change has occurred in terms of the policy as a result of the adoption of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan which has superseded the previous Unitary Plan. Nevertheless, the policies involving building new houses outside development boundaries essentially remain the same. It is also noted that the relevant national guidance, namely Technical Advice Note 6, has not changed during this time and, therefore, the requirements in terms of national guidance remain unchanged.

1.5 This is a full application to erect a new two-storey four bedroom residential dwelling in open countryside with the installation of a septic tank and creation of a new vehicular access and access road.

1.6 The existing site is open agricultural land with the remains of a stone building on a part of the site. The land rises from the direction of the A497 highway nearby. The existing unclassified road leads from the A497 towards the Penamser public cemetery which is located to the south of the application site.

1.7 The submitted plans show a proposal to include the following:

- Ground floor - living room, kitchen/dining room, utility room, toilet, hall, study and garage
- First floor - four bedrooms (two en-suite bedrooms), bathroom, office and gym

Outside, a hard standing is formed to the front of the building and an access road leads from the site to where it would join the road leading to the nearby cemetery. It is proposed to install private treatment works near the access road. Externally, the building would be finished with natural stone and a slate roof.

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 16/04/2018
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION MANAGER	PWLLHELI

1.8 According to the information submitted, the building's internal floor surface area would be 225m² and 6.3m high at its highest point.

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 seven 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 2017:

POLICY PCYFF 1: Development boundaries

POLICY PCYFF 2: Development criteria

POLICY PCYFF 3: Design and place shaping

POLICY PCYFF 4: Design and landscaping

POLICY AMG 2: Special landscape areas

POLICY TRA 2: Parking standards

POLICY TRA 4: Managing transport impacts

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

As well as the above, it is believed that the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance are material planning considerations in this case, specifically:

- Affordable Housing
- Building New Houses in the Countryside

2.4 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales, edition 9 2016

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design

TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities

3. Relevant Planning History:

3.1 The application site has no relevant planning history. However, a pre-application enquiry was submitted for the proposal.

Y16/000248 - erection of new dwelling - it was confirmed in a formal letter dated 10.02.16 that the site was outside the development boundary and, as a result, it was contrary to the basic requirements of adopted local and national policies. Consequently, it would not be possible to support the proposal. Reference was made to exceptions to this but proof would be required by submitting evidence that there was a need for an agricultural/rural enterprise worker.

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 16/04/2018
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION MANAGER	PWLLHELI

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council:	No objection
Transportation Unit:	No objection, recommend including standard conditions and advice if permitted.
Natural Resources Wales:	No observations
Welsh Water:	Standard advice
Public Protection Unit:	Not received
Rights of Way Unit:	Not received
Biodiversity Unit:	The land is improved grazing land and is of low Biodiversity value, it is suggested that a condition be included for drainage clearing work to be undertaken outside the nesting season. A bat roost is provided nearby. It is essential that no lighting affect bats; and, if permitted, it is suggested to include a condition to agree on a lighting scheme.
Housing Strategic Unit:	General observations regarding a local need for housing, namely, that 49 applicants are on the register; nobody has noted their preference for a four bedroom house; it appears that houses are for sale in the area which would be deemed affordable; there is no confirmation that the applicant has been assessed by Tai Teg to be eligible for an affordable house.
Public Consultation:	<p>A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. The advertisement period has expired and correspondence was received supporting the application on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shortage of suitable and affordable housing in the local area/high number of second homes • Applicant is originally from the area and has returned to start a business • Need to live on the land to supervise farm activities and be close to elderly parents • Applicant developing an ambitious business plan which would lead to changing the use of the land • No suitable land available to build in Porthmadog due to a flood zone designation • Consideration must be given to additional construction sites such as this application site which is outside a flood zone • Site of a former farmhouse, walls still stand although it has no roof • Suitable design which would be concealed within the landscape

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 16/04/2018
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION MANAGER	PWLLHELI

- The nearby Penamser industrial estate has been developed and extends beyond the boundary of the town
- The Aberglaslyn mountain rescue team centre has been constructed nearby on land outside the boundary, the applicant is a member and the team supports the application
- The current road is accessible from the main road
- Electricity and water are already nearby

5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

The principle of the development

- 5.1 This site is located outside the defined development boundary for the Porthmadog area and, as such, it is considered to be a site located in the countryside. Due to the site's location in the countryside, the proposal cannot be considered under usual housing policies for Porthmadog, namely policy TAI 1, as this policy relates to housing developments within the development boundaries. As a result of the need to maintain and protect the countryside, special justification is needed to approve the construction of new houses in the countryside. Therefore, the construction of new houses in the countryside will only be approved in exceptional circumstances. The content of Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities - July 2010 (TAN6) prepared by the Welsh Assembly Government must therefore be considered.

Paragraph 4.3.1 of TAN 6 notes that one of the few circumstances in which a new isolated residential development in the open countryside can be justified is when accommodation is required to enable agricultural or rural enterprise workers to live at, or close to, their workplace. Whether this is essential in any particular case will depend on the needs of the rural enterprise concerned and not on the personal preference or circumstances of any of the individuals involved. TAN 6 also notes that Local Planning Authorities should carefully assess applications for planning permission for new agricultural or rural enterprise dwellings to ensure that a departure from the usual policy of restricting development in the open countryside can be fully justified by reference to robust supporting evidence.

There is reference in the application, specifically within the Design and Access Statement, together with letters of support, to the current agricultural use of the land along with a proposed business plan to change the use of this land for a new sustainable business as well as a local mountain rescue service using a part of the land. No information was submitted confirming the exact type of business being proposed, the use and density of the current agricultural use, or the relevance to this application of the Mountain Rescue Service using a part of the land.

Nevertheless, it appears that there is an established agricultural use on the land, and therefore, in accordance with the requirements of TAN 6, should the application be for a house for a full-time agricultural or rural enterprise worker, information must be submitted that relates to functional, time, finance and other dwelling tests to prove the need and justification for the construction of a dwelling in open countryside:

- The Functional Test (Section 4.8 of Technical Advice Note 6) - The functional test makes it mandatory to indicate that it is essential for a worker to be readily available at most times, on the site or close to it, for the proper functioning of the appropriate rural enterprise.

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 16/04/2018
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION MANAGER	PWLLHELI

- The Time Test (Section 4.9 of Technical Advice Note 6) - The time test and the functional test are separate tests, but there must be a full-time requirement for the worker for whom there is a functional need.
- The Financial Test (Section 4.10 of Technical Advice Note 6) - Dwellings will only be approved where it can be proven that a rural enterprise is sustainable, and a financial test is used to consider the enterprise's financial robustness, its projections over a reasonable period of time, and the ability of the business to fund the proposal.
- The Other Dwelling Test (Section 4.11 of Technical Advice Note 6) - The needs of an enterprise are considered in the context of the availability of existing options for alternative dwellings to meet the noted functional need, and/or the scope to reorganise the work of managing the enterprise so that no new dwelling is needed.

These tests are applicable in all circumstances, and each must be dealt with in a manner which is appropriate to the specific type of application submitted.

No evidence has been submitted with the application to be able to consider or satisfy the above and, therefore, the proposal cannot be assessed in terms of these matters. Also, as already noted, further information was requested as a result of the committee's decision to defer over a year ago, and no further information has been received at the time of writing this report.

It was noted at the time of submitting the application that the applicant already lives in Porthmadog, no information has been submitted in relation to the tenure of his current property (mortgage/occupation with no mortgage/rent) or any evidence why this property cannot meet the need for a house. The proposed house would be located approximately 100m away from the nearest part of the development boundary of Porthmadog, and no evidence has been submitted that there is no other house available on the holding or within the town to meet the need.

Also, the location of the dwelling should give consideration to the specific functional need that it is expected to meet. The dwelling should be sufficiently close to the operational areas where it is necessary, for example, to sufficiently monitor animals, and to enable workers to respond effectively to any difficulties noted if justification for the construction of the house in this location is due to its association with agricultural use.

It is considered that the location of the dwelling is unsuitable. There is no formal agricultural building or site nearby. Reference is included in observations received that the land forms part of the Penamser Farm holding which is located approximately 800m away from the application site when travelling along the unclassified road which leads to a nearby cemetery, and then by travelling along the A497 highway and then into the farmyard towards the buildings. It is not considered that the application site is sufficiently close to justify an agricultural dwelling in the proposed location and associated with this specific farm.

An agricultural dwelling is expected to be located on the farmyard (namely, the location of Penamser Farm according to submitted information in this case - on the grounds that no information has been submitted about any other lands or buildings), or that a 'farmyard'/farm buildings/equipment are provided close to/surrounding the property to enable the business to operate in the most effective manner. In this case, the proposed dwelling is not located on any existing farmyard.

The size of any proposed dwelling is considered in relation to the ability of the enterprise to fund and maintain the dwelling, and should reflect the needs of the

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 16/04/2018
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION MANAGER	PWLLHELI

enterprise, but also, as the possible occupancy of the dwelling would be extended to those who qualify for affordable housing, the size of the dwelling should comply with relevant Affordable Housing requirements.

In this case, the proposed dwelling proposes four bedrooms with an internal floor surface area of 225m². Guidance on Affordable Housing sizes within Supplementary Planning Guidance: Affordable Housing, restricts the floor surface area for four-bedroom affordable houses to 120m². The proposed dwelling is substantially larger than this, and therefore, does not conform to the requirements as the property would not meet affordable housing needs if its use as an agricultural house/rural enterprise came to an end. No information has been submitted about the applicant's needs for a larger property than what is noted in the SPG.

Therefore, it is considered that neither the location nor the size of the property comply with the requirements of Technical Advice Note 6 or Supplementary Planning Guidance: Affordable Housing.

Based on the above assessment, it is considered that the proposal is also contrary to the requirements of policy PCYFF 1 of the LDP which encourages new developments to be located within development boundaries unless the development fully conforms to another specific policy within the LDP. Similarly, it is not believed that the proposal is acceptable in terms of policy PCYFF 2 which states that a proposal must comply with all relevant policies in the Plan and national planning policies and guidance.

When dealing with any planning application the statutory test should be your first consideration at all times, i.e. it is necessary to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan, unless other relevant considerations state otherwise.

Visual, general and residential amenities

- 5.2 Policies PCYFF 3 and PCYFF 4 of the Local Development Plan are involve assessing matters in relation to the design of the proposal, site landscaping and its impact on the area's amenities.

Notwithstanding the above assessment that considers that neither the location nor the size of the property is suitable for an agricultural property or a rural enterprise worker, and despite the fact that the site is not suitable for any other property due to its location outside the village's development boundary, it is considered that the overall design and materials of the property are suitable, and that the property itself would not have a detrimental impact on the visual and general amenities of the area.

It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable in principle and the proposal could comply with the requirements of policies PCYFF 3 and PCYFF 4, but it is noted that this does not override the fact that the principle of the proposal is unsuitable, as is noted above.

The site is located within the Porthmadog Bay and Tremadog Special Landscape Area, therefore, consideration is given to the requirements of policy AMG 2 for this aspect. The policy requires that appropriate consideration be given to the scale and nature of the development, ensuring that it will not have a substantial detrimental impact on the landscape. In this case, it is not believed that the proposed development in relation to

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 16/04/2018
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION MANAGER	PWLLHELI

this specific aspect is unacceptable in terms of compliance with the relevant requirements of policy AMG 2.

Transport and access matters

- 5.3 Policies TRA 2 and TRA 4 relate to parking requirements and managing transport impacts; and state that development proposals will be approved provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to relevant matters.

The Transportation Unit confirms that the proposal is unlikely to have a detrimental impact on matters relating to transport and access. It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policies TRA 2 and TRA 4 in relation to these matters only.

Flooding matters

- 5.4 It is acknowledged that finding suitable land to construct new houses in Porthmadog is difficult as the vast majority of the town has been designated as a flood zone. As is known, the erection of new residential houses within areas such as these is not permitted, as confirmed in recent advice from Welsh Government and in formal appeal decisions. It is true to say that this application site is not within a flood zone but this does not justify the erection of a new house outside a defined development boundary as it cannot be erected within the boundary for other reasons.

Response to the public consultation

- 5.5 As already noted above, letters of support for the proposal were received from local individuals and others, due consideration was given to all material planning matters noted in the observations received. For clarity, the responses to some specific matters that arose in observations received in support of this application are noted here:

Penamser Industrial Estate - reference was made to the location of this nearby estate and the fact that this estate extends beyond the town boundary. This site has been designated for industrial use in the Unitary Plan, it has been protected as an employment site and is located entirely within the development boundary. Historical planning permissions are in place for a number of existing activities seen on the site. It is usual for sites such as these to be located on the outskirts of towns and, although it is recognised that the site is large, its use is established and protected. It is not believed that the location of this site is justification for the erection of a residential house outside the development boundary.

Aberglaslyn Mountain Rescue Team Site - reference is made to the location of this centre on another part of the applicant's land which is also outside the development boundary but which was granted permission in 2009. It is noted from the application that the storage that existed was demolished and a new building erected in its place. Additionally, strict conditions have been imposed on the permission stating that only the rescue team is permitted to use the building and that the site would return to agricultural use if this use came to an end.

Land for affordable housing - the Design and Access Statement notes that the applicant has offered a substantial area of land for the Council to construct affordable houses, claiming that this would be a way of reaching the annual affordable housing provision target in Gwynedd. This offer has been made as part of the process to adopt the Local Development Plan, and therefore, the Policy Unit was asked to provide background

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 16/04/2018
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION MANAGER	PWLLHELI

about the situation. They confirmed: *"An objection was received regarding the fact that the land had been exempt from the Joint Local Development Plan. The objection was addressed and it was decided not to change the Plan to include the land. The Inspector of the Public Examination of the Joint Local Development Plan has received a copy of all objections. As part of the Public Examination process regarding land in Porthmadog, a Public Hearing was held during September last year. The Public Hearings have led to a number of Action Points which in turn have led to Matters Arising Changes. There are no Matters Arising Changes to the development boundaries of Porthmadog - therefore, the land remains outside the development boundaries. The Inspector will submit his final binding recommendations to the Council in May/June 2017 - the final timetable depends on how many observations we will receive about the MAC and the nature of those observations"*. The development boundaries remained unchanged and the land was not allocated for residential development in the final version of the Local Development Plan.

Additional information

5.6 As already noted above, the applicant had submitted a formal pre-application enquiry for the proposal as indicated under reference Y16/000248. At the time, it was confirmed in a formal response that such a proposal would be contrary to the requirements of relevant policies and, as a result, the Authority would not be able to support the proposal.

6. Conclusions:

6.1 Having considered the above and all the material planning matters, including the local and national policies and guidance, as well as the observations received, this proposal to erect a new house in this specific location is not deemed acceptable for the reasons noted above.

7. Recommendation:

7.1 To Refuse – reasons

1. This proposal for the erection of a new house in the countryside is not justified and is therefore considered to be unacceptable in principle and contrary to the requirements of Policies PCYFF 1 and PCYFF 2 of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Development Plan along with guidance in Supplementary Planning Guidance: Building New Houses in the Countryside, Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities along with Planning Policy Wales, Chapter 9 on Housing.
2. The applicant has not provided sufficient and appropriate evidence to prove the need for an agricultural/rural enterprise dwelling in this site outside the development boundaries of Porthmadog. It is therefore considered that the proposal is contrary to that noted in paragraph 4.3.1 of Technical Advice Note 6 and paragraph 9.3.6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9, 2016).