



PLANNING AND REGULATORY **FACT FINDING VISITS**

9.00 AM MONDAY, 30TH JULY, 2018

ON SITE AT BLAEN-Y-GARTH FARM, BLAEN-Y-GARTH ACCESS ROAD, PANT, MERTHYR TYDFIL

For Members attending the Rights of Way Committee:

Please note that the Rights of Way Committee will follow on from this meeting on site at Gurnos 18

This Agenda has been prepared by the Democratic Services Department. Any member of the public requiring information should contact the department on (01685 725284) or email democratic@merthyr.gov.uk.

Any reference documents referred to but not published as part of this agenda can be found on the Council's website or intranet under Background Papers.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 relating to Council Tax, the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct

Note:

- (a) Members are reminded that they must identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest and

(b) Where Members withdraw from a Meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they must notify the Chair when they leave

3. P/16/0094 - Blaen-y-Garth Farm, Blaen-Y-Garth
Access Road, Pant, CF48 2UY

To consider report of the Deputy Chief Executive **3 - 22**

4. Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair

COMPOSITION:

Councillors: H Barrett (Chair)
C Tovey (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: J Amos, D Chaplin, M Colbran,
E Galsworthy, K Gibbs, C T Jones, G Lewis, J Thomas
and S Thomas

together with appropriate officers

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Agenda Item 3

DATE WRITTEN	6th July 2018
REPORT AUTHOR	Judith Jones
CASE OFFICER	David Cross
COMMITTEE	Planning and Regulatory
COMMITTEE DATE	18th July 2018

Application No.
P/16/0094

Date
30th March 2016

Determining Authority
MTCBC

Proposed Development

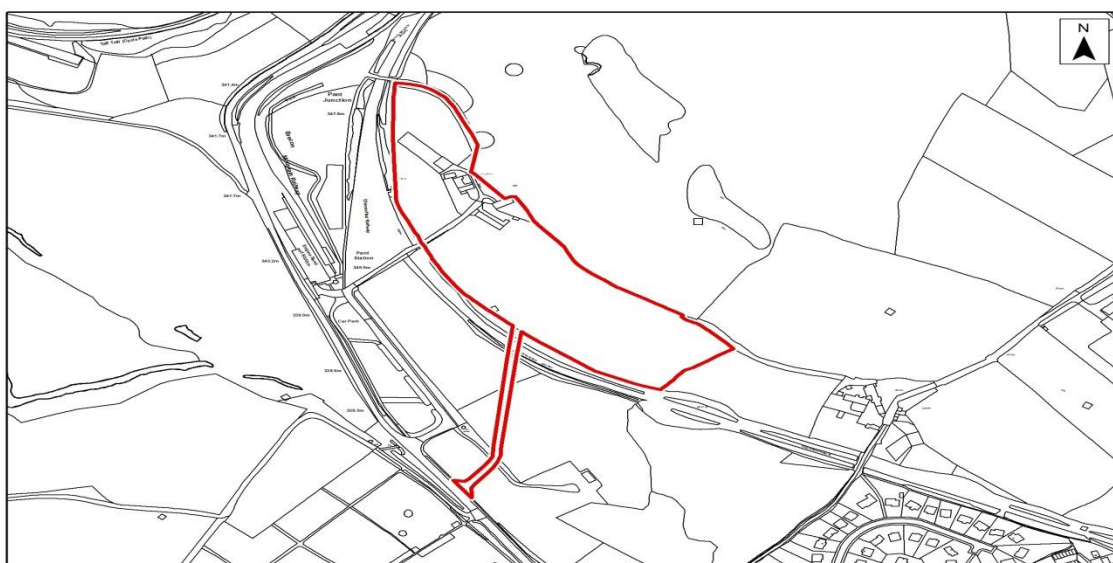
Location

Name & Address of Applicant/Agent

Creation of tourist holiday park comprising 57 camping and caravan pitches. The restoration and change of use of the farm house to accommodate an office, store rooms and shop.
Conversion and extension to existing barn to provide tourist information area and cafe.
Erection of two amenity buildings and construction of a new vehicular access road, landscaping and associated infrastructure works

Blaen-y-Garth Farm
Blaen-Y-Garth Access Road
Pant
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 2UY

Beacons Leisure Limited
c/o Bernard Eacock Ltd
1 Fine Street
Peterchurch
Herefordshire



P/16/0094

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APPLICATION SITE

This application relates to an area of grassland within the open countryside measuring approximately 3.6 hectares. The site is located in the northern part of the County Borough, adjacent (north-east) to the Brecon Mountain Railway and 0.2km to the north-west of Pant. The site is also situated approximately 1.3km to the south of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The site itself comprises 3 field enclosures with a number of trees and hedgerows scattered along the boundaries. In the northern part of the site is a farmyard together with the former Blaen Y Garth farmhouse and barn, which is in a dilapidated condition due to the loss of its roof, which has resulted in significant damage to its interior. It is noted that the farmhouse is a Grade II listed building. It appears that the farmhouse has not been occupied for a considerable length of time and the barn has been used for storage and the keeping of animals.

A former railway line runs along the southern boundary of the site which is defined as a raised embankment and is intersected by an existing stone track that provides access to the farmhouse. This track links to the car parking area serving the Brecon Mountain Railway (to the south-west), with access then on to the main highway (a link road between Pant and Pontsticill to the north).

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Full planning permission is sought for the creation of a tourist holiday park to accommodate a total of 57 camping and caravan pitches, comprising 20 mobile homes, 14 touring caravan pitches, 15 tent pitches and 8 glamping pods. Additionally, two amenity buildings are proposed, which would provide toilet and showering facilities. There would be a change of use and restoration of the existing farmhouse to accommodate an office, store room and shop, together with the conversion and extension of the barn to provide a tourist information area and café.

The restoration of the farmhouse would involve the provision of a new slate roof, the installation of new timber framed sash windows and timber doors, together with a new lime wash finish to the external elevations. The existing modern porch would be removed and replaced with a new timber canopy. Additionally, the existing dry stone walls adjoining and surrounding the farmhouse would be restored. The internal layout of the farmhouse would remain unchanged.

The existing barn comprises an original stone built structure with a pitched slate roof, which is in fairly good condition. Attached to one side is a dilapidated steel profiled clad shed which has been used to accommodate animals. It is proposed that this element of the building be removed and replaced with a new extension of a similar scale to accommodate part of the proposed café. The extension would measure 5.6m wide by 10.5m deep and 2.5m high with a flat roof. The external finishes would comprise timber cladding on the external elevations together with a glazed corridor linking the extension to the original barn structure.

One of the toilet/shower blocks (amenity building 1) would be located to the north (rear) of the barn to serve nearby glamping pods and tent pitches. This building

would measure 15m wide by 5.6m deep and 4.3m high with a pitched roof. The other amenity building would be located to the south-east of the farmhouse adjacent to large stone walls, which appear to be the remains of a former building/structure. This amenity building would measure 15m by 5.6m deep and 4.3m high with a pitched roof. The external finishes of both amenity buildings would comprise render on the elevations with a slate roof and would include 2.3m high stone walls that screen the entrances.

The proposed mobile homes would be located within the south-east part of the site and would generally be of a simple timber construction with elongated windows and a large glazed entrance. Each mobile home would be pre-fabricated and of the same design measuring 6.7m wide by 11.9m deep and 2.9m high with a flat roof. Each unit would also incorporate a small decked area to provide external amenity space.

The proposed touring caravan and tent pitches would be provided at the centre of the site, together with two ponds, which would help support a sustainable drainage system. In the northern extent of the site, glamping pods would be provided, which generally consist of a canvas structure measuring 5.6m wide by 8m deep and 3.1m high.

Although a detailed landscaping scheme has not been provided, the submitted plans illustrate the development would involve the restoration of existing stone boundary walls, the planting of trees alongside the new tracks within the site and scattered amongst the various pitches. A woodland area would also be provided in the south-east corner of the site.

To accommodate the development a new access track into the site is proposed, which would vary between 3.9m and 5.5m wide over a length of 170m. This track would provide a new link between the Brecon Mountain Railway carpark and the existing track serving the farmhouse. Additionally, a network of new tracks would be formed within the site to provide access to the respective camping/caravan pitches along with some parking bays. The main tracks and parking bays would be surfaced with compacted Whindust and the secondary tracks and hardstanding areas for the touring caravans would be constructed using an 'X-Grid' grass road system.

The application has been supported by the following documents:

- Planning Statement
- Viability Assessment
- Design and Access Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Heritage Assessment
- Transport Statement
- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Ecological Survey
- Landscape Appraisal and Photomontages

PLANNING HISTORY

P/16/0095 - Listed building application for the conversion of Blaen-Y-Garth Farm

House, including internal and external restoration works, to accommodate an office, store room and shop, as part of a tourist holiday park development. The conversion of existing barn, including the demolition of a side annexe with associated internal and external works, to provide a tourist information area and café

This application is currently under consideration.

CONSULTATION

Internal consultees

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Engineering and Traffic Group Leader | - | No objection subject to conditions relating to retaining works, surface water drainage and access details. |
| Planning Division's Policy Group Leader | - | No objection. |
| Planning Division's Conservation Officer | - | No objection. |
| Planning Division's Countryside Officer to | - | No objection subject to a condition relating to ecological mitigations. |
| Planning Division's Landscape Architect to | - | No objection subject to a condition relating to landscaping details. |
| Rights of Way Division | - | No response. |
| Environmental Health Manager | - | No response. |
| Local Resilience Unit | - | No objection. |
- ### External consultees
- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---------------|
| Natural Resources Wales (NRW) | - | No objection. |
|-------------------------------|---|---------------|

Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust	-	No objection subject to conditions relating to a programme of historic building recording and an archaeological watching brief.
Cadw	-	No objection.
Health & Safety Executive	-	No objection.
South Wales Police	-	No response.
Welsh Water	-	No objection subject to a condition for the submission of a drainage scheme.
Western Power Distribution	-	No response.
Wales & West Utilities	-	No response.

Neighbouring authorities

Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council	-	No objection.
Brecon Beacons National Park Authority	-	No response.

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, a letter was sent to Garth Farm (adjoining property) on the 8th April 2016, 6 site notices were displayed within the vicinity of the site on the 14th April 2016 and a notice was advertised in the local newspaper on the 14th April 2016. A further consultation exercise was undertaken, following amendments to the proposed access and a reduction in the number of mobile home pitches. This comprised a letter sent to Garth Farm and 6 site notices displayed around the site on the 10th April 2018.

As a result of these consultation exercises a total of 2 letters of objections were received which raised the following concerns:

- The proposed tourist caravan and camping park would attract additional traffic along Pant Road which is already a busy road at peak times and would present an issue for the residents of Pant.
- The proposed development is not located within the settlement boundary and the countryside location is not fully justified.
- The development would have an unacceptable impact on the local landscape and would have an adverse effect on the natural heritage and historic landscapes.
- The design of the proposal is substandard.
- The site is located within a local mineral safeguarding zone.

- The development would sever well established local rights of way.
- The scheme does not provide community benefits in the form of public access.

POLICY CONTEXT

The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application:

National planning policy

Planning Policy Wales (PPW), Edition 9, November 2016:

Section 4 – Planning for Sustainability

Para 4.6.3 highlights the priorities for rural areas; these are to secure, amongst other outcomes, a thriving and diverse local economy where agriculture-related activities are complemented by sustainable tourism and other forms of employment in a working countryside

Para's 4.11.9 – 4.11.12 set out the principles of good design in new development proposals, which should take into account its relationship to its surrounding context. Regard should be given to the appropriate scale, appearance, landscaping and quality of building design and should also be accessible for all.

Section 5 – Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast

Para's 5.5.1 – 5.5.3 note that the impact a development proposal may have on wildlife or the landscape is an important consideration in determining applications. Where ever possible adverse effects on the environment should be avoided or acceptably minimised.

Chapter 6 – Conserving the Historic Environment

Para 6.5.11 highlights that there should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation of a listed building and its setting. Where a development proposal affects a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. It is also noted that whilst the continuation or reinstatement of the original use should generally be the first option, it is also recognised that there is a need for flexibility where new uses have to be considered in order to secure a building's survival or provide it with a sound economic future.

Para 6.5.29 – 6.5.30 notes that enabling development can deliver substantial heritage benefits that would be contrary to other objectives of national or local planning policy. Such development may be appropriate if the public benefit of rescuing, enhancing, or even endowing an important historic asset decisively outweighs the harm to other material interests.

Section 7 – Economic Development

Para 7.1.3 indicates the planning system should support economic and employment growth alongside social and environmental consideration within the context of sustainable development.

Para 7.6.1 encourages local planning authorities to adopt a positive and constructive approach to applications for economic development taking account of the likely economic benefits i.e. creation of jobs, regeneration priorities and enhancing employment opportunities.

Section 8 - Transport

Para 8.7.1 sets out the criterion that should be considered where transport implications may occur, such as impacts on local travel demand, public transport provision, accessibility and highway safety.

Section 11 – Tourism, Sport and Recreation

Para 11.1.1 makes the point that tourism is vital to economic prosperity and job creation in many parts of Wales. It is a significant and growing source of employment and investment, based on the country's cultural and environmental diversity. Tourism can be a catalyst for environmental protection, regeneration and improvement in both rural and urban areas.

Para 11.3.3 highlights the need to consider the effects of sport and recreation on neighbouring uses in terms of noise, light emissions, traffic generation and in the case of larger developments, ease of access and the safety of residents, users and the public.

Technical Advice Notes (TAN):

- TAN 5 Nature Conservation and Planning, September 2009
- TAN 6 Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities, July 2010
- TAN 11 Noise, October 1997
- TAN 12 Design, March 2016
- TAN 16 Sport, Recreation and Open Space, January 2009
- TAN 18 Transport, March 2007
- TAN 23 Economic Development, February 2014

Local planning policy

Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2006-2021:

- Policy BW4 - Settlement boundaries / locational constraints
- Policy BW5 - Natural heritage
- Policy BW6 - Townscape and built heritage
- Policy BW7 - Sustainable design and place making
- Policy BW8 - Development and the water environment

- Policy BW10 - Mineral safeguarding
- Policy BW12 - Development proposals and transport
- Policy BW16 - Protecting / enhancing the network of leisure facilities
- Policy AS4 - Historic landscape
- Policy TB11 - Access, parking and accessibility of local facilities

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG):

- SPG 2 Planning Obligations, March 2012
- SPG 4 Sustainable Design, July 2013
- SPG 5 Nature and Development, May 2015

Other material considerations

Destination Management Plan 2016-2018

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of the development

The application site is located outside of the settlement boundary and as such the proposal constitutes a countryside development as defined by policy BW4 of the LDP. Development in such locations can be supported in principle where it relates to tourism, recreation or leisure facilities, where a countryside location is fully justified.

A Viability Assessment (VA) has been submitted in support of the application in order to justify the location of the development and draws reference to the Council's Destination Management Plan (DMP), which seeks to promote and strengthen the tourism offer within the County Borough. It is acknowledged that there has been a growth in tourism with a number of new and improved facilities such as Bike Park Wales and the Welsh International Climbing Centre. Combined with this, the VA notes that since 2013 there has been a steady increase in the provision of accommodation within the County Borough and that the DMP seeks to improve the range of tourist accommodation to encourage short and long stay vacationers. In this respect the VA acknowledges that there is only 1 caravan/camping site in the County Borough, with no sites that currently offer static caravans/chalets. As such, the proposal seeks to address this gap in the market and widen the tourism accommodation offer.

The VA highlights that the site is suitably located with excellent transport links via the Heads of the Valleys Road and along the local highway network. Additionally, it is ideally located close the Brecon Beacons National Park, which provides a wide range of outdoor activities and recreational pursuits. In the immediate vicinity of the site, there is the Brecon Mountain Railway and the Morlais Golf Club, as well as national cycle routes with good links to other attractions. Taking into consideration the location of the site and its relationship with a number of tourist attractions in the area, its links to the surrounding area, not least its close proximity to the National Park, the development is reasonably justified in the countryside location.

Notwithstanding the tourism benefits of the development, it should also be noted that part of the proposal includes the restoration and conservation of a Grade II Listed Building. Presently the Blaen Y Garth farmhouse is unoccupied and in a significant state of disrepair. Given the current state of the building and the fact that it has been vacant for a considerable length of time, it is likely that the building would continue to deteriorate to the detriment of the longevity of the building and the loss of its special qualities. The proposal would not only enable the restoration of the building and prevent it from further deterioration, it would also enable the building to be brought back into beneficial use and would be more accessible to the public as a result of the overall development. This in turn has a benefit to the historic environment, which also contributes to the tourism offer within the County Borough. Therefore the principle of the development complies with policy BW4 of the LDP.

Design and landscaping

The layout of the development has been informed by the presence of a number of features within the site, in particular the existing field boundary enclosures and the undulating topography. The main bulk of the development (comprising the mobile homes, touring caravan pitches and the majority of the camping pitches) would be located in the largest of the three field areas, within the southern half of the site, which slopes down from the farm house. This enables the main elements of the development to be positioned away from the farmhouse in order to reduce the impact on its immediate setting. Although the caravans and mobile homes would inevitably be visible from the farmhouse, the separation distance and change in levels would help to maintain some appreciation of the existing setting.

The proposed pitches would generally be positioned around a central gravel access track with smaller tracks that spur off to some of the outer pitches. The use of Whindust and a grass road system for the surfacing of the access tracks and hardstanding areas would be in keeping with the countryside environment and enables the development to integrate with the landscape.

As an integral part of the development, the Grade II listed farmhouse is to be converted from its former residential use to an office with a shop and store room. The listed building would be a focal point to the development for visitors arriving at the site. The proposal to fully restore the exterior of the building, including the construction of a new roof, doors, windows and canopy, along with the restoration of its interior, would have a significant improvement on the overall quality and appearance of the building that enhances the character of the area. The alterations to the farmhouse will also be fully considered as part of the listed building application P/16/0095. Furthermore, the conversion of the building to accommodate facilities for the holiday park would provide a viable use to the building that ensures its longevity and appreciation in the public interest.

The presence of caravans and tents within the site would vary with the holiday seasons. However, the mobile homes and amenity buildings would be more permanent features of the site and as such would have a greater impact on the character of the area. The mobile homes would essentially be timber cabins, which have a modern appearance accentuated by large bi-folding doors on the front elevations and elongated windows. The use of a flat roof with an extended overhang

to provide a canopy above an area of decking also adds to the modern design, whilst reducing the overall visible bulk of the structures within the landscape. Two amenity buildings would be located near the farmhouse, which would provide toilet/shower facilities for the caravan and camping/glamping pitches. The Design & Access Statement (DAS) notes that these buildings have been designed to adopt a traditional mass, scale and form that reflects the vernacular of the farmhouse. The DAS also considers that these permanent structures would form a small group of buildings around the farmhouse in much the same way as a farmstead would traditionally be formed. Their external finishes would comprise a combination of render, stonework and slate, which would complement the traditional materials used on the farmhouse and barn.

The proposed caravan pitches would be situated approximately 50m away from the listed farm house. Given the nature of caravans, they would appear as alien features to the landscape. The proposed caravan pitches would be located at the centre of the site where the land generally dips down and would be partly screened by the undulating land and embankments, including the former railway line. There are also a number of intervening trees adjacent to the farm house and along the boundaries of the site, which would help to reduce the impact of the caravans on the setting of the listed building and surrounding landscape. The impact of the caravans on the landscape would also considerably diminish depending on the seasonal demand. The glamping pods (approx. 65m to the north of the farm house) would also be partly screened by the existing barn and surrounding trees.

The proposed extension to the barn would be of a modern design that draws reference to the form and scale of the existing attached dilapidated metal shed. The extension would be seen as a juxtaposition of the barns original features, with its contrasting roof profile and external finishes. This is further emphasised by the glazed corridor that combines the two elements together. Within a historic context, the extension would be clearly read as a modern addition that complements and emphasises the special qualities of the farm house and barn.

The general layout and design of the proposal has clearly been informed by the need to minimise the impact of the development on both the qualities of the landscape and the setting of the listed building. In this regard a Landscape Appraisal (LA) has been submitted in support of the application. The LA concludes that it is the historic qualities of the site and surrounding landscape character, which is most sensitive to change. The LA notes that the changes to the agricultural field pattern within the site are considered to be significant, largely because of the historic value placed on the area. However, the LA acknowledges that the field boundaries would be retained and restored, which would improve the quality of these features. Furthermore, the LA considers the built form and settlement pattern would only be altered locally and would not impact on the wider historic landscape.

When considering the visual impacts of the development in the wider area, over a 10 year period (allowing for the proposed landscaping to mature), the LA notes the most significant effect would be experienced by visitors to Pant Cemetery, due to the angle of views which may not be fully screened. Photomontages have been submitted, which illustrate the mobile homes would be the most visible element of the development from Pant Cemetery, with the remaining part of the proposal, in the

main, being screened by existing and proposed trees. The low profile of the mobile homes and the use of timber cladding on the elevations, would enable the development to integrate into the landscape without significant harm to the views from Pant Cemetery. The proposal would not appear as a stark feature in the landscape that overly dominates the views from the cemetery or the recognition of other features within the landscape. Additionally, given the location of the development (approx. 200m) from Pant Cemetery, the proposal would not adversely impinge on its peaceful environment.

It is accepted that the very nature of the development will undoubtedly have an impact on the character of the area and the setting of the listed building, by virtue of its presence within an otherwise undeveloped area of the countryside. Notwithstanding this, the undulating landform and provision of additional tree planting across the site helps to reduce some of the impacts. This combined with the design of the permanent buildings and retention/restoration of field boundaries, ensure that the development could be accommodated within the landscape without significant harm to the surrounding area. It is acknowledged that the Planning Division's Landscape Architect has not raised any objection to the proposal subject to details of a comprehensive landscaping scheme being provided, which can be secured by condition. Therefore, the proposal complies with policies BW5 and BW7 of the LDP.

Historic environment

The proposed development is located within a Landscape of Historic Interest as defined by policy AS4 of the LDP. There are also a number of historic assets within the site and close to its boundaries, namely the Grade II listed Baen Y Garth Farmhouse at the heart of the development and the Grade II listed Ventilation Shafts, which form part of the Morlais Tunnel and are located adjacent to the new access road. In the wider area is the Morlais Hill Ring Cairn and Morlais Castle (within 1km to the west of the site) which are both Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs).

In support of the application a Heritage Assessment (HA) has been carried which considers the potential impact on the historic landscape and historic assets. In terms of the SAMs, the report concludes that due to various intervening features and buildings within the landscape the development would not harm the significance of these assets. Cadw have indicated that although there would be some inter-visibility between the development and the SAMs, the proposal would not adversely impact on the setting, interpretation or understanding of these designated monuments. As such, Cadw have not raised any objection to the development.

The proposed new access into the site would be located approximately 30m away from the Grade II listed Ventilation Shafts, which are situated next to the Brecon Mountain Railway building and on the southern edge of the car parking. The creation of a new access road within the vicinity of these structures, which runs parallel with the existing car park, would have the potential to impact on their setting. Due to the presence of modern development in the vicinity of the ventilation shafts, the HA considers their setting to have some capacity for change. Given the siting of the new access and the presence of the existing carpark, there would only be a slight change

to the setting of the Ventilation Shafts, which would not cause harm to their significance or appreciation.

The Historic Assessment notes that the proposal falls within the Garth and Blaen-y-Garth Historic Landscape Character Area (HLCA). The significance of this HLCA is associated with the rural character of the landscape and its ties to the historic farmsteads. As a result of the abandonment of the farm house, the building has fallen into severe disrepair. The HA acknowledges that the development would bring a change to the character of the fields as the pasture paddocks would be replaced by camping areas with associated infrastructure and planting. Nevertheless, this change would also bring other benefits to the area. Notably the restoration of the Grade II listed farmhouse, which would be brought back into beneficial use as a result of the development.

The Heritage Statement submitted in support of the application reviews the critical condition of the farmhouse, which has significantly deteriorated in recent years following the loss of its roof. It is clear that the occupation of the building in connection with an agricultural use is no longer viable. As such, the survival of the building depends crucially on it being utilised as part of the proposed holiday park, which would enable its restoration and re-use. Additionally, the existing stone boundary walls and hedgerows, which define the field patterns and the setting to the listed building, would be enhanced, adding further value to the features that make up the qualities of the HLCA. Therefore, the historic benefits enabled by the development would considerably outweigh any potential harm caused to the overall historic environment. Therefore the proposal complies with policy BW6 of the LDP.

Natural environment

An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report has been submitted in support of the application, to determine the potential impact on any protected species or habitats as a result of the proposed tourism development. Although the survey provides an assessment of the site, its study area was far greater than the area of land to be developed. As such, a number of ecological features were identified that would be a considerable distance away from the development. Subsequently a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report was submitted, along with an Ecological Survey for bats to further refine the potential impacts of the development. These reports identified that the development would have the greatest potential to impact on bats and reptiles within the site.

A number of features within the site were considered to have potential to be used by bats for roosting and foraging. Such features include the dilapidated farmhouse and barn, dry stone walls and a nearby tree. The bat survey concludes that despite the potential of the structures and a tree on the site to be used by bats for roosting, no evidence was gathered to confirm that such activity is occurring. It also notes that bats appear to pass through the site and on occasion forage there, but there was no evidence to show that they used the site for roosting.

In terms of reptiles, the reports conclude that the majority of the grassland within the site has a low potential to be used by reptiles as the sward height is largely short and uniform. However, the presence of horse manure can attract reptiles together with

dry stone walls which can offer shelter. Notwithstanding this, the Planning Division's Countryside Officer has noted that large amounts of suitable habitats have been identified to the south-west, west and north of the site. This combined with the development proposal to retain boundary walls means the impact on reptiles is not likely to be significant. A number of recommendations are set out in the survey reports (which can be secured by condition) to mitigate for any potential impacts i.e. to accommodate bats in the roof space of the farmhouse, provision of bird boxes and dark areas/corridors. Therefore, the development would not have an adverse impact on protected species or habitats and would comply with policy BW5 of the LDP.

Highway implications

Access to the application site would be via the existing car park serving the Brecon Mountain Railway. No alterations are proposed to the existing junction from the car park onto the main highway. To determine the potential impact of the development on the existing highway network, a Transport Statement (TA) has been provided, which considers the suitability of the existing access into the car park and the traffic implications.

The TA notes that vehicles turning into the site either northbound or southbound could be adequately seen by following vehicles, and any occurrence of additional right turning traffic into the site (i.e. crossing lanes) would not lead to any significant queues or delays along the highway. In terms of the level of additional traffic likely to be generated by the development, the TA predicts a maximum of a 12 vehicles per hour to the site, or 1 vehicle every 15-20 minutes north of the access and every 6-7 minutes south of the access. The TA concludes that all of the roads have adequate capacity to accommodate the relatively modest increase in traffic flows and the level of impact from the development would be negligible.

The proposed new access track leading from the car park into the main part of the camping/caravan site would be privately maintained as part of the development and would link to the existing track serving the farmhouse. The position of this track would be a sufficient distance away from the junction onto the highway so as not to impede traffic movements in and out of the car park. Additionally, the provision of an access track that is separated from the car park would minimise any disruption to the visitors of the Brecon Mountain Railway.

The network of shared surface tracks within the application, which would provide access to the various pitches, would be of an appropriate design within the rural setting. Additionally, the use of gravel surfaces and grass roads would enable surface water to be appropriately managed within the site. The parking needs for visitors would be met within the site, largely on each caravan pitch. Dedicated parking spaces would also be provided adjacent to the camping/glamping pitches as well as adjacent to the existing barn, which could be used for visitors on arrival. There is adequate room within the site to accommodate the traffic movements of the development with passing bays provided in appropriate locations. It is acknowledged that the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader has not raised any highway safety concerns. Therefore, the proposal is acceptable and complies with policies BW12 and TB11 of the LDP.

Residential amenity

The nearest residential properties to the site are Garth Farm (to the east) and Pant-Cad-Ivor Cottages (to the south), both of which would be at least 0.2km away from the development. Additionally, the submitted plans illustrate a woodland area would be provided in the south-east part of the site, which would offer additional screening of the development from the residential area of Pant. Taking into the account the location and context of the site, the development would not have an adverse impact on residential amenity in terms of loss of privacy, overbearing impacts or through excess noise and disturbance. In this respect, it is acknowledged that no such concerns have been raised by local residents following the publicity exercise undertaken. Therefore the proposal complies with policy BW7 of the LDP.

Representations

A concern was raised that the development would sever well established local rights of ways. It is acknowledged that there is a right of way approximately 0.23km to the south-east of the site along Garth Lane. However, this does not extend towards the development and there are no other rights of way that cross through the site. Therefore, the development would have no impact on any existing right of way.

It is acknowledged that the site lies within a limestone safeguard area as identified in the LDP. However, the development would only extend over a relatively small section of the overall designation and would not sterilise or adversely hinder the future extraction of the mineral resource.

Whilst the development does not include community benefits in the form of new public access, the proposal would provide other benefits to the area through the restoration of the listed building and its re-use, as well as the tourism and economic benefits.

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 and thus the proposal is in accordance with the sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers well-being objectives set out as required by section 8 of the WBFG Act.

For the above reasons, the proposed development is acceptable and complies with the relevant LDP policies. Accordingly, the following recommendation is made:

RECOMMENDATION: BE APPROVED subject to the following **CONDITIONS** and the **ISSUANCE OF THE LISTED BUILDING CONSENT** (P/16/0095).

1. The development shall begin not later than five years from the date of this decision.

Reason - To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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

Drawing No. 04b - Cafe & Visitor Information centre, received 10.02.2018

Drawing No. 04d - Farmhouse as Proposed, received 30.04.2018

Drawing No. 04e - Mobile Home, received 03.03.2016

Drawing No. 04f - Glamping Tent, received 30.03.2016

Drawing No. 04g - Amenity Building 1, received 03.03.2016

Drawing No. 04h - Amenity Building 2, received 03.03.2016

Drawing No. 0002 - Existing & Proposed Site Plan, received 02.03.2018

Drawing No. 0007 - Existing & Proposed Site Sections A, received 02.03.2018

Drawing No. 0008 - Existing & Proposed Site Sections B, received 02.03.2018

Drawing No. 0009 - Farmhouse Site Layout, received 02.03.2018

Drawing No. 0011 - Gas Pipeline Analysis, received 02.03.2018

Drawing No. 0012 - Landscaping Details, received 02.03.2018

Drawing No. 0015 - Road Sections, received 02.03.2018

Drawing No. 0016 - Existing and Proposed Spot Levels, received 02.03.2018

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

3. The development, consisting of mobiles homes, caravans, glamping tents 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 - The site is unacceptable for permanent housing by reason of it's location in the open countryside in accordance with Policy BW4 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

4. Before the tourist holiday park hereby permitted is brought into beneficial use, the listed building (Blaen Y Garth Farmhouse) shall have been repaired and restored completely in accordance with the details approved by the listed building consent P/16/0095.

Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the proposed works will be in keeping with the special architectural and historic character of the listed

building in accordance with Policy BW6 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

5. **Prior to works commencing on site** details/samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the barn extension, mobile homes and glamping pods, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason - To ensure that the external appearance of the proposed development will be in keeping with the character of the area and adjoining buildings in the interests of visual amenity and to accord with Policy BW7 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

6. **No development shall commence** until details of a scheme for the disposal of foul and surface water has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the beneficial use of the development and retained in perpetuity.

Reason - To ensure adequate disposal of foul and surface water drainage in accordance with Policy BW8 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

7. **No development shall take place** until details, including structural calculations and facing materials, of any retaining wall which exceeds 1 metre in height have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The walls shall be completed in accordance with the approved details before the development hereby approved is brought into beneficial use.

Reason - In the interest of safety and visual amenity in accordance with Policy BW7 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan .

8. **Prior to works commencing on site**, details for the construction of the new access road, compacted 'whindust' tracks, 'X-Grid grass road' system and hardstanding areas, as illustrated on drawing no. 0012 (Landscape Details), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The access road, tracks and hardstanding areas shall be completed in accordance with the approved details prior to the beneficial use of the holiday park and maintained as such thereafter.

Reason - In the interests of road safety in accordance with Policies BW12 and TB11 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

9. The siting of mobile homes, caravans, glamping tents and camping pitches shall be limited to the number and specific locations as indicated on the proposed site plan (Drawing No. 002, received 2nd March 2018). No additional mobile homes, caravans, glamping tents or camping pitches shall be located within the site.

Reason - To avoid intensification of the development within a countryside location, in the interests of the character and appearance of the area, highway safety and to accord with Policy BW5 and BW7 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

10. **No development shall take place** until details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include:
- i) A statement setting out the design objectives and how these will be delivered;
 - ii) earthworks showing existing and proposed finished levels or contours;
 - iii) means of enclosure and retaining structures, including the restoration/repairs to existing stone walls;
 - iv) other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas;
 - v) hard surfacing materials;
 - vi) minor artefacts and structures (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, etc.), and
 - vi) water features.

Soft landscape works shall include planting plans, written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants noting species, plant supply sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate and an implementation programme (including phasing of work where relevant).

The hard landscaping works shall be completed in accordance with the approved details **prior to the opening of the tourist holiday park to members of the public**. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the opening of the tourist holiday park to members of the public or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

Reason - To ensure that the new development will be visually attractive in a countryside location in the interests of amenity and to accord with Policies BW5 and BW7 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

11. **No development shall take place** until a Wildlife Protection Plan for Construction has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall focus on bats, reptiles, nesting birds, trees and boundary walls/hedgerows and shall include:
- a. An appropriate scale plan showing 'Wildlife Protection Zones' where construction activities are restricted and where protective measures will be installed or implemented;

- b. Details of protective measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid impacts during construction;
- c. A timetable to show phasing of construction activities to avoid periods of the year when sensitive wildlife could be harmed (such as nesting bird season).
- d. Persons responsible for:
 - i) Compliance with legal consents relating to nature conservation;
 - ii) Compliance with planning conditions relating to nature conservation;
 - iii) Installation of physical protection measures during construction;
 - iv) Implementation of sensitive working practices during construction;
 - v) Regular inspection and maintenance of physical protection measures and monitoring of working practices during construction;
 - vi) Provision of training and information about the importance of the 'Wildlife Protection Zones' to all construction personnel on site.

All construction activities shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and timing of the plan.

Reason - To protect the natural environment in accordance with Policy BW5 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

12. **Prior to the opening of the tourist holiday park** to members of the public, details of the external lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works shall be completed in accordance with the approved details prior to the opening of the tourist holiday park to members of the public and shall be maintained as such thereafter.

Reason - To minimise the impact of external lighting serving the development within a countryside location and in the interest of the environment for protected species and to accord with policies BW5 and BW7 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

13. **No development shall take place until** the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured agreement for a written scheme of historic environment mitigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the programme of work will be fully carried out in accordance with the requirements and standards of the written scheme.

Reason - To identify and record any features of archaeological interest discovered during the works, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource and to accord with policy BW6 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

INFORMATIVES

1. The applicant / developer should be aware that it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild animal listed as protected in the Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Further advice can be sought from the Planning Division's Countryside Officer on 01685 725278.
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