

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSED OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

THE SITE OF THE FORMER JOLLY TAR PUBLIC HOUSE,
QUAYSIDE, CARMARTHEN.

A DEVELOPMENT BY THE BMA SSAS



JAN. 2017.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared consequent to the provisions of;

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 9 (Nov. 2016)

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12 : Design (Mar. 2016)

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2016

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Wales) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

It is intended to complement the proposals put forward in the plans, drawings and information which accompany the application, and which comprise;

- Site location and block plans at 1:1250 and 1:500 scales respectively
- Existing and proposed site plans at 1:200 scale
- Ground floor, first floor and roof plans at 1:100 scale
- Proposed elevations at 1:100 scale together with graphic illustrations.

2. SITE ANALYSIS

The application site lies between the northern flank of Quayside and the southern flank of Coracle Way in the centre of Carmarthen. The former is a lightly trafficked, single lane (one way) highway, directly alongside the River Towy, and was formerly the town's quay for the loading / unloading of both river and sea going

vessels. The quay, and the buildings which front it (including the application site), form an integral part of the Quayside / Towyside Conservation Area.

Coracle Way sits at a higher level to the rear of the application site effectively separating the Quayside from the commercial centre of the town. Its three lanes are heavily trafficked, and are an integral element of the town's highway system, contributing to the distribution of traffic at Carmarthen Bridge to and from the town centre and routes to the west and north.

The former Jolly Tar public house is set back some two metres from the back of the Quayside behind a low forecourt wall and railings. It is not a Listed Building, but its origins lie in the eighteenth century, although it has been very much altered since. It is a double fronted building with a central doorway, low eaves, and a rendered front façade with a slated roof. With its ancillary outbuildings (which include two former cottages subsequently used as apartments linked to the licensed premises), it has been vacant for some 8 to 10 years and has significantly deteriorated in condition and appearance during that time. The Condition Survey attached to this application concludes that the buildings have reached the end of their physical and economic life, which supports the view of the Local Planning Authority in its conclusion when determining a previous planning application for redevelopment of the site in 2011 (ref: W/23315), that “..... whilst this particular building has made a contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, its steady deterioration over recent years and with no real prospect of improvement in sight, on balance, it is accepted that the current building has run its lifespan and should now make way for a modern alternative.”

Immediately adjoining the eastern flank of the site are the yards and outbuildings of Towy Works, with the main (listed) building of that business, some 60 metres distant along the Quayside. On the western flank is a traditional, stone faced building utilised as an accountancy office, which in turn adjoins a newly built office premises on a site redeveloped in 2014.

3. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

The site lies within the Carmarthen Growth Area, as defined by the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan, and in turn within the defined settlement limits of Carmarthen Town. Whilst the site has no specific land allocation within the development plan, it is currently occupied by (albeit derelict) commercial premises, and adjoins existing offices and a long established ironmongers and builders' merchants.

Carmarthen is of course the County Town, and provides a focal point, situated as it is on the M4 / A48 / A40 corridor and on the banks of the River Towy. It is considered to be a highly sustainable settlement with a wide range of facilities. These include many employment opportunities, primary and secondary education, hospital and health centres, numerous retail outlets in an established shopping centre, recreation fields and parks, community, social and entertainment facilities. It is directly accessible from the M4 / A48 which passes to the south, and is served by numerous bus services radiating throughout the County and beyond. Additionally, it has a busy railway station on the main Fishguard to Paddington.

From the application site, the town centre and many of the facilities of the town are within comfortable walking / cycling distance. The town's shopping centre is only some 100 metres to the north east, whilst 800 metres to the south and south west lie established secondary schools and leisure facilities. Carmarthen's formal park is only some 400 metres from the site to the west, and there are extensive recreational and social facilities throughout the town. A kilometre to the north lies the County Hospital, and some 800 metres to the south is a regional technical and training college. In terms of travel the town railway station is 200 metres away, whilst all of the bus routes serving and radiating from Carmarthen pass through the central bus station which is just 100 metres from the site.

4. POLICY CONTEXT

The Local Planning Authority's approach to development is guided by national and local planning policy, and includes;

Planning Policy Wales (Revision 9) November 2016 which seeks to establish a sustainable development framework particularly in relation to the location of new development, and also the promotion of sustainability through good design. It seeks to promote resource efficient settlement patterns that minimise land take and urban sprawl, especially through a preference for the re-use of suitable, previously developed land and buildings; to locate development so as to minimise demand for travel (especially by private cars); to develop neighbourhoods which are safe; and to promote development at locations which have good access to employment, shopping, education, health, community, leisure, sports facilities and open space. To achieve best use of urban land and to promote sustainability, development should be near public transport links.

It makes clear that meeting the objectives of good design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process, and should be applied to all development proposals, at all scales, from the construction or alteration of

individual buildings to larger development proposals. The visual appearance of proposed development, its scale, and its relationship to its surroundings and context are material planning considerations. Local planning authorities should reject poor building and contextual designs, but should not attempt to impose a particular architectural taste or style arbitrarily, and should avoid inhibiting opportunities for innovative design solutions.

Technical Advice Note 12 : Design (2016) provides detailed advice on design considerations, and makes it clear that local planning authorities and the guidance they provide should aim to steer development to meet the needs of the intended occupants; to be distinctive and yet respect local character; promote layouts and design features which encourage community safety and accessibility; focus on the quality of place and the living environment for pedestrians rather than the movement and parking of vehicles; avoid inflexible planning standards and encourage layouts which manage vehicle speeds through the geometry of the roads and buildings; promote environmentally sustainable features such as energy efficiency, and make clear commitments to carbon reduction and / or sustainable building standards; secure the most efficient use of land; and to consider and balance potential conflicts between all these criteria. Additionally the TAN seeks to avoid the rigid application of highway standards and recommends measures including the varying of density in order to create differences in the built form to make the development a more interesting place.

The Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2014 is the development plan in force for the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Relevant Plan policies are as follows;

SP1- Sustainable Places & Spaces. Supports proposals for development where they reflect sustainable development and design principles by distributing development to sustainable locations; promote the efficient use of land with preference for previously developed sites; integrate with the local community; reflect and enhance local character; create safe, attractive and accessible environments; promote active transport infrastructure and convenient, sustainable access particularly through cycling and walking; use sustainable construction methods; improve social and economic well being; protect and enhance the area's biodiversity.

The application site is in a highly sustainable location adjacent to the central area and the town centre of Carmarthen. It utilises previously developed land adjacent to an extensive commercial area and other facilities, and has excellent infrastructure linkages for cyclists (being directly adjacent to National Cycle Route 47 and within 100 metres of National Cycle Route 4), and those utilising public transport and the

railway network. The form of development results in a safe and secure environment.

SP2 - Climate Change. Establishes a principle in favour of proposals which respond to and minimise the causes and impacts of climate change. In particular those that adhere to the waste hierarchy and the minimisation of waste; promote the efficient consumption of resources; reflect sustainable transport principles; minimise the risk of flooding; promote energy efficiency by reducing energy demand and increasing the supply of renewable energy; utilise sustainable construction methods.

The development proposes a strict waste control regime with basement recycling and segregated waste disposal facilities, whilst providing the latest communications technology facilities. The submitted Transport Statement clearly defines the sustainability of the location in terms of access by foot, on bicycle, and by public transport, whilst the Flood Consequences Assessment concludes that whilst the site is in a C2 Flood Risk Area, then not using the lower ground floor of the building will negate any risk of danger to life from flooding, and will not increase the risk from flooding elsewhere. The build is intended to be highly energy efficient and, in addition to maximising levels of insulation, it will utilise air source heat pumps.

SP3 - Sustainable Distribution - Settlement Framework. Sets out a hierarchy of settlements within the County, and seeks to direct growth and development to those which are most sustainable.

In this context the status of Carmarthen as a designated Growth Area reflects its comparatively high population level and the availability of an extensive range of services and facilities in a strategic context and which are vital to supporting the principles of sustainability. It also fulfils the criteria of being a large and established urban area located on sustainable transport routes which serve areas beyond its localised catchment

SP9 - Transportation. Seeks to reduce the need for travel, particularly by private motor car; address social inclusion by increased accessibility to employment, services and community facilities; support alternatives to the motor car, such as public transport.

The application site lies at the edge of the town centre. Thus travel distances for those using the facility are potentially short, and there are established pedestrian and cycle routes to and from the site with the town's central bus station within 100 metres, and the rail station on the London to Fishguard main line, just 200 metres distant.

SP13 - Protection & Enhancement of the Built and Historic Environment. This policy seeks to ensure that development proposals should preserve and enhance the built and historic environment of the County, its cultural, townscape and landscape assets, and where appropriate their setting. Development in Conservation Areas will be expected to promote high quality design that reinforces local character and respects and enhances the local setting and the cultural and historic qualities of the area.

The scale, form and design of the replacement build has been the subject of significant pre-application consultation with the Local Planning Authority. Although marginally higher than adjoining properties, the building sits comfortably into the backdrop of higher land to the north, from the distance views available across the river. Whilst that same change in ground levels ensures it is not overbearing from Coracle Way, and is itself overlooked by the highway and properties in Bridge Street and Quay Street, and merging into the riverside roofscape from Carmarthen Castle above. Gables to the front and rear elevations provide interest, as well as echoing the form of the adjoining properties on Quayside, and the extensive areas of glass on both those elevations seeks to reduce any impression of bulk. Both side elevations are studded with linear arrays of smaller windows, emblematic of traditional riverside warehousing. As a further of the site's location and history, high level porthole windows are to be lined on the lower ground floor entrance doors, overlooking the water

GPI - Sustainability & High Quality Design Permits development proposals which enhance the character and appearance of a site; utilise appropriate materials; have no adverse impact on adjacent land uses, properties, residents or the community; have appropriate and safe access and parking facilities; have appropriate arrangements for the disposal of waste, surface and foul water; promote the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

The proposed development is sympathetic in scale, form and external appearance to its surroundings, and will have a positive effect on a site which is abandoned and neglected. Adjoining properties are all in commercial or business use and the replacement build is of sufficient distance and appropriate form not to have any adverse effects upon those properties or their employed occupants / visitors, whilst its appearance will enhance the overall setting. Waste, surface, and foul water will all utilise appropriate means of disposal, whilst in terms of travel and access this is a wholly sustainable location with immediate access to different modes of public transport, National cycle routes, and in walking distance of a significant population as well as a range of shopping, social, recreational and cultural activities. Consequently, the thorough Travel Plan submitted with the application concludes that no car parking provision dedicated to this development is required on or

adjacent to the site. However there is to be a facility of one car parking space for those with a disability to be provided on the lower ground floor adjacent to the Quayside.

GP2 - Development Limits. Subject to all other Plan policies, this supports proposals sited within settlements.

The application site is within the development limits of Carmarthen, as defined by the Local Development Plan.

EMP2 - New Employment Proposals. Seeks to permit proposals for employment related development when they are within the development limits of settlements, provided that the land or building is suitable for conversion or re-use, the development proposals are of suitable scale and form and are not detrimental to the townscape, and are compatible with its location and neighbouring uses. The application site is within the settlement limits of Carmarthen (a designated Growth Area), and whilst the existing building has been demonstrated to have passed its useful life and not capable of appropriate conversion, the proposed new build is to be within a commercial location, adjoined by existing businesses, and of a form and appearance appropriate to the site.

TR2 - Transport Considerations. Requires that proposals which have a potential for significant trip generation are sited in accordance with the Plan's settlement framework, objectives and policies, are accessible to non-car modes of transport and contain provision for those with mobility difficulties, and has been subject to a submitted Travel Plan.

The development is sited appropriately in the context of the Local Development Plan, being within a Growth Area, is in a highly sustainable location with excellent public transport links and has excellent access for non-car modes of transport. The proposal contains provision for parking and access for those with a disability, and a comprehensive Travel Plan has been submitted.

EQ1 - Protection of Buildings, Landscapes and Features of Historic Importance. Requires that proposals for development affecting landscapes, townscapes, buildings and sites or features of historic or archaeological interest which make an important contribution to the character of an area, will only be permitted where it preserves or enhances built and historic environment.

The application site is within the Quayside / Towyside Conservation Area, and is sat directly on the historic quay, which for many years was the hub of economic activity in the town. As set out earlier in relation to the requirements of Policy SP13, the design elements of the development have been subject to significant consultation with the Local Planning Authority, and every effort has been made to

provide a building which will nestle in to its setting, is wholly appropriate to its location, and in its features is redolent of past activities.

EQ4 - Biodiversity. Sets out that development proposals which have an adverse impact on priority species, habitats, and features of importance in terms of biodiversity and conservation will not be permitted unless the impact can be mitigated, acceptably minimised or appropriately managed to create net enhancements, or there are exceptional circumstances which outweigh the conservation / biodiversity interests and alternative habitat provision can be made. In this case, the submitted Bat Survey and Habitats Report clearly concludes that there are no priority species, habitats, or important biodiversity features on or adjacent to the site.

5. DESIGN ANALYSIS

Design is defined within Planning Policy Wales (PPW) as;

“The relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment. To create sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, environmental and economic aspects of the development, including its construction, operation and management, and its relationship to its surroundings.”

It also highlights that;

“Good design is also inclusive design. The principles of inclusive design are that it places people at the heart of the design process, acknowledges diversity and difference, offers choice where a single design solution cannot accommodate all users, provides for flexibility in use, and provides buildings and environments that are convenient and enjoyable to use for everyone.”

The key objectives of good design are identified under the following 4 headings; Character and Context, Access and Movement, Community Safety, Environmental Sustainability.

6. CHARACTER AND CONTEXT

The application site is a roughly rectangular area of land of 0.0465 hectares, averaging some 34 metres in depth, and running from the public highway (Coracle Way) to the north, to the public highway (Quayside), to the south. The former Jolly Tar public house (a two storey premises), and a range of outbuildings including two former cottages latterly used as self contained flats attached to the public house, occupy some 65% of the total site area. The rest of the site is hard surfaced with a

mix of tarmacadam, concrete, paving slabs, decking and chippings. Along the length of the eastern boundary behind the public house is a low stone wall that separates the site from a range of yards and buildings part of the Towy Works (builders merchants and ironmongers), that run along the remaining length of Quayside to the east. The western wall of the public house abuts a tarmacadamed public pathway linking Quayside and Coracle Way, and separating the site from the premises currently occupied by an accountancy practice. Both the north and south boundaries are formed by railings above a low plinth / wall at the back of pavement.

Amount : In terms of the area of the overall site taken up by the proposed development the office accommodation would take up some 88% or 0.0409 hectares would take up some 0.18 hectares. The remaining land is divided between a single parking space to the Quayside frontage, small irregular areas of tarmac to the western flank adjoining the existing footpath, an external access ramp on the same flank, and a part paved / part landscaped area to the Coracle Way frontage. This ratio of built form to site area is entirely appropriate in the context of the adjoining properties and facilities, and is in accord with locally distinctive patterns and forms of development. There are no issues of mix to be considered in the current application, but there is sufficient land remaining to provide for the retention of the few existing features. The plot in itself is large enough and sufficiently distanced from neighbouring commercial properties to allow adaptation to meet the changing needs of occupants without adverse effect on adjoining dwellings in terms of privacy or sunlight.

Scale : The proposed building, although slightly taller, is comparable in scale and massing with the neighbouring premises to the west, whilst it will be sufficiently distanced from all so as to avoid any possibility of overbearance or loss of privacy. Set against the rising land of Castle Hill for all but the most oblique long distance views it will appear wholly appropriate in its context. Public access will be principally from the front entrance on to the pavement of Coracle Way, thus it will be overlooked and safe, whilst the single car parking space is directly off Quayside and so will also be secure.

Appearance : Both the appearance and form of adjoining buildings (including the recently built office accommodation two properties to the west) have distinctly similar characters of form although for the greater part they have been built individually, for different purposes at different times. They present in individual context a comparatively slim gable “end” wall to the river, which serves to somewhat emphasise the height of the buildings - typical of traditional quayside warehouses. Whilst all exhibit a form of slate, grey roof covering, there is a broad pallet in colour, form and texture of facing materials, including natural stonework, and it

would perhaps be difficult to find an appearance that could not be appropriate. In such a setting, it is inevitably best to adopt predominantly traditional values in seeking to ensure external form and detailing is sensitive to character, original functionality and sense of place. A slated roof covering, a maximum use of windows to the south elevation for light and solar gain, set in external wall finishing of a lightly textured render. This would be a modern adaptation of those traditional values, materials and appearance to provide a development at ease in its place.

Layout : The aim has been to create an efficient use of what is urban land, but not cramped to the extent that its future use and movement within will feel in any way oppressive or inhibit appropriate levels of circulation. The aim has been to reflect the setting and character of the location, particularly the relationship with neighbouring buildings and the historic context of the quay. In this respect, in the preparation of the layout regard has been paid to a number of regulating factors, including;

- location of the vehicular access at a point of maximum visibility on entry and exit,
- the retention of an appropriate spatial relationship between the new build and existing properties with good separation distances and privacy spaces between,
- siting the new build with gable end wall to the quay,
- ensuring a principal elevation of the new build is south facing to maximise solar gain, ensuring a principal elevation is overlooking site entry and car parking to ensure satisfactory levels of security.

Overall, it is believed that the layout proposed sits neatly on the site and serves to consolidate rather than detract from the immediate built form.

Landscaping : The site is currently bare of any elements of natural or introduced landscaping apart from an invasive element of Japanese Knotweed which is to receive appropriate treatment to ensure its eradication. There is in fact limited opportunity for soft landscaping of the site, but on eradication of the Knotweed, specimen planting will be introduced into the otherwise paved area adjacent to the Coracle Way frontage.

7. ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

The key objectives of access and movement in Technical Advice Note 12 (TAN 12), are to promote sustainable means of travel and to ensure access for all. The scale of development is such that movements generated will only impact at a local

rather than a strategic level. The location, which has been shown earlier in this Statement to have a high level of sustainability and is well served by transport links, will encourage access by foot and bicycle due to its connectivity with the surrounding settlement pattern. The development itself will allow all users to freely access all parts of the site, and is designed to meet change, whilst ensuring that all movement is free from obstruction or hindrance. A designated car parking space for those with a disability will provide a facility close to the ramped entrance to the building to the entrance of the building, whilst 16 cycle park spaces will be available in the lower ground floor.

TAN 12 identifies a series of key objectives of good design which includes the principle of “ensuring ease of access for all” by adopting inclusive design principles ensuring adequate provision for people with disabilities and others. There is an expectation for all those involved in the design process to foster a culture of inclusion, whereby design solutions provide access for the widest range of people possible. Inclusive design is a specific approach to barrier free environments. Its principles include equitable use, flexibility in use, intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort and size / space for approach and use. Implicit in this is a move away from a “special needs” approach to a disability view which relies on adaptations to buildings and individual design.

The current proposal has, and will, address all inclusive design issues arising from the use and users of the building, and as a minimum will ensure compliance with all statutory requirements and legislation. Throughout the design and construction process the intent is to ensure an inclusive formula and a development that is as far as practical, accessible to all.

8. COMMUNITY SAFETY

The clearly defined boundaries of the site, and the definition of the entry ways and the building itself will provide a sense of ownership and clearly identify responsibilities for every part of the development. In terms of security the degree of separation from surrounding properties and the circulation space provided within the site will provide an opportunity for natural surveillance of all external spaces from the building’s principal windows. The site entry point and car parking bay will be clearly viewed from the public highway as well as from within the site, and the intended use throughout the day, and the level of activity that will generate will ensure security and safety. Additionally, there will be professional installation of security equipment.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- The site is located in the town of Carmarthen, and in close proximity to the town's shopping centre and an extensive range of supporting facilities.
- The detailed design and siting of the development will sustain local characteristics and reinforce legibility (identity). By conforming to the surrounding pattern of layout and by utilising traditional form and materials.
- The development will utilise materials in its construction and in its setting, which wherever possible will be locally sourced (e.g. timber, slate), ensuring minimum importation from outside the area to reduce transport emissions. Wherever possible they will have a low environmental impact, they will come from sustainable sources, and will utilise reclaimed and recycled materials.
- The development will incorporate a sustainable approach to water supply by control of usage by efficient operation.
- On site provision will be made for the storage of recyclable waste and composting facilities.
- Design of the building is such as to maximise energy efficiency where possible, including high levels of insulation, solar gain and the use of dedicated energy efficient light fittings.

10. CONCLUSION

This Statement has illustrated that the proposal meets the “objectives of good design” and is a sustainable and appropriate development in terms of the requirements of Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Note 12, and the Policies of the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan. Throughout, the focus has been to ensure that the proposal is a legible development, designed to integrate comfortably into its surroundings, and be freely accessible to all users.