

Planning Statement

Detached building for Use as Tourist Accommodation

Land at Prosser Terrace, Cymmer

PHONE

MOB PHONE

EMAIL

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This document has been prepared to support the above development.

2.0 Planning History - Planning Context

2.1. Planning History

2.2 Q2019/0092 - Pre application May 2019 – No objection

P1995/10114 – Dwelling house (Outline) – Approved 06/10/1995.

P2014/0241 – 3 No. Two-store Terraced Dwellings – Returned to Applicant.

P2014/0649 – Two x 2-bed dwellings with associated car parking and engineering works – Returned to Applicant.

P2015/0424 – Two-storey split level dwelling with mezzanine, plus associated engineering works – Withdrawn.

2.3 Planning Context

2.4 Local Policy - The development plan for the site is the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan 2011-2026. The Council adopted the plan on

January 2016.¹

2.5 Policy

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10)

3.51 Previously developed (also referred to as brownfield) land (see definition overleaf) should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites where it is suitable for development

3.56 Development in the countryside should be located within and adjoining those settlements where it can best be accommodated in terms of infrastructure, access, habitat and landscape conservation. Infilling or minor extensions to existing settlements may be acceptable, in particular where they meet a local need for affordable housing or it can be demonstrated that the proposal will increase local economic activity. However, new building in the open countryside away from existing settlements or areas allocated for development in development plans must continue to be strictly controlled. All new development should be of a scale and design that respects the character of the surrounding area.

SC1 Settlement limits

SP15 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

TO1 Tourism in the Countryside

TR2 Design and access to new developments

EN6 Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites

BE1 Design

¹ <https://www.npt.gov.uk/7328>

3.0 Application Site

- 3.1 The application site is located in the settlement of Abercragan just south of Cymmer
- 3.2 The site is a sloping piece of vacant land which was previously occupied by the Abercragan Hotel.

4.0 Appraisal

- 4.1 Whilst the site forms part of a well-defined cluster of dwellings, the application site, for the purposes of the LDP is outside settlement limits.
- 4.2 However Policy TO1 does support the proposal
- 4.3 *“Tourism proposals outside of settlement limits will only be permitted where all of the following criteria are satisfied:*
 - 1. *It is demonstrated that the proposal is viable and contributes towards the quality and economic sustainability of the tourism industry;*
 - 2. *It is demonstrated that either the proposal requires a countryside location or it could not be accommodated within an existing settlement;*
 - 3. *The proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the landscape, ecology, and cultural heritage and would not adversely impact upon the social, economic, environmental or residential amenity of the area;*

4. *The proposal does not create unacceptable levels of vehicular traffic, cause a detriment to highway safety and access can be provided by a range of transport modes”.*

4.4 **Viability and Contribution** - In 2012 Tourism contributed £99.6 million to the Neath Port Talbot economy and supported 1,637 jobs locally.²

4.5 In October this year the Council published its LDP Annual Monitoring Report. It reported that “tourism within Neath Port Talbot has become a significant contributor to the local economy and has provided a variety of opportunities, especially within the valleys areas. The latest release of tourism statistics showed that in 2016, tourism contributed £110.28 million to the Neath Port Talbot economy, an increase of £18.28 million since the base date of the Plan (2011). “

4.6 The evidence therefore is that there is strong growth within that sector and that tourism plays a vital role within the local economy.

4.7 The Afan Valley plays a vital role within the local tourism market with its cycle tracks having national importance.

4.8 In 2015 the Council published a strategic tourism report *Neath Port Talbot Destination Management Plan 2015- 2020*³ which identified key tourism sites and set out strategies for developing tourism within the area.

4.9 The report found that the area “*mountain biking growth in Afan Forest Park, the area attracts fairly affluent but 'niche' mountain biking*

² <https://www.npt.gov.uk/4418>

³ <http://www.npt-business.co.uk/media/4345/neath-port-talbot-destination-management-plan-2015-2020-final.pdf>

visitors.”

4.10 The report recognised that it had excellent strength such as

“Capacity to host large national sporting events (Afan Forest Park and Margam Country Park).

Excellent 'sense of place' from local and friendly tourism businesses.

World known as a mountain bike visitor destination. “

4.11 However, one of the areas weakness identified was

“Limited range of accommodation categories”

4.12 The Lack of quality accommodation identified within the report is mirrored by the available accommodation within the Afan Valley as published by Visitnpt⁴.

4.13

B&B		Bunk House/Hostel		Hotel		Self-Catering		Camping/Caravans	
Nos	Grade	Nos	Grade	Nos	Grade	Nos	Grade	Nos	Grade
0	0	2	2- Ng	1	4*	12	5 -Ng 5- 3* 2- 4*	2	1- Ng 1 -3*

⁴ <http://www.visitnpt.co.uk/1785>

Ng – Not Graded

4.14 In 2016 the Council commissioned and produced a report *Research Report Wales Visitor Survey 2016 Neath Port Talbot*⁵. The report involved face to face interviews at key tourism destinations. These were

- Aberdulais Falls
- Afan Forest Park
- Margam Park

4.15 In 2017 a further report was commissioned *Neath Port Talbot Visitor Research 2017*⁶. As with the 2016 face to face interviews were conducted in the 6 key tourism destinations. These were

- Margam Country Park
- Afan Forest Park Visitor Centre
- Glyncorrwg Ponds Visitor Centre
- Pontneddfechan
- National Trust Aberdulais Falls
- Aberavon Seafront

4.16 The survey again reinforces the role of the local landscape with 63% of people visiting because of the scenery and 61% of visitors participating in an outdoor sport/activity predominantly associated with the Afan

⁵ <http://www.npt-business.co.uk/media/8468/wales-national-visitor-survey-2016-neath-port-talbot-findings.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.npt-business.co.uk/media/8459/neath-port-talbot-visitor-research-report-2017.pdf>

Valley.

- 4.13 However, the picture in terms of visitor stays was not as good with 89% of visitors visiting just for the day
- 4.14 The economic impact of such a high proportion of day visitors is significant as the report shows that staying visitors spend almost ten times more per day than day visitors. As shown in **Figure 1** below

Figure 1

Total spend – all locations

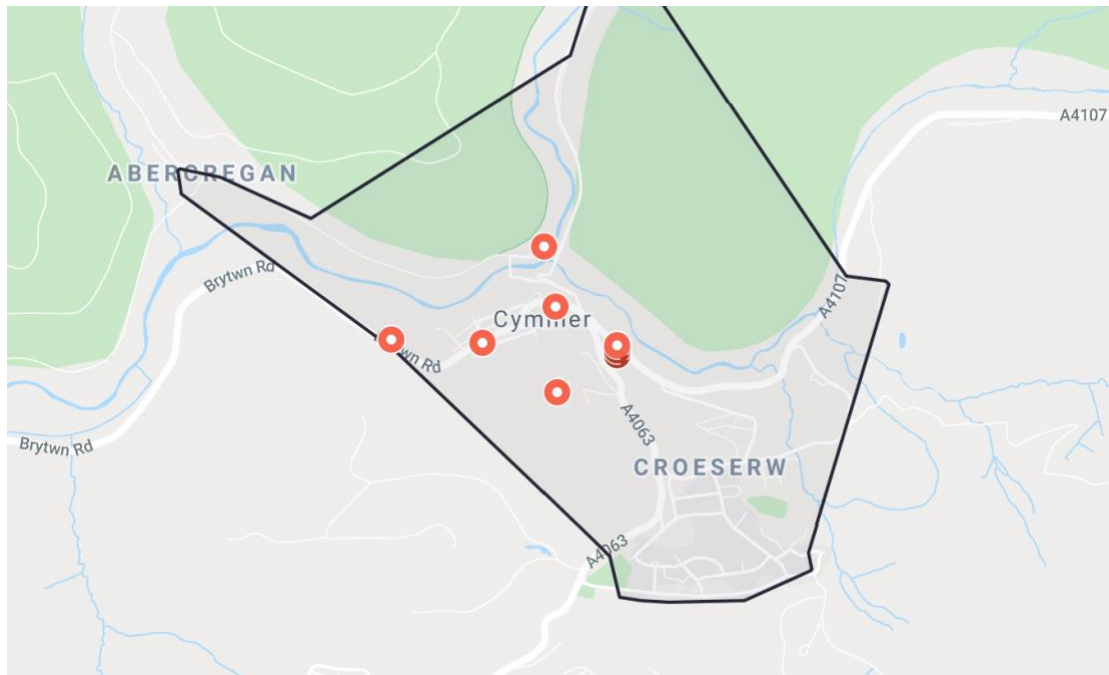
Activity	Staying in NPT	Day visitors / Staying outside of NPT	All visitors
Accommodation (staying visitors in NPT)	£137.02		£15.08
Food & drink	£99.87	£15.95	£25.35
Entertainment / entry to attractions	£7.24	£3.19	£3.65
Shopping (excluding groceries)	£12.46	£1.87	£3.05
Travel paid for in the region	£18.78	£2.45	£4.27
Total spend	£275.37	£23.46	£51.40
Base	126	1011	1137

- 4.15 The evidence therefore clearly indicates that the provision of good quality accommodation, as proposed, will have an economic benefit to the area.
- 4.15 There are no occupancy rates (OCR) recorded in Neath Port Talbot but rates in Wales are 54% with rates in Swansea at 59% (2017/18)
- 4.16 OCR within Wales for the period Jan-June 2019 are again 54% with better and higher in Swansea at 59%. Moreover, the sector has a very positive output expected from accommodation providers.

- 4.17 The most recent Tourism Barometer published by Welsh Government⁷ for 2019 (sample size of 827 which covers all of Wales and all sectors), reported that 83% increased or maintained their visitor levels during May/June half term. 81% of self-catering operators were very confident or fairly confident in the summer season.
- 4.18 It is clear that there is a need for such accommodation in the area and a high demand. Presuming an occupancy rate of 54%, in line with the Welsh average, and a nightly rate of £75 it is estimated that the business will generate an income of £14,550 per annum.
- 4.19 **Location** Whilst outside settlement limits the site is on a brownfield site within a cluster of dwellings.
- 4.20 As indicated previously visitors to the area come for the scenery and the outdoor activities. The site provides a semi-rural location and is importantly on an established cycle link that connects south to Afan Forest and North to Glyncorrwg.
- 4.21 A search of locally available properties was undertaken on the 6th November. Rightmove indicated that there were 5 properties and 2 building plots available ranging from £65,000- £350,000 as shown in **Figure 2** below

⁷ <https://gov.wales/tourism-barometer-wave-2-2019>

Figure 2



4.22 These were clustered in the settlement and did not provide

- Rural settings required by visitors
- Good connection to Cycle routes
- High standards of Accommodation.

4.23 **Landscape and Amenity** The proposed building will be a single storey structure it has a modern semi-rural design and will be landscaped to fit into the existing landscape.

4.24 The building has been designed so that it will have no overlooking into

neighbouring properties

4.25 **Access** The applicant considers that one car parking space off Prosser Terrace is adequate for the proposal.

4.26 However, additional parking space is available on the lower section of the site.