

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No: P/20/0050

Site Address: Land To The North Of Lewis Square And
West Of Glyndyrus Close
Abercanaid
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 1YL

Development: Proposed campsite comprising 8 glamping pods, 2 shepherd huts, 12 touring pitches, 8 tent pitches, toilet/welfare block and bike store

Case Officer: David Cross

Site Visit: 9th March 2020

Application Expiry Date: 20th April 2020

Consultation reply date expired: 24th March 2020

APPLICATION SITE

This application relates to an area of land measuring approximately 0.47 of a hectare, which essentially comprises a raised plateau with steep embankments along the southern and eastern boundaries. The site is partly enclosed by a 2m high timber fence that extends along the top of the embankments with trees/vegetation to the west, adjacent to the A470 trunk road. To the north is vacant grass land and a bridleway that provides a link to a network of cycling/pedestrian routes. Access to the site is via an existing track that extends down the embankment to the south-east where it then links to Lewis Square. Within the vicinity of the site is Pitwood House to the north-east and residential properties to the south and east, which form part of Lewis Square and Glyndyrus Close respectively.

Although planning permission (P/14/0269) was previously granted to utilise the site for residential purposes, it is noted that the site has been used as an unauthorised campsite for approximately 2 years with a number of structures having been introduced to the site i.e. bike storage, glamping pods and toilet/shower facilities.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Permission is sought retrospectively for a campsite comprising 8 glamping pods, 2 shepherd huts (one of which is being used as a bar/communal hut), 12 touring caravan pitches and 8 tent pitches, with associated toilets/welfare block and bike store. It is noted that this is a resubmission of previous application (P/18/0349), which was refused due to the lack of information to fully consider the highway implications. In this respect, a highway assessment has been submitted in support of the application.

The existing access serving the site has been extended around a central area of the plateau, which accommodates the glamping pods and shepherd huts. Adjacent to the

eastern, southern and western boundaries of the site is a series of pitches for touring caravans. The northern part of the site provides a grassed area for tents and associated parking. The toilet/welfare block is situated adjacent to the entrance of the site and the bike store is located adjacent to the southern boundary. A parking space is provided for each of the touring pitches, glamping pods and one of the shepherd huts.

The glamping pods are essentially rectangular structures with a curved roof that extends to the ground. These are of a timber construction and measure 3.5m wide by 6m long and 3m high. The shepherd huts have the appearance of a carriage on wheels, measuring 2.8m wide by 7.8m long and 3.4m high. They are of a timber construction with a curved corrugated roof. The toilet/welfare block, consists of a purpose built shipping container, measures 6.1m wide by 2.8m deep and 2.55m high. The bike store is a rectangular structure, which measures 4.5m wide by 7.5m long and 2m high. It has been constructed using metal sheeting on the pine ends with a curved corrugated metal roof that extends to the ground.

PLANNING HISTORY

P/18/0349 - Proposed campsite comprising of 8 glamping pods, 2 shepherd huts, 12 touring pitches, 8 tent pitches, toilet/welfare block and bike store.

REFUSED permission on the 01.08.2019 for the following reason:

1. *The applicant has failed to provide sufficient information to demonstrate that the existing highway (Lewis Square) serving the site can adequately accommodate the additional traffic generated by the development without creating traffic hazards to the detriment of highway and pedestrian safety. As such, the proposed development is contrary to Policy BW12 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2006-2021.*

P/14/0269 - Erection of a Park Home (detached bungalow style home) with associated access road and drainage works.

Permission GRANTED on 05.01.2015

P/08/0288 - Reclamation of land (by means of open excavation, including coal extraction and washing of coal from selected tips) and reinstatement works.

Permission GRANTED on 22.05.2009

CONSULTATION

Engineering and Traffic
Group Leader - No objection

Environmental Health
Manager - No objection

The Coal Authority - No objection

Welsh Water - No objection

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent out to neighbouring properties and a site notice was displayed within the vicinity of the site.

No representations have been received as a result of this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

Planning Policy Wales (PPW), Edition 10, December 2018:

Para 3.5 – 3.15 sets out the importance of high quality design to ensure inclusive design, to promote environmental sustainability and ensure high environmental quality. Regard should also be given to the special characteristics of an area, community safety and to encourage sustainable forms of transport.

Para 3.51 notes that previously developed land wherever possible should be used in preference to greenfield sites where it is suitable for development.

Para 4.1.43 – 4.1.55 sets out the need to reduce the level and speed of traffic in new development, the provision of car parking and how this may be integrated into new development to minimise the reliance of cars. Transport assessments are also an important mechanism to determine anticipated impacts a development proposal may have.

Para 5.5.2 encourages tourism where it contributes to economic development, conservation, rural diversification, urban regeneration and the needs of visitors and those of local communities.

Para 5.5.4 notes that much of the existing provision of facilities and accommodation for tourism occurs in urban locations.

Para 5.5.6 sets out the need to consider the scale and broad distribution of existing and proposed tourist attractions and enable complementary developments such as accommodation and access to be provided in ways which limit negative environmental impacts as well as consider the opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

Para 6.3.3 acknowledges that all landscapes of Wales are valued for their intrinsic contribution to a sense of place and local authorities should protect and enhance their special characteristics, whilst paying due regard to the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits they provide, and their role in creating valued places.

Para 6.4.21 – 6.4.23 notes that local authorities should seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and build resilient ecological networks to ensure that any adverse environmental effects can first be avoided, mitigated or compensated. Regard should also be given to any potential impacts on protected species that may result in disturbance or harm to the species or its habitat.

Para 6.9.23 sets out that local authorities should take into account the nature, scale and extent of ground instability which may pose direct risks to life and health, buildings and structures, or present indirect hazards associated with ground movement, including mine

entry collapse, which provide potential pathways for the migration to surface of landfill or mine gases.

Para 6.9.25 states that planning decisions will need to take into account; the potential hazard that instability could create to the development itself, to its occupants and to the local environment; and, the results of a specialist investigation and assessment by the developer to determine the stability of the ground and to identify any remedial measures required to deal with any instability.

Para 6.9.27 states that where acceptable measures can overcome instability, planning permission may be granted subject to conditions specifying the necessary measures. If instability cannot be overcome satisfactorily, the authority may refuse planning permission.

Technical Advice Notes (TAN)

- TAN 5, Nature Conservation and Planning, September 2009
- TAN 18, Transport, March 2007
- TAN 12, Design, March 2016
- TAN 13, Tourism, October 1997

Local planning policy

Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016-2031:

- Policy SW4 - Settlement Boundaries
- Policy SW11 - Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- Policy EnW1 - Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- Policy EnW4 - Environmental Protection
- Policy EnW5 - Landscape Protection
- Policy EcW7 - Tourism, Leisure and Recreation Development

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG):

- SPG 4- Sustainable Design, July 2013
- SPG 5- Nature and Development, May 2015

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Land use

The application site is located within the settlement boundary, where the majority of new development is generally encouraged and supported in principle by policy SW4 of the LDP. It is noted that planning permission (P/14/0269) has previously been granted for the residential use of the site for a single dwelling set within a large curtilage. It is considered that the camping facilities, alongside the residential use of the site, are compatible, particularly as both elements are within the applicant's control. In this respect, it is noted that the camp site has already been operating for approximately 2 years. Furthermore, the site is ideally located close to Bike Park Wales, which has contributed to the rise of camping facilities/tourism accommodation across the County Borough. In this respect it is acknowledged that the nearby bridleway/cycle routes provide direct links to the mountain bike centre.

Design

The development would introduce a number of single storey structures across the site (some of which are already present), comprising glamping pods, shepherd huts, toilet facilities and a bike store. In addition to this, there would be a number of touring caravans and vehicles parked on the various pitches (a total of 29). Given the elevated nature of the site, there is potential for the development to be visible in the wider context. However, the existing trees, which run alongside the A470 trunk road, and the existing fencing along the top of the embankments, help to screen the majority of the development within the local context. The development is mostly visible from the cycle/pedestrian track approximately 85m to the north of the site. From this position the development can be seen in the context of other residential properties and does not adversely impact on the user experience or recreational use of the bridleway.

Whilst the views of the development from neighbouring properties is limited, in some cases it may be possible to view part of the touring caravans above the boundary fence line. Notwithstanding this, given the low number of pitches and the level of existing screening, the development would not be particularly visible within the landscape and would not have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the area. Furthermore, the permanent structures (glamping pods, toilet facilities and bike store) are well contained within the site and are of an appropriate scale, design and appearance. Therefore, the proposal complies with policy SW11 of the LDP.

Amenities

The dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the site to the north-east, east and south have the greatest potential to be affected by the development. Although the site is in an elevated position in relation to these properties, when taking into account the separation distance (of at least 19m), the level of existing screening and the scale of any structures, there would not be an adverse impact on residential amenity in terms of overbearing impacts or a loss of privacy.

There is potential for the development to give rise to some noise and disturbance as a result of the traffic movements to and from the site, and from the activities that may take place within the site i.e. visitors using the picnic tables or the bar within the shepherd hut. It is understood that the development primarily seeks to attract visitors who wish to attend Bike Park Wales, given its close proximity and the direct cycle links. As such, it is expected that once people have arrived at the site much of the traffic movements would be cyclists using the bridleway to the north.

With the exception of the shepherd hut that accommodates a particularly small bar (can seat up to 6 people) to provide drinks to those using the camp site, there are no other facilities that would generate a significant level of noise or disturbance. The selling of alcohol in the small bar and its opening times would be regulated by the Licensing Authority. However, given its size with limited capacity and its location away from neighbouring properties, it is not deemed to have an adverse impact on residential amenity. Furthermore, the existing fencing around the camping/caravan pitches, together with the elevated nature of the site, helps to attenuate any noise and thus reducing the potential impacts on the neighbouring properties. In this regard, it is acknowledged that no concerns have been raised in respect of noise and disturbance as a result of the publicity exercise. Nor have there been any complaints in relation to the potential impacts on

residential amenity since the camp site has been in operation. Therefore, the proposal complies with policies SW11 and EnW4 of the LDP.

Highways

It is noted that the previous application (P/18/0349) to retain the camping facility was refused on the grounds of insufficient information to fully assess the potential highway implications. At that time concerns had been raised in respect of the potential increase in traffic movements to and from the site and implications this may have on highway safety.

To address this issue, a highway assessment report has been submitted in support of the application, which considers the suitability of the existing access to accommodate the development. The report also includes details on the anticipated vehicular traffic movements, pedestrian access and impacts on the wider highway network.

Access into the site is via a recently constructed gravel track, which was granted permission (P/14/0269) as part of a previous application to utilise the site for residential purposes. This track links to Lewis Square (an adopted highway) to the south-east, which leads to a roundabout (further south) that forms part of the main highway serving the wider Abercanaid area.

The existing track serving the site measures approximately 3.5m wide and is generally suitable for single lane traffic. However, there is sufficient room and adequate visibility at either end to enable drivers to wait and negotiate passing vehicles before entering or exiting the site. The layout of the development also provides a one-way system to enable the appropriate circulation of traffic. Additionally, there is also sufficient on-site parking with at least one space for each of the pitches.

On the approach to the application site along Lewis Square the carriageway varies in its width. The initial stretch of the highway, adjacent to the roundabout, measures approximately 4.7m wide and has no pedestrian segregation. This section of the road also forms part of a bridleway that links to other pedestrian/cycle routes further north. Adjacent to the site entrance the carriageway measures between 5.5m and 7.5m wide and includes a 2m wide footpath along one side, which links to a bus stop situated on the main highway serving Abercanaid.

It is noted that the existing highway currently serves 31 residential properties and that the camping/caravan site would introduce a total of 29 pitches, of which 12 of these could be utilised for touring caravans. To assess the potential impact on traffic movements along the highway network serving the site, the submitted highway report utilises the TRICS database, which sets out the anticipated level of traffic for different types of development. In this respect, the highway report notes that the proposal could generate 3 vehicle trips during the morning peak time (8am – 9pm) and 7 vehicle trips in the afternoon peak time (4pm – 5pm). A survey was also carried out to determine the existing traffic movement in the vicinity of the site. This survey highlights that during the morning (7:30am – 9:30am) and afternoon (3:30pm – 6:00pm) periods there were 10-14 traffic movements. Based on this information, the highway report concludes that the development will generate a very low volume of traffic and will therefore have a negligible impact on the local highway network.

The existing highway leading to the application site, is of an adequate standard to accommodate two way traffic movements. It is acknowledged that there is a bend in the

road adjacent to Lewis Square which restricts the forward visibility for drivers. However, traffic speeds along this section of the highway would be low, allowing sufficient time for drivers to react to oncoming traffic. Additionally, there is an existing footpath along one side of the carriageway, which provide adequate pedestrian access from the existing residential properties to the nearby bus stop. In this regard it is acknowledged that the camp site has been operating at the site for 2 years without any obvious highway implications. Based on the information submitted with the application, it is acknowledged that the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader has not raised any objection to the proposal. Furthermore, no complaints have been received in regards to any unacceptable increases in the level of traffic in the area or congestion. Taking into account the low level of traffic generated by the camp site, the development would not give rise to a significant impact on highway safety for pedestrian and cyclists in the surrounding area. Therefore the proposal complies with policy SW11 of the LDP.

Environment

The application site, which largely comprises an area of grassland with gravel tracks, is generally void of any features of ecological interest. It is also noted that the development does not encroach into the area of existing trees and vegetation that adjoins the western boundary. The development has also been operating for a period of time and so the continued use of the site for camping would not have an adverse impact on protected species or habitats. Therefore, the proposal complies with policy EnW1 of the LDP.

Ground conditions

The application site lies within an area identified by The Coal Authority to be at high risk to past coal mining activities. As such, a Mining Risk Assessment has been submitted in support of the application. The report notes that there are three air shafts and two adits to the south of the site, which are deemed to be too remote from the site to affect the proposed development. The report also notes that the development lies outside of the potential collapse zone of an air shaft close to the south-east corner. The Mining Risk Assessment concludes that there are no recognised risks to the development from the solid geology of the site. Nor is it prone to landslip conditions. Additionally, the report considers the development would not be at risk from past mining activities. In this respect, The Coal Authority has not raised any objection to the proposal. Therefore, it has been adequately demonstrated that there are no significant ground stability concerns with the proposed development as a result of past mining activities.

CONCLUSIONS

The duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ("the WBFG Act") has been taken into consideration when determining this application. In reaching the following recommendation, the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act have been considered, as well as the Welsh Ministers well-being objectives set out in section 8 of the WBFG Act.

For the above reasons, the proposed camp site is deemed to be acceptable and complies with the relevant LDP policies. Accordingly, the following recommendation is made:

RECOMMENDATION: **BE APPROVED** subject to the following **CONDITIONS:**

1. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Drawing No. AL(90) 10 - Proposed Site Plan, received 24.02.2020
- Drawing No. AL(0)15 - Elevations as Proposed , received 24.02.2020

Reason -To ensure compliance with the approved plans and clearly define the scope of the permission.

2. The development, consisting of glamping pods, shepherd huts, caravan and camping pitches, shall be occupied as holiday accommodation only and shall not be occupied as a person's sole or main place of residence. An up to date register shall be kept at the holiday accommodation hereby permitted and be made available for inspection by the local planning authority upon request. The register shall contain details of the names of all of the occupiers of the accommodation, their main home addresses and their date of arrival and departure from the accommodation.

Reason - To define the scope of the permission in the interests of the character and appearance of the area, highway safety and to accord with policy SW11 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Replacement Local Development Plan.

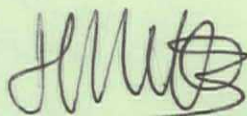
3. The siting of glamping pods, shepherd huts, caravans and camping pitches shall be limited to the number and specific locations as indicated on the proposed site plan (Drawing No. AL(90)10). No additional glamping pods, shepherd huts, caravans or camping pitches shall be located within the site.

Reason - To avoid intensification of the development in the interests of the character and appearance of the area, highway safety and to accord with policy SW11 Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan.

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

Reason - To prevent hydraulic overloading of the public sewerage system, to protect the health and safety of existing residents, to ensure no pollution of or detriment to the environment and to accord with Policy SW11 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Head of Town Planning

DATE:

9/4/20