

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Ynysmeudwy Arms

November 2022



Summary

Proposal:

Proposed full planning application for a retrospective change of use from public house (A3 Use) to guesthouse (C1), including public bar / restaurant and 8 no. guest rooms to allow for premises to be used for private hire / functions. and boundary fence

Location:

Ynysmeudwy Arms, 168 Ynysmeudwy Road, Ynysmeudwy, Pontardawe, Swansea, Neath Port Talbot

Date:

November 2022

Project Reference:

S22.189

Client:

Leigh Dineen

Product of:

Asbri Planning Limited
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Cardiff CF23 8RS

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Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Asbri Planning is appointed as planning agent to Leigh Dineen in respect of the above planning application for a retrospective change of use from public house (A3 Use) to guesthouse (C1), including public bar / restaurant and 8 no. guest rooms to allow for premises to be used for private hire / functions. and boundary fence
- 1.2 The applicant was engaged by Neath Port Talbot Planning Enforcement Team with a letter issued on the 28th June 2022 ref. E2022/0084. The letter confirms that they considered there has been a breach of planning requiring the benefit of planning permission with regard to the erection of a boundary fence, gate and pillars. The officer considered that it would be in the public interest to take enforcement action as the fencing would restrict visibility for road traffic and pedestrians. The officer could not conclude on whether a change of use had occurred from a public house to a holiday rental.
- 1.3 Following the above and discussion between the applicant and enforcement officer a second letter was issued dated 25th July 2022, ref. E2022/0084. The letter confirms:
- "I would advise that our initial assessment has concluded that we should **invite you to submit a planning application to regularise the development in question**. This is primarily because the development, while likely to be recommended for approval, can only be made acceptable by the imposition of conditions on any grant of planning permission."*
- 1.4 As such this letter is being prepared in support of a planning application to regularise the development in question as set out in the correspondence received from the enforcement team.
- 1.5 The planning application has been submitted via Planning Portal and the submission documents are listed below.

Drawing name	Drawing reference / prepared by
Site Location Plan	A001
Proposed Site Layout	A002
Proposed Floor Plan and Block Plan	A003
Existing and Proposed Floor Plan	Applicant
Planning Forms	Asbri Planning
Planning Letter	Asbri Planning

Site Description

The Site & Surroundings

- 2.1 The site is located in Ynysmeudwy which is a village in the Swansea Valley north of Pontardawe. The site comprises the Ynysmeudwy Arms which is a public house with surrounding grounds including a car parking area alongside outdoor amenity area for customers. The site sits to the south of Ynysmeudwy Road with no. 172 Ynysmeudwy Road to the east and undeveloped green fields to the south and west.
- 2.2 A review of the Cadw mapping system shows that the site is not listed and does not adjoin any listed buildings. There is a listed structure nearby ref. Ynysmeudwy Uchaf Overbridge on Swansea Canal which is a grade II listed.
- 2.3 A review of the NRW development advice map shows the site is within Zone A as such is considered to be at little or no risk of fluvial or coastal/tidal flooding. The flood map for planning identifies the site is within flood zone 1 therefore is at negligible risk of flooding.
- 2.4 There are two bus stops closely located to the site on Ynysmeudwy Road the further is approximately 70m from the site with the closest being within 30m.
- 2.5 A review of the OS mapping shows that there is a national trail / long distance route which runs along the canal alongside an off road cycling route along the river. Each option provides good connectivity for active travel options.

Proposals

- 3.1 The proposals comprise a full planning application for a change of use from a pub (A3) to guesthouse (C1), including public bar / restaurant and 8 no. guest rooms to allow for premises to be used for private hire / functions. As set out in the background section above this is to regularise the development in question following engagement with the enforcement team.
- 3.2 Due to the venue's financial situation other avenues of generating revenue have had to be explored and the proposals would therefore allow the pub to remain open as a private venue catering for all events. Without this investment from the current owner the pub would simply have closed with no plans to open, this would result in the asset lost to the community for years to come and the building would no doubt fall into disrepair and lose its value.
- 3.3 The whole building can be hired or just the communal areas and the rooms would be shut off. The venue will not be open to the general public as it isn't supported enough to cover costs. Notwithstanding the bar and kitchen remain integral to the use.
- 3.4 The schedule of rooms within the building is as follows:

Rooms	Description
Rooms 1 – 8 (Upstairs)	7 x double bedrooms with ensuite. 1 x children's bedroom, no ensuite.
Bar / communal area	One large room with bar and toilets to the side. The communal area has been split into areas : Children's TV area with soft furnishings Games area with pool darts etc Dining area
Kitchen	-
Toilets	-
Storage	-
Cellar	-

Planning Policy Context

Planning Policy Wales

- 4.1 National planning policy is contained within the 11th edition of Planning Policy Wales (PPW), published by the Welsh Government in February 2021. PPW is supported by 19 topic-based Technical Advice Notes (TANs), which are also relevant. PPW is the Welsh Government's principal planning policy document, setting out the context for sustainable land use planning policy, within which Development Plans are prepared and development.

Future Wales the National Plan: 2040

- 4.2 Future Wales – the National Plan 2040 is our national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 4.3 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act came into force in 2015 and seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals in order to make sure that everyone works towards the same vision.

Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan

- 4.4 The Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan covers the period 2011 to 2026. It was adopted in January 2016 and comprises the statutory Development Plan for NPTCBC. In terms of LDP policy, the site comprises previously developed land (brownfield) and lies within the settlement boundary of Ynysmeudwy. The site is within the Pontardawe Spatial Area (AH1) and within the Valleys Strategy Area (SP6).
- 4.5 The following LDP policies are considered relevant to the proposal:

Policy ref.	Relating to
SP3	Sustainable Communities
SC1	Settlement Limits
SC2	Protection of Existing Community Facilities
SP6	Development in Valleys Strategy Area
BE1	Design

- 4.6 Policy SC2 relates to Protection of Existing Community Facilities and states:

Any proposals which would result in the loss of an important existing community facility will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- 1. The facility is surplus to requirements; or*
- 2. The existing use is no longer viable.*

- 4.7 The subtext to the policy states:

The type of evidence required will vary depending on the type of facility under consideration, but may include details of why the building is no longer in use, what alternative provision there is locally, what other community options have been considered for the building and evidence to show that reasonable efforts have been made to market the facility for sale or lease for its existing use.

Appraisal

Overview

- 6.1 As stated above, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This section of the Planning Statement aims to identify the main issues of relevance to the determination of the Planning Application, and assess the scheme against the Development Plan.
- 6.2 The key material considerations of relevance in the determination of the application are as follows:
- Compliance with Policy SC2

Compliance with Policy SC2

Financial Justification

- 6.3 Please see Appendix A which provides an overview of the financial situation of the pub between 2018 and 2020. This appendix is confidential.
- 6.4 December 2018 shows a breakeven but the pub in fact lost £50,000 as the owners had to write off £50,000 of loans owed to them to show a break even. This was done so as not diminish the pubs credit rating.
- 6.5 December 2019 the pub lost £55,000. The pub didn't write off loans this time as could not afford to.
- 6.6 March 2020 (upto lockdown) the pub lost £18,000 in 3 months. The pub was leased for a short time after this - the tenants handed back the keys beginning of December 2021 as they had lost all their money and couldn't afford to continue. They didn't have the bookings or cash to keep going over the Christmas period.
- 6.7 The pub made no profit and in fact lost nearly £135,000 in 2 and a ¼ years up to covid.
- 6.8 The turnover in 1st quarter of 2020 suffered a drop in custom of 29% compared to 2019. 2019 – £80,000 whilst 2020 – £57,000.
- 6.9 Ynysmeudwy is a very small village and a lot of the trade was not local. The pub had approx 10/15 people that we could count as regulars for drinks. The pub was more a destination pub for food and used by an older generation during the week. These people never returned after covid.

Facilities within the surrounding area

- 6.10 Please see appendix B which comprises a map showing a 5 mile radius of the surrounding area and the public houses available. This demonstrates there are 29 no. public houses within a 10km radius of the site.
- 6.11 This demonstrates that there is extensive availability of public houses in the surrounding areas for the community to use. The nearest is the Ivy Bush which is circa 2km to the south west of the site. At this point is Pontardawe where there are 5 options for other pubs.
- 6.12 Not only does the map demonstrate the number of pubs in the surrounding area but shows that there is extensive competition for the Ynysmeudwy Arms operating as a pub. The majority of the pubs are focussed in more densely populated areas. The housing density surrounding the Ynysmeudwy Arms is much less than the density nearby most pubs in the area. As a result there is less custom nearby and as demonstrated in the financial information provided this results in a pub not being a viable use.

Other material considerations

- 6.13 The proposed change of use is to ensure that the use at the building is regularised inline with advice from the authorities enforcement team. The description of development includes reference to 'public bar / restaurant'. This is to ensure that should the opportunity arise the building could be opened to the public. The application does ensure that the community use of the building remains.

Conclusion

- 7.1 This statement has been prepared for the proposed full planning application for a retrospective change of use from public house (A3 Use) to guesthouse (C1), including public bar / restaurant and 8 no. guess rooms to allow for premises to be used for private hire / functions. and boundary fence at Ynysmeudwy Arms, 168 Ynysmeudwy Road, Ynysmeudwy, Pontardawe, Swansea.
- 7.2 The application has been prepared following discussion between the applicant and NPT enforcement team which advised:
- "I would advise that our initial assessment has concluded that we should **invite you to submit a planning application to regularise the development in question**. This is primarily because the development, while likely to be recommended for approval, can only be made acceptable by the imposition of conditions on any grant of planning permission."*
- 7.3 The prime concern for the LPA is whether the proposals comply with policy SC2 relating to the Protection of Existing Community Facilities. The policy confirms that the loss of a community facility is acceptable where it can be demonstrated that:
1. The facility is surplus to requirements; **OR**
 2. The existing use is no longer viable.
- 7.4 The appraisal section above has demonstrated that the pub has not been able to achieve a profit within the previous 4 years and as a result previous tenants left the pub due to running out of money.
- 7.5 The mapping exercise undertaken has demonstrated that there is an extensive number of pubs within the surrounding area. As a result this creates difficult competition for the Ynysmeudwy Arms and also demonstrates the facility it surplus to requirements.
- 7.6 The proposal is therefore compliant with policy SC2 and Neath Port Talbot CBC is respectfully asked to grant planning permission.

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Appendix A

Financial Information

Appendix B

Mapping of Pubs in the Surrounding Areas