

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 19/12/2016
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE MANAGER	CAERNARFON

Number: 4

Application Number: C16/1090/33/LL

Date Registered: 02/09/2016

Application Type: Full - Planning

Community: Buan

Ward: Efailnewydd/Buan

Proposal: Increasing the number of touring units from the 11 that were approved to 19 (eight more) and erect a washing facility

Location: Plas yng Ngheidio, Boduan, Pwllheli, Gwynedd, LL538YL

Summary of the Recommendation: TO APPROVE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

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1. Description:

- 1.1. This is an application to increase the number of touring caravans on an existing caravan site. The proposal would involve increasing the number of touring units from 11 to 19: eight more. The application also includes the construction of a washing facility, a new play area, fencing part of the field to separate it to encourage wildlife, and plant some trees on the area adjacent to the new play area.
- 1.2. The site is located in open countryside within a Landscape Conservation Area. The site is also located within a Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. A farm track that is also a public footpath runs parallel to the north-eastern boundary of the field. The site is served by a third class road which runs parallel to the farm. Located to the north east of the farm is the Cors Geirch Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is also a Ramsar site and the Llŷn Fens Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 1.3. The application is submitted to Committee as it involves a development of more than five caravans.

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 considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Unitary Development Plan.
- 2.2. Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 the Council has a duty not only to carry out sustainable development, but also to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet its sustainable development (or well-being) objectives. 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 making the recommendation the Council has sought to ensure that present needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being objectives as a result of the proposed recommendation.

2.3. Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan 2009:

POLICY A2 – PROTECT 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 B10 – PROTECTING AND ENHANCING LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION AREAS

Protect and enhance Landscape Conservation Areas by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at avoiding significant damage to recognised features.

POLICY B12 – PROTECTING HISTORICAL LANDSCAPES, PARKS AND GARDENS - Safeguard landscapes, parks and gardens of special historical interest in Wales from developments which would cause significant damage to their character, their appearance or their setting.

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Policy B15 – Protection of International Nature Conservation Sites – Refuse proposals that are likely to cause significant harm to nature conservation sites of national importance unless they conform to a series of criteria aimed at managing, enhancing and protecting recognised features within such sites.

POLICY B16 – PROTECTING NATIONALLY IMPORTANT NATURE CONSERVATION SITES - Refuse proposals which are likely to cause significant harm to nature conservation sites of national significance unless they conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting, enhancing and managing the recognised features of the sites.

POLICY B22 – BUILDING DESIGN - Promote good building design by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting 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 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 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 CH33 – SAFETY ON ROADS AND STREETS - Development proposals will be approved provided they conform to specific criteria relating to the vehicular access, the standard of the existing roads network and traffic calming measures.

D20 – TOURING CARAVAN, CAMPING AND TOURING UNIT SITES – EXTENSIONS, ADDITIONAL PITCHES, RELOCATION AND EXCHANGES - To approve proposals to increase the number of pitches or extensions to sites, or to relocate plots or exchange plots subject to meeting specific criteria relating to environmental and visual improvements, the setting, design and appearance of the site and its location in the surrounding landscape, the reasonable ability of the area to include such developments and cumulative effect of caravan sites, camping sites and current touring units.

Supplementary Planning Guidance : Holiday Accommodation (July 2011)

The Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan which is currently being prepared is subject to an ongoing Public Examination. At present, it is not a relevant planning consideration for determining planning applications.

2.4 **National Policies:**

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9, November 2016).
 Technical Advice Note 13 – Tourism
 Technical Advice Note 18 – Transport

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3. Relevant Planning History:

- 3.1 C14/1218/33/LL - Change of use of a field to form a touring caravan site for 11 caravans and two camping 'pods' along with the construction of a toilet/shower block and installation of a new septic tank - approved 27 March 2015.
- 3.2 C12/0718/33/LL Improvements to vehicular access and engineering work: Approved 16 July 2012
- 3.3 C12/0195/33/LL Site for 12 touring caravans and washing facilities: Refused 19 April 2012
- 3.4 C08D/0048/33/AM Single-storey dwelling: Refused 14 April 2008
- 3.5 C07D/0267/33/AM Erection of two dwellings: Refused 19 September 2007
- 3.6 C02D/0035/33/LL Agricultural shed: Approved 12 April 2002.

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: Not received.

Transportation Unit: No objection to the proposal. Although the increase in numbers is substantial, it is believed that the number as a total is unlikely to have a detrimental impact and that the roads network in the vicinity is sufficiently good to cope with the numbers applied for.

Natural Resources Wales: Observations 15 November 2016
Thank you for referring details of the septic tank along with the application. We can confirm that we are satisfied with the details submitted with regard to the septic tank.

Observations 19 September, 2016

In the previous planning application we recommended the need for a reed bed. The applicant contacted us to discuss the risk of groundwater to the SSSI. The applicant stated that a septic tank with an improved soakaway would be constructed. This improved soakaway means that the effluent would be slowed down so that it is retained in a layer of washed sand, and a membrane layer. This allows bacterial breakdown of the effluent in the earth and avoids rapid discharge into the groundwater. There will be a need to ensure that the capacity is suitable for the extra load without causing pollution.

Welsh Water: Sewage
No observations on this aspect as there is no intention to connect to the public sewer.

Water Supply:

No objection to the proposal.

Biodiversity Unit: Observations 21 November 2016

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I am satisfied with the additional information submitted and I have no further observations to make.

Observations 26 September 2016

No concerns regarding the submitted application but I notice that Natural Resources Wales refers to its observations about an alternative sewage treatment method that was approved in the previous application, namely a reed bed (C14/1218/33/LL). Details of this new method should be included in this current application, demonstrating how it would deal with the increase in the number of caravans and the new washing facility.

Footpaths Unit: Not received.

Caravans Officer: There is no objection to the application as long as it complies with the licensing conditions. This development must comply with the requirements of the Acts and Model Standards as follows:-

- Caravan Site and Control of Development Act 1960.
- Model Standards 1983.
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

The applicant will be required to make an application to vary the site's licence should this application be permitted.

Fire Service: No observations on the application in terms of access for fire equipment and water supply.

Public Consultation: A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. The advertisement period has expired and one letter / item of correspondence has been received objecting on the following grounds:

- Matters relating to the water supply as the same water pipe is shared by the property of the application and their property and that those issues had not been resolved since the previous application.

5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

The principle of the development

5.1 Policy D20 of the GUDP approves proposals to increase the number of pitches on existing touring caravan sites by means of an extension provided that the proposal forms part of a plan that will secure environmental and visual improvements in terms of the location, layout, design and appearance of the site, and its position in the surrounding landscape. Furthermore, it is a requirement that the proposed development will not exceed the reasonable capacity of the immediate locality to accommodate such a development, taking into account the cumulative impact of existing touring caravan sites.

5.2 This proposal involves extending and adding eight new pitches on an existing caravan site which has permission to site 11 touring caravans and two pods. The intention is to site the new units on the site's western boundary. The plans have been changed from those originally submitted, with more improvements proposed. It is proposed

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that the north western corner of the site be landscaped by planting some trees; creation of a new play area and construction of a new washing facility are also proposed. It is also proposed that the field to the west of the site be fenced off to encourage wildlife. This site is comparatively concealed and unobtrusive in the landscape, as there is an earthen clawdd with growth along its ridge located near the site's eastern boundary, and the land to the west is higher. Recently, work was undertaken to plant hedgerows on the clawdd to the east of the site and this growth has now matured, although a small area toward the north eastern corner appears weaker than the rest at present.

- 5.3 As part of the improvements, an application has been submitted to construct a new washing facility adjacent to the shower/toilet block that has been constructed on site. In terms of its location, design and size, the proposed building is considered to be reasonable, and would be located adjacent to the existing building within the caravan site and not far from the farmhouse. The external walls would be finished with pebble dash and the roof would be made of corrugated sheets
- 5.4 The existing site operates between 1 March and 31 October of any given year and the same period would apply to the new units.
- 5.5 Having assessed the proposal against the requirements of policy D20, it is believed that the proposal in terms of its location, setting, design and appearance is likely to integrate and blend in with the site and its landscape. The site is neither prominent nor intrusive in the landscape, and it is not considered that it would have a detrimental impact on the area's visual amenities or on the Landscape Conservation Area. The proposed landscaping and amendments would be environmental improvements which would improve the appearance and facilities of the site in its entirety. The Highways Unit believes that the area and county roads network would be able to cope reasonably well with an increase of eight units. Opposite the application site lies the exempt caravan site of Graeanfryn; Carreg Lwyd caravan site is also in the direction of Ceidio. Permission was granted at the last committee for Tu Hwnt i'r Ffirwd caravan site which is also fairly close to the application site. Nevertheless, it is not considered that this addition would be beyond the reasonable ability of the area to cope with such a development at present, in considering them in terms of their accumulative impact and the environmental, amenity and roads impact context that would justify refusing the application. The road leading up to Plas yng Ngheidio is wide enough and suitable to deal with the traffic flow. Therefore, it is considered that an increase in numbers and proposed amendments would conform to policies B10, B22, B25, B27 and D20 of the GUDP.

Visual amenities

- 5.6 One of the main objectives of policy B10 is to safeguard and enhance Landscape Conservation Areas and ensure that developments are integrated well in the landscape. As already noted, it is not considered that the site in its current form is too intrusive in the landscape from the most public areas such as the nearby roads, because of the cloddiau, the higher ground in the background, and the shadows cast by the farm buildings. The cloddiau in the farthest part of the field are a little lower and, toward the north west, are more open; however, extensive planting has been carried out which is likely to alleviate the impact after they have matured. Every effort would have to be made to ensure that this landscaping is maintained in the future.

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- 5.7 There is no great concern about the visual impact of the touring units. It is also considered that the proposed washing facility is acceptable in terms of design, size and scale and is located in the corner closest to the shower / toilets block and to the house, and therefore maintains a good relationship with the existing buildings. Given the levelling work that has been carried out, along with the high cloddiau and planting, it is not considered that the proposal would cause significant harm to the visual quality of the landscape or have a detrimental impact on the Landscape Conservation Area. Consequently, it is considered that the proposal complies with policies B10, B22, B25 and B27 of the GUDP.
- 5.8 The site lies within the Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. Policy B12 of the GUDP requires that the impact of proposals on the historic landscape be assessed when they are of such a scale and magnitude that their impact would be greater than merely a local impact. As the proposal involves increasing the numbers on a caravan site, it is not considered that the proposal would be on such a large scale that it would have an impact on the historic landscape. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of Policy B12 of the GUDP.

General and residential amenities

- 5.9 Other than the Plas yng Ngheidio farmhouse, there are two dwellings in the surrounding area, namely a bungalow known as Tŷ Ni which belongs to the farm, and the property known as Graeanfryn which is opposite. It is considered that a site with 19 touring caravans and two 'pods' would neither be an over-development of the site nor would it lead to additional traffic to an extent that it would significantly harm local amenities. The Graeanfryn site itself acts as a Caravan and Camping Club exempt site, therefore the use in question is unlikely to affect the property any more than it currently does. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposal would cause significant harm to the amenities of the local neighbourhood and the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of policy B23 of the GUDP.

Transport and access matters

- 5.10 A new wide vehicular access to the third class county road has already been approved and created. The new entrance ensures better visibility in both directions than the original farm entrance. The Transportation Unit has stated its satisfaction with the proposal and that the proposal is unlikely to have a detrimental impact and that the roads network in the vicinity is sufficiently good to cope with the numbers applied for. The third class county road which leads from the Bryn Cynan roundabout to the site is comparatively open and most of it is wide enough for two vehicles and is therefore acceptable to accommodate the increase in traffic. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of Policy CH33 of the GUDP without having a negative impact on road safety.

Linguistic Matters

- 5.11 Policy A2 of the GUDP states that proposals that would cause significant harm to the social, linguistic or cultural cohesion of communities, due to their size, scale or location, will be refused. A language and community statement was received as part of the previous application when a caravan site for 11 touring caravans and two pods was approved. The Welsh language was not considered to be at a significant risk as a result of this proposal. The existing proposal is for eight additional touring units and, as such, a Linguistic and Community Statement was not a requirement for this number of units. The seasonal and touring nature of the units in question means that it is not considered that the proposal would cause significant harm to the social,

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linguistic or cultural fabric of the community, and that it is acceptable in respect of Policy A2 of the GUDP.

Biodiversity matters

- 5.12 Cors Geirch lies approximately 160 metres to the north of the site which runs parallel to Afon Geirch. The marsh has been identified as a Ramsar site and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is of international conservation significance. The marsh is also a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) of national significance. In the original proposal, observations were received from Natural Resources Wales expressing concern regarding the proposed sewage disposal system and its possible impact on the conservation site. Consequently, a condition was imposed on planning permission C14/1218/33/LL requiring that a reed bed be laid. However, following the granting of permission it appears that the applicant has had discussions with Natural Resources Wales at which an understanding was reached that installing septic tanks with a soakaway of a higher than usual quality would be acceptable. Details of these septic tanks were submitted as part of the application, and Natural Resources Wales and the Biodiversity Unit are satisfied with the details and that the capacity is sufficient for the proposal. These septic tanks have already been installed in consultation with Natural Resources Wales. It is, therefore, considered that the proposal is acceptable in relation to Policy B15 and B16 of the GUDP.

Response to the public consultation

- 5.13 A letter was received in response to the public consultation expressing concern about the impact on the water pressure and supply to the Graeanfryn property. Similar observations were noted on application C14/1218/33/LL as there are problems with water pressure as the supply serves the property of Plas yng Ngheidio first before the property of Graeanfryn and the proposed development would lead to more problems. The condition imposed on planning permission C14/1218/33/LL requiring details of the method of ensuring that a sufficient water supply was available to serve the development. This condition was imposed as a result of observations by Welsh Water on the proposal. The response of Welsh Water was received stating that it had no objection to the proposal on the grounds of the water supply. This time, no reference was made in their observations either to the fact that the mains pipe was insufficient to ensure a supply, or to suggest that the applicant should install a tank and pump to cope with the additional demand, or to install a new service to another pipe. Since the previous application was approved, it is understood that discussions have taken place between the applicant and Welsh Water to try to reach an understanding about the water supply and that they have attempted to obtain a water supply from an alternative pipe. The intention is to connect to the main water supply at Cefn Morfa and Welsh Water has been on site looking at it and assessing the line to lay down the pipes. It, therefore, appears that plans are afoot to solve the problem of the water supply to the site and a condition could be imposed to ensure that the work of connecting to the mains water pipe has been completed before the proposal, which is the subject of this existing application, begins. Based on this and as a result of observations by Welsh Water on the existing application, the current proposal is considered to be acceptable with regard to a sufficient water supply to the site.

6. Conclusions:

- 6.1 Work has been carried out to substantially level the land and landscape, which has improved the appearance of the site in the landscape. As a result of the work, along with the existing landscaping features, it is considered that the site is no longer

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obtrusive in the landscape, and is it not considered likely to have a significant harmful impact on the visual amenities of the Landscape Conservation Area in the long term. In relation to ensuring that the site is correctly managed, it is considered that this can be ensured through relevant conditions.

7. Recommendation:

7.1 To approve – conditions

1. Commence within five years.
2. In accordance with plans.
3. Number of units on site at any one time to be restricted to 19 touring caravans and two pods.
4. Restricted to holiday season
5. Holiday units only and a register must be kept
6. No caravans to be stored on the land
7. Landscaping
8. Maintain the landscaping whilst the caravan use exists
9. External walls of the washing facility to be in-keeping
10. The roof of the washing facility to be in-keeping
11. Need to connect to the water mains pipe before the development hereby granted can be used for the first time.