

Planning Statement

Job No. 1276

Revision -



Applicant:

Caren Jones

The Celtic Lodge, 36 Westernmoor Road, Neath. SA11 1BZ

Site Address:

The Celtic Lodge, 36 Westernmoor Road, Neath. SA11 1BZ

Scope of works:

The Lodge Proposal: Retention of raised decking, gazebo, privacy screen fencing, and access ramp.

Introduction

This statement is submitted in support of a planning application for the retention of external timber structures at The Lodge. The site operates as a commercial venue, situated on an expansive plot that provides ample parking and specializes in hosting weddings and private events. While the site serves as a premier destination for functions, it is situated within a residential context, bordered on all sides by residential dwellings.

The development consists of three distinct phases: the original rear decking and gazebo (2015), side access improvements (2024), and a recent gazebo and platform (2026).

Site Context and Commercial Use

The Lodge serves a vital role in the local economy as a bespoke event space. Given its primary use for weddings, the external areas are designed to provide a high-quality guest experience while carefully managing the relationship between a commercial operation and the surrounding residential neighbours.

Established Use (2015 Works)

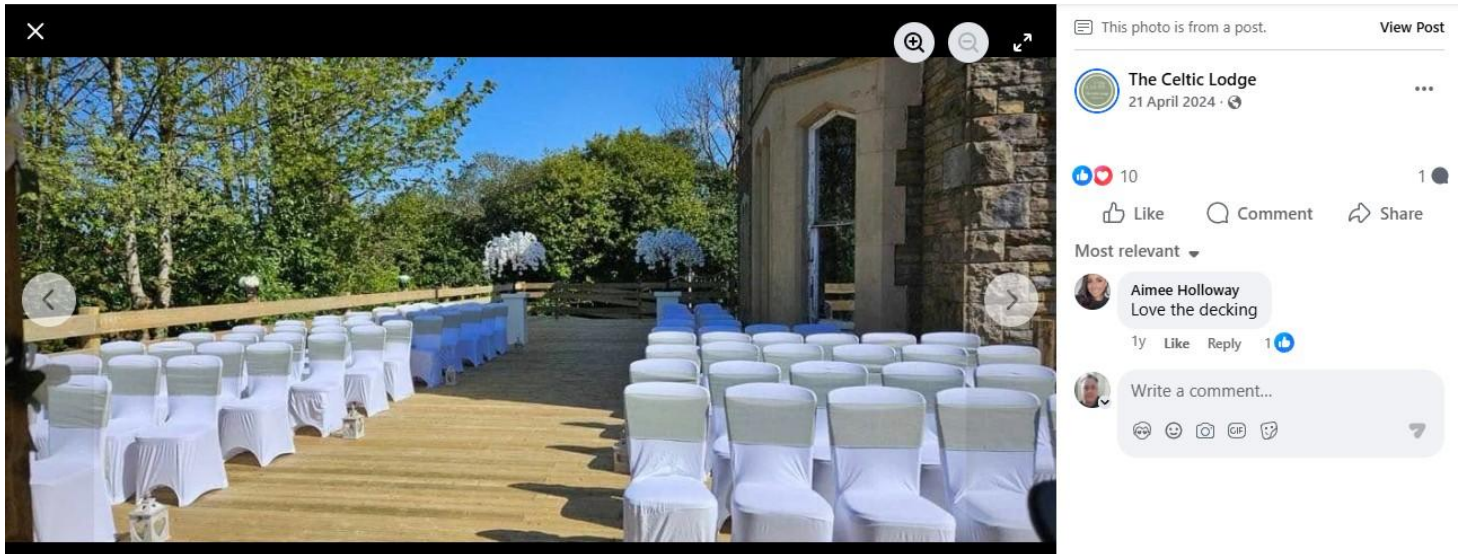
The raised decking, gazebo, and privacy screen fencing to the rear were installed in 2015. Image below shows a Facebook posts dated July 2015, whilst the works were in the final stages of completion.



- **Longevity:** Having been in situ for over a decade, these structures constitute an established use under relevant planning guidelines.
- **Historical Record:** Their continuous presence provides a clear record of their integration into the property's operational layout, proving they are compatible with both the venue's requirements and the site's constraints.

Accessibility and Operational Impact (2024 Works)

The access ramp and side decking sections were added in early 2024 to enhance the venue's functionality. Image below shows a Facebook posts dated April 2024 showing the works completed and a wedding in planned.



- **Inclusion:** These additions are essential to the venue's commercial viability, facilitating easier movement and ensuring the site provides robust disabled access for all guests.
- **Evidence of Compatibility:** Despite the proximity of residential dwellings on all sides, a two-year period of continuous use has yielded no complaints regarding privacy or noise. This confirms that these structures do not adversely affect the character of the site or the comfort of neighbouring residents.

5. Environmental Sensitivity and Amenity (2026 Works)

The timber platform and gazebo completed in April 2026 have been strategically sited to accommodate the venue's needs while respecting the site's natural and residential borders.

- **Arboricultural Care:** Great care was taken during construction to protect the site's natural assets. The foundations for the new gazebo were hand-dug specifically to minimize the impact on the root systems of surrounding trees.
- **Preservation of Greenery:** It is important to note that no trees were removed as part of these works; the structure was designed to sit harmoniously within the existing woodland.

- **Natural Screening:** The established tree canopy and dense foliage effectively conceal the gazebo from surrounding dwellings, ensuring the visual impact is negligible.
- **Proactive Mitigation:** A dedicated privacy screen on the southern elevation acts as a proactive measure to preserve the seclusion of neighbours, ensuring commercial activity does not infringe upon the residential amenity of the area.

Conclusion

The development represents a necessary and sensitive enhancement of a successful commercial business. By balancing the requirements of an event venue with environmental preservation and the privacy needs of neighbouring residents, the structures at The Lodge demonstrate a sustainable and harmonious use of the land. We respectfully request that the application for retention be approved.