Application Ref: NP/13/0519

Application Type

Full

Grid Ref:

SN13370492

Applicant

Mrs D Flannery, Pembrokeshire Brewing Company Ltd

Agent

Mr Hywel Rees, Hywel Rees -Tenby

Proposal

Change of use of disused school building to microbrewery/visitor centre including provision of stainless steel flue on north elevation, new door opening on west elevation and associated car staff and visitor parking.

Site Location

The Old School, The Ridgeway, Saundersfoot.

Pembrokeshire, SA69 9JZ

Case Officer

Liam Jones

Summary

This application has been referred to the Development Management Committee at the discretion of the Head of Development Management due to the concerns raised by Saundersfoot Community Council.

This application proposes a change of use of a disused school building to a micro-brewery/visitor centre. The development includes the provision of a stainless steel flue on the north elevation of the building, a new door opening on the west elevation and associated staff and visitor car parking.

Following consideration of the policies contained within the Local Development Plan and National Planning Policy in the form of Planning Policy Wales and having regard to all material considerations it is considered that the development proposed, subject to suitable conditions is acceptable. Although it is understood that the use relates to the relocation of an existing business it will nevertheless result in the positive re-use of a vacant building within Saundersfoot and will provide employment and visitor benefits to the area. The concerns of local residents are noted and considered, however, on balance it is considered that the development can be suitably and adequately controlled such that refusal on grounds of a potential impact upon amenity would be unreasonable.

In view of the above the scheme is considered to meet the requirements of policies 1, 4, 8, 9, 11, 15, 29, 30, 31, 32, 35, 42, 52 and 53 of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan (Adopted 2010) and as such is recommended for approval.

Consultee Response

Saundersfoot Community Council: - Object to application as it stood but in favoiur of application subject to four planning conditions to restrict hours of visitor centre to between 10.00am and 5.00pm, brewing to take place between 8.00am and 6.00pm, condenser to reduce steam and smells to be included in application and a traffic management plan to be included.

Natural Resources Wales: No objection

PCC - Head of Public Protection: Conditional Consent

PCC - Transportation & Environment: Conditional Consent

Buildings Conservation Officer: Supporting **Access Officer - PCC**: Conditional Consent

Ecologist - Pembrokeshire County Council: No adverse comment

Public Response

The application was advertised by neighbour notification letters sent to those neighbours adjoining and near to the application site on 8th November 2013. In addition to this site notices were displayed adjoining the front of the site and adjoining the access to the car park to the rear of the site on 22nd November 2013.

The application has attracted 21 letters of objection from concerned parties as well as a petition circulated by a local resident and signed by 47 people.

The full responses are available to view on the application file; however, the key concerns are the impact of the development upon residential amenity in the area by virtue of smell, noise and disturbance as well as concern with the traffic impact upon the area. Key comments from the representations are documented below;

- If this goes ahead it will devastate the lives of the residents living nearby. The impact on the infrastructure surrounding this development would be considerable. It would be open 7 days week, until 8pm every day, with delivery lorries on already congested roads. The noise and pungent smell that would permeate through the area would have a major effect on the environment.
- Concern on health and safety grounds and increased traffic and smell from fumes.
- Proposed scheme is unsustainable in terms of accessibility for disabled persons.
- This is a proposed commercial use involving the sale of alcohol and is therefore inappropriate for a quiet residential area.
- Brewing process generates a significant amount of waste products that can be noxious and difficult to dispose of. There is no information provided as to how on-site waste from the brewing process will be treated, stored, recycled or disposed of.
- No assessment of the number of HGV movements to/from the site or traffic generation by the proposed development.

- The noise and pollution this site will cause is unacceptable in a residential area.
- Concerns include increased traffic possibly hindering emergency ambulances that attend the surgery regularly and the doctor who attends urgent home visits.
- Smell may be a problem, chimney would look out of place on school, the brewing activities would be most inappropriate in the middle of the village and would add to the traffic congestion.
- Westfield Road is a residential area, close to the village centre but far enough away for peace and quiet. This proposal would clearly change that, with constant noise, smell and traffic associated with a commercial business operation 7 days a week together with long hours, there would be no let up for residents.
- The location of these premises is opposite the medical centre which has a constant flow of traffic on a very awkward junction which has recently been narrowed and where several accidents together with numerous near misses with vehicles mounting the pavement to avoid collisions.
- The increased flow of traffic in the very restricted area of the Ridgeway and Westfield road, which accommodates the medical centre, could provide extremely dangerous. The smell, noise and possible retail outlet in this residential area would do nothing to enhance the beauty of Saundersfoot.

Policies considered

Please note that these policies can be viewed on the Policies page Pembrokeshire Coast National Park website - http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/default.asp?PID=549

LDP Policy 01 - National Park Purposes and Duty

LDP Policy 04 - Saundersfoot Local Centre

LDP Policy 08 - Special Qualities

LDP Policy 11 - Protection of Biodiversity

LDP Policy 15 - Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

LDP Policy 29 - Sustainable Design

LDP Policy 30 - Amenity

LDP Policy 31 - Minimising Waste

LDP Policy 32 - Surface Water Drainage

LDP Policy 35 - Visitor Economy

LDP Policy 42 - Employment Sites and Live/Work Units

LDP Policy 48 - Community Facilities and Infrastructure Requirements

LDP Policy 52 - Sustainable Transport

LDP Policy 53 - Impacts on traffic

PPW5 Chapter 04 - Planning for Sustainability

PPW5 Chapter 06 - Conserving the Historic Environment

PPW5 Chapter 07 - Economic Development

PPW5 Chapter 08 - Transport

PPW5 Chapter 10 - Planning for Retailing and Town Centres

PPW5 Chapter 11 - Tourism, Sport and Recreation

PPW5 Chapter 12 - Infrastructure and Services

PPW5 Chapter 13 - Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution

SPG05 - Sustainable Design

SPG12 - Parking

TAN 04 - Retailing and Town Centres

TAN 05 - Nature Conservation and Planning

TAN 11 - Noise

TAN 12 - Design

TAN 18 - Transport

Officer's Appraisal

Background

The application site comprises a building formerly used by Pembrokeshire County Council as a school. In June 2013 the applicant submitted a preapplication to this Authority concerning proposals to change the use of the building to a micro brewery/visitor centre. Officers advised that the last use of the building appeared to be a community education centre which ceased in 2010 and the new use proposed was considered to be an employment use. The principle of a proposed employment use and visitor centre which would act as a visitor attraction was considered to be acceptable, however the response advised that the detailed matters of privacy, amenity, parking, noise, smell etc. are areas of potential conflict with surrounding uses and would need to be considered as part of a formal submission.

History

No formal planning history

Constraints

- Special Area of Conservation within 500m
- Biodiversity Issue
- Rights of Way Inland

- Recreation Character Areas
- Adjoining Saundersfoot Conservation Area

Current Proposal

The application proposes a change of use of a disused school building to a micro-brewery/visitor centre. The development includes the provision of a stainless steel flue on the north elevation of the building, a new door opening on the west elevation and associated car staff and visitor parking to the rear (south) of the existing building.

Plans show the building would provide a brewery and bottling plant room which would be visible through a glazed viewing screen from a visitor centre within the building. Also proposed is a store room served by a new external door, office and staff kitchen and staff and visitor toilets all on one floor. The proposed visitors centre, which would include a bar area, accommodates 39.6m² of floor space of the available 156m² of floorspace within the building. Access into the building would be provided from an existing side entrance positioned to the east of the building.

The application has been supported with a Design & Access Statement ('DAS') which outlines the design approach taken to the development. The DAS advises that the building has formerly been used as a school and then became a community education centre and more recently a local crèche facility. It advises that this facility then moved to the Regency Hall as the old school was found to be unsuitable and not fit for purpose in 2010. The building has since been vacant.

Through discussion with the applicant it is evident that the applicant has a current business, Pembrokeshire Brewing Company 'Cych Valley Brewery', based at Boncath and it is the intention to relocate the business to Saundersfoot.

Key Issues

The application raises the following planning matters:-

- Policy and Principle of Development
- Visual Amenity and Special Qualities of the National Park
- Neighbouring Amenity and Privacy
- Highway Safety, Access and Parking
- Other material considerations

Policy and Principle of Development

The site and building lies within the Centre of Saundersfoot as designated in the Local Development Plan ('LDP'). Policy 4 of the LDP relates specifically to Saundersfoot and sets out the types of developments that may be permitted within the Centre. This includes small-scale employment opportunities to meet

the needs of the local area. It also requires developments to contribute to the protection and enhancement of the village's special qualities.

The last use of the school building appears to be a community education centre which ceased in 2010. The building has since been vacant. Policy 48 of the LDP seeks to protect against unnecessary loss of community facilities by controlling the re-use of premises used for this purpose. Thus development which would adversely affect the operation of a community facility, or results in its loss will not be permitted except where a suitable replacement or enhanced facility is to be made available, or where it can be shown that the facility is no longer required or is not commercially viable. The applicant has advised that the previous use of the building was relocated to the Regency Hall in Saundersfoot and the former school building was unsuitable and not fit for the purpose.

As the school building is now vacant the current proposal is no longer displacing a current community use. Policy 48 requires that priority is given to other community facilities, employment use or affordable housing when considering a new use for a redundant community facility. In this instance, the proposal for a micro-brewery would fall within these requirements as an employment use. The incorporation of a visitor centre would also create an attraction which accords with the aims of Policy 35 of the LDP which allows visitor attractions within Local Centres such as Saundersfoot. As such the principle of the change of use of the building to a micro-brewery is acceptable and further consideration needs to be given to other material planning considerations.

Visual Amenity and Special Qualities of the National Park

Policy 8 of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) is a strategic policy which refers to the special qualities of the National Park and lists priorities to ensure that these special qualities will be protected and enhanced. Policy 15 of the LDP seeks the conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park with criteria 'a' and 'b' resisting development that would cause significant visual intrusion and/or, that would be insensitively and unsympathetically sited within the landscape. Criteria 'd' and 'e' resists development that would fail to harmonise with, or enhance the landform and landscape character of the National Park, and/or fail to incorporate important traditional features.

Policy 29 of the LDP requires all development proposals to be well designed in terms of place and local distinctiveness (criterion 'a'). Policy 30 of the LDP seeks to avoid development that is of an incompatible scale with its surroundings (criterion 'b') or is visually intrusive (criterion'd').

The built works proposed to enable the use to take place are minimal and would result in the creation of a new flue along the north elevation of the building and a new door opening on the west elevation. The flue which would serve an internal copper boiler is proposed to be positioned adjacent to a centre gable projection near the eaves of the roof. It is not considered to be

harmful to visual amenity or the character of the building and would be an acceptable addition to the building. The new door opening would utilise an existing window opening and would not look out of keeping with the host building. Although the site lies outside the Saundersfoot Conservation Area it does lie adjacent to it. As such consideration needs to be given to the impact of the proposed changes upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As discussed above the changes are minimal and will have no harmful impact upon the wider street scene or the adjacent Conservation Area. The qualities of the Conservation Area would therefore be conserved.

In summary it is considered that the development would have no harm upon visual amenity, the character and appearance of the existing building or wider amenities and complies with the aims of policies 8, 15 and 30 of the Local Development Plan.

Neighbouring Amenity and Privacy

Policies 29 and 30 of the Local Development Plan seek to protect community cohesion and health and to avoid incompatible development that would lead to a significant adverse impact upon amenity. The supporting text at paragraph 4.136 explains that the policy aims "to protect the amenity enjoyed in people in their residences, workspaces and recreational areas. Amenity is defined as those elements in the appearance and layout of town and countryside which makes for pleasant life rather than mere existence. Anything ugly, dirty, noisy, crowded, intrusive or uncomfortable is likely to adversely affect amenity".

Policy 30 is a criteria based policy setting out that development will not be permitted where it has an unacceptable impact on amenity particularly where, a) the development is for a use inappropriate for where people live or visit and/or; b) the development is of a scale incompatible with its surroundings; and/or; c) the development leads to an increase in traffic or noise or odour or light which has a significant adverse impact; and/or; d) the development is visually intrusive.

A number of objections have been received from local residents in connection with the proposal as well as concerns raised by Saundersfoot Community Council. There are concerns that the use will harm neighbouring amenity by virtue of smell, noise and disturbance to what has been described by some objectors as a quiet and peaceful area. The objections received are numerous but all focus on the perceived concern that the change of use could have on the area particularly with impact upon amenity and highway safety.

These concerns are noted and National Policy advises that the local planning authority must take into account relevant planning matters expressed. Planning Policy Wales (Edition 5, November 2013) sets out at paragraph 3.1.8; "When determining planning applications local planning authorities must take into account any relevant view on planning matters expressed by neighbouring occupiers, local residents and other third parties. While the

substance of local views must be considered, the duty is to decide each case on its planning merits. As a general principle, local opposition or support for a proposal is not, on its own, a reasonable ground for refusing or granting planning permission; objections, or support, must be based on valid planning considerations."

Whilst the concerns raised are relevant what also needs to be considered is the fall back position of the use of the building for community or school purposes based on its lawful fallback history of use. Planning permission would not be required to revert back to the former uses of the building which would come within a D1 Use Class of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. As such the building could be used as a clinic, health centre, crèche, day nursery, day centre, school, art gallery, museum, library, hall, place of worship, and other similar uses, under a D1 Use Class without control.

It is accepted that there are residential properties adjacent to and near the application site and building, however, there are also a range of other public buildings in proximity and the town centre is within walking distance. For example the site is bounded by a medical centre to the south, two places of worship to the north and east and a gallery building to the east. The fact that the premises would provide commercial activity relating to the sale of alcohol is a consideration in assessing potential impact upon amenity. Whilst a standalone public house would likely introduce a use incompatible with a residential environment, and the environment which surrounds the application site, the use proposed is not a stand-alone public house but is a visitor centre and brewery. The scheme shows that the building would provide an educational opportunity through the internal glazed link between the brewery room and visitors centre and matters relating to the licencing of the premises would be controlled through separate legislation by Pembrokeshire County Council.

Where a use has the potential to impact upon amenity through noise, odour and disturbance local planning authorities must consider whether suitable conditions could be attached to control a use or activity resulting in an acceptable development. In fact the comments received from Saundersfoot Community Council advise that there are objections to the development as it stood, i.e. without conditions and they suggest including limiting the opening hours of the visitor centre to between 10:00am and 5:00pm, limiting the brewing process to between 8:00am and 6:00pm, introducing a condenser unit to deal with steam and smells and to have a traffic management plan. Subject to these conditions Saundersfoot Community Council have no objection to the development.

The Environmental Health Section of Pembrokeshire County Council has been formally consulted in view of the potential impacts on amenity. Following an evaluation of the information submitted and subject to conditions they raise no objection to the development proposed. Their response advises that opening hours of the visitor centre be restricted to between 10:00am and 8:00pm Monday to Sunday, no deliveries to take place outside the hours of 7:00am and 7:00pm Monday to Saturdays nor at any time on Sundays, Bank

or Public Holidays and that a waste storage and disposal scheme be agreed in writing prior to the commencement of development.

Officers have no reason to disagree with the comments received from Environmental Health in that suitable conditions would mitigate to an exceptional degree. Whilst Saundersfoot Community Council suggest opening hours of between 10:00am and 5:00pm these are considered to be overly restrictive in the interests of the development. The hours suggested by Environmental Health are considered to be more reasonable in achieving a balance between allowing a business use to take place and controlling amenity in the area. A condenser unit has not been insisted upon by Environmental Health although a scheme to control wastes has. Concerns about highway matters are considered separately below.

It is noted in the letters of objection received that there are concerns with the potential for the building to be open to members of the general public, concern about use of the outdoor areas for consumption of alcohol or food, concern about pedestrian access along the north-west corner of site and concern about any outdoor storage of equipment, products or wastes. It is considered that suitable conditions could be applied to confirm the use of the building as a visitor centre and not a public house, prevention of the use of outdoor areas without formal consent and provision of a scheme of waste storage and disposal has already been suggested by Environmental Health. It is not considered that the closure of existing access points would be justified or reasonable in this instance.

In summary of the above and subject to suitable conditions as considered the development complies with the aims of Policy 30 of the Local Development Plan.

Highway Safety, Access and Parking

Policies 52 and 53 of the Local Development Plan refer to sustainable transport and the traffic impacts of proposed development.

The application proposes utilisation of the former school car park off Westfield Road for 15 parking spaces and a further 2 marked out disabled parking bays. The Highway Authority advises that there is sufficient parking space provided to serve the users particularly given that the site is within a safe walking distance from most parts of the town. Accounting for the provision of parking for staff there is considered to be sufficient space for all users of the building. They have suggested that the parking numbers be reduced from 17 spaces to 10 spaces in order to ensure there is suitable space within the site for delivery van parking and for loading/unloading and turning. They suggest that spaces marked on the plan as numbers 1 to 4 and 10 to 12 are reserved for these purposes. In terms of deliveries to the site the Highway Authority raise no concern subject to a condition specifying that deliveries and despatches are made from the car park off Westfield Road only.

Concerns have been raised by third parties in relation to the potential traffic generation of the use. The Highway Authority advise that this traffic should not be a problem along Westfield Road given that the use is equivalent, or less than, what can be expected if the existing permitted uses of the Old School Building were to continue. In planning terms the fact that the building could recommence its use as a school or community centre or any other use falling with D1 as suggested in above paragraphs is a considerable material consideration in assessing traffic impact. The use of the building as a school could generate a lot more vehicular movements at peak times than the use of the building as a micro brewery/visitor centre.

In addition to the concerns regarding visitors to the site concerns have been raised about disabled access to the building itself and the fact that access from the car park to the building can only be achieved by steps unless access is achieved via the front of the building and using the surrounding pavement network. Whilst the lack of access within the site is unfortunate, this is due to the topography of the site and it is not considered that this would be a sufficient ground alone to withhold planning permission. The fact that the site could continue to be used as a school or community centre with the same parking layout and form needs to be given weight as does the availability of disabled access to the front of the building via the footpath network.

In view of the advice gained from the Highway Authority and the fall back position of the use of the site it is considered that the use proposed is acceptable and will have no adverse impact upon highway safety in the area. There will be sufficient parking and turning areas provided to serve the use proposed and subject to conditions to ensure that deliveries are only made from the rear parking area, retention of parking and turning areas the scheme is considered acceptable and complies with the aims of policies 52 and 53.

In addition to the above it is considered that this scheme has the potential to attract cyclists in addition to pedestrians and vehicles. As such suitable provision will be required for a cycle parking facility/area for users of the building. A condition to require such provision would be reasonable in the interests of the development and policy 52 criterion (b).

Other Material Considerations

Emerging National Policy in the form of a new draft Technical Advice Note 'Planning for Economic Development' is focussing on the need for the planning system to do more to support economic growth. A TAN is being produced to complement existing policy contained within Chapter 7 of Planning Policy Wales which identifies that the planning system should support economic and employment growth alongside social and environmental considerations within the context of sustainable development. With this in mind it is important to consider the economic benefits of this proposal albeit a small scale proposal which would bring up to 4 full time equivalent jobs to the area. The proposal also brings opportunities for a new visitor experience relating to a micro brewing process in Saundersfoot.

Conclusion

Following consideration of the policies contained within the Local Development Plan and National Planning Policy in the form of Planning Policy Wales and having regard to all material considerations it is considered that the development proposed, subject to suitable conditions is acceptable. Although it is understood that the use relates to the relocation of an existing business it will nevertheless result in the positive re-use of a vacant building within Saundersfoot and will provide employment and visitor benefits to the area.

The concerns of local residents are noted, however, on balance it is considered that the development can be suitably and adequately controlled such that refusal on grounds of a potential impact upon amenity would be unreasonable. As such the scheme is considered to meet the requirements of policies 1, 4, 8, 9, 11, 15, 29, 30, 31, 32, 35, 42, 52 and 53 of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan (Adopted 2010) and as such is recommended for approval.

Recommendation

The application be approved subject to conditions, as suggested in the report, to control the following matters;

- The nature and extent of the use of the building and outdoor spaces to be a brewery and visitor centre only
- Opening hours to between 10:00 to 20:00 Monday to Sunday
- Delivery hours to be between 07:00 and 19:00 Monday to Saturday only and not on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays
- Waste storage and disposal scheme
- Deliveries only to be made off Westfield Road
- Revised parking and turning scheme











