



PLANNING STATEMENT
PROPOSED CORPORATE EVENTS VENUE AT LAND NEAR
PANTGWYN FARM WHITEMILL, CARMARTHEN

On behalf of
Mr and Mrs Light

Our Ref: 0414.a
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Prepared by: JDE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 JCR Planning has been instructed by Mr and Mrs Light to prepare a full planning permission for the change of use of land to a corporate events venue at land near Pantgwyn Farm, Whitemill. This Statement therefore forms part of the submissions of the application to be considered by the Authority and provides information on the following points:

- A brief description of the site and surrounding area
- A description of the proposed development
- Consideration of relevant planning policy

1.2 The contents of this document should also be read in conjunction with the accompanying Pre-Application Consultation Statement.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 THE SITE

2.1.1 The application site relates to a large area of land (approximately 5ha) owned by the Applicants that has been historically used for a mix of countryside pursuit related activities including clay pigeon shooting, fishing and the rearing of deer. The core of the application site therefore relates to a range of areas, some of which are illustrated below.



Photograph 1



Photograph 2



Photograph 3



Photograph 4

2.1.2 The activities have been undertaken on a part-time commercial basis to date (some 18 years), with some of the deer being sold when stock-management has dictated

necessary. The land and site in question requires considerable work in order to maintain and manage its varying areas, resulting in the site also including a general storage building (Photograph 5) and a staff welfare building (granted permission under planning application W/30827) (Photograph 6).



Photograph 5



Photograph 6

2.1.3 The application site is then served by a hard surfaced track that leads on to the public highway at its south western point.

2.2 THE SURROUNDING AREA

2.2.1 As detailed above, the application site forms part of the much larger land holding (approximately 31.1ha) of the Applicants, which consists of a mix of wooded areas and field enclosures. In all, the land holding can be largely described as representing its own valley, with its boundaries being clearly defined by further bands of woodland or mature hedgerows.

2.2.2 The surrounding landscape then largely consists of further agricultural enclosures, pockets of woodland and isolated dwellings or farmsteads. On this point, whilst an existing residential unit adjoins the application site area (at its point of access from the public highway), the separation distance from the nearest residential dwelling to the areas of proposed activity will be 225m (Gelliglyd).

2.2.3 In the wider sense, the application site is located 1.5km to the north of the settlement of Whitemill, which is served by a number of regular bus services to the County Town of Carmarthen 3km to the west. Carmarthen itself then has a range of community facilities and local services, as well as a rail and bus stations.

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The proposal is for full planning permission for the change of use of land for the purposes of a corporate events venue. The following information therefore provides an overview of the various elements of the proposal and should be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings and reports.

Project Rationale

3.2 Since the approval of the staff welfare building, the Applicants have operated the land in question on a part-time commercial basis for the purposes of running fishing and clay pigeon purposes, but within the stipulations of the 28 and 14 day limits. Whilst each event type has never been implemented fully to these limits, through this exercise, they have been overwhelmed with the level of interest shown by various groups in the site and what it has to offer in relation to the activities in question.

3.3 Notwithstanding the above, in order to maintain the holding, its respective areas and the activities undertaken there, the Applicants now recognise that changes must be made to ensure its economic sustainable future, including the level of employment it currently offers. As a result of these factors, the Appellants have reached the logical solution of seeking to increase the usage of the application site for clay pigeon shooting and fishing purposes on a more commercial basis.

Proposed Uses

3.4 The proposal seeks the change of use of land to a corporate events venue, consisting of clay pigeon shooting and fishing activities, together with deer management courses. The proposal will see no physical alteration to the application site and its current assets, which include a range of clay pigeon traps (details accompany this application), shooting positions (see accompanying plans), 5 fishing lakes and agricultural enclosures used for the purposes of grazing deer.

Site Layout

- 3.5 The existing layout of the application site and its associated areas will remain unchanged.

Employment and Opening Hours

- 3.6 Through the proposed change of use and the site's existing land management activities, it is anticipated that the application site will require 2 full time workers and 1 part time worker.
- 3.7 It is proposed that the change of use will only take place for up to 150 days per annum, allowing then sufficient time for general maintenance and management of the site. It should be noted that no two events – clay pigeon shooting, fishing or deer management courses – will take place on the same day.
- 3.8 In terms of the clay pigeon shooting activities, this use will only take place between 10am and 4pm in any one day, but allowing for safety briefings and lunch within time this is only likely to result in 3 hours of actual shooting. In addition, such events will be limited to 8 persons per session with customers likely to travel to the site in 2-3 vehicles.
- 3.9 With regards then to the proposed fishing uses, this will again be limited to 8 persons per day. However, due to the nature of the sport, there will be no limit on the hours of operation for this form of event. Again, it is anticipated that customers are likely to travel to the site in 2-3 vehicles.
- 3.10 In terms of the deer management courses, these will be limited to 4 individuals per day, with the courses operating between 10am and 4pm. It is anticipated from enquiries to date that such customers would travel to the site in 1-2 vehicles.

Parking and Access

- 3.11 The site will continue to be accessed via the existing means and utilise the existing private access road. The application site contains more than adequate areas for the

provision of parking, but 8 dedicated spaces will be positioned behind the existing storage building.

- 3.12 All visitors to the application proposal will do so by motorised vehicle. However, it is recognised that a public footpath does run through the application site and so the existing safety measures in place (air-horns at each end of the site with signage) will continue to be used as part of the proposed change of use.

4.0 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

4.1 In terms of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the adopted development plan for the area within which the application site lies is the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan (LDP). As a result, it is the policies of this document that have had a strong steer on the preparation of the proposal subject of this planning application, including the following: .

- SP1 – Sustainable Places and Spaces
- SP15 – Tourism and the Visitor Economy
- GP1 – Sustainability and High Quality Design
- TR3 – Highways in Developments (Design Considerations)
- TSM3 – Small Scale Tourism Development in the Open Countryside

4.2 The application site lies within an area designated as ‘open countryside’, but is nevertheless well related to the settlement of Whitemill. Notwithstanding this, the proposal will not involve any physical alteration to the application site or any of its existing assets or features. On the basis therefore that the application in effect represents a change of use only that will generate a nominal level of additional traffic largely outside of peak times, the most pertinent policy in terms of the application proposal is considered to be Policy TSM3 and so the following provides an assessment of the proposal against its requirements.

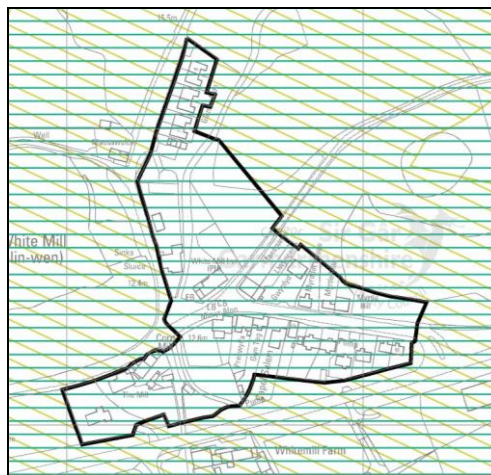
Policy TSM3 – Small Scale Tourism Development in the Open Countryside

4.3 Policy TSM3 as its title suggests relates to schemes proposed at an open countryside location for a range of small scale attractions or facilities. The Policy offers support for such schemes on the provision that the requirements of five criterion are met, which are now considered in the context of the application proposal.

4.4 The first criterion sets out that “*There is no suitable site available within the Development Limits of any nearby defined settlement.*”. In the first instance, it must be recognised that the site and land based requirements of the application proposal

are in themselves quite specific and to all intents and purposes bespoke. As a result and taking into consideration that the application proposal relies heavily on the specific assets of the application site, on this basis alone it would be unlikely that an alternative site within the locality would be available.

- 4.5 Notwithstanding the above, the nearest defined settlement – Whitemill – has been given consideration and the extent of its Development Limits is illustrated in the plan below.



Plan A

- 4.6 As can be seen, there is limited undeveloped land within the Development Limits for Whitemill, let alone enough to accommodate the application proposal. Furthermore, the separation distance between the undeveloped land and existing residential development is somewhat limited and so would in turn raise issues in terms of impact on amenity. In summary therefore, there are no suitable available alternative sites within the Development Limits of the nearby defined settlement.
- 4.7 Criterion b) then goes on to require that “*The site is directly related to a defined settlement.*”. As detailed above, the nearest defined settlement to the application site is that of Whitemill, with the two areas being separated by a distance of less than 1.5km. With the access route between the two locations being clear and legible to visitors, the requirements of Criterion b) are therefore met.

- 4.8 The third criterion for consideration (Criterion c)) then sets out that “*The countryside location is essential and the proposal is highly dependant on the attributes of the site.*”. For reasons set out in relation to Criterion a), the application proposal has been brought about for the very reasons set out in Criterion c), with the site and its attributes playing a critical role in its rationale and justification. The attributes of the site logically and naturally lend themselves to the proposed change of use, whilst its location and relationship with the surrounding landscape also ensure that it can be facilitated without any detriment to any amenity of any kind being incurred. The requirements of the Criterion are therefore adhered to.
- 4.9 Criterion d) then sets out the requirement that “*The proposal includes a supporting statement demonstrating a clear and justifiable need for the development to be located at the given location*”. Again, as with the consideration of the proposal against the requirements of Criterion a) and c), the assets and form of the application site itself have dictated the chosen location for the proposed change of use. Its high level of natural landscaping, its topography and distinctive separate areas for the proposed uses result in the application site lending itself naturally to the proposed change of use. Put simply, there is no other location within the locality or the adjoining areas that is capable of accommodating the proposal in a sympathetic and safe manner. As a result, the proposal supports and adheres to the requirements of Criterion d).
- 4.10 With no physical changes proposed by the application scheme, the proposal then in turn also adheres to the requirements of Criterion e) and f). In addition, with no additional external structures being proposed as part of the scheme, all relevant requirements of Policy TSM4 and adopted local planning policy as a whole are therefore adhered to.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The application is for the change of use of land to a corporate events venue.
- 5.2 As has been set out above, the application site is unique in its form and location. It currently consists of a range of areas and features that have enabled its use for the purposes of commercial fishing and clay pigeon shooting on a part-time basis, as well as the rearing of two herds of deer. Its location then and indeed its topographical form and vegetation has enabled this level and form of activity to take place with no qualified detrimental impact to any form of amenity.
- 5.3 This planning application therefore represents the natural progression of the application site's use to a greater level of usage. This will not only provide a more sustainable economic base for the general maintenance and operation of the application site and the holding it forms part of, but it will also enable it to provide direct and indirect economic benefits to the local area.
- 5.4 Notwithstanding the above, the level of activity at the application site will be low, with activities restricted both in terms of a per annum basis, but also in terms of what occurs each day. Working with Officers from other departments in the Authority, it has been established that the activities are capable and do take place without any detriment to residential properties in the surrounding area. The same can also be said to existing users of the public highway and indeed the local public highway network.
- 5.5 In summary therefore, the application proposal will adhere to both national and local planning policy and guidance and so we respectfully request that planning permission is granted for the proposed development in question.