

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 19/12/2022
REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	

Number: 4

Application Number: C22/0744/14/LL

Date Registered: 16/03/2022

Application Type: Full

Community: Caernarfon

Ward: Menai

Proposal: Formation of a full size 3G sports pitch with associated 4.5 metre high fencing, 4 metre high acoustic barrier, 6 x 15 metre high floodlights, teams' shelters, hardstanding and landscaping bund with planting

Location: Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen, Ffordd Bethel, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1HW

Summary of the Recommendation: TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

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1. Description:

- 1.1 This is a full application to develop a full size 3G sports pitch with associated 4.5 metre high fencing, to erect a 4 metre high acoustic barrier, to install 6 x 15 metre high floodlights, to construct teams' shelters (details to be agreed), to install a storage container measuring 6 metre long, 2.4 metre wide and 2.59 metre high and to create a soil bund landscaped with bushes and plants.
- 1.2 The site is within the school boundaries and the development boundary of the town. The location of the 3G pitch would border the school building to the south-west and face a separate row of houses and a residential area to the west. The eastern side of the pitch would border the existing playing field and the eastern side would face the Arfon Leisure Centre building.
- 1.3 It is intended to erect a boundary fence (4.5 metre high) along with a 4 metre high acoustic fence along the western side of the pitch that faces residential housing, along with a landscaping plan between the fence and those houses. The teams' shelters will be located in the centre of the northern side of the new pitch.
- 1.4 The following documents were submitted with the application:
- Floodlights Performance Report,
 - Lighting Data Sheet Guidelines,
 - Noise Impact Assessment
 - Landscaping Assessment.
 - Design and access statement.
- 1.5 As part of the application, justification and additional information were received from the applicant stating:
- The project's aim was to construct a full size 3G synthetic pitch in Caernarfon. It would replace the sand-filled, ½ sized (7-a-side) pitch located on the grounds of Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen, the local secondary school for Caernarfon and nearby villages. The Healthy Living Hub (the former Arfon Leisure Centre and Arfon Tennis Centre) is located adjacent to the site. These offer changing facilities and parking areas for the proposed new facility.
 - The location will be an important strategic site to support the growth and quality of football provision in the region. The facility has been identified as a location to support the development of football for girls in north-west Wales, as a location to support competitive and informal play and opportunities to play. It has also been identified as a location to support the Gwyrfai Youth League, especially in winter as it is not possible to play on a number of local grass fields.
 - The most recent school sports survey from Sports Wales indicates the hidden demand for football and highlights the need for new and improved facilities in order to meet the requirements of football in every community in Wales. It was disclosed as the sport with the highest demand in the Caernarfon area.
 - The proposal would lead to considerable benefit for the wider community by providing a better play facility and an opportunity to use it all year round, and it would be available for use by partner organisations and community groups.
 - It would make a substantial contribution towards addressing the unmet demand for modern football facilities in the Caernarfon area.
- 1.6 The application is submitted to committee as the size of the site exceeds half a hectare.

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2. Relevant Policies:

2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales emphasise that planning decisions should be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Local Development Plan.

2.2 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.

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

ISA 1: Infrastructure Provision

ISA 2: Community Facilities.

PS 4: Sustainable Transport, Development and Accessibility

TRA 2: Parking standards

TRA 4: Managing transport impacts

PS 5: Sustainable development

PS 6: Mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change

PCYFF 2: Development criteria

PCYFF 3: Design and place shaping

PCYFF 4: Design and Landscaping

Policy PS19: Conserving and where appropriate enhancing the natural environment.

AMG 5 - Local biodiversity conservation

PS 20 - Conserving and where appropriate enhancing heritage assets

AT1: Conservation Area, World Heritage Sites and Landscapes, Parks and Registered Historic Gardens

AT 4 - Protection of non-designated archaeological sites and their setting

2.4 National Policies:

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11 - February 2021)

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SPG Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities.

3. Relevant Planning History:

3.1 C07A/0194/14/R3 – Installation of four mobile classrooms and two storage units
- Approved with conditions 09.05.2007.

C07A/0424/14/R3 Installation of temporary classrooms - Approved 12.07.2007.

C22/0744/14/LL - Formation of a full size 3G sports pitch with associated 4.5 metre high fencing, 4 metre high acoustic barrier, 6 x 15 metre high floodlights, teams' shelters, hardstanding and landscaping bund with planting - Current application.

C22/0906/14/LL – Installation of new fencing and black coloured bow top style gates along the front boundary of the school, and installation of a turnstile to manage access for pupils. Another application on the site but it is not considered here.

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: It was decided to support the application provided that the drainage arrangements were acceptable by Welsh Water. Also needed an understanding / to co-ordinate the work as there was another development close by and traffic was heavy at times in a busy area (unanimous).

Transportation Unit: I refer to the application above and wish to state that I do not intend to submit a recommendation as it is assumed that the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on any road, or proposed road.

Welsh Water: Having reviewed the proposed drainage strategy, we note it is proposed to communicate surface water runoff from the proposed development with the public sewer via the existing surface water drain serving the school. Due to capacity constraints with the downstream public combined sewerage network, we would request clarification on the outfall of the surface water drain serving the school with the public sewerage system.

In light of the above we offer a holding response until clarification has been received in relation to the outfall of the surface water drain serving the school with the public sewerage system.

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

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reserve the right to make new representation.

Applicant's response

Please find attached revised plans showing a revised drainage layout and drainage strategy. Following comments from Welsh Water and a pre app response for the SABS application from Dan Hughes in the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) team we are now proposing draining through a combination of the soakaway and natural infiltration through the base rather than into the wider public sewer network.

Further observations from Welsh Water

I refer to the email chain below and attached drainage strategy. On the understanding that no surface water will communicate to the public sewer either directly or indirectly we are content to support the application

Please include the following condition

No surface water and/or land drainage shall be allowed to connect directly or indirectly with the public sewerage network

Public Protection Unit:

A noise report and lighting assessment have been provided as part of the application for a new sports pitch.

The lighting assessment has concluded that the proposed floodlights will be within the levels included in the Lighting Institute's Guidance Notes. That said, it cannot be said that these lights will not be seen by the residents. It is noted that the sports field is intended to be approximately 30m from the residential houses and, therefore, the residents will see the lights although the lights will not shine into the gardens or the houses according to the lighting expert's calculation.

Currently, there is no lighting so close to the properties and it would be assumed that this area is relatively dark of an evening; the installation of the new pitch will have a certain degree of impact on the nearby residents from both noise and lighting.

Both reports have stated that the predicted noise and lighting levels will be within the levels stated by the guidance provided.

The noise report has stated that noise mitigation measures must be implemented. The author of the report has stated that in properties south-east of the proposed pitch there will be a very slight increase in noise and mitigation measures must be implemented along with the acoustic barrier (as quoted on page 33 *"An acoustic barrier is to be installed against the weld mesh fencing along the north-west boundary and returning along the sides for 10 metres, with an*

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overall barrier height of 4 metres relative to the surrounding ground level. The barrier is to have a minimum surface density of 10 kilograms per metre squared with no gaps and is to be located as shown in Section 8”, and it is recommended that neoprene isolators are located between the panels and the posts as stated on page 29).

Due to the close proximity that this new pitch will be to the residential properties, should the application be granted it would be strongly advised that a limit is placed on the hours of use so as to limit the disturbance to the residents during the evenings and over the weekend. The proposed use of the sports field is until 22:00 at night and throughout the day on Saturday and Sunday, there is a possibility that this may have an impact on nearby residents due to noise and light because of the proximity of the field.

Biodiversity

The landscaping scheme proposes suitable mitigation for the loss of grassland habitat. I advise a native species is substituted for Privet such as spindle / rowan / elder / blackthorn / wych elm to promote biodiversity. Silver Birch (Be pnd) may be substituted for Downy Birch, Ped. Oak may be substituted for Sessile Oak in line with local environmental conditions. All trees should be sourced from local provenance seed and regularly watered during the first summer. External lighting must follow best practice guidelines in relation to bats.

Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service:

The proposed development is for the creation of new 3G pitches on the playing fields associated with Sir Hugh Owen, a school located on the northern side of Caernarfon. The existing site comprises a mix of grass field and tennis court with, according to the test pit results, 0.2-0.3m of turned soil beneath likely established during the landscaping of the fields. The proposed depth of cut, as well as the relatively shallow fill, has the potential to impact sub-surface archaeological remains, and as the initial creation of the playing fields predates modern archaeological planning legislation the condition of the area is unknown.

Very little investigation having been conducted on this side of the town, with the historic environment databases recording sporadic post medieval sites straddling the Menai Strait itself. The school retains an entry (PRN: 62353) as it retains late 19th/early 20th century origins. The site falls within the Historic Landscape Characterisation area of Caernarfon, which is defined by the medieval core of the town, as well as known Roman occupation throughout. The World Heritage Site of Caernarfon Castle itself (ref. 374) is located roughly 1km to the south, with the scheduled monument Segontium (ref. CN006) just less than 1km to the south-east. It should be noted that due to the proximity of these sites, as well as other scheduled monuments in the

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immediate landscape, Cadw must be consulted.

Recent investigation conducted during the creation of the Caernarfon to Bontnewydd by-pass has also exhibited the potential for unknown archaeological sites throughout the locale, especially as it relates to the intermediate zone between the Menai Strait and the uplands to the east. There is a wider potential for Roman settlement along the coast, especially as a multiple crossing points are known to have existed – but are still unidentified. There is a wider landscape potential for prehistoric material pre-dating the Roman settlement of Caernarfon, with dispersed settlement and occupation activity such as burnt mounds, pits and burials.

Owing to the undeveloped condition of the site, as well as a lack of archaeological investigation in the vicinity, it is important to mitigate any potential here whereby newly encountered archaeological remains would enhance the wider understanding of the area. Ensuring any yet undiscovered archaeological material is not unduly destroyed or lost, contributes to the preservation of heritage, and also has the potential to improve our wider understanding. As such, it is considered appropriate that a programme of mitigation be implemented during the development, in the event of planning consent being granted. This mitigation will allow for any archaeological material to be properly and appropriately assessed, recorded and if necessary, removed.

In the light of these comments and in accordance with Planning Policy Wales (2021) and TAN 24: The Historic Environment, it is recommended that the planning authority should require that appropriate archaeological mitigation is undertaken, should planning be granted. The following condition wording is suggested to secure such a scheme of work:

- a) No development (including topsoil strip or other groundworks) shall take place until a specification for a programme of archaeological work has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out and all archaeological work completed in strict accordance with the approved details.
- b) A detailed report on the archaeological work, as required by condition (a), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority within six months of the completion of the archaeological fieldwork.

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Public Consultation:

A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. The advertisement period has ended and correspondence was received objecting on the following grounds:

- The close proximity of the proposed development to properties to the North and West, particularly on England Road North / Lôn Ysgubor Wen, will result in significant harm to residential amenity from the significant noise and nuisance, particularly shouting, whistles and ball strikes, from the use of the pitch. This is particular unreasonable in the evenings and weekends.
- It is felt that the noise levels at nearby sensitive receptor points will exceed maximum permitted levels and will cause a nuisance.
- The flood lights will cause light nuisance from light spill into nearby properties.
- The development may lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour.
- The development will result in harm to local wildlife and biodiversity.
- The intensification of the use and noise and nuisance will result in harm to the health of nearby residents.
- There are examples of other AGPs in residential areas which have resulted in significant harm to nearby residents.
- Site Management - concerned about inappropriate behaviour from users and certainty is needed through the planning conditions that such behaviour would be addressed.
- Noise from current playing field and the proposal would exacerbate that situation.
- Concerns regarding drainage.
- Closing hours would have to be reduced to 21:00 on weekdays and 18:00 on weekends.
- Damage to property.
- No need, sufficient artificial pitch provision already in the area.
- Change in view. Noise and disturbance.
- Impact on hours of sleep.

5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

The principle of the development

5.1 Policy ISA 2 Community Facilities is relevant to this application. The policy aims to protect existing community facilities and encourage the development of new facilities where appropriate. Local leisure and community facilities are important to the health, social, educational, linguistic and cultural needs of the Plan area, along with its economic welfare. For the purpose of this policy, community facilities are defined as facilities used by local communities for the health, leisure, social and educational purposes and they include schools, libraries, leisure centres, health care provisions, theatres, village halls, cemeteries, places of worship, public houses and any other facility that performs the functions of serving the community. Although the application does not propose new facilities (in terms of land use), it would substantially improve and enhance existing facilities and is likely to be a godsend for the school and the wider community.

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- 5.2 The site lies within the Caernarfon development boundary and is easy to reach by foot, bicycle and public transport. Given that Caernarfon is recognised as an Urban Service Centre, namely one of the main centres in the county, it is considered that the scale and type of the development is appropriate compared to the size, character and function of the settlement. It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable in principle and complies with policy ISA 2.

Visual amenities

- 5.3 Policy PCYFF 3 states that proposals will be approved, including extensions and changes to existing buildings and structures, if they comply with a number of criteria including that the proposal adds or improves the character or appearance of the site, the building or the area in terms of setting, appearance, scale, mass, the height and elevation treatment; that it respects the context of the site and its place in the local landscape; that it uses materials that are appropriate to their surroundings and incorporates soft landscaping; that it improves a safe and integrated transport and communications network; that they limit the risk and danger of flood water run-off and prevent pollution; that it achieves an inclusive design that allows access for all and helps to create healthy and lively environments taking into account the health and well-being of future users.
- 5.4 The proposal is situated on playing fields north of the school building. There are residential dwellings to the north-west, playing fields to the north and the county road and leisure centre building to the east. It is not considered that the proposal, including the fences, would create an alien feature within the local area considering the buildings and structures that already exist. There is some concern regarding an element of the proposal that involves erecting six floodlight posts due to the possibility of creating light pollution. However, it is noted that there are street light and floodlight posts already within the local area and the lighting report submitted with the application explains that any new floodlights would be aimed towards the proposed pitch and would then reduce local light pollution.
- 5.5 No details regarding the teams' shelters were received with the application and a condition would need to be imposed on any permission to agree on the design of those shelters. The application also includes locating a storage container near the site, and although details about the structure were received, the exact location must be agreed before its installation on the site. Generally, it is not believed that this development would cause significant harm to the visual amenities of the local area or its residents and it is believed, by imposing appropriate conditions, that it can be ensured that the amenity impact of the development will be acceptable under policies PCYFF 2 and PCYFF 3 of the LDP.

General and residential amenities

- 5.6 Criterion 7 of Policy PCYFF 2 is relevant to the proposal and refuses proposals if they will have a significantly adverse impact on:

"The health, safety or amenities of the occupiers of local properties, land uses or other properties or the features of the local area through increased activities, disturbance, vibration, noise, dust, fumes, litter, drainage, light pollution or other forms of pollution or disturbance".

- 5.7 The site is located on school grounds, to the north-east of the school building, and the north-western side of the proposed pitch faces a separate row of residential houses within the residential area. Playing fields already exist on the application site. However, the western half of the site facing neighbours' houses is shaded natural grassland except half of the all-weather pitch site to the east near the county road. Therefore, it is likely that the fields are mostly used by the school and during

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daylight hours and, therefore, it must be acknowledged that the proposal would change the situation and enable a more intense use than the current situation. The main impacts are likely to derive from the floodlights and noise impacts.

- 5.8 The north-western side of the proposed pitch would be approximately 15 metres from the school's boundary wall with neighbours' houses and over 30 metres from the rear of those houses. It is intended to construct a soil bund and undertake a landscaping plan between the proposed pitch and school boundary. It can be seen from the photographs submitted with the report that the top half of neighbours' houses can be seen above the school boundary. As noted above, the school grounds border the residential area where a number of houses are located up to the northern boundary of the school's existing playing fields. It is likely that the proposal would somewhat affect those houses as well, but any impact would reduce as the distance from the application site increases.
- 5.9 As part of the application, a Floodlight Performance Assessment was received along with details about the goals, Noise Impact assessment and Landscaping assessment. The noise report concludes that the noise impacts, with mitigation measures in place (acoustic fence and soil bund), would keep the noise levels low enough not to have a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of nearby residents. Information about the floodlights indicates that light would still be visible from neighbours' houses but that lights would not shine into the gardens or the houses.
- 5.10 The Public Protection Unit has stated some concern about the proposal but there was no objection to the proposal subject to conditions. The Planning Service also received correspondence from local residents objecting to the application mainly due to the impact of increased noise and light installation. Furthermore, a statement was received from the applicant offering to reduce opening hours to 21.00 instead of 22:00 during the week and it would be possible to include an appropriate condition should the application be approved. Although the observations received are acknowledged, it is not considered that the proposal would have a detrimental impact on residential amenities and, therefore, with conditions the proposal satisfies the requirements of policy PCYFF 2.

Transport and access matters

- 5.11 From the information submitted within the "Principle of the Development" section, use of the site would intensify and, as a result, the number of vehicles that would enter and exit the site would increase. The current access already serves the site and no change is intended to the access. Due to the current use of the site, sufficient parking spaces are already on site. The site is also situated in an accessible location, within reasonable walking distance from a large number of residential housing and is also close to a bus stop. The Transportation Unit submitted observations stating that they had no objection to the application. It is not considered that the proposal would be contrary to policies TRA2 or TRA4.

Biodiversity matters

- 5.12 The site is already used and maintained as a playing field and, as a result, the proposal is very unlikely to affect protected species or have a detrimental impact on biodiversity. However, the proposal includes landscaping work that would include planting shrubs and plants. The Biodiversity Unit had no objection to the proposal but it recommended the use of native plants. By ensuring that appropriate conditions are imposed on the development, it is believed that this development will meet the requirements of Policies PS19 and AMG 5 of the LDP which encourage proposals to protect, and where appropriate, to enhance the area's biodiversity.

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Archaeological Matters

- 5.13 Observations were received from the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service on the proposal. The Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service note that the development would entail land disturbance on undeveloped land and in a landscape where there is good potential for historical remains. Any archaeological remains would improve the wider understanding of the area especially in relation to the early occupancy of the area and the environs. The Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service therefore recommend imposing a condition regarding a programme of archaeological work for the entire development. On the advice of the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service, Cadw was consulted but at the time of writing the report, no response to the consultation had been received. It is considered by imposing an appropriate condition to carry out archaeological work that the proposal is acceptable in terms of Policy AT 4 of the LDP.

6. Conclusions:

Given the relevant planning matters in this case, the proposed development meets the objectives of the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan by proposing a development of high-quality, modern and suitable design, that will make a substantial contribution towards improvements for local sports facilities. Existing concerns about the proposal are acknowledged; however, the specialist evidence indicates that the impacts would not be substantially detrimental and the applicant has submitted mitigation measures as part of the application.

7. Recommendation:

Approve – conditions

1. Commence the work within five years.
2. Reduce opening hours to 21:00.
3. Landscaping.
4. Agree details of players' shelters.
5. Archaeological details.
6. In accordance with the plans along with technical documents.
7. Agree on the location of the storage container.