

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 05/11/2018
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICE MANAGER	CAERNARFON

Number: 1

Application Number: C18/0796/11/R3

Date Registered: 11/09/2018

Application Type: Regulation 3

Community: Bangor

Ward: Glyder

Proposal: Demolish the existing primary school and construct a new primary school in its place including new access roads, playing fields and ancillary works

Location: Ysgol y Garnedd, Penrhosgarnedd, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2LX

Summary of the Recommendation: TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

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1. Description:

1.1 This application involves building a new school for 420 pupils to replace the existing building of Ysgol y Garnedd, Penrhosgarnedd (which has capacity for 210 pupils). The development would include extending the Ysgol y Garnedd site to include part of a playing field belonging to Ysgol Friars. The new school is to be erected on a site which currently forms part of the Friars site, whilst the site of the school that is to be demolished will be used to create playing fields and a car park.

1.2 The school site will be in two parts, namely the western part where the current school building is located, along with a mobile cabin used by the Ysgol Feithrin, a hard surface playing area and associated playing fields. This part abuts the gardens of houses to the south and the west whilst there is woodland to the east and a nature reserve to the north. The site's eastern part will be located on the playing fields of Ysgol Friars and this area is relatively level with a slope to the north that rises to an embankment along the edge of the site. The area abuts woodland to the west, residential gardens to the south and the grounds of Ysgol Friars to the north and east. An access route will be created to connect the two parts of the site, which will pass wet woodland that backs onto the Eithinog Site of Special Scientific Interest.

1.3 The new school would consist of:

- Reception and administration area
- Small and large halls (combinable) and an adjoining kitchen
- A room for the Cylch Meithrin
- Nursery Classroom
- Two classrooms for every year group from Reception to Year 6
- Dedicated ALN classrooms
- A group/ food science room and a library
- ITC Room
- Supplementary teaching spaces and group learning spaces
- Outdoor spaces for every classroom in KS1
- Hygiene rooms, toilets and shower rooms for every user
- Plant and ancillary rooms

1.4 The following documents were submitted to support the application:

- Ecological Survey
- Trees Report
- Drainage Strategy
- Environmental Noise Assessment
- Transport Assessment
- Pre-application Consultation Report

- Design and Access Statement
- Phase 1 and Phase 2 Geo-environmental Report
- Access to Penrhos Avenue Report
- Review of Alternative Systems
- Environmental Method Statement (Draft)
- Construction Method Statement (Draft)
- Design and Access Statement

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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 Gwynedd and Anglesey 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: MITIGATE AND ADAPT TO THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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 19: CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

AMG 5: LOCAL BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

AMG 6: PROTECTION SITES OF LOCAL OR REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

2.4 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 9 (2016).

Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016)

3. Relevant Planning History:

C11/0614/11/R3: Extend and repair existing car park together with a bus bay and footpath link - approved 05/09/11

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C10A/0511/11/R3: Creation of footpath and cycle track - approved 25/11/20

C06A/0635/11/R3 – Siting of a mobile classroom together with drainage works and landscaping – approved 10/10/06

C05A/0432/11/R3 - External alterations – approved 14/07/05

C02A/0376/11/R3 – Erection of a pair of portable buildings for the provision of two classrooms and toilets - approved 31/07/02

C98A/0132/11/R3 - Extension to the school - approved – 6/05/98

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: Not received

Transportation Unit: No objection but propose standard conditions regarding:

- Providing the roads network / footways / parking in accordance with the plan prior to the School being operational.
- Providing traffic calming measures (to be agreed with the Transportation Department) on Penrhos Road,
- Managing construction traffic movements during specific periods of the day.

The following standard notes are also recommended:

- Carry out a road condition survey prior to commencing construction work
- Commission a Road safety audit (clauses 2-4) to assess and adapt the roads network and footways and change them as needed.

Footpaths Unit: Observations - a condition is needed to ensure an appropriate diversion for the public footpath. Need to keep the unofficial path that surrounds the site open during the construction process.

Natural Resources Wales: Observations - request conditions:

1. A comprehensive Construction Environmental Management Plan should be submitted (to include a Waste Management Plan) prior to commencement of development
2. Must adhere to the Ecological Survey recommendations

CADW : Not received

Biodiversity Unit: Observations:

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- The measures noted in section 11.0 of the ecological report should be strictly adhered to.
- Plans will need to be submitted showing the details of all biodiversity mitigation work before work commences
- A condition should be included that the findings of a second bats survey are submitted prior to demolishing the old school building.
- An Environmental Method Statement will need to be agreed before starting the development work.

Public Protection: Not received

Trees Unit: Observations - the tree report is in accordance with BS 5837:2012 and outlines the process for protecting trees and its recommendations should be followed during the development.

Welsh Water: Observations - request a condition to ensure that surface water/land drainage water does not enter the public sewage system.

Fire Officer: No observations to offer

Land Drainage Unit: Not received

North Wales Police: Not received

Municipal Services: Not received

Public Consultation: A notice was posted on site and in the press, and nearby residents were informed. The publicity period for the planning application has ended and the following observations were received objecting to the development:

- Concern regarding noise and disturbance emanating from the school and affecting the houses of Penrhos Road along with damage to privacy - suggest that solid fencing will be required around the school rather than wire fencing.
- Concern regarding water drainage from the site and the proposed new culvert will not be sufficient to avoid flooding issues.
- Other concerns raised related to the proposal to use Penrhos Avenue to secure a separate vehicle access during the construction phase. The concerns of residents include:
 - The safety of residents in Penrhos Avenue as there is no pavement to separate pedestrians from the heavy traffic

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- Concern that emergency services will not be able to gain access along the avenue especially to the fire hydrant near Number 6.
- The road surface has not been constructed to meet with the demands of heavy construction traffic - there are sewage and gas pipelines under the surface and there is a risk that these could be damaged.
- Concerns regarding noise and disturbance during the construction period and the proposed working hours (07.30 - 18.00 Monday to Friday) are excessive.
- Health concerns deriving from particulate matter in the air.
- The development would harm the residential feeling of the area

The following observations were also received and these are not material planning considerations:

- Using Penrhos Avenue is not suitable in terms of logistical and engineering considerations.
- The cost of the access routes is excessive
- The Council has a duty of care towards the county's residents
- The school's existing access should be used to gain vehicular access to the construction site
- Using Penrhos Avenue could cause structural damage to the houses along the street

Correspondence in support of the application was also received.

It should be noted there is an ongoing consultation in the press regarding the diversion of Footpath 25 Bangor City.

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 state 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 these criteria below:
1. The first criterion requires that a site is located within or adjacent to development boundaries and given that this site is within the Bangor development boundary the proposal satisfies this criterion.

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2. Secondly, proposals should first look at making dual use of existing facilities or converting existing buildings. Given that the purpose of this application is to provide better facilities than what can be provided in the existing building, and when looking at the condition and nature of the existing school, 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 the facility, that it can be shown that the original site is no longer suitable for this use. Given that the land use would not change as a result of this development it could be argued that this application merely involves relocating facilities within a single large educational site. Nevertheless, it is believed, due to the scale of the new school building, that it is entirely reasonable to change the location of the building to a site that is sufficient to meet the anticipated educational needs.
 4. The fourth criterion means that the scale and the type of the proposal is appropriate to the settlement in question. Given that this proposal derives from the lack of school places available in Bangor and the need that has been identified by the Education Authority to provide more school places in the Penrhosgarnedd area, it is believed that the scale of this development is entirely appropriate for its location.
 5. The last criterion asks that the proposal is accessible to alternative modes of travel and given its location in the centre of the community of Penrhosgarnedd 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.

General and residential amenities

- 5.4 Generally, policies PCYFF 2 and PCYFF 3 of the Joint Local Development Plan approve proposals for new developments provided they do not have a detrimental impact on health, safety or the amenities of the residents of local properties or on the overall area.
- 5.5 The new building would be ‘u-shaped’ and construction around a hard surface courtyard. The building will mainly be two-storeys with a variety of roof shapes and materials to break up the uniformity of the elevations. The external elevations would include stone walls on the ground floor, coloured metal composite panels of a variety of colours and profiles, metal profile roofs of a colour that seeks to reflect the colours of the roofs of the surrounding houses, a roof of photovoltaic panels on the south facing slope of the hall and grey coloured windows of varying size across the development.
- 5.6 Although the footprint of the new school is more than twice the size of the existing school its location will be less prominent, in fact the school would not be visible from any public vantage point apart from the public footpath that crosses the site (which will be diverted after the development). It is considered that the submitted design offers a development on a scale and appearance that would be appropriate for its use and the site. The design of the new building, with its variety of materials and roof shapes creates a pattern of an urban development that would be in-keeping with the scale and design of the surrounding mixed area which includes the buildings of Ysgol Friars and the residential buildings of Penrhos Road. The front elevation (right) although modern, would reflect local materials and vernacular with its use of stone and its relatively domestic scale while the quiet colours blend in with the nearby woodland. It is

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therefore believed that the proposed design for the new building blends in with its edge-of-town semi-rural site.

- 5.7 The form of the development with its “u” shape will help to keep noise and disturbance near the building although it is inevitable that the density of activity on the former Ysgol Friars site will be greater than it is at the moment with its use as a playing field. Having said this, the school will only be open for limited hours and the children will be inside the building most of this time. Therefore, it is not believed that the school's day to day activities will not cause significant harm local residents' amenities.
- 5.8 Despite the above, several objections were raised during the consultation process by the residents of Penrhos Avenue, which is intended to be used as an access for construction transport as the site is developed. They state concern regarding matters such as noise, dust and pollution and the response of the Public Protection Unit to those specific matters is awaited. Nevertheless, it is believed that these matters can be overcome and managed in an acceptable manner by securing appropriate work methods through planning conditions and by agreeing on a Construction Methodology Management Statement before commencing the development.
- 5.9 Generally, it is not believed that this development would cause significant detrimental 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 believed, by setting appropriate conditions in light of receiving the observations of the Public Protection Unit, it could be ensured that the amenity impact of the construction work could be reduced as much as practically possible so that the potential harmful impacts are on a level that is acceptable over a short-term period. By operating as above, it is believed that the development would be acceptable under policies PCYFF 2 and PCYFF 3 of the LDP.

Open Spaces

- 5.10 The site of the new school building is on land that has been earmarked as an Open Space / Playing Field. Policy ISA 4 of the LDP encourages refusing proposals that would lead to the loss of existing open spaces, including amenity green spaces, unless four specific criteria can be met. The following assessment looks at the proposal in the context of this criteria:

1. There is an overall surplus of provision in the community;

Approximately 0.8ha of the application site has been earmarked as open space and most of it will be lost under the new school and the hard standing around it. Having said this, it is intended to create a new playing field on the site of the former school, which is approximately 1.1ha and approximately 0.2ha of the site will be a car park. On the whole, there will be no significant change in the total surface area of the provision of open amenity lands and therefore there will be no significant change in the provision.

2. The long-term requirement for the facility has ceased;

The need for a playing field facility continues and the loss will be replaced by relocating the field within the school site.

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3. Alternative provision of the same standard can be offered in an area equally accessible to the local community in question;

The new provision will be of a similar standard to what will be lost and within a site that is equally as accessible to the community.

4. The redevelopment of only a small part of the site would allow the retention and enhancement of the facility as a recreational resource.

The new playing facilities will be designed purposefully to meet with the school's modern needs and they will expand on the facilities that are available to the community.

- 5.11 Given the above, it is not believed that there will be a significant change to the amount of open land that will be available to the community and therefore the proposal is acceptable under policy ISA4.

Trees and Landscaping

- 5.12 A Trees Report was submitted with the application which identified the need to fell several trees and prune some others, including a strip of 11m to be cut from the edge of the woodland that abuts the new school's access road in order to enable the creation of a road of a sufficient width along with a foot and cycle path. It is intended to mitigate the effects of this work and the Trees Report recommends methods that are acceptable to the Council's Trees Unit. These measures will include planting indigenous trees to compensate for those that will be lost and it is believed that it is of crucial importance to ensure that a comprehensive landscaping/tree planting plan is agreed before development commences. By imposing conditions to ensure that the recommendations of the Trees Report are followed and to agree on a landscaping / tree planting plan, it is believed that the development is acceptable under policy PCYFF 4 of the LDP.

Biodiversity

- 5.13 The site is partly within the Gorphwysfa Regional Wildlife Site and an ecological Report was submitted with the application to assess the potential impact on the habitats of the site and its vicinity. The Biodiversity Unit and Natural Resources Wales state that the measures noted in section 11.0 of the Ecological Report should be strictly adhered to (Improvements and Mitigating Biodiversity).
- 5.14 Two preliminary surveys have demonstrated that bats do not use the school building however there is potential for bats to use it at some point in the future. Mitigation measures have been proposed including installing bat and bird boxes in the woodland and on the new building. Plans will need to be submitted showing the locations of the bat and bird boxes before the work commences. The Ecological Survey also states an intention to re-inspect the existing school for bats before it is demolished in 2020. The Biodiversity Unit agrees that this should happen and that a planning condition is needed to ensure this.
- 5.15 The Eithinog Site of Special Scientific Interest is approximately 80m to the north of the site. This site was designated due to its interest in terms of grass land fungi and NRW accepts, that by following suitable measures to prevent pollution and manage waste, that it is not likely that approving the application would harm this habitat.

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- 5.16 Due to the size of the development, the application had to be screened to see whether or not there was a need to undertake a full Environmental Impact Assessment for the development, and it was concluded that such an assessment was not necessary.
- 5.17 By ensuring that appropriate conditions are included on the development it is believed that this development meets with the requirements of Policies PS19, AMG 5 and AMG 6 of the LDP which encourages proposals to protect, and where appropriate, to enhance the area's biodiversity.

Highways matters

- 5.18 The Transportation Unit had no objection to the proposal but it did recommend ensuring that the vehicular access, footpaths and the entire parking provision are provided before the new school opens.
- 5.19 The plans include providing connecting paths for pedestrians and cyclists, from Penrhos Road, through the site and this will assist in promoting alternative modes of transport and also corresponds to the objective of the Active Travel Act. The proposal also includes providing additional parking on the site, for general vehicles, a specific site for buses and intends to formalise drop-off areas within the roads network in the school's vicinity.
- 5.20 It is proposed to use Penrhos Avenue as part of the traffic management plan during the construction phase. This street has not been adopted as a public highway, however a public footpath runs along it and across part of the site. As part of that application, the applicant has submitted a document entitled 'Vehicular Access along Penrhos Avenue Rev P01) which identifies the type of vehicles that will be allowed access along this road and the Transportation Unit confirms that this document is acceptable.
- 5.21 It is recommended to extend the scope of the road improvements work to include appropriate measures to reduce traffic speeds along Penrhos Road near the school junction. It is also recommended to look at imposing further measurements such as flashing signs or a speed table near the access to coincide with the existing 20mph zone.
- 5.22 In terms of appropriate conditions / notes, specific conditions have been recommended that relate to providing the roads network / footways / parking in accordance with the plan prior to opening the school, to providing traffic calming measures (to be agreed with the Transportation Unit) on Penrhos Road, and conditions to manage construction traffic movements during specific periods of the day. Standard notes have also been recommended in relation to carrying out a roads condition survey before work commences and to commission a 'road safety audit' (clauses 2-4) to assess and adapt the roads network and footways and change them as needed.
- 5.23 By acting in accordance with the Transportation Unit's recommendations it is believed that the scheme complies with the requirements of policies PS 4, TRA 2 and TRA 4 which aim to ensuring provision for transportation that is sustainable and safe for all users.

Public Footpath

- 5.24 Public Footpath 25 Bangor Community crosses the site and the planning application includes the right to divert the path officially to follow the route of an unofficial footpath which has already been created around the Ysgol Friars playing field. This

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unofficial path is owned by the County Council and has a tarmacadam surface and this is the path used by the public when crossing the site.

- 5.25 The Footpaths Unit is satisfied with the proposed diversion but also emphasises the importance of the unofficial path and notes, that although it is not currently a dedicated path, it is of special importance to the local community. With this in mind, it is eager to see this footpath protected during the construction phase.

Drainage matters

- 5.26 In accordance with the expectations of Policy PS 6, which requires assurance there is appropriate evidence that full consideration has been given to the potential impacts of climate change, a Drainage Strategy was submitted as part of the application. This states that an investigation has identified that the ground water level on the site is very high (typically 250mm under the surface). The strategy also identified that water flows from the site through a culvert in the far end that leads under Penrhos Avenue. The culvert is in poor condition and there are no access chambers to enable maintenance. It is therefore proposed, as part of the work to redevelop the school, to install a new culvert across the site as a long-term solution for draining the school site.
- 5.27 Welsh Water confirms there is sufficient capacity within the sewage system to cope with the flow of foul water from the school. Neither Welsh Water nor Natural Resources Wales have raised any objections to the plans and the observations of the Water Drainage Unit are awaited.

6. Conclusions:

- 6.1 Given the relevant planning matters in this case, the proposed development meets with many objectives in the Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan and proposes a development with a high quality, modern and suitable design that will make significant contributions to meeting the need for local educational places and expand and improve the current provision on the site. Consideration was given to all material issues, including all matters raised by objectors, and it is not believed that the proposal is likely to cause any long-term unacceptable detrimental impact 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 delegate powers to the Senior Planning Manager to approve the application, subject to receiving favourable observations from the Public Protection Unit and the Land Drainage Unit along with a positive outcome to the process of consulting on the public footpath diversion. The following conditions should also be included:-

1. Time - (five years)
2. In accordance with the plans
3. Agree on materials and final colours
4. Transport conditions
5. Welsh Water Condition
6. Submit and agree on a detailed Environmental Construction Method Statement - the Statement will include a Waste Management Plan for the period when the site is being developed.
7. Submit and agree on a Detailed Landscaping Plan

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8. Submit and agree on a detailed Ecological Mitigation Plan.
9. Must adhere to the Ecological Survey recommendations
10. Must strictly adhere to the recommendations of the Trees Report
11. Before the new school becomes operational a Demolition Plan must be submitted and agreed for the existing school that will include a timetable for the demolition work, restoring the land and landscaping along with a timetable for an additional bat survey that will be completed prior to the demolition work.
12. Working hours restrictions during the construction phase (to be agreed with the Transportation Unit and the Public Protection Unit)
13. Any other additional conditions required by the Public Protection Service
14. Agree on treatment of the boundaries

Notes

1. Welsh Water
2. Natural Resources Wales
3. Highways
4. Footpaths Unit