

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 11/04/2022
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICE MANAGER	

Number: 4

Application Number: C21/0922/03/LL

Date Registered: 22/09/2021

Application Type: Full

Community: Ffestiniog

Ward: Diffwys & Maenofferen

Proposal: Application to demolish existing shop and erect 1 shop, 3 open market houses and 1 affordable house together with new vehicular access and parking provision (re-submission)

Location: Former Woolworths shop, 30 High Street, Blaenau Ffestiniog, LL41 3AE

Summary of the Recommendation: TO APPROVE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

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1. Description:

- 1.1 The application was deferred at the Planning Committee on 28 February 2022 in order to undertake a site inspection visit.
- 1.2 This is a full application to demolish an existing empty shop and erect 1 shop, 3 open market houses and 1 affordable house together with new vehicular access and parking provision at the former Woolworths site, High Street, Blaenau Ffestiniog.
- 1.3 The development would be split into two parts, namely one building facing the High Street and the other building facing Glynllifon Street. The front building would be split into the shop area (A1) measuring approximately 55.7 square metres and adjacent would be an entrance hall for two residential units. There would be a flat above the shop (2 bedrooms) and a two-storey house (1 bedroom) adjacent to the back of the shop with a garden. The second building would include two residential units (1 bedroom) that would extend over three storeys each with amenity gardens and parking provision. The buildings would be finished with slate roofs and a mixture of slate surfaces, smooth render and timber boards on the walls.
- 1.4 The site in question is within the development boundary of the Blaenau Ffestiniog Urban Service Centre. The site is within the Town Centre area designation as earmarked in the the Local Development Plan Inset Maps with the shopping area on the eastern side of the High Street bordering on the site. The site is served by the A470 trunk road in the front and Glynllifon Street that is an unclassified county road to the side. It lies within the World Heritage Site, Blaenau Ffestiniog Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest and within a 500m area to the Diffwys Quarry Scheduled Monument.
- 1.5 The application is submitted to the Planning Committee at the request of the Local Member.
- 1.6 The application is a resubmission of application number C21/0295/03/LL which was withdrawn to respond to the concerns of the Planning Officers.
- 1.7 The following documents were submitted with the application:
 - Planning Statement
 - Drainage Strategy
 - Initial Ecological Assessment

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 (Wales) Act 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.

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2.3 **Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026, adopted 31 July 2017**

PS 1 The Welsh Language and Culture

ISA 1 Infrastructure Provision

PS 4 Sustainable Transport, Development and Accessibility

TRA 2 Parking Standards

TRA 4 Managing transport impacts

PS 5 Sustainable development

PS 6 Alleviating and adapting to the effects of climate change

PCYFF 1 Development boundaries

PCYFF 2 Development Criteria

PCYFF 3 Design and place shaping

PCYFF 4: Design and landscaping

PCYFF 5 Carbon Management

PCYFF 6 Water conservation

PS15 Town centre and retail developments

MAN 1 Proposed developments in town centres

PS 17 Settlement Strategy

TAI 1 Housing in the Sub-regional Centre and the Urban Service Centres

TAI 8 An appropriate mix of housing

PS 18 Affordable housing

TAI 15 Threshold of affordable housing and their distribution

PS 19 Conserving and where appropriate enhancing the natural environment

PS 20 Conserving and enhancing cultural assets

AT 1 Conservation areas, world heritage sites and landscapes, parks and registered historic gardens

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Affordable Housing (April 2019)

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Housing mix (October 2018)

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Planning obligations (September 2019)

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities (July 2019)

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Supplementary Planning Guidance: Change of use of community facilities and services, employment sites and retail units (January 2021)

2.4 **National Policies:**

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11, February 2021)

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 2: Planning and Affordable Housing (2006)

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 4: Retail and Commercial Developments (2016)

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design (2016)

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 18: Transport (2007)

Technical Advice Notes (TAN) 20: Planning and the Welsh Language (2017)

Technical Advice Notes (TAN) 24: The Historic Environment (2017)

3. **Relevant Planning History:**

C21/0295/03/LL Application to demolish existing shop and erect 1 shop, 3 open market houses and 1 affordable house together with new vehicular access and parking provision:

Withdrawn 27 May 2021

Y20/0687 Pre-application enquiry to re-develop the site

4. **Consultations:**

Community/Town Council: The Town Council totally recognises the need to re-develop this site on the basis that it has been empty for many years, however, local residents have several concerns that has led the Town Council to refuse this planning application as it stands.

Please note the following concerns:

- Concerns regarding the impact on the exit below The Meirion if the development continues as planned.
- Concern regarding the foundations and safety of buildings linked to 30 High Street if the building is to be demolished and it is felt that this has not been mentioned in the planning application.
- Local knowledge claiming that the access to the site on the plans is not part of the applicant's land, but in the ownership of the owners of 'The Meirion Vaults'.
- Concerns about the entrance to the site, in an area that is already under pressure with heavy traffic including the Clipa and school buses. There are concerns that adding a new entrance and increasing traffic in this area would lead to creating an unsafe site for cars.
- Obvious negative impact on the privacy of the site's neighbours.

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- And generally the community's response that the plans are an over-development of this specific site.

Transportation Unit: Not received.

Biodiversity Unit: The applicant has provided a protected species report by Cambrian Ecology. There was no sign of bats present. I have no ecology concerns, however, this report recommends sparrow boxes to improve biodiversity and I agree with this, and I would be grateful if the development included these bird boxes.

Land Drainage Unit (Gwynedd Consultancy): Since 7 January 2019, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are required to control surface water for every new development of more than one dwelling or where the building surface area has drainage implications of 100m² or more. Drainage systems must be designed and constructed in accordance with the minimum standards for sustainable drainage as published by Welsh Ministers.

These systems must be approved by Gwynedd Council in its role as SuDS Approval Body (SAB) prior to commencement of the construction work.

Due to the size and nature of the development, it is possible that an application will need to be provided to the SuDS Approval Body for approval before construction work commences. The drainage strategy submitted suggests that the developer intends to drain the site in a suitable sustainable manner; however, until an application is made to the SAB, there is no certainty that the site plan would enable compliance with the full suite of national SuDS standards. Early consultation with the SAB is recommended.

<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/cy/Trigolion/Cynllunio-a-rheolaeth-adeiladu/Cynllunio/System-Draenio-Cynaliadwy.aspx>

Strategic Housing Unit: Not received.

Environmental Health (Public Protection) Unit: Not received.

The Welsh Government's Transportation Unit: I refer to your consultation on 01/10/2021 regarding the above planning application, and advise that the Welsh Government, as the highway authority for the A470 trunk road, directs that any permission granted by your authority shall include the following conditions:

- 1) The applicant must submit a Method Statement for work to be carried out adjacent to the A470 Trunk Road to the local authority for approval, in consultation with the Welsh Government, prior to works commencing on site.
- 2) The applicant must submit a Construction Traffic Management Plan to the

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local authority for approval, in consultation with the Welsh Government, prior to works commencing on site.

The above conditions are included to maintain the safety and free flow of trunk road traffic.

The following points should be brought to the attention of the applicant:

- A. The applicant should note that planning permission does not constitute permission under the Highways Act for various activities that may be associated with the development i.e use of the highway/footway/verge to: for example, deposit material, deposit skips, erect scaffolding, excavate within the highway or erect traffic management apparatus. Such activities will require the separate consent of the Highways Authority;
- B. Any temporary traffic management arrangements required in connection with this application shall be in accordance with Chapter 8 of the Traffic Signs Manual and in accordance with the Safety at Street Works and Road Works Code of Practice, and shall be approved by the highway authority.
- C. Road traffic signs in Wales must be bilingual, Welsh above English, and adhere to Welsh Government specifications, see following link for standard details; http://www.traffic-wales.com/traffic_signs.aspx

If you have any further enquiries, please forward to the following Welsh Government Mailbox -
NorthandMidWalesDevelopmentControlMailbox@gov.wales

Welsh Water:

We refer to your planning consultation relating to the above site, and we can provide the following comments in respect to the proposed development.

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water were previously consulted on a similar application (Ref: C21/0295/03/LL) to redevelop 30 High Street, and by response (Ref: PLA0056011) we offered no objection subject to recommended advisory notes albeit acknowledged receipt of a drainage strategy which proposed to communicate surface water flows to the combined public sewer. We acknowledge that this application was later withdrawn. As part of this latest application (Ref: C21/0922/03/LL), the same 'Drainage Strategy' (Ref: 224-R1) has been submitted and as previous (Ref: PLA0056011), for the purposes of any forthcoming SAB application, we would recommend further investigations into alternative surface water drainage options including any surface water sewers and highway drainage systems.

Accordingly, if you are minded to grant planning permission for the above development, we would request that the following Advisory Notes are included within the consent to ensure no detriment to existing residents or the environment and to Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's assets:

Advisory Notes

As of 7th January 2019, this proposed development is subject to Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The development therefore requires approval of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) features, in accordance with the 'Statutory standards for sustainable drainage systems - designing, constructing, operating and maintaining surface water drainage systems'. It is therefore recommended that the developer engage in consultation with Gwynedd County Council, as the determining SuDS approval body (SAB), in relation to

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their proposals for SuDS features. Please note: Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water is a statutory consultee to the SAB consultation process and will provide comments to any SuDS proposals by response to SAB consultation.

The applicant may need to apply to Dŵr Cymru / Welsh Water for any connection to the public sewer under S106 of the Water Industry Act 1991. If the connection to the public sewer network is either via a lateral drain (i.e. a drain which extends beyond the connecting property boundary) or via a new sewer (i.e. serves more than one property), it is now a mandatory requirement to first enter into a Section 104 Adoption Agreement (Water Industry Act 1991). The design of the sewers and lateral drains must also conform to the Welsh Ministers Standards for Gravity Foul Sewers and Lateral Drains, and conform with the publication "Sewers for Adoption" - 7th Edition. Further information can be obtained via the Developer Services pages of www.dwrcymru.com.

The applicant is also advised that some public sewers and lateral drains may not be recorded on our maps of public sewers because they were originally privately owned and were transferred into public ownership by nature of the Water Industry (Schemes for Adoption of Private Sewers) Regulations 2011. The presence of such assets may affect the proposal. In order to assist us in dealing with the proposal the applicant may contact Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water to establish the location and status of the apparatus. Under the Water Industry Act 1991 Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water has rights of access to its apparatus at all times.

Our response is based on the information provided by your application. Should the proposal alter during the course of the application process we kindly request that we are re-consulted and reserve the right to make new representation.

If you have any queries, please contact the undersigned on 0800 917 2652 or via email at developer.services@dwrcymru.com

Natural Resources
Wales:

We do not oppose the proposed development as submitted and we provide the following advice.

Protected Species

We note that the bats report submitted to support the above application (Ecolog Cambrian. Preliminary Ecological Assessment - 30 High Street, Blaenau Ffestiniog. V2. 23/02/2021) has noted that no bats were using the application site. We therefore have no comments to make on the application as submitted.

Other matters

The above comments only relate specifically to matters on our check-list, Advice Service on Development Plans: consultation topics (September 2018), which can be seen on our website. We have not considered the potential impacts on other matters and we cannot disregard the possibility that the proposed development can impact the interests of others.

The applicant is reminded of the fact that it is his responsibility to ensure that all other licences/permissions relevant to the development are acquired, as well as planning permission. Please refer to our website for further details.

Advice is also given to the Developer - See letter of 20.10.21

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Cadw: Thank you for your letter inviting our comments on the information submitted for the above planning application.

Advice

Having carefully considered the information provided, we have no objection to the proposed development in regards to the world heritage site listed in our assessment of the application below.

The national policy and Cadw's role in planning are set out in Annex A.

Assessment

The application area is located inside the boundaries of Ffestiniog, its slate mines and quarries, 'slate town' and railway to Porthmadog section of the Slate Industry of Northwest Wales World Heritage Site.

The former Woolworth store is a flat roofed 'box like' structure built into the sloping ground south of the High Street and opened in 1933. It has a single storey frontage onto the high street, which retains some elements of the Woolworth's corporate style but in general does not enhance the current street scene. The structure behind the façade is block like and is of little architectural value. Another building which will be demolished as part of this proposed development is a store facing onto Glynllifon Street. This is a traditional slate walled and pitched roofed building that would appear to have been constructed earlier than the Woolworths store and later incorporated into it.

The proposed development will see all the buildings on the site demolished and replaced with a new two-storey building on the High Street frontage, with a separate block at the rear containing two more dwellings. Both blocks will have pitched slate roofs and mainly slate clad. As such, in our opinion, whilst the loss of the traditional building facing onto Glynllifon Street will have an impact on the historic street scene, overall the proposed development will be in character with the surrounding area and will not have a significant impact on the outstanding universal values of the World Heritage Site.

Public Consultation:

A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. The advertising period has expired. Three objections to the proposal were received on the grounds of:

- Design - Height of Unit 1 and 2 higher than that of the neighbour, over-development of the site
- Amenities - Impact on neighbours' privacy
- Housing mix - Family homes are required not 1 and 2 bed units, no amenity space for Unit 4 flat
- Entrance road and Parking - Glynllifon Street is a busy street, not enough parking provision for the units, need to reverse into the street as there is no turning area
- Concern about Party Walls - Proposed buildings touch buildings that are outside their ownership, concern about building safety, excavation and undermining adjacent buildings. Plans do not show that the boundaries overlap. No consultation between the developer and the affected neighbours.

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- Development would lead to antisocial behaviour
- Concern about the impact of the work on nearby businesses
- Need to move the electricity pole
- Support the need to develop the former Woolworths site - however this does not meet with the need for family homes

5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

The principle of the development

- 5.1 The site in question is located within the development boundary of the Blaenau Ffestiniog Local Service Centre occupying a site on the High Street within the Town Centre designation. The proposal would involve the demolition of a substantially sized shop, that has stood empty for some time, and to erect a new small shop in its place and four residential units on the site.
- 5.2 Policy MAN 1 is the consideration when dealing with retail developments in Town Centres. The proposal would use a previously developed site, doing away with a shop with a substantial retail area of approximately 530 square metres in exchange for a smaller shop of 55.7 square metres. It is understood that the retail unit has been marketed by Dafydd Hardy Estate Agents for a long time, and a letter from them is included with the application noting that the property was placed on the market in August 2017 for a price of £125,000 without much interest. The price was later reduced to £90,000 without success. The Estate Agents note that there is a reasonable demand for small units but they were having difficulty to find occupiers for large retail units. It is therefore suggested that the size and form of the retail space in question is beyond the needs of existing businesses and a smaller unit would be more viable and attractive to the current retail nature and trends.
- 5.3 Policy MAN 1 encourages and directs retail developments towards town centres provided that their scale and type of development is appropriate to the size, character and function of the centre in the retail hierarchy.

It is considered that the proposed shop meets with the requirements of the four policy criteria as this would:

1. Improve town-centre attraction, vitality and viability,
2. The proposed development either by itself or in combination with others, would not undermine the centre's retail role,
3. The proposed use is in keeping with nearby uses
4. It would not create an excessive number of empty frontages.

The proposal would not lose a retail unit but would adapt it to appeal to smaller businesses, with the retail scale and space more similar to other shops in the vicinity. It is deemed that the proposal meets with the Government's objectives for town centres and retail, that promotes town centres as the most appropriate locations for retail, leisure and other similar functions. Policy PS 15 of the Local Development Plan also encourages a diverse mix of suitable uses in high quality environments that attract a wide range of people at different times of the day, which are safe and accessible to all. It has to be acknowledged that the efforts to sell the unit as it is have not been successful and the appearance of the existing shop does not positively contribute to the High Street's appearance and look. It is considered that the development would be of assistance to improve the condition, appearance and quality of Town Centre facilities. The retail element therefore satisfies the requirements of policy MAN 1 and the principles of policy PS 15 of the LDP.

- 5.4 In terms of the residential housing element of the proposal, policy TAI 1 *Housing in the Sub-regional Centre and the Urban Service Centres* would be the consideration. Blaenau Ffestiniog

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has been identified as an Urban Service Centre and the site is within the centre's development boundary. Policy TAI 1 supports housing developments to meet the Plan's strategy delivered either through housing allocations or on suitable windfall sites within the development boundary. The application site is a windfall site that also falls under the definition of previously developed land, namely a Brownfield Site that is considered suitable for development. The indicative supply level for Blaenau Ffestiniog over the Plan period is 298 units (including a 10% 'slippage allowance', which means that the method of calculating the figure has taken into account potential unforeseen circumstances which could influence the provision of housing, e.g. land ownership matters, infrastructure restrictions, etc.). During the period 2011 to 2021, a total of 20 units have been completed in Blaenau Ffestiniog. The windfall land bank, i.e. sites with extant planning permission, in April 2021, was 14 units. In considering this information, it would be possible to support 4 units that are part of this development against the current indicative supply level figures for Blaenau Ffestiniog.

5.5 Policy TAI 15 states that new housing developments will be expected to make an affordable housing contribution in line with the threshold figures noted in the policy, namely 2 affordable units in a Local Service Centre. Since the proposal is for 4 units, this is in line with the threshold where it is a requirement to make an affordable housing contribution. As Blaenau Ffestiniog is situated within the 'Blaenau Ffestiniog' housing price area in the Plan, it is noted that providing 10% of affordable housing is viable. This means that 0.4 of the new units should be affordable. As the proposal before you offers one affordable house, this would be sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the criteria of Policy TAI 15 of the LDP. The application does not detail which unit is proposed to be affordable, however, it is suggested that the remaining 3 units would also, due to their size, scale and location be likely to offer a home for a low price. An estimated valuation was received from Estate Agents as part of additional information on the application (dated 26 May 2021) noting that the price for terraced housing on Glynllifon Road are expected to be approximately £120,000 or rental for approximately £550 pcm. The typical price of a first floor flat on the High Street would be approximately £70,000 with a monthly rental of approximately £500. Based on these figures, it is likely that all the units would be affordable with the appropriate discount. It would be possible to deal with the affordable element via a planning condition that would require an affordable Housing Plan to be submitted detailing which unit would be affordable, the type of tenure offered, a red book valuation and a 106 affordable agreement arrangement (if provided by a private developer and not a housing association) and this prior to the commencement of any development work. The agent has confirmed that such a condition is acceptable to them.

5.6 Policy TAI 8 *An Appropriate Mix of Housing* is also a consideration when assessing housing applications, where it seeks to ensure that every new residential development contributes to improving housing balance and meets the needs noted for the entire community. The following housing mix is proposed:

- 1 flat - 2 bedrooms (2-3 persons)
- 3 houses/flat - 1 bedroom (1-2 person)

It is noted in the Planning statement that accompanied the application that the housing mix was determined via discussions with professional local Housing Consultants to find the local market need in Blaenau Ffestiniog. The statement notes that the mix proposed appeals to single persons, couples, or small families who are looking for a low-priced house in an accessible location. Although the mix is not extensive, it is argued that the units respond to the physical restrictions of the site that is surrounded by buildings and housing. It is added that it would be difficult to provide a mix of larger units such as 3-4 bedrooms, as the proximity of the site to houses and overlooking implications would prevent a more conventional layout of the site. It is argued that the setting and the lack of parking spaces would make it difficult to sell larger units. It is noted that some of the objectors state that the proposal does not address the local need for family dwellings, and that there is no need for small 1 and 2 bedroom units. It can be agreed that the built environment of the site to an extent determines the type of units that can be provided and that larger family units would not

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be as attractive to buyers on such a restricted site. On the whole, it is considered that the proposal uses land in a sustainable way, with the development density suitable to a town centre location characterised by flats and terraced housing. It would increase and improve the quality of the existing housing stock. It would increase and improve the quality of the existing housing stock. As this is a relatively small development, it is deemed that the housing mix makes best use of the site's limitations and satisfies the requirements of TAI 8 of the LDP.

- 5.7 Therefore as a result of the above, it appears that that proposal meets with the requirements and principles of the Retail policies MAN 1, PS 15 and Housing policies TAI 1, TAI 8, TAI 15 of the LDP with a condition to agree on an affordable housing scheme.

Language Matters

- 5.8 As Blaenau Ffestiniog has not reached the indicative housing figure and this is a residential development of fewer than 5 units, it is not a requirement under the requirements of policy PS 1 to submit a Welsh Language Statement in this case. However, the Planning statement submitted with the application has touched upon Language matters. It is proposed to employ local people who speak Welsh to work in the shop. It noted that the scale of the development is fairly small having considered the size of the population, therefore the impact on the Welsh language is likely to be low. Due to their size, the units would be unlikely to appeal to people from outside the area, with the unit occupiers likely to be local Welsh-speaking residents who are looking for local housing. Therefore, the Statement concludes that the proposal would not be likely to cause harm to the Welsh language and the linguistic balance of the local community. The above information is sufficient to satisfy the requirements of how they have given consideration to the Welsh language when drafting the planning application. A condition can also be imposed to ensure that Welsh names are given to the houses to retain the area's culture. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets with the requirements of policy PS 1 in the LDP.

Visual amenities

- 5.9 Visually, the existing shop appears from the High Street as a single-storey building with a flat roof and extends back into two-storey to the rear, due to the difference in ground levels. From Glynllifon Street a stone store can be seen with a gable end and extensive flat roof of the Woolworths building behind it. In terms of the context of the High Street, there are buildings of various forms, scale and design in the nearby vicinity with The Meirion pub adjacent, independent two-storey and three-storey shops opposite with flats above and a detached two-storey dwelling at the other side. Glynllifon Street is of a residential nature, with rows of terraced housing in the nearby vicinity. It has to be acknowledged that the building as it is does not contribute positively to the appearance of High Street or the vicinity.
- 5.10 The development would be split over two buildings with a two-storey building to the front (for the purpose of the report building A) facing the High Street and a three-storey building to the rear (building B) and an amenity area/gardens in the centre to separate them. Building A will be two-storey and close to the same roof level as the adjacent buildings, namely The Meirion and house number 31 High Street, but with a lower section at the back. It is considered that the frontage design is in keeping with the design of the High Street shops. The details of the slate and the dormer windows offer a little interest to the front and it would be possible to impose a condition to agree on the colour of the finish of the walls and cladding. On the whole, it is considered that the size, scale and appearance of the main frontage is likely to improve the character of the High Street to what is currently experienced.
- 5.11 Building B would be a three-storey building that would comprise two, 1 bedroom residential units. The houses would have an upside down layout, with a living room and kitchen in the roof space, a bedroom and bathroom on the first floor and a multi-purpose room and equipment on the ground floor. Both units would share the same entrance and bin storage. The height of the building would

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be a little higher than the neighbour's property in number 8 Glynllifon Street. It is considered that the scale, size and design of building B is also in keeping with buildings in the vicinity and the mix of slate finish, render and timber boards present an interest to the main façade. The built nature of the site restricts a little of the design possibilities. On the whole, it is considered that the development is likely to blend into its urban context retaining the traditional development forms and patterns and using suitable materials for the location. The proposal would make positive use of the site of an extensive previously used building that has stood vacant and had been deteriorating for a long period. This is an effort to improve and restore the appearance of the High Street in a sustainable manner. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets with the requirements of policies PS 5 and PCYFF 3 in the LDP.

- 5.12 The site lies within the World Heritage Site, Blaenau Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest and within a 500m area to the Diffwys Quarry Scheduled Monument. We consulted with Cadw on the confirmed application, although a traditional historic building will be lost from Glynllifon Street, as a whole it is considered that the development will retain the character of the vicinity and is unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the exceptional values of the World Heritage Site. In considering the context of the site, this location is enclosed to a large degree by other buildings, therefore the proposal would only have restricted views of places close by. On this basis, it is not considered that the proposal would have a detrimental impact on the Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest designation or on the setting of the Diffwys Quarry Scheduled Monument. It is therefore assessed that the proposal satisfies policies PS 20 and AT 1 of the LDP.

General and residential amenities

- 5.13 As noted above, the building in question is surrounded by buildings in all directions. Therefore, we have to assess the implications of the proposal on the residents of those buildings. There is no concern regarding the impact on the shops/flats north of the site as a trunk road separates them. East of the site is the dwelling of 31 High Street, that is set further back than the frontage of the application site. An objection to the development was received from the owners of this property, expressing concern that the proposal would overlook the back of their property and garden. The plan shows one first floor bathroom window in the eastern elevation of Building B and it is noted that it is an opaque glass window. There are also four rooflights in the eastern elevation, in the living room/kitchen on the upper floor. It would be possible to impose a condition to ensure that the first-floor window is in opaque glass and that the design is a top hung type to limit the opening and visibility into the neighbour's property. Regarding the windows in Unit 1, it appears that the height layout of both above the living room is approximately 1.7m from ground level, this would be a sufficient height to protect the neighbour's amenities, however, the rooflight on the kitchen side appears at a lower level of approximately 1.4m. As there is regular use to be made of the kitchen, we have asked the agent to raise this window to 1.7m also from ground level, this is a compromise to safeguard the neighbour's amenities. An amended plan is expected soon to show these changes. The main window in the living room/kitchen is on the northern elevation, and therefore the main function of the rooflights would be to provide light. The roof angle is at a degree and height of the rooflights and will help ensure that the eastern windows are not oppressive and unacceptable over the back of number 31. It has to be accepted in such an urban built environment that overlooking is inevitable in the majority of circumstances. It is noted that the neighbour has expressed concern about the back windows of Building A and side windows of Building B, facing over the development's gardens. It is not considered that these would have a significant intrusive or oppressive impact on the neighbour, as there would be an angled view over number 31. There would be a high wall of approximately 1.8m on the boundary between the two buildings and the neighbour's house which is reasonable. On one hand it could be argued that the proposal would be likely to improve the situation regarding the neighbour's light, as the development would create more of a gap between the buildings and would be much less oppressive than the high wall that currently faces them.
- 5.14 An objection was also received, based on amenities, from the neighbour to the south, namely 8 Glynllifon Street. Although building B will be higher than the existing flat roof building, it is not

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considered that the difference in height will have an impact on them considering the building to the north of the neighbour and the sun's path in the other direction. The neighbour has also expressed concern that the existing Woolworth building touches his lean-to shed and the demolition and clearance of the building would destabilise their property. The proposed plan shows that part of building B will also touch the lean-to shed. This is a construction method matter and are considerations that need to be resolved under the Party Wall Act between the developer and the relevant owner. It is not believed that the development would cause any significant harm to the amenities of the neighbour of number 8 Glynllifon Street in this case.

- 5.15 The owner of Y Meirion has expressed concern regarding the possibility that the demolition work would compromise the stability of their property as well, emphasising that the boundaries of both sites overlap in places. Building A will touch Y Meirion and it is proposed to construct a 1.8m high wall along the boundary. It is not considered that any windows from the development will significantly affect the public house/flat therefore it is acceptable in terms of amenities. As has already been noted, boundary walls are Party Wall matters and are beyond the planning process. The condition of the building as it is, has the potential to cause more damage to the neighbours if it continues to deteriorate further.
- 5.16 Although we realise that the inter-visibility of overlooking will be likely between building A and B, it is not considered that this will cause a problem bearing in mind that any buyers would be aware of the situation when buying the houses. An amenity area has been earmarked for three of the units, but not for the flat of Unit 4, Building A. Although an external amenity space would be ideal for each unit, it is appreciated that the setting and restrictions of the site to an extent influences the situation. The flat of Unit 4 would have a specific bin store in the hall and a utility room under the stairs of the flat which is advantageous. It is considered that this can be accepted as satisfactory, in such an urban situation, bearing in mind that a number of flats do not have an external amenity space. Some of the objectors suggested that the types of 1-bedroom units are likely to attract antisocial behaviour. There are no grounds to these claims and certainly there is no justification to refuse the application on this basis. Having assessed the impact of the proposal on the nearest neighbours, it is considered with the appropriate conditions regarding the bathroom window, the receipt of an amended plan to raise the height of the rooflight in Unit 1 and a note about the Party Wall, that the proposal is acceptable and would not have a significant impact on neighbours' amenities. The proposal, therefore, satisfies the requirements of policy PCYFF 2 of the LDP.

Transport and access matters

- 5.17 The site is served by the A470 trunk road of the High Street and Glynllifon Street which is an unclassified county road. The proposal indicates two parking provisions for Unit 1 and 2 in building B, off Glynllifon Street with work to re-establish a formal pavement instead of the existing lay-by situation. The Assembly Government's Transportation service was consulted due to the location of the building near the trunk road. A reply was received requesting that a condition be imposed that a Method Statement and Transportation Plan are submitted and agreed prior to the commencement of the development, to establish whether any work affects the trunk road and traffic flow on the A470. They also suggest relevant notes, as seen in the above responses. The conditions requested are reasonable.
- 5.18 The Transportation Unit was consulted on the application as well, however, no response was received. However, the proposal has been subject to a pre-application consultation and has received advice from the Transportation Unit in advance regarding the setting of the entrance and the parking situation. The Transportation Officer suggested that there was a need to look at the layout for kerbs and the existing situation to pull in and advise them to re-establish the line of the footpath and install dropped kerbs for access to the parking area. The plan submitted has responded to the pre-application advice in terms of re-establishing the footpath. It is noted that the same parking arrangement is in this application as the previous application C21/0295/03/LL, where we received Highway observations, therefore we can take those comments into consideration. The proposal

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would include two parking areas, an area for the two units on Glynllifon Street. Although the proposal does not offer an individual parking provision for each unit, it is deemed that what is proposed is reasonable for a town centre location, with parking opportunities on nearby streets and in public car parks. We agree with the comments that the site is an accessible location to the High Street where there is convenient access to public transport and priority should be given to develop accessible and sustainable sites as everyone does not own a vehicle. We realise that some of the objectors have expressed concern about highway matters and parking in the vicinity, however, it should be borne in mind that the density of traffic of the previous shop such as delivery lorries and parking and the staff themselves generated heavy traffic movements. It could be argued that the traffic movements of two cars will cause much less disruption than delivery lorries and staff and customer movements with the previous use. Based on the previous observations of the Transportation Unit, and that there has been no change to the parking layout, it is considered that the proposal can be accepted and satisfies the requirements of policies TRA 2, TRA 4 and PS 5 of the LDP. As suggested, a condition can be included that requires the parking provision to have been completed prior to the occupation of the units with relevant notes regarding acquiring the relevant licences to undertake work on the highways/pavement.

Biodiversity matters

- 5.19 The application site lies in an built urban area without any link to wild habitat. An Initial Ecological Impact Assessment was submitted by Cambrian Ecology as part of the application. No traces of bats using the building were found, only feral pigeons nesting within the main shop area. There were no ecological matters arising, however, it is noted that there is a duty to seek better biodiversity on sites where possible. Therefore it is recommended in the report that house sparrow bird boxes are installed. A response was received from the Biodiversity Unit confirming that they have no biodiversity concerns but agree with the Ecologist's recommendation requesting measures to enhance biodiversity. Based on the contents of the report and the observations of the Biodiversity Officer, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of policy PS 19 of the LDP.

Drainage Matters

- 5.20 A Drainage Strategy was submitted as part of the application that notes their intention for the discharge of surface water and foul water drainage. Foul water will be connected to the Glynllifon Street sewer network. Since there are no watercourses in the vicinity with an existing sewer network, connecting to these is an option. As there will be a reduction in the construction area and measures to control and collect surface water it is suggested that this is an improvement. Welsh Water was consulted and they had no objection, but ask that notes are included regarding an agreement on Sustainable Drainage Systems. The Council's Drainage Unit was also consulted and they confirm that drainage systems have been designed and constructed in accordance with the required standards for sustainable drainage and approval from Gwynedd Council in its role as a SDC Approval Body prior to the commencement of construction work. A condition will need to be imposed to this end.

6. Conclusions:

- 6.1 The Committee have had an opportunity to visit the site and to see for themselves the nature and restrictions of the site. Having weighed up the proposal against the relevant policies and after considering the response to the consultations and objections, it is concluded that the principle of the proposal in essence conforms to the requirements of policies MAN 1 and TAI 1 of the LDP. Priority will be given to the development of sites that have been previously developed, and it is considered that the proposal would achieve this and improve the visual quality of a prominent site on the High Street. The design and scale of the development is in keeping with the vicinity and the amenity and privacy matters can be overcome via conditions. No objections had been received from the various consultation bodies and it is considered that highway, biodiversity and drainage matters are acceptable with the conditions noted. This second submission has followed advice given in the previous application that was withdrawn. Based on the above assessment it is recommended that the application should be approved with the conditions noted below.

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7. Recommendation:

To delegate powers to the Planning Manager to approve the application, subject to receiving an amended plan showing the rooflight in the kitchen of unit 1 at a higher level as discussed in paragraph 5.13 and in accordance with the following conditions:

1. 5 years
2. In accordance with the plans
3. Slate
4. Agree on external finish
5. First floor window on the eastern side of Unit 1 to be of opaque glass and a top hung design to prevent visibility.
6. The setting of the rooflights on the eastern elevation of the units shall be no lower than 1.7 metres from the level of the internal floor.
7. Submission and agreement of an affordable housing plan and arrangement to ensure affordability in the future.
8. Prior to the commencement of any work on the site, a Method Statement of the work proposed to be undertaken on the A470 trunk road shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA in consultation with the Welsh Government.
9. Prior to the commencement of any work on the site, a Traffic Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA in consultation with the Welsh Government.
10. The entrance to the county highway and the parking locations shall be completed prior to the occupation of the residential units.
11. House sparrow bird boxes shall be installed in accordance with the recommendations of part 8 of the Initial Ecological assessment, Cambrian Ecology.
12. Sustainable Drainage System (SUDS)
13. Welsh names to be given to the units that form part of the development.

Notes:

Draw attention to the Assembly Government's Transportation notes

Need relevant Highway licences, traffic control plan and Welsh signage

Highway Notes

Welsh Water Note

Party Wall Note