

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 25/06/2018
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION MANAGER	DOLGELLAU

Number 2

Application Number: C17/1172/19/LL

Date Registered: 09/04/2018

Application Type: Full - Planning

Community: Bontnewydd

Ward: Bontnewydd

Proposal: Change of use of a former residential nursing home to create four self-contained holiday units, erect a separate building to be used as a swimming pool together with extensions and alterations to the existing building.

Location: Plas y Bryn Nursing Home, Bontnewydd, Caernarfon, LL54 7YE

Summary of the Recommendation: TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

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1. Description:

1.1 Full application for the change of use of a building that was until fairly recently used as a residential nursing home for older people, to create self-contained holiday units together with erecting a separate building to house a swimming pool, as well as extensions and alterations to the existing building.

1.2 The plans show the following as part of the proposed development:

- Construction of three conservatories
- Creation of dormer windows and new rooflights within the main building space
- Erection of a separate building measuring 7m x 16m to house a swimming pool

The plans indicate how the building would be split into four separate units, namely:

- Unit 1 (over two floors) - 10 bedrooms, 1 bunk-room, games room, kitchen/dining room, 2 lounges, conservatory
- Unit 2 (over two floors) - 11 bedrooms, 1 bunk-room, lounge/kitchen/dining room, play room, conservatory
- Unit 3 - 13 bedrooms, 1 bunk-room, games room, kitchen/lounge/dining room, conservatory
- Main building/Unit 4 (over three floors)- lounge, dining room, 2 kitchens, games room, 13 bedrooms (including the married couple's bedroom), family room

The following information was submitted with the application:

- Transport Assessment
- Bat Survey
- Trees Report
- Business plan

1.3 Detailed information in the form of financial/business plan was submitted but not in a standard format as is usually expected. An amended version is awaited, however, at the time of writing it had not been received.

1.4 The site is located on elevated land on the outskirts of the village of Bontnewydd, there are several mature trees within and surrounding the site (some are the subject of a formal Tree Preservation Order). A holiday chalet park backs onto the south eastern boundary of the site and there is also a working farm in the same direction but further away.

1.5 The existing site is extensive and comprises a lawn in front of the main building together with service areas to the side and rear. It is seen that substantial existing extensions have been added to the back of the original building. The internal layout of the building is shown (namely its former use as a nursing home) to include 57

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bedrooms with all the associated resources for a residential home such as a kitchen, sitting rooms, office etc.

- 1.6 According to the information submitted, visitors to the site will use the existing car park within the site. Access is gained to the site off the A487 highway along a class 3 road and then along a private road up to the site itself.
- 1.7 The application has been amended since its original submission by deleting the building that was to operate as a 'wedding barn' on part of the site with a linked path, in addition the plans were amended to show a space within the roof that would act as a roosting site for bats and a transportation assessment was received. A second full consultation was undertaken following the receipt of these amendments and additional information.
- 1.8 The application is submitted to the Committee as three or more letters of objection have been received during the public consultation.
- 1.9 An enquiry was submitted prior to the submission of the application where the principle of the proposed development was discussed and matters were highlighted that required specific attention as part of the application such as the need to submit tree and bat surveys and a business plan.

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 2011-26 adopted 31 July 2017**

TRA 2: Parking standards

TRA 4: Managing transport impacts

PCYFF 2: Development criteria

PCYFF 3: Design and place shaping

PCYFF 4: Design and landscaping

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

ISA 1: Infrastructure provision

PS 14: The visitors' economy

TWR 1: Visitor Attractions and Facilities

TWR 2: Holiday accommodation

PS 19: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment where appropriate

AMG 5: Local Biodiversity Conservation

AMG 6: Protection Sites of Local or Regional Significance

PS 20: Preserving and where appropriate enhancing heritage assets

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Supplementary Planning Guidance: Holiday accommodation

2.4 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales Edition 9 2016
 Technical Advice Note 12: Design
 Technical Advice Note 13: Tourism
 Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk
 Technical Advice Note 18: Transportation

3. Relevant Planning History:

3.1 C09A/0270/19/LL - siting a temporary residential caravan for the manager - approved 09.07.09

C08A/0182/19/LL - erection of a one-storey building to include an 8 bed care unit - approved 16.10.09

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: Unacceptable increase in transport, access road narrow, access and road safety problems, need to protect trees, need to ensure that the infrastructure is sufficient

Transportation Unit: No objection

Natural Resources Wales: An initial comment was received referring to the bats survey and the need to include suitable mitigation measures. Having received amended plans and re-consultation, confirmation was received that there was no objection to the application or the contents of the relevant conditions.

Welsh Water: Standard observations and conditions regarding drainage matters

Public Protection Unit: Not received

Biodiversity/Trees Unit: The trees survey is acceptable and there is a need to follow the recommendations. The bat survey states the need for mitigating measures due to the presence of bats. An amended plan was received in due course showing an earmarked space in the roof for bats.

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

- Standard of information is poor and unclear
- Lack of arrangement and suitable internal layout
- Concern regarding the condition and size of the access road
- Unacceptable increase in traffic movements
- Insufficient parking provision
- Infrastructure/sewerage problems
- Development too large/no local benefit
- Detrimental effect on the amenities of local residents.

Observations were received supporting the proposal on the following grounds:

- Suitable use
- No significant transportation impact

5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

The principle of the development

5.1 This application is for the change of use of a former nursing home to be used as holiday accommodation. Due to the nature of the proposal, this type of development is considered as self-service accommodation and is therefore considered under the relevant requirements of policy TWR 2 in the Local Development Plan. This policy states that proposals for:

1. *The development of new permanent serviced or self-serviced holiday accommodation, or the conversion of existing buildings into such accommodation, or extending existing holiday accommodation establishments will be permitted, provided they are of a high quality in terms of design, layout and appearance and that all the following criteria can be met:*
 - i. *In the case of accommodation which is a new build, that the development is located within a development boundary, or makes use of a suitable previously developed site;*
 - ii. *That the proposed development is of appropriate scale considering the site, location and/or settlement in question;*
 - iii. *That the proposal does not lead to a loss in the permanent housing stock;*
 - iv. *That the development is not located in a mainly residential area, and does not cause substantial harm to the residential character of the area;*
 - v. *That the development does not lead to an excess of such accommodation in the residential area.*

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- 5.2 In this case, the location of the proposed development lies outside the development boundary of the village of Bontnewydd and is therefore in open countryside. However, the proposal is for the conversion of an existing building and would make use of a suitable site that was previously developed. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in respect of criterion i.
- 5.3 The site is extensive and until comparatively recently had intensive historical use. Apart from erecting three conservatories and a building for the swimming pool, it is not proposed to undertake any extension or significant alterations to the existing building. Therefore, it is deemed that the scale of the amendments will blend in easily with the site and the existing building. It is considered therefore that the proposal is acceptable in respect of criterion ii.
- 5.4 Previously the building was used as a residential nursing home, although this use was residential to an extent, this use had now ended and it is not considered that there would be a permanent loss of housing stock as stated in criterion iii.
- 5.5 Although scattered residential housing existing nearby, it is not considered that the site itself within the residential area is prominent and therefore the proposal is not considered unacceptable in terms of criterion iv.
- 5.6 It is deemed that this is the first application for this type of holiday units and size within the nearby area. The financial details within the Business Plan submitted show a progressive profit projection over 10 years from the commencement date of the enterprise which suggests that the business is viable. As noted above, a Business Plan was submitted with the application, the information has been assessed by the Joint Planning Policy Unit, who state:
- That the business is part of an already established business;
 - It will offer other services namely wedding services and events;
 - The budget is in place
 - The company markets with experts in the holiday accommodation field.
- Therefore, the proposal is not considered to be unacceptable and is in accordance with the requirements of point v. above.
- 5.7 In terms of proximity to the roads network, the site is located less than a mile from the A587 highway. The Transportation Unit had no concerns regarding the proposal and therefore it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of access roads that serve the site.
- 5.8 The general requirements of policy TWR 1 state that proposals will be supported to develop new facilities by re-using existing buildings or previously used sites. In this case it is considered that the site, despite its location in the countryside, is suitable to be converted for the proposed use and make appropriate use of buildings and a fairly extensive site.
- 5.9 From the information submitted, it is seen that the proposal is to split the buildings into four separate holiday units for groups of families and extended friends. In the information it is noted that the units will be expected to be full during occasions when weddings take place and run on a 50/60% capacity at other times. As is often the case with developments to create holiday accommodation in the countryside, standard conditions are included in order to ensure that permanent residential use will not be made of the units with a record kept via a formal register of those who use the facilities.

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- 5.10 As a consequence of the above assessment, it is considered that the principle of the proposal is acceptable and is acceptable in terms of the relevant requirements of policies TWR 1 and TWR 2 of the LDP.

Visual amenities

- 5.11 The site is in an elevated location and it is not considered to be fully visible from sites within the village due to the presence of so many surrounding mature trees. It is likely that it would be partly visible from places that back onto the site and higher locations to the south and east but as the alterations to the buildings are minor, it is not deemed that a prominent change would be visible.
- 5.12 The relevant requirements of policy TWR 1 state that a proposed development will be of a high quality in terms of design, setting and appearance. In the same manner, policies PCYFF 2 and PCYFF 3 refer to amenity and design matters.
- 5.13 In the case of this particular application it is considered that what is proposed in terms of the size of the alterations and additions proposed namely three conservatories, swimming pool room and installation of dormer windows are acceptable and within the context of the existing site and the surrounding area, do not appear as an intrusive or unacceptable feature.
- 5.14 Therefore, it is believed that the proposal is acceptable in respect of the relevant policies of TWR 1, PCYFF 2, PCYFF 3.

General and residential amenities

- 5.15 The site is located on the outskirts of the village of Bontnewydd in a location on its own. It is recognised that residential housing will be passed along the road that leads from the A487 to the site and that a holiday chalet park and a farm are fairly close to the site boundary. Consideration has to be given to the historical use of the site and what is proposed in this case, weighing up the obvious differences between both. Intensive use has been established on the site because of its use as a residential nursing home, it is imagined that there was some disturbance at times due to staff movements arriving and leaving, visitors, deliveries, doctors/ambulance etc. It is accepted that movements will stem from the proposed development as well, but it is not considered that it would be to an extent that would be significantly more than what was already experienced and can legally recommence without requiring any further permission. It is deemed that the nature of the development and its location on its own would be an acceptable use, and would not have more of an unacceptable significant impact on general and residential amenities of local residents and therefore it is not believed that it would be contrary to the relevant requirements of policy PCYFF2.

Transport and access matters

- 5.16 As noted above, there was full consultation regarding the proposal with the Council's Transportation Unit. There is no objection to the proposal from the aspect of transportation from this unit.
- 5.17 It is recognised that concerns have been highlighted by local residents regarding the impact of the proposed development on the private access road together with the public road that leads to the access off the A487 highway. The road is winding, steep and comparatively narrow in places, however, the road has been so for many years

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including when it served the residential nursing home. A transportation assessment was submitted as part of the application, where it is shown that regular and intensive movements were made during its period as a residential home. There is no objection to the proposal in terms of transportation and therefore the proposal is not considered unacceptable in terms of the relevant requirements of policies TRA2 and TRA4.

Biodiversity matters

- 5.12 Observations were received from the Biodiversity Unit regarding matters dealing with trees and bats. It is accepted that the trees report submitted is acceptable and by imposing relevant conditions it is deemed that trees on the site, including trees that are subject to a Preservation Order, will be protected. The application was amended as a result of the Biodiversity Unit and NRA comments in order to include a roof space to secure a roosting area for bats. It is accepted that the space is acceptable for this purpose and by imposing relevant conditions to ensure appropriate control and that the recommendations of the Ecology Evaluation report submitted with the application are followed.
- 5.19 Part of the access proposed towards the site borders the Special Area of Conservation and the Afon Gwyrfai and Cwellyn Site of Special Scientific Interest. This road has existed for several years and it is not proposed to undertake alterations to this road as part of the existing application. It is believed that the use of this road was established a long time ago in parallel with these designations, without evident damage to these. No increasing evident damage will stem from the proposed use compared to the previous use as a residential nursing home, therefore it is believed that the relevant requirements of policies PS19, AMG 5 and AMG 6 of the LDP are satisfied.

The economy

- 5.12 Strategic Policy PS 14 states that the Council should "support the development of a year-round local tourism industry by managing and enhancing the provision of high quality un-serviced tourism accommodation in the form of self-catering cottages and apartments..". In this case it is believed that the proposal adds in a positive way to the local economy by offering new accommodation provision to the type of traditional accommodation that can generally be found in the area. The proposed units offer accommodation on a larger scale than what is assumed that is currently available in the area. From the information submitted, it appears that the main use of the site will be for weddings, as units of the proposed size would be suitable for letting to groups of families and friends which is not currently available in the nearby area. It is considered that this is supported by the Council's adopted policies and there would be economic benefit stemming from the proposal making suitable use of buildings and the existing extensive site.

Infrastructure matters

- 5.21 It is noted that observations have been received from an objector referring to historical problems regarding drainage and sewerage arrangements on the site. In their response to the public consultation Welsh Water, who are responsible for such issues, note that they consider the drainage arrangements to be acceptable and suggest that a condition and standard advice be imposed on any permission regarding the future drainage arrangements of the site. Having considered this, it is believed that sufficient infrastructure is available to serve the site in accordance with the relevant requirements of policy ISA 1.

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Flooding/Conservation matters.

- 5.22 There is a bridge on a small section of the access road that leads to the site, crossing afon Gwyrfai which is some distance lower than the bridge itself. This bridge is a grade II listed structure and is also part of the road and within the flood zone. The current proposal has to be considered in the context of the previous use as a residential nursing home. It is not believed that the use of the site would intensify compared to the previous use and the nature of the movements would not be significantly different to what it was in the past. It is not believed that the proposal would be unacceptable in terms of its impact on the listed bridge as it would not intensify or change the pattern of use. In the context of the application, the Council's Senior Conservation Officer has no concerns regarding the use of the proposed bridge. In the same manner, it is not believed that the proposed use would be significantly different to the historic use in terms of the type of use and intensity in terms of numbers/movements etc and therefore there would be no concerns regarding floods. No observations were received regarding this aspect from Natural Resources Wales. Therefore, it is believed that the proposal is acceptable in respect of the relevant requirements of policies PS 20 and PS 6.

Response to public consultation

- 5.23 As previously referred to, observations/objections to the proposal have been received from local residents objecting to the proposal, and a number of matters relating to the proposed development have been raised concerning the access and movements stemming from the proposed development.
- 5.24 It is considered that these matters have received thorough consideration in the above assessment.
- 5.25 The historical and legal use of the site are material when considering this application and although there has been some disturbance in the past, and this in itself is no justification for allowing damaging developments, it is not believed in this case that what is proposed will be substantially damaging to the general and residential amenities of the area.

6. Conclusions:

- 6.1 Having considered the above and all the material planning matters, including the local and national policies and guidance, together with all the observations received from statutory consultees and local residents, it is considered that this proposal is acceptable in terms of compliance with the requirements of the relevant policies as noted above, subject to relevant conditions.

7. Recommendation:

- 7.1 Approve - conditions

1. Time
2. Comply with plans
3. Biodiversity
4. Restrict to holiday use only.
5. Keep a register
6. Protecting trees
7. Natural Resources Wales conditions
8. Welsh Water conditions

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9. Materials