

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 10/02/2020
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICE MANAGER	PWLLHELI

Number: 4

Application Number: C19/1045/18/LL

Date Registered: 11/11/2019

Application Type: Full

Community: Llanddeiniolen

Ward: Bethel

Proposal: Siting of 18 touring holiday units, siting of a mobile shepherd's hut used as washing facilities for the touring units, create roadways together with environmental improvements including walkways and landscaping

Location: Rhyd y Galen Caravan and Camping Park, Bethel Road, Caernarfon LL55 1UL

Summary of the Recommendation: TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

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1. Description:

- 1.1 Full application to extend the existing touring caravan site for the location of 18 additional touring units (caravans, motorhomes, tents and trailer tents). The current planning permission allows for the siting of 63 touring units, six camping pods and two late arrival pitches. Approving the proposal would allow for a total of 81 touring units and six camping pods, without the inclusion of late arrival caravan pitches. It is also intended to install a shepherd's hut in the centre of the proposed site for use as a washing facility. The touring units would be moved to a storage site within the existing caravan site outside the holiday season. The proposed extension to the touring caravan site is located on an area of land to the west of the existing site. The site measures 0.7 hectares and is on a downward facing slope which runs north to south. The field is currently vacant, and the lower part is used to deposit soil waste. The applicant states that the proposed site has been used as a campsite under 28 Day Regulation. It is also noted that the existing late arrival caravan site is intended for use as a provision for two late arrival tents. As part of the proposal, it is intended to construct hard standing areas of slate waste, measuring 12 metres by 7 metres, for the touring units; a tarmac service road similar to that of the existing site; wildlife trails in the adjoining field and the planting of trees and hedgerows within the site and on its boundaries.
- 1.2 Neither the site nor the nearby area has been denoted or protected in terms of landscape safeguarding designations. The site is served by an existing entrance off a class 2 county highway. There is no intention to modify this entrance.
- 1.3 A Design and Access Statement was submitted with the application (although not mandatory) which contains a preliminary Ecological Evaluation and a Tree Specialist's report.
- 1.4 The amended plan was received on 09.12.2019, showing a storage site for touring units within the existing caravan site, and a cross-section plan dated 05.01.2020, showing the necessary excavation work for the construction of the hard standing plots.
- 1.5 The application is submitted to committee as it involves siting touring units on land measuring in excess of 0.5 hectares.

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 2011-2026 adopted 31 July 2017:-**
- TRA 2: Parking standards.
- TRA 4: Managing transport impacts.
- PCYFF 2: Development criteria.

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PCYFF 3: Design and place shaping.

PCYFF 4: Design and landscaping.

TWR 5: Touring caravan, camping and temporary alternative camping accommodation

PS 19: Conserving and where appropriate enhancing the natural environment.

SPG: Holiday Accommodation (2010).

2.4 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales - Edition 10 (2018).

Technical Advice Note 13 – Tourism.

Technical Advice Note 18 – Transport.

3. Relevant Planning History:

Application number C10A/0409/18/LL – Extend the touring caravan site from 35 to 50, increase the number of tents from five to six, site a caravan for a seasonal manager. Retain the winter storage for 20 touring caravans together with environmental and landscape improvements – Approved 13.10.2010

Application number C15/0003/18/LL - Change of use to create two late arrival pitches, siting of 13 additional touring units within the existing site, replace six camping pitches with six camping pods, together with landscape and environmental improvements to the site - Approved 25.03.2015.

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: No objection.

Transportation Unit: No objection to the proposal; however, it is recommended to consult with Welsh Government's Trunk Roads Unit in relation to the site's proximity to the bypass.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) No objection to the application, but offers the following observations: It is noted that the preliminary Ecological Evaluation stated that there were no bats or otters present on the site. NRW considers, in light of the information submitted, that the risk to bats and otters is low, as defined in the Natural Resources Wales Approach to Bats and Planning (2015) guidance document. Bats and their breeding sites and nesting places are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. NRW does not consider that the development would have a detrimental impact on the species in question. It is also stated that the drainage system will need an Environmental Licence from NRW.

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Welsh Water: The usual observations referring the applicant's intention to use a private sewage system, along with noting that certain public drains are not noted on Welsh Water's maps.

Public Protection Unit: It is noted that it is proposed to connect with an existing sewage system. The applicant must ensure that the current system is in good condition and is sufficient to deal with the flow and load as a result of this development. The applicant should provide these details to the authority in order to prove that the current septic tank has sufficient capacity.

Biodiversity Unit: It is noted that the previous planning permission for the extension of the touring caravan site, dated 12.10.2010, was approved subject to a condition imposing the introduction of a Council biodiversity management scheme to create a wildlife and conservation area to compensate for the land used to extend the caravan site.

It is recommended that an additional biodiversity mitigation area should be provided to compensate for the land used for the current application.

The site includes mature trees with the potential for bat roosts, and so there will be a need to contact an ecologist should there be an intention to fell trees.

That rivers are habitats and wildlife corridors. Records show that there are hedgehogs present on the existing camping site. It is likely that the hedgerows and greenfield land provide a good habitat for hedgehogs. All hedgerows should be retained.

The ecological report stated that no invasive species had been recorded. However, the site was inspected in April before Himalayan Balsam went to seed. This plant has been recorded in a number of locations within 300 metres of the campsite and along the banks of the adjacent river. The Biodiversity Officer recorded Montbretia growing at the edge of one of the fields. Both of these plants are listed as invasive species.

The introduction of a pollution prevention plan is recommended before the work is undertaken.

That trees and hedgerows provide habitats for a number of species. This proposal would affect a small section of hedgerow, and therefore a new hedgerow should be planted to compensate.

It is recommended that the applicant should provide a Biodiversity management scheme to include the planting of hedgerows and the management of fields as traditional wildflower meadows which would benefit insects and animals.

A pollution prevention plan is needed.

No tree felling, hedge cutting or clearing of vegetation within the nesting season.

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Welsh Government - Trunk Roads Unit: No objection

Caravans Officer: No objection

CADW: No objection to the proposal as it is likely that the intended planting would, in time, create an effective screen between the proposed development and the nearby monuments.

Public Consultation: A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. No responses were received.

5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

The principle of the development

5.1 The principle of extending a touring caravan site is included in Policy TWR 5 of the LDP. Such developments are approved if compliance with a number of criteria can be secured:-

- That the proposed development is of high quality in terms of design, layout and appearance, and is sited in an unobtrusive location which is well screened by existing landscape features in a way which does not significantly harm the visual quality of the landscape - the proposal involves creating an extension to the touring caravan park in a field to the west of the site. The intention is to locate the touring units around the boundaries of the field but at a sufficient distance from the existing vegetation so as not to damage trees and hedgerows; this arrangement will also allow for an open area in the centre of the proposed extension. The site is hidden from the adjacent county road due to existing trees and hedgerows, and it is intended to reinforce these boundaries with further planting. Given the above, it is not believed that this proposal would be an obtrusive development in the landscape.
- The proposal would avoid the creation of too many hard standing areas - the proposal involves the installation of 18 units on a field measuring 0.7 hectares. The low density for the site is therefore noted. It is realised that there is an intention to develop large hard standing areas of slate waste and a tarmac service road; however, it is not considered that this would be excessive in this case due to the hidden location of the site and its size in comparison with the number of units proposed. The applicant states that the use of tarmac would create a clear path to facilitate the transportation of touring units to their plots, and that it is likely that building the road of a less permanent material would cause difficulties for visitors' vehicles in wet weather due to the downward contour of the site towards the river. Despite this, a condition could be imposed on any permission requiring agreement on the colour of the tarmac for the service road.
- Physical contact with the ground is limited and items can be moved from the site during the closed season - details of the units were not included with the application; however, it is understood that the units would include caravans, tents and camper vans. The units would be mobile, and so any physical contact with the ground would be minimal.
- Any ancillary facilities should be located in an existing building; or, if this is not possible, any new facility is commensurate with the scale of the development - the only ancillary facility that is part of this proposal is the mobile unit for washing and toileting which also takes the form of a shepherd hut, measuring 5.6 metres by 2.4 metres. It is believed that

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adding this structure to the holiday units would be commensurate with the scale of the development, considering its location and setting within the landscape. Confirmation has been received from the Public Protection Unit that this size is acceptable for the site.

- That the site is close to the main highway network and that adequate access can be provided - the site is served by an existing entrance off a class 2 county highway, and it is believed that approving this application would not undermine road safety on the public roads in the vicinity of the site of the application and this element of the proposal is acceptable to the Transportation Unit and Welsh Government - Trunk Roads Unit.
- Occupation of the development is restricted to holiday use only - the applicant has confirmed that use made of the holiday accommodation units would be seasonal only and that the accommodation units would be removed from the site outside of the holiday season.
- That the site is used for touring purposes only and that any units are removed from the site during periods when not in use - a plan has been received from the applicant showing that the intention is to keep the units in a storage area within the existing caravan site.

5.2 As a result of the above assessment, it is believed that the proposal is acceptable on the grounds of location, setting, scale and its impact on visual amenities in the local area; to this end, therefore, it is believed that the proposal is acceptable, subject to imposing relevant conditions, and complies with all the requirements of Policy TWR5 of the LDP.

Visual amenities

5.3 As referred to above, the site is located on a field which is relatively hidden due to the presence of trees and hedgerows along its boundaries. The touring units will include caravans, tents and motor homes, and the washing unit will take the form of a shepherd's hut measuring 5.6 metres by 2.4 metres, and finished in conservation green. The site is located on the slopes of a small valley to the west of the existing site. The lie of the land along with existing landscaping at the boundaries creates a site which is hidden from public places. It is also noted that the site is located a field's width (approximately 70 metres) from the county highway to the north. It is also noted that neither the site nor the nearby area has been acknowledged or denoted as a landscape of any special interest, and therefore it is felt that there is less emphasis on landscape safeguarding. However, the plan submitted with the application shows a proposal to reinforce the existing hedgerows with further planting, and that this would reduce any impact on the landscape; it is believed that the proposal would have no detrimental impact on the rural character and atmosphere of the local landscape. Therefore, the proposal is acceptable based on the requirements of Policies PCYFF3 and PS19 regarding its impact on the natural environment. CADW states that there are three ancient monument sites within two kilometres of the area, and despite concerns regarding the proposal's impact on one of these [hut circle, monument no. CN229) due to its location approximately 115 metres from the application site, it is considered that the proposed planting work is likely to reduce any impact over time.

General and residential amenities

5.4 The application was advertised at the site and nearby residents were notified. No response was received. The site is located in the countryside approximately 180 metres from the nearest neighbouring house. The site will not be visible from this house. A touring caravan site already operates from the site and, even though the intention is to add to the number of caravans on the site, it is not considered that the additional activities on site would have a substantial additional detrimental impact on the amenities of the houses in the vicinity. It is therefore felt that the proposed use will not generate more noise than the current activities and use. It is considered that the proposal would not have a substantial detrimental impact on nearby residents and therefore the proposal is not considered to be contrary to Policy PCYFF 2 of the LDP.

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Transport and access matters

- 5.5 The site is served by an existing access to a class 2 county highway. There is no intention to modify the entrance. Considering the scale of the development (18 additional touring units) a substantial increase in traffic is not expected on this network of roads as a result of the development itself, to the detriment of road safety. It is also noted that the applicant stated that the existing storage provision would be sufficient for the proposal outside of the holiday season, and it is likely that this would reduce the movement of traffic on the county road as a result of the proposal. The Transportation Unit has no concerns about the effect the proposal would have on any road or proposed road. Welsh Government - Trunk Roads Unit submitted observations confirming that it would not be serving direction with regard to the proposal. It is considered that the proposal is acceptable based on the requirements of Policies TRA2 and TRA4 of the LDP.

The economy

- 5.6 Information was submitted with the application stating that the applicant had substantially reinvested in the site in order to upgrade and improve the quality and variety of resources for visitors, and that the visitor accommodation industry contributed significantly to the local economy by offering employment and employment opportunities to the community and the wider area.

Biodiversity

- 5.7 The proposal includes the use of an empty field currently used as a camp site under the 28 day regulation as an extension to the existing touring caravan site. The proposal will include the development of 18 hard standing areas along with a service road for the units. The trees survey recommends the felling of four trees for safety reasons, and it is felt that the new planting work would compensate for any loss of vegetation. The development of the site as proposed will remove the waste area in the southern part of the site by using it for the location of five touring units. The fact that the Biodiversity Unit has recommended the setting aside of land as a wildlife and conservation area, as with the 2010 permission, is appreciated. However, the applicant states that he planted approximately 1000 trees and bushes in 2014 in a new hedgerow measuring around 190 metres, that a wildlife conservation area has been established, and that the intention is to plant further vegetation as part of this plan. It is therefore felt that there is no justification for setting more land aside in order to expand the wildlife and conservation area. The ecological report states that there was no evidence of the presence of any protected species on the site; however, it is felt that it should be ensure that the site is lighted in an appropriate manner in order to avoid hampering the trees' potential to support and provide homes for protected species, as well as the emission of light pollution. Lighting details were received, showing low light lamps on posts within the site. It is proposed to impose a condition on any permission given to ensure that the work conforms to the details of the ecological report.
- 5.8 The trees survey states that the site is surrounded by mature trees and hedgerows, and although the location of the proposed units would not affect the existence of these trees and hedgerows, it is understood that four trees must be felled in the interests of safety. However, the report also states that the loss of these four trees would not disrupt the visual amenities or the character of the site. It is noted that the applicant has shown intent to plant further trees within and on the site's boundaries, and this could be imposed as a condition.

6. Conclusions:

- 6.1 Having considered the above and all the relevant planning matters including the local and national policies and guidance, as well as the observations received, it is now believed that the

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proposal is acceptable based on the matters noted in the report and that it would not have a substantial impact on the Special Landscape Area, amenities of the neighbourhood or road safety.

7. Recommendation:

To approve with the following conditions:

1. Five years.
2. In accordance with the revised plans.
3. Landscaping.
4. Restrict the numbers to 18 touring units
5. Restrict the units to holiday use only.
6. Restrict the holiday season.
7. A register to be maintained.
8. The units to be stored in a storage site when not in use / outside the holiday season
9. Act in accordance with the recommendations of the ecological assessment.
10. No tree felling, hedge cutting or clearing of vegetation within the nesting season.
11. Agree on the colour of the tarmac for the service road.
12. Lighting control.
13. Lighting control.