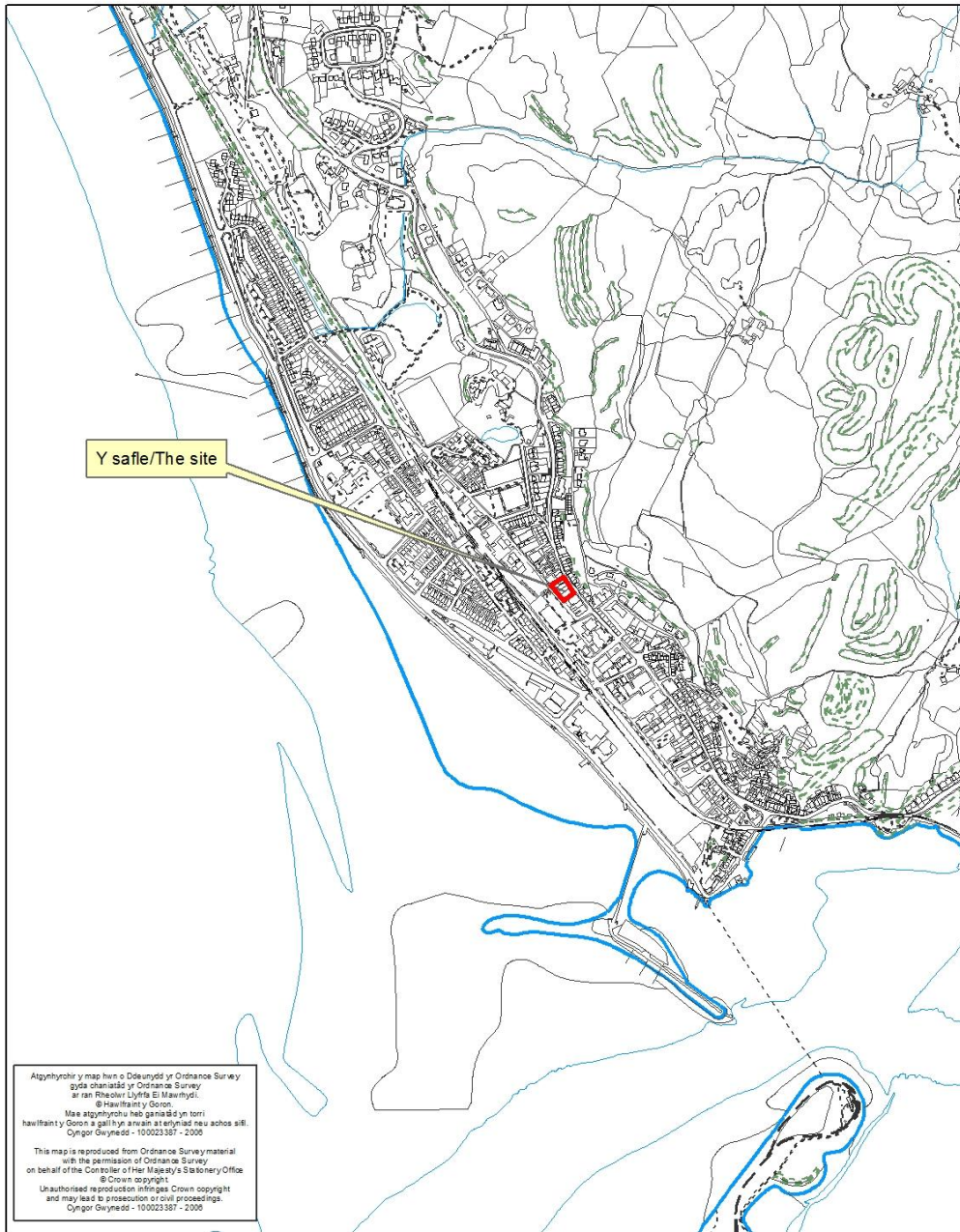


Number: 4



Rhif y Cais / Application Number : C15-0568-00-LL

Cynllun lleoliad ar gyfer adnabod y safle yn unig. Dim i raddfa.  
Location Plan for identification purposes only. Not to scale.



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Application Number: C15/0568/00/LL  
Date Registered: 02/06/2015  
Application Type: Full - Planning  
Community: Barmouth  
Ward: Barmouth

Proposal: ADAPTATION AND EXTENSION OF EXISTING BUILDING (TO INCLUDE CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL FLOOR) TO CREATE NINE HOLIDAY UNITS AND TWO RETAIL UNITS

Location: ELEPHANT WORKS (FORMER LEWIS'S FURNITURE STORE), KING STREET, ABERMAW, GWYNEDD, LL42 1AD

**Summary of the Recommendation:**

TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

**1. Description:**

- 1.1 This application is to adapt and extend the existing building in order to create a total of nine holiday units (in the form of three units with three bedrooms and six units with two bedrooms), and two retail units. The proposal comprises the provision of an additional floor on the building that would be a mixture of flat roofs and slate ridge roofs, as well as a roof garden on the north-eastern elevation with a balcony/terrace on the south western elevation on the additional floor. There would be no change to the building's ground floor and the holiday units would be located on the first and second floors of the building with retail units on the first floor facing King Edward Street. North-west of the site it is proposed to demolish the existing workshop in order to provide storage areas for bins and bicycles and to create eight parking bays.
- 1.2 The existing building is a significant two-storey structure placed on two levels between King Edward Street and Park Road in the town of Barmouth. As a result of the differences in levels the section of the building facing King Edward Street appears to be one-storey whilst the section bordering with Park Road is two-storey. Currently the upper floor is empty and it was last used as a retail unit. The units on the ground floor are a mixture of uses which include small retail units together with a printers, church, carpenter's workshop and a nursery. North-east of the site is the class 1 county highway (A496) and across that road are five-storey buildings, some of these buildings have retail units on the ground floor together with residential units above. South-west of the site is the empty former mail sorting office with planning permission to be converted into residential units. A non-classified road (Park Road) borders the site to the south-east and across that road are car parks and a supermarket.
- 1.3 The proposal also entails undertaking external alternations to the building which include opening and closing window openings and new doors, as well as refurbishing the front windows in the retail units that face King Edward Street. The proposal also includes a storage provision for waste bins and recycling bins together with a bicycle storage area. The proposal also provides eight parking bays (including 1 disabled) and a turn table within the building's curtilage to the north-west of the site. It is also proposed to finish the building with a mixture of slate, render and natural stone. The site is located within the development boundary of Barmouth.
- 1.4 The site is not located within the Barmouth Conservation Area, however, it is within 30 metres of the Conservation Area boundary. A Design and Access Statement has been submitted as part of the application, together with a Language and Community Statement and an open market valuation for the proposed units.

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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 in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Unitary Development Plan.

## 2.2 Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan 2009:

### POLICY A2 – PROTECTING THE SOCIAL, LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL FABRIC OF COMMUNITIES

Safeguard the social, linguistic or cultural cohesion of communities against significant harm due to the size, scale or location of proposals.

### POLICY B4 – DEVELOPMENTS IN OR AFFECTING THE SETTING OF CONSERVATION AREAS

Ensure that proposals within conservation areas, or proposals that affect their setting, are refused unless they aim to maintain or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting.

### POLICY B20 – SPECIES AND THEIR HABITATS THAT ARE INTERNATIONALLY AND NATIONALLY IMPORTANT

Proposals that are likely to cause unacceptable disturbance or harm to protected species and their habitats will be refused unless they can conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features of the site.

### POLICY B22 – BUILDING DESIGN

Promote good building design by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features and character of the local landscape and environment.

### POLICY B23 – AMENITIES

Safeguard the amenities of the local neighbourhood by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the recognised features and amenities of the local area.

### POLICY B24 – ALTERATIONS AND BUILDING EXTENSIONS WITHIN DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES, RURAL VILLAGES AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

Ensure that proposals for alterations or extensions to buildings conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the character and amenity value of the local area.

### POLICY B25 – BUILDING MATERIALS

Safeguard the visual character by ensuring that building materials are of a high standard and are in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area.

### POLICY B26 – SHOP-FRONTS AND COMMERCIAL UNITS IN THE TOWN CENTRES

Ensuring that proposals that are approved respect the scale, size, materials and architectural style of the building and the local vicinity.

### POLICY C1 – LOCATING NEW DEVELOPMENT

Land within the development boundaries of towns and villages and the developed form of rural villages will be the main focus for new developments. New buildings,

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structures and ancillary facilities in the countryside will be refused with the exception of a development that is permitted by another policy of the Plan.

**POLICY C4 – ADAPTING BUILDINGS FOR RE-USE**

Proposals to adapt buildings for re-use rather than demolition will be approved provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to the suitability of the building, visual considerations, design and the impact on the vitality of neighbouring towns and villages.

**POLICY CH11 – CONVERSION OF BUILDINGS WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES OF LOCAL CENTRES AND VILLAGES FOR RESIDENTIAL USE**

Proposals to convert buildings for residential use within the development boundaries of villages and local centres will be approved provided they can conform to criteria relating to local need, impact on holiday accommodation and community services and occupancy of the dwelling.

**POLICY CH30 – ACCESS FOR ALL**

Proposals for residential/business/commercial units or buildings/facilities for public use will be refused unless it can be shown that full consideration has been given to the provision of appropriate access for the widest possible range of individuals.

**POLICY CH33 – SAFETY ON ROADS AND STREETS**

Development proposals will be approved provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to the vehicular entrance, the standard of the existing roads network and traffic calming measures.

**POLICY CH36 – PRIVATE CAR PARKING FACILITIES**

Proposals for new developments, extensions to existing developments or change of use will be refused unless off-street parking is provided in accordance with the Council’s current parking guidelines, and having given due consideration to the accessibility of public transport, the possibility of walking or cycling from the site and the proximity of the site to a public car park.

**POLICY D15 – SELF-SERVICED HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION**

Proposals for developing new, permanent self-catering holiday accommodation and adaptation of existing buildings or existing establishments will be approved provided the design, setting and appearance of the development is of high standard and if it conforms to criteria relevant to the location and scale of the development, impact on the permanent housing stock and on residential areas and availability of this type of holiday accommodation.

- Supplementary Planning Guidance – Holiday accommodation
- Supplementary Planning Guidance – Planning and the Welsh Language
- Supplementary Planning Guidance – Planning for sustainable building
- Supplementary Planning Guidance – Affordable Housing
- Gwynedd Design Guidance

**2.3 National Policies:**

- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7, July 2014)
- Technical Advice Note 12: Design
- Technical Advice Note 18: Transportation
- Technical Advice Note 13: Tourism
- Technical Advice Note 20: Planning and the Welsh Language

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### 3. Relevant Planning History

C99M/00/11/00/LL – Full application for the change of use of former warehouse (Unit 5) and former café and storeroom (timber building) to a religious meeting hall and an addition to the meeting hall – Approved June 1999.

C01M/0054/00/LL – Unit 7 – Change of use of former woodworking site and warehouse as an addition to the church and youth club – Withdrawn July 2001;

C01M/0116/00/LL – Unit 7 – Change of use of former woodworking site and warehouse as an addition to the church and youth club – Approved November 2001;

C03M/0160/00/LL – Units 5 and 7 – Change of use of part of the church into a nursery and meeting room – approved October 2003;

C05M/0089/00/LL – Unit 8 Change of use to form a bookshop and church meeting room – Approved June 2005;

C14/0341/00/LL – Units 1 and 2 - Change of use of shop unit to community use for meeting rooms, offices and church to include alterations to front of Building and create a play area for children and adaptations – Approved June 2014;

### 4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: No objection.

Transportation Unit: No objection to the proposal. The site is central within the town of Barmouth and within walking distance to a number of local facilities.

Plans show parking provision for eight vehicles, although it is proposed to construct nine holiday units. Although there is no parking bay for each unit, it is assumed that the provision is acceptable as there are several modes of transport available in the vicinity including a regular train service; therefore it is not essential for visitors to travel to the site in a car in this case.

Dŵr Cymru: No response.

Biodiversity: The building has a flat roof and brick walls. The light levels are very high in the building. There is only a low potential that bats may be present and no bat survey will need to be undertaken prior to determining the application. Should bats be found during the work, the work should be stopped immediately and Natural Resources Wales should be contacted for advice.

Natural Resources Wales: No response

Public Protection Unit: No response

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Public Consultation: A notice was posted on site and nearby residents were informed.  
The advertisement period has expired and objections were received based on relevant planning matters which relate to:

- Loss of natural light;
- Parking and road safety issues;
- Increase in waste and storage area;
- Loss of privacy;
- Concern that the public sewer will not be able to cope with additional units;
- Concern regarding the impact of the proposal on local business during the building period.

In addition, the following observations were received, that are not relevant planning considerations when assessing this application:

- Loss of view;
- That the owner of the building had not notified the tenants in the correct manner.

## **5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:**

### **The principle of the development**

- 5.1 Policy C1 of the GUDP states that land within town and village development boundaries and the developed form of rural villages will be the main focus for new developments. New buildings, structures and ancillary facilities in the countryside will be refused with the exception of a development that is permitted by another policy of the Plan. In this case, the proposal entails the conversion and extension of an existing building situated within the development boundary of the Barmouth local centre and therefore the proposal conforms to this specific policy.
- 5.2 Policy C4 of the GUDP involves adapting buildings for re-use, and states that policies to adapt buildings for re-use will be approved provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to the suitability of the building, visual considerations, design and the impact on the vitality of neighbouring towns and villages. It is considered that the existing building is suitable for the proposed use which is a mixture of retail and residential and the design, including the essential changes/alterations, respect the structure of the original building and is a significant improvement in terms of the building's design which is currently an eyesore and a mixture of different materials, and in keeping with the surrounding area.
- 5.3 The proposed external alterations include adding an additional floor, roof terraces as well as changes to door and window openings, provision of new windows that are expected for this type of proposal, and suitable in this case bearing in mind that the design and appearance of the existing building is an eyesore. It is considered that these alterations are unlikely to cause significant harm to the area's visual quality and character and they will be an improvement to the general character of the townscape considering the time the building has been vacant and its current condition.

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Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with all the requirements of policy C4 above.

- 5.4 Policy D15 of the GUDP states that proposals for developing new, permanent self-catering holiday accommodation and adaptation of existing buildings or existing establishments will be approved if the design, setting and appearance of the development is of high standard and if it conforms with criteria relevant to the location and scale of the development, impact on the permanent housing stock; residential areas and the availability of this type of holiday accommodation. The proposal entails the adaptation of the existing building and its extension and it is situated within the GUDP development boundary and therefore it is considered that the proposal complies with criterion 1 of this policy. The building subject to this application is situated on the outskirts of the main street in Barmouth and is surrounded by varied commercial and residential buildings, and it is therefore considered that the proposed use is in keeping with this area of the town. It is considered that the area and size of the site is sufficient to locate a development of this scale and although it is intended to include an additional floor on the existing building it is considered that its scale is acceptable when it is compared with adjacent two-storey buildings facing King Edward Street and three-storey from the direction of Park Road. In addition, the site is very accessible and situated close to the highway network with various modes of public transport. It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of criterion 2 of Policy D15 above.
- 5.5 The proposal in question will not lead to the loss of current housing stock as no residential units are currently part of the building. This area of the town of Barmouth has a mixture of residential and commercial uses, however, it is not considered that this development of nine holiday units would lead to significant harm to the area's residential character and therefore it is considered that the proposal conforms to criterion 4 of policy D15 of the GUDP. In criterion 5 of this policy it is stated that the development should not lead to an over-concentration of such accommodation within the area, although Barmouth is known as a seaside resort there is no evidence of over-concentration of holiday accommodation in this area of the town from the evidence available on the internet. It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with all the criteria in policy D15 of the GUDP.
- 5.6 The units proposed are a mixture of two and three bedroomed units and if the application were approved then a condition would be imposed limiting the units for holiday use only. Although concerns have been discussed with the Council's Joint Planning Policy Unit that the units may be changed into permanent residential units in the future (however, it is considered that the proposal may be in accordance with policy CH11 that also concerns the conversion of buildings into living units), it is considered that the size of the majority of the units would be affordable (according to the floor area noted in the Supplementary Planning Guidance: Affordable Housing) and considering their size and location and likely value therefore the proposal would also be in accordance with criterion 1 of policy CH11 as well as policy CH6. In addition, it has to be borne in mind that the application has to be considered exactly in accordance with what the applicant seeks and any application for permanent housing on the site would have to be considered on its own merit.

### **Visual amenities**

- 5.7 Policies B22 and B24 of the GUDP relate to making alterations and extending buildings. These policies promote good building design by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features and

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character of the local landscape and environment. It is necessary to ensure that proposals for adaptations or extensions to buildings conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the character and amenity value of the local area and that the approved proposals respect the scale, size, materials and the architectural style of the building and the local area.

- 5.8 Policy B25 of the GUDP relates to safeguarding the visual character by ensuring that building materials must be of a high standard that complement the character and appearance of the local area.
- 5.9 The proposal comprises an additional floor on top of the existing building. The design of the additions and adaptations to the existing building include modern aspects such as terraces, whilst also incorporating a more traditional design such as sash windows and traditional shop frontages. As previously noted it is considered that the size and scale of the development respect the site and local area and will not lead to an overdevelopment of the site and it is considered that the proposed alterations respect the local townscape.
- 5.10 The proposal includes a number of minor external alterations that include changes to door and window openings, providing openings and new windows and such changes are expected in this type of development. It is considered that the design of the external alterations are suitable and in keeping with the original building and are a definite improvement of a building of sub-standard design. In addition, the inclusion of a ridge roof on the roof section of the additional floor and a false roof and the south-western elevation will improve the appearance of the existing building that has a very plain design. In terms of finishes, it is proposed that they will be a mixture of render, natural stone for external walls of the development with a natural slate roof on part of the building. If the application is approved then a condition will be imposed to agree on the external finishes of the building in writing prior to the commencement of any work regarding the development.
- 5.11 It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policies B22, B24 and B25 above as well as the Gwynedd Design Guidance.
- 5.12 Policy B26 states that proposals that are approved are required to respect the scale, size, materials and architectural style of the building and the local vicinity. It is therefore considered that the shop frontages of the proposed two retail units follow the design features and the finish of traditional shop frontages and comply with policy B26 above. Policy B4 deals with ensuring that proposals that affect the setting of conservation areas, are refused unless they aim to maintain or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting. As several high buildings are located between this development and the conservation area this will ensure that the development will not have an impact on the character or the appearance of the conservation area.

### **General and residential amenities**

- 5.13 Policy B23 of the Unitary Development Plan deals with safeguarding the amenities of the local neighbourhood by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features and amenities of the local area.
- 5.14 As previously stated, residential dwellings are located opposite the site from the direction of King Edward Street and planning permission has been granted for residential units in the former mail sorting office, south-east of the site. It is vitally



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important to ensure that this development has no detrimental impact on the residential amenities of existing nearby residents and the amenities of the proposed development to convert the existing building south-east of the site (former mail sorting office) that has received planning permission on a site nearby. The front of the building is on the main street of Barmouth, and it backs onto another highway and a supermarket. Measures include a 1.1m high handrail (to keep terrace users away from the sides facing houses on King Edward Street) and an opaque screen of 1.8m high on the south-eastern elevation of the roof terrace facing King Edward Street to ensure that the development does not impair on the privacy of nearby residents. In addition, there are no windows on the first floor level facing King Edward Street and this will ensure that there will be no overlooking into the houses opposite.

- 5.15 Concern has been raised regarding the loss of natural light in nearby residential houses, although the proposal includes an additional floor on the existing building it is considered that this will not lead to the loss of light into these properties. It is considered that there is sufficient distance between the development and the residential houses opposite on King Edward Street to ensure that the development will not lead to the loss of natural light, and that the proposal to ensure that the wall opposite and the former mail sorting office are finished in a white colour (or another light colour to be agreed with the Council) will save any impact of the loss of natural light to residential units situated in this building. It is not considered that the proposal will overdevelop the site - it provides a reasonable number of a specific type of accommodation. Eight parking spaces have been provided within the building's curtilage, public parking is available around the site, and it is not considered that the proposal is likely to add to traffic or the associated traffic noise in a way that will cause significant harm to local amenities. Bin storage provision has been submitted as part of the application and it is considered that there is sufficient space within the property's curtilage to keep bins away from the road. Concern was also expressed regarding the impact that any construction work may have on businesses that currently use the property. It is considered that this would only be a short term disturbance and would not have a long term impact on the amenities or the viability of local business.
- 5.16 As a result of the above, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policy B23 above.

### **Transport and access matters**

- 5.17 Policy CH30 of the GUDP deals with ensuring access for all, and refuses proposals for residential, business/commercial units or buildings/facilities for public use unless it can be shown that full consideration has been given to the provision of appropriate access for the widest possible range of individuals. It is intended to install a lift within the existing building as part of the proposal and this will give access to the disabled to all the floors of the proposed development; in addition is proposed to provide a parking space for the disabled within the car park. It is seen that consideration has been given to providing access for all and therefore it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policy CH30 above.
- 5.18 Policy CH33 of the Unitary Development Plan is involved with ensuring safety on roads and streets, and it permits development proposals provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to the vehicular entrance, the standard of the existing roads network and traffic calming measures. Policy CH36 of the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan ensures private parking facilities and refuses proposals for new developments, extension of existing developments or change of use unless off-street

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parking is provided in accordance with the Council's current parking guidelines, and having given due consideration to the accessibility of public transport, the ability to walk or cycle from the site and the distance from the site to a public car park. The site is accessible with pedestrian links, bus and train transport nearby. The proposal also provides eight parking spaces within the curtilage of the new building and there is public parking available around the site. The transportation unit is of the opinion that this is sufficient to meet the parking needs of the residents and the staff in the building, and that the proposal is not likely to cause a detrimental impact on road safety. It is also proposed to create a provision to store bicycles within the building's curtilage. Concern has been raised regarding loading and unloading as a result of the two retail units that are part of the proposal, however it has to be remembered that a retail unit has been part of the building previously and the proposal would not lead to intensifying use that would lead to road safety issues. The Transportation Unit has no objection to the proposal and therefore it is considered that the proposal conforms to all the requirements of policies CH33 and CH36 of the Unitary Development Plan.

### **Language and Culture Matters**

- 5.19 Policy A2 of the Unitary Development Plan protects the social, linguistic and cultural fabric of communities by safeguarding social, linguistic or cultural cohesion within communities against significant harm due to the size, scale or location of proposals.
- 5.20 A Linguistic and Community Statement has been submitted as part of the application and states that the proposal would satisfy the need for holiday accommodation within the Local Centre. In response to consultation, the Joint Planning Policy Unit state that they are of the opinion that the nature or the scale of the proposed development would not be likely to have a detrimental impact on the Welsh language as the proposal provides for visitors to the area and not for permanent residents, it is unlikely that the development would have a significant impact on inward migration into the area. Therefore it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policy A2 above and the relevant paragraphs within the Technical Advice Note: Planning and the Welsh Language.

### **Biodiversity Matters**

- 5.21 Policy B20 of the GUDP states that proposals which are likely to cause disturbance or unacceptable damage to protected species and their habitats will be refused unless they conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the recognised features of the site. The response of the Biodiversity Unit to the consultation states that the light levels into the building are very high and consequently they note that there is only a low potential that bats might be present and a bats survey will not have to be undertaken prior to determining the application. Further, they note that if bats should be found during construction, work should be stopped immediately and Natural Resources Wales should be contacted for advice. No observations have been received from Natural Resources Wales regarding the application. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with policy B20 of the GUDP that concerns protecting species and habitats that are nationally and internationally important.

### **Response to the public consultation**

- 5.22 In response to public consultation on the application an objection was stated that the tenants who use the building had not been notified in the correct manner. The agent for this application has stated that the tenants in the existing building only have a

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short term tenancy and as these tenants do not have a freehold or lease for seven years or more it is not necessary for the applicant to formally notify them. However, he states that he had informed them of the application. According to the information submitted it is therefore considered that the applicant has followed the required procedure in terms of submitting the relevant certificates.

- 5.23 A further objection was received stating that there was concern regarding the loss of views, this objection is not considered to be a material planning consideration. No response to the consultation has been received from Welsh Water at the time of writing the report, regarding the objection received about the suitability of the public sewer to cope with additional living units, however it is proposed to consult with them to ask if they have any concerns to this end. In addition, a response was received stating that there was concern that there was insufficient provision for the storage of bins and recycling. It is confirmed that there is provision for bin storage and recycling provided in the proposed plans and they are sufficient to satisfy the need within a development such as the one in question.

## **6. Conclusions:**

- 6.1 Following the above assessment, it is considered that the proposal is an acceptable plan for the site that is a prominent building on one of the main streets in Barmouth, and that it conforms to all the relevant policies in the Unitary Development Plan as well as national policies and planning guidance. It is not considered that there are any other relevant planning considerations to state to the contrary.

## **7. Recommendation:**

- 7.1 To approve – conditions
1. Five years;
  2. In accordance with plans;
  3. Condition of holiday use only/keep a register;;
  4. Slates on the roof;
  5. To agree on external finishes;
  6. The handrail and the opaque screen on the terrace/roof garden on the north-eastern elevation has to be in place prior to occupation of the development;
  7. The car parking area must be completed in total accordance as shown on the submitted plan and prior to the occupation of the development;
  8. The external wall on the south eastern elevation of the development to be finished in a light colour and maintained in that condition permanently following this;

### Note

If bats are found during the construction work then further building work on the building should be stopped and Natural Resources Wales should be contacted immediately.