

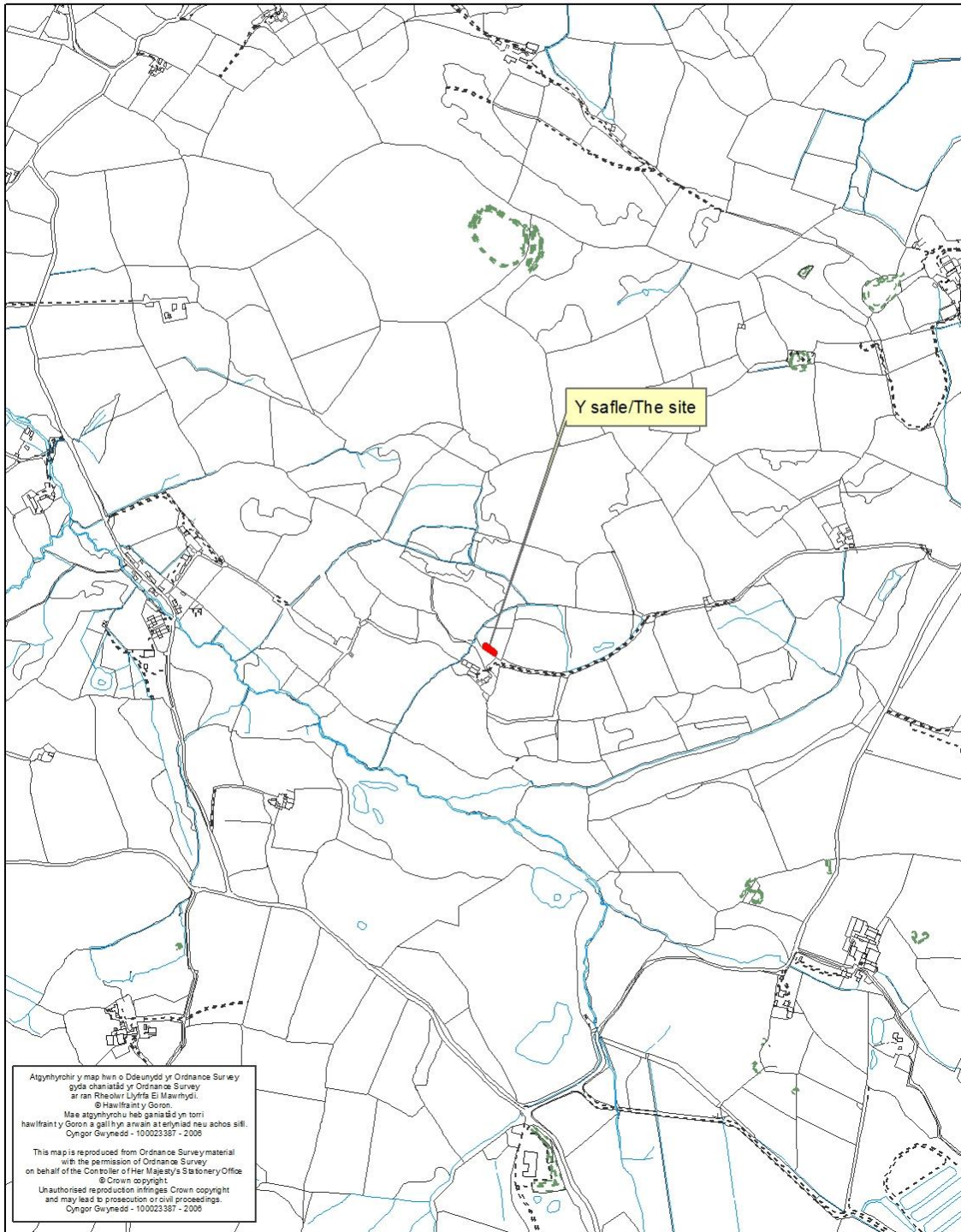
PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 11/01/2016
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICE MANAGER	DOLGELLAU

Number: 2



Rhif y Cais / Application Number : C15-1072-34-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: C15/1072/34/LL
Date Registered: 23/10/2015
Application Type: Full - Planning
Community: Clynnog
Ward: Clynnog

Proposal: RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF ONE ROW OF SOLAR PANELS IN A FIELD.

Location: ERW WEN, LLANLLYFNI, GWYNEDD, LL54 6SY

Summary of the Recommendation:

TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

1. Description:

- 1.1 This is a retrospective application for the erection of a row of solar panels within a field near the dwelling known as Erw Wen, and for the benefit of this property only. The panels have been installed.
- 1.2 The site is located in open countryside and is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty between the villages of Tai'n Lôn and Nasareth. A long access track leads to the property and to the site. The application site is within a field which slopes towards the valley near the property, which is approximately 40m away. The area of the panels is approximately 66m², and they measure 22m by 3.3m high and are sited in one row. There is existing significant vegetation around the application site.
- 1.3 A Design and Access Statement was submitted with the application.
- 1.4 The application is submitted to Committee at the Local Member's request.

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 B8 – THE LLŶN AND ANGLESEY AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

Safeguard, maintain and enhance the character of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the recognised features of the site.

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 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 B25 - BUILDING MATERIALS

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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 B27 – LANDSCAPING SCHEMES

Ensure that permitted proposals incorporate high quality soft/hard landscaping which is appropriate to the site and which takes into consideration a series of factors aimed at avoiding damage to recognised features.

POLICY C27 – RENEWABLE AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SCHEMES

Proposals for renewable energy and sustainable energy management schemes will be approved provided that a series of criteria relating to the impact on the visual quality of the landscape and environmental and social factors can be met.

2.3 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales 2014

TAN 8 Renewable Energy 2005

3. Relevant Planning History:

3.1 C15/1169/34/TR - Retention of overhead electricity cable - APPROVED - 16-Nov-2015

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: No response

Transportation Unit: No objection to the proposal, however it is recommended to draw the application to the attention of the Rights of Way Unit, as path 13, Clynnog Community, runs through Erw Wen's curtilage.

Footpaths: The Countryside and Access Department is keen to ensure that public footpath no. 13 Clynnog Fawr is protected during and after this development.

Welsh Water: No response

Natural Resources Wales: Do not object to the proposed development in any way.

Public Protection: No response

Biodiversity Unit: The panels have been installed in an improved field of very low biodiversity value. No biodiversity concerns in relation to the application.

AONB Unit: Not received

Public Consultation: A notice was posted on the site. The advertising period has come to an end and no letters / correspondence have been received.

5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

The principle of the development

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- 5.1 Policy C27 of the GUDP assesses renewable and sustainable energy plans and approves proposals provided that a series of criteria relating to the impact on the visual quality of the landscape and environmental and social factors can be met.
- 5.2 Criterion 1 - notes that the development should not involve the siting of a scheme with a higher capacity than 5MW within the Llŷn AONB, or that no plan located outside the Llŷn AONB causes any significant harm to its setting or to the setting of the Llŷn/Anglesey AONB or Snowdonia National Park. In this case, the site is located within the Llŷn AONB, but the plan is small-scale and domestic, which would only generate 10kw. The plan is also located in a concealed location which has been significantly landscaped already by trees and the rising landscape behind the site. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with criterion 1.
- 5.3 Criterion 2 - notes that the type, scale and design of the proposed development must be appropriate in terms of the site, the location and the impact on the landscape. As previously mentioned, this plan is small-scale and domestic, and has been located on a concealed site which has been significantly landscaped already by trees and the rising landscape behind it. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is appropriate in terms of its scale, design, location and the impact on the landscape, and that the proposal therefore complies with criterion 2.
- 5.4 Criterion 3 - notes that any associated ancillary equipment should be designed and located in a way that would alleviate the visual impact on the landscape. This application does not involve any buildings or equipment which are ancillary to the frames and solar panels. Therefore on this basis, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of criterion 3.
- 5.5 Criterion 4 - notes that no associated overhead cables or pipes should cause significant harm to the visual quality of the landscape. The agent has confirmed that the proposal has been connected underground, and that it would be reasonable to impose a condition to ensure that this situation does not change. A previous application to retain an overhead electricity cable between a pole near the property and a pole further down the valley has already been approved by the Local Planning Authority as there were no objections to the proposal. Therefore on this basis, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of criterion 4.
- 5.6 Criterion 5- notes that the proposed development should not cause an unacceptable increase in the levels of noise, smells, dust or gases. This development is unlikely to cause any impact relating to noise, odour, dust or gases due to its nature as a solar development. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with criterion 5.
- 5.7 Criterion 6 - notes that the proposed development should not cause any unacceptable damage to hydrological systems (ground water and surface water), thus harming biodiversity. The plan is small-scale and has been located within agricultural land of low Biodiversity value, and this has been confirmed by the Biodiversity Unit. It is therefore considered that any additional run-off water which would be created would be minimal, and it is not likely to cause an unacceptable impact or harm Biodiversity. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with criterion 6.
- 5.8 Criterion 7 - notes that the development should not generate unacceptable traffic levels given the quality of the roads and the nature of the surrounding area. The scheme is small-scale and has already been installed, and it is considered that any impact on traffic levels in the area would have been minimal, and it is not considered that it would be likely to impact traffic levels by now. It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of criterion 7 of Policy C27.

Visual amenities

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- 5.9 Policy B8 of the GUDP safeguards, maintains and enhances the character of the Area of Outstanding Natural beauty by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria that aim at protecting the recognised features of the site. This proposal is a small-scale solar panels scheme located in a concealed location which has already been landscaped by existing trees and the rising land behind the site; which means that the proposal would not be visible from a distance. A public footpath passes the site, but nevertheless it is considered that the public would only see the panels for a small period, and it is not considered that it would significantly impact views from the footpath.
- 5.10 It is therefore not considered that the proposal causes significant harm to the landscape, wildlife, historical remains and buildings, language and culture and the quiet and unpolluted nature of the area. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of Policy B8 of the GUDP.
- 5.11 Policy B23 of the GUDP safeguards the amenities of the local neighbourhood by ensuring that proposals must conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the recognised features and amenities of the local area. There is no other property within 470m of the application site, and the nearest property has been located across the valley, and the panels will not be visible to that property due to the existing landscaping around them. It is not considered that the panels would involve an overdevelopment of the site due to their small scale, and it is not considered that the proposal would add to the traffic or the noise associated with traffic in a way that would cause significant harm to local amenities. It is not considered that the plan increases opportunities for people to behave antisocially, neither does it create an environment where people do not feel safe to walk, cycle and play compared with the current situation. It is not necessary to consider public access needs to the site as it is a private site and is only associated with the property.
- 5.12 Based on the above, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policy B23 of the GUDP, and also policy B27 which secures adequate and suitable landscaping plans.
- 5.13 The panels have been installed on a simple aluminium frame sited in the land. The panels have been covered in anti-glare glass to ensure that they absorb a high level of sunlight. It is considered that these materials are suitable and therefore this proposal complies with the requirements of policy B25 of the GUDP.

Biodiversity matters

- 5.14 The Biodiversity Unit has confirmed that the panels have been installed in an improved field of very low biodiversity value, and has also confirmed that it has no biodiversity concerns in light of the proposal. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposal will cause unacceptable disturbance or harm to protected species or their habitats and, therefore, the proposal complies with the requirements of policy B20 of the GUDP.

6. Conclusions:

- 6.1 It is not considered that the proposal is contrary to any relevant planning policy and it is not considered that the proposal will have a detrimental effect on the amenities of the local area or any neighbouring property.

7. Recommendation:

- 7.1 To approve – with conditions

1. To complete the development in accordance with the plans;
2. Any cable connection from the panels must be underground, or as differently agreed with the LPA beforehand.

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