



03 October 2019

Planning Application for the Temporary Change of Use from Granny Annexe and Studio to School (Use Class D1)

at

**The Annexe to The Spinney,
Twyncyn,
Dinas Powys,
Vale of Glamorgan.
CF64 4AS**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A planning application was submitted on 25th June 2019 to the Vale of Glamorgan Council for a change of use of a residential annexe into a school (D1 Use Class) at The Spinney, Twyncyn, Dinas Powys (2019/00690/FUL). The submitted documents included:
- An Access Statement;
 - Plans and elevations; and
 - Building specifications
- 1.2 It is acknowledged that there was a lack of some detail in the submitted documents and this would have caused some concerns for local residents. The absence of traffic information was an issue for the Highways Department. This document updates the previously submitted information and provides supplementary evidence in the form of professional traffic and noise assessment reports as requested by the planning department. It details the school's operating procedures and seeks to allay the concerns of any other interested parties or neighbours to ultimately assist in the positive determination of this application.
- 1.3 The application was submitted in advance of the school year commencing. However, with school places offered and accepted, the use commenced on 9th September 2019 on a part-time basis and in line with Estyn regulations and the Common Inspection Framework, but prior to the granting of planning permission. In order to become a full-time operation, Estyn require the school to gain full planning permission.
- 1.4 Accompanying this document is a range of supplementary reports and documents in order to fully inform the proposal and frame its impacts, particularly in relation to residential amenity and highway safety. These comprise:
- a transport plan provided by DW Transportation;
 - a noise assessment undertaken by Acoustics and Noise Limited;
 - a Car Parking Licence agreement between the Applicant and Dinas Powys Bowling Club; and
 - a Unilateral Undertaking offered by the Applicant.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 As outlined in the previously submitted details, this application seeks to change the use of an existing residential annexe into an independent school for a temporary period. That temporary period is sought until the end of the school year in July 2020. Thereafter it will relocate and expand into a new location in September 2020. The Applicant intends, with the input of the students, to find a more permanent site which offers the expansion opportunities that the school model requires. The current site operates at full pupil capacity now and so is self-limiting in terms of the proposed expansion in pupil numbers.
- 2.2 A small number of minor amendments are proposed to the existing building (Fig.1) and have been detailed in the submitted plans. No alterations are proposed to the existing access and no new buildings or extensions are proposed.



Figure 1. The Annexe, undergoing minor alterations in readiness for the start of the school term.

- 2.3 The D1 school use will be contained within the existing domestic curtilage of The Spinney and primarily within the existing annexe building which serves as the indoor teaching space. The extensive gardens of The Spinney will also be used as external teaching space, with a proviso of exclusion areas adjacent to neighbouring properties.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In order to fully understand how the school will operate, and the importance of its role in the future education system of Wales, it is necessary to provide background information on the unique school concept which is being explored through the proposal.

The Awen Project

- 3.2 It is generally recognised that the existing school system (both state and private) is not suited to all students. Whilst generally being a small minority, it is a societal fault that these children fall through the educational system through no fault of their own. Many of these children have individual skills which are not fully appreciated, and the large classes and high numbers of pupils in many schools do not enable teachers and staff to realise the student's potential. For example, some children may have difficulty expressing themselves due to shyness and introversion whilst others may have agoraphobic tendencies which prevent interaction with classmates. A range of approaches to fulfil each child's potential can be explored with an individual learning plan agreed with each pupil.
- 3.3 The Awen Project is an ambitious and inspirational project to provide an autonomous, free to attend, democratic school which enables children to not only choose their path of learning and shape their futures but to have a direct input into the design and construction of their learning space and the school curriculum. Drawing on best practices from across the world, it is anticipated that this type of educational process will generate a more pro-active, confident student who is prepared for the world of employment due to problem solving and active engagement in real world issues from an early age.

Operating Regime

- 3.4 The first year is in a temporary space, The Spinney Annexe, Dinas Powys (the application site). The temporary nature of this new school has always been the intention during its first year in order to gauge the success of the innovative system and its acceptability to students and parents.
- 3.5 The pioneer pupils will be provided with the opportunity to design and plan their future school to provide their ideal learning environment whilst pursuing their academic interests and following the school's curriculum to provide ownership over their learning environment and education. The vision is that each new year of pupils will contribute to the development of the school structure and teaching methods, allowing constant evolution and enabling the school, pupils and teachers to respond rapidly to changing society. Eventually, although not in this first year, the pupils would operate enterprises from the school which would fund its operation and growth. The intention is that

every year the school will ‘grow up and down’ by a year to eventually teach pupils ranging from 3 to 16 years old – in this respect the current site is going to be unsuitable in the following years anyway.

- 3.6 This school is like no other with a focus on passion-based creative learning, skills development and individual needs, whilst aiming to foster strong links with the local community.

2019 - 2020

- 3.7 The first intake from September 2019 comprises 20 children, ages 10 to 12 years old, taught in two classrooms provided at ground and first floor levels of the annexe building at The Spinney. Whilst the curriculum for the first year hangs off the concept of building a school, all seven areas of learning identified in the National Curriculum for Wales 2008 (linguistics, mathematics, technology, science, humanities and social science, physical education, and aesthetic and creative) will also be covered. Below is an example of a typical weekly timetable:

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
MORNING SESSION (10-12:30)	Concept, scenario & exploration	Concept, scenario & exploration	Concept, scenario & exploration	Concept, scenario & exploration	Concept, scenario & exploration
SKILLS (12:00-12:30)	Focussed English Skills	Focussed Science Skills	Focussed Maths Skills	Focussed English Skills	Focussed Maths Skills
LUNCH (12:30 – 1:30)	Cooking, shared meal & free play	Cooking, shared meal & free play	Cooking, shared meal & free play	Cooking, shared meal & free play	Cooking, shared meal & free play
AFTERNOON SESSION 1 (1:30-2:30)	15 mins flash writing 15 mins maths 15 mins reading	15 mins flash writing 15 mins maths 15 mins reading	15 mins flash writing 15 mins maths 15 mins reading	Weekly school meeting	15 mins flash writing 15 mins maths 15 mins reading
AFTERNOON SESSION 2 (2:30-4:15)	Expressive arts appreciation	Physical education	Expressive arts appreciation	Weekly school meeting	Physical education
STORY: (4:15 – 4:30)	Story telling	Story telling	Story telling	Story telling	Story telling

- 3.8 Outside of the core of the school’s curriculum, students will be afforded daily opportunities to develop a wide variety of important life skills including plant husbandry, cooking and cleaning.

3.9 School term dates are as follows:

AUTUMN TERM

1st Half: Monday 9th September - Friday 18th October (6 weeks = 30 days)

Half Term: Monday 21st October - Friday 1st November (2 weeks)

2nd Half: Monday 4th November - Friday 13th December (6 weeks = 30 days)

SPRING TERM

1st Half: Monday 6th January - Friday 14th February (6 weeks = 30 days)

Half Term: Monday 17th February - Friday 28th February (2 weeks)

2nd Half: Monday 2nd March - Friday 3rd April (5 weeks = 25 days)

SUMMER TERM

1st Half: Monday 20th April - Friday 22nd May (5 weeks = 25 days)

Half Term: Monday 25th May - Friday 29th May (1 week)

2nd Half: Monday 1st June - Friday 17th July (7 weeks = 35 days)

3.10 Thus, it can be seen that the proposal will be for a theoretical total attendance period of 175 days, after which the school will cease to operate on the site. The Applicant is currently engaged in seeking a new school site for use from September 2020 and has a short list, which has been made unspecific for contractual and legal reasons. The sites are:

- A former hotel on Cathedral Rd, Cardiff;
- A site that has previously been used for the provision of additional learning needs education in Barry;
- A former bowling club and green in Cardiff;
- A farm with forest land in Cardiff; and
- A former hospital in Cardiff.

3.11 The hours of operation of the school are deferred compared to standard school hours in order to avoid peak traffic hours and minimise travel times for the children. As the timetable above shows, teaching starts from 10am with the school day ending at 4:30pm.

3.12 The outdoor space at The Spinney will be utilised for learning and play. The intention is to encourage creativity and adventure and so to limit use of this space to certain hours within the school day would be against the ethos of the school. The space is however utilised in a sensitive manner with a demarcated area nearest to adjoining properties avoided for play and outdoor learning. There is a vegetable patch which the children can attend to close to the northern boundary of the application site, which is the furthest point away from the closest neighbour. A covered learning area is also located north of the annexe building. The Applicant is therefore willing to limit outdoor activity to allocated 'zones' within the curtilage. These areas could be defined by pegs and string, low impact fencing or landscaping.

3.13 The site is currently operating on a part-time basis (12.5 hours per week) because Estyn will not sanction full-time schooling in the absence of planning permission. Due to the current limited schooling hours, the students bring pre-prepared sandwiches and food to school. Once operating on a full-time basis they will be encouraged to prepare communal meals in the fitted out kitchen in the annexe. The process will be carried out under teacher supervision through the Welsh medium to enable the students to progress their language skills through everyday use. The kitchen is fully compliant with all building and hygiene regulations.

Admissions

3.14 Admission to the school for the 20 pupils currently attending was made *via* application directly to the school itself. Children were interviewed and ultimately self-selected according to whether the school and its teaching methods would be appropriate for them and meet their needs.

3.15 Of the 20 children attending, two currently live at the application property whilst the remaining 18 are largely from the Vale of Glamorgan region. Being an independent school, the Awen Project is not bound by catchment areas or financial income. Travel distance does however have a direct correlation with attendance at the school and it is not anticipated that students will travel much further to attend than the current intake.

Visitors and Vehicular Journeys

3.16 Further to detailed discussions with the Vale of Glamorgan Council, and taking into consideration the concerns of neighbours over potential increases in traffic and noise in a residential area in close proximity to the application site, it has been decided that access to the school would be retained as the currently operational walking bus proposal¹. Two teachers will drive to the site daily. Other visitors are likely to be rare – fewer than one per week on average, which is not an uncommon number for an average domestic dwelling.

3.17 There is a legal agreement in place with the Dinas Powys Bowling Club to allow their car park to be used as a daily pick-up / drop-off point for the students. They are transported from their respective homes by parents who group the children in their cars as they travel from home to the drop-off point. There are currently five cars/day ferrying children from their homes to the car park, averaging just over three children per car. This is unlikely to change for the remainder of the school year. Once at the Bowling Club they are met by the two teachers and when the full ensemble have arrived they

¹ A walking bus is a form of student transport for schoolchildren who, chaperoned by two adults (a "driver" leads and a "conductor" follows), walk to school along a set route, in much the same way a school bus would drive them to school.

walk to the school – one teacher at the head (the driver) and one at the rear (the conductor). The children have a daily review on road safety, albeit the roads are quiet at the start and end of the school day.

- 3.18 The highway from the car park (St Andrews Road) has a 1.5 – 2.0m wide tarmac pavement along its entire length from the Bowling Club car park to the Twyncyn, providing adequate walking space for students walking two-abreast in line, or in single line in case of pedestrians walking in the other direction. Road traffic speed is reduced by traffic calming speed bumps on the road. The walking bus would turn left towards the school after 175m into the Twyncyn. This is a quiet residential road with few car movements. There is no definitive pavement, however, traffic is so light that it is anticipated that the walking bus could move along it without hindrance or danger and in the rare event when two cars may be passing in opposite directions the students have a wide grass verge on which to seek refuge (Fig.2).



Figure 2. The Twyncyn is a quiet residential road with wide verges.

- 3.19 At the top of the Twyncyn the access to the application site is *via* a shared private drive which serves three properties (Fig.3). This also has a wide verge and is a seldom used stretch of road some 100m in length with a wide verge on either side. The northerly section (40m) of this shared drive narrows to some 2.6m wide and is shared by the applicant and the owners of the neighbouring dwelling, Long Drive. It is a straight section of road with clear visibility from one end to the other.
- 3.20 In order to provide safe passage for the children in the event of a car movement from Long Drive, the ‘driver’ of the walking bus will walk ahead whilst the children congregate with the ‘conductor’ half

way along the drive, where it widens considerably. When a safe passage can be confirmed the 'driver' will signal to the walking bus and they will proceed quietly and quickly along the drive.

3.21 A risk assessment has been provided in the appendix to this Statement.



Figure 3. The private drive serves three properties.

3.22 In the exceptional circumstance of a student being ill or attending a doctor's/dentist appointment, it is considered appropriate that a parent or guardian would be able to drive to the property to collect or drop off the child. Such journeys would be considered *de minimis* in terms of affecting traffic volumes in the area.

3.23 The operation of the site in reality will be very much like a child-minder setting in terms of its impact on neighbouring properties. Even the smallest property can have up to six children for child minding without requiring planning permission – with six sets of parents and expected day trips throughout the day considered to be reasonable without having an adverse harm on amenity and before a change of use is considered to have occurred.

3.24 It is recognised that a total of 20 children and two teachers will attend the Awen Project school at The Spinney from Monday to Friday and which will represent a change of use, albeit temporary (175 days). However, The Spinney has the benefit of being set within extensive grounds so activity is unlikely to have an adverse impact on neighbouring residents – noise and traffic assessments substantiate this and are provided as standalone reports accompanying his statement.

- 3.25 The Spinney has sufficient on-site parking for occasional necessary visitors and so presents no harm to the residents of the Twyncyn in terms of parking on the highway. Nevertheless, having considered the concerns of neighbours it was decided that the walking bus approach was the most suitable and will have the added benefit of preparing students for the working day with a brisk walk.
- 3.26 It is worth noting that the previous use of the annexe generated a considerable amount more vehicular movements than the proposed use. During the time of its use, many music professionals and recording artists would visit the site, some living in the house as guests. At other times there would be business meetings associated with the industry. The use as a school, under the proposed system, would result in a significant decrease in traffic movements and a commensurate increase in road safety.

4.0 LOCATION

- 4.1 The Applicant owns the property known as The Spinney, which extends to grounds of some 0.90ha (2.21 acres). It comprises a single detached dwelling with an annexe. The built area is located within the settlement boundary of Dinas Powys, on its north-west periphery. The immediate areas to the south and east comprise a limited number of large detached residential properties set within large gardens. The immediate area is of suburban character with very low levels of traffic. The northern part of the Applicant's landholding, extending to some 0.57ha (1.42 acres), lies outside the settlement boundary. This area is within limestone mineral safeguarding zone adjacent to, but outside of, Coed Twyncyn SINC and Cwrt-yr-Ala Basin Special Landscape Area.

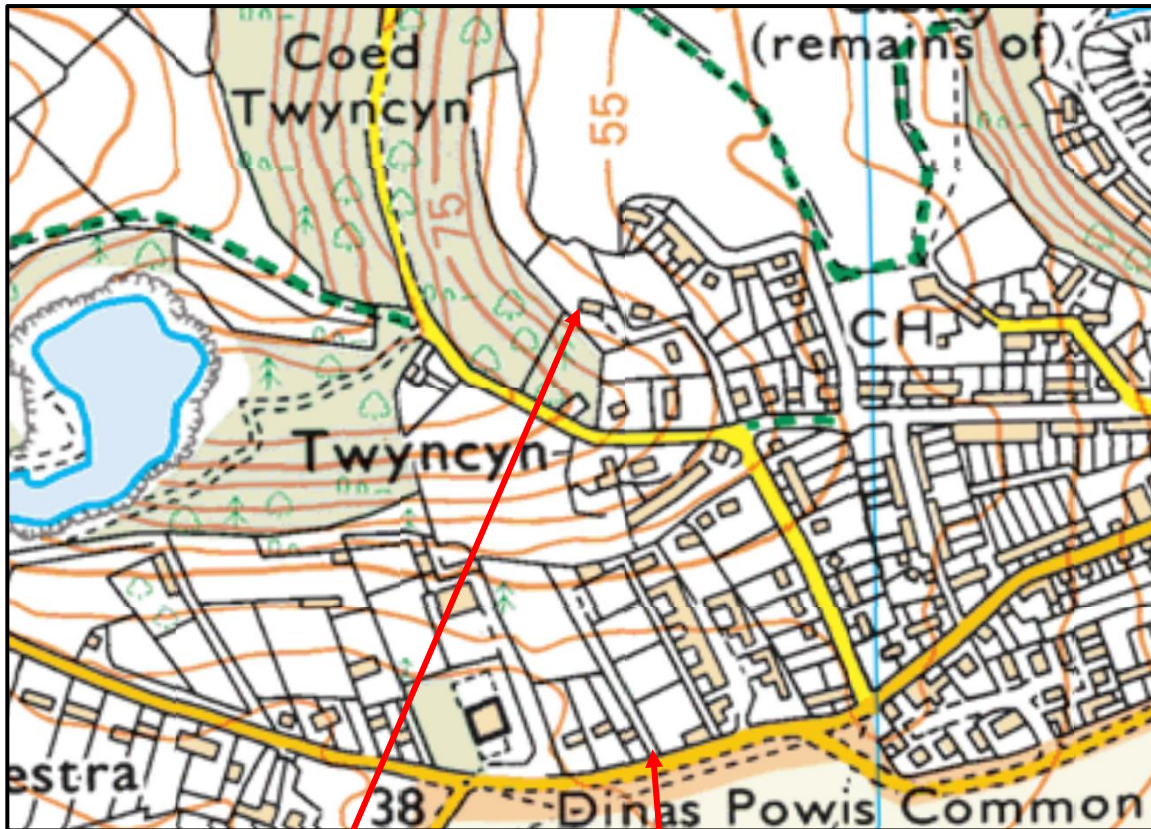


Figure 4. The application site and Dinas Powys Bowling Club car park.

- 4.2 Dinas Powys Golf Course is situated on the north-west boundary of the property.
- 4.3 No operational development is proposed within the part of the Applicant's garden which is outside the settlement boundary (open countryside) and the existing garden. This area comprises a small field and is managed by occasional mowing of the grass.
- 4.4 The site is accessed off the Twyncyn, a wide residential road with grass verges on either side, in the main. It is a no-through road, so traffic along the road only relates to dwellings on either side or another residential no-through road, King's Ride; and a farm, Beauville Farm, located at the end of Beauville Lane. The Spinney is accessed off the Twyncyn *via* a private drive serving three dwellings. Traffic along these roads is limited and slow.
- 4.5 The Twyncyn is accessed off St Andrews Road, which is one of the main access roads into Dinas Powys, albeit a relatively quiet road because it serves a rural area and is narrow once outside the built-up area. Since the road only serves a residential area and St Andrew's School, there are traffic calming bumps in the area associated with this application, therefore traffic tends to travel at 30mph or less.
- 4.6 There are three primary schools within the Dinas Powys locality:
- Dinas Powys Primary School (1.0 miles from the application site);

- St Andrew's Major Church in Wales Primary School (0.5 miles from the site); and
- Murch School (primary) (1.0 miles from the site).

4.7 The local secondary school is St Cyres School in Penarth which is 2.25 miles from the application site with a pupil enrolment of some 1,150 children.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

National Policy

5.1 National policy is contained within Planning Policy Wales (PPW10) Edition 10 December 2018. There are no specific policies associated with education or provision of schools, although reference is made to enabling the whole community to have a range of choices in facilities:

“...to ensure that residents of existing and new communities have access to jobs and an appropriate range of community facilities including recreation, leisure, health and education...” (paragraph 4.02)

5.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 *“requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.”*².

5.3 It sets out seven well-being goals:

- i) a prosperous Wales;
- ii) a resilient Wales;
- iii) a healthier Wales;
- iv) a more equal Wales;
- v) a Wales of cohesive communities;
- vi) a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; and
- vii) a globally responsible Wales.

5.4 Whilst the Awen Project and proposed school is not a public body, its objective is to assist students who may not be wholly suited to mainstream education, providing them with a high standard of

² <https://futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/#targetText=The%20Well%20being%20of%20Future,health%20inequalities%20and%20climate%20change>.

education through alternative teaching methods thus enabling them to attain and possibly exceed their personal goals. This provides equality in education objectives which may not be achieved elsewhere, such as schooling by the local education authority. Through enabling this educational system the local authority can be seen to be taking reasonable steps to meet some of the well-being objectives in the context of educational development of children.

5.5 Local policy

MG6 – Provision of Educational Facilities. The Policy references sites for allocation of new or extended state sector schools in the Vale, but no reference is made to independent schools within the Local Authority area. The Policy is based upon evidence within the Council's '*Educational Facilities Background Paper*' (September 2013). This acknowledges at paragraph 4.5 that "*...the Council has a statutory duty to meet parental preference for school places such as Welsh Medium or denominational education.*" However this background paper does not deal with facilities for schooling outside of the traditional system and as such does not comprehensively deal with likely increased demand for this type of facility.

MD1 – Location of New Development.

"New development on unallocated sites should:

- 1. Have no unacceptable impact on the countryside;*
- 2. Reinforce the role and function of the key settlement of Barry, the service centre settlements, primary settlements or minor rural settlements as key providers of commercial, community and healthcare facilities;*
- 3. Where appropriate promote new enterprises, tourism, leisure and community facilities in the Vale of Glamorgan;*
- 4. In the case of residential development, support the delivery of affordable housing in areas of identified need;*
- 5. Have access to or promote the use of sustainable modes of transport;*
- 6. Benefit from existing infrastructure provision or where necessary make provision for new infrastructure without any unacceptable effect on the natural or built environment;*
- 7. Where possible promote sustainable construction and make beneficial use of previously developed land and buildings;*

8. Provide a positive context for the management of the water environment by avoiding areas of flood risk in accordance with the sequential approach set out in national policy and safeguard water resources; and

9. Have no unacceptable impact on the best and most versatile agricultural land."

The proposal is compliant with MD1 in terms of it being amongst the first steps to providing a community integrated school on an alternative site where community involvement will be actively encouraged and vital to the effective operation of the school and its curriculum. The existing school is located within the allocated settlement boundary and makes efficient use of an existing building with minimal changes in external appearance. It will not therefore have any unacceptable impact on the appearance or character of the adjacent countryside or SLA.

MD2 – Design of New Development

"In order to create high quality, healthy, sustainable and locally distinct places development proposals should:

- 1. Be of a high standard of design that positively contributes to the context and character of the surrounding natural and built environment and protects existing features of townscape or landscape interest;*
- 2. Respond appropriately to the local context and character of neighbouring buildings and uses in terms of use, type, form, scale, mix, and density;*
- 3. Where appropriate, provide new or enhanced areas of public realm particularly in key locations such as town centres, major routes and junctions;*
- 4. Promote the creation of healthy and active environments and reduce the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour. In the case of retail centres, developments should provide active street frontages to create attractive and safe urban environments;*
- 5. Provide a safe and accessible environment for all users, giving priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users;*
- 6. Have no unacceptable impact on highway safety nor cause or exacerbate existing traffic congestion to an unacceptable degree;*
- 7. Where appropriate, conserve and enhance the quality of, and access to, existing open spaces and community facilities;*

8. *Safeguard existing public and residential amenity, particularly with regard to privacy, overlooking, security, noise and disturbance;*
9. *Provide public open space, private amenity space and car parking in accordance with the council's standards;*
10. *Incorporate sensitive landscaping, including the retention and enhancement where appropriate of existing landscape features and biodiversity interests;*
11. *Provide adequate facilities and space for the collection, composting and recycling of waste materials and explore opportunities to incorporate re-used or recyclable materials or products into new buildings or structures; and*
12. *Mitigate the causes of climate change by minimising carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions associated with their design, construction, use and eventual demolition, and include features that provide effective adaptation to, and resilience against, the current and predicted future effects of climate change."*

There will be very limited physical alterations to the existing building as the change in use will only be temporary. None of the amendments will have any significant difference upon the character and appearance of the main dwelling house or adjacent Special Landscape Area. The inside and outside spaces will provide safe learning and play environments for the children and will encourage creativity.

A healthy and active lifestyle is one of the learning outcomes from the Awen Project, with an emphasis on exercise through the walking bus at the start and end of the day, undertaken under close supervision with daily health and safety briefings.

The environment and the global impact of humans is an integral part of the school curriculum. The students' interaction with the environment is an important element in their education.

MD5 – Development within the Settlement Boundary

"Settlement boundaries have been defined around all the settlements within the LDP settlement hierarchy. New development within these settlements will be permitted where the proposed development:

1. *Makes efficient use of land or buildings;*
2. *Would not prejudice the delivery of an allocated development site;*

- 3. Is of a scale, form, layout and character that is sympathetic to and respects its immediate setting and the wider surroundings and does not unacceptably impact upon the character and appearance of the locality;*
- 4. The proposal would not result in the loss of natural or built features that individually or cumulatively contribute to the character of the settlement or its setting;*
- 5. Would not result in the unacceptable loss of public open space, community or tourism buildings or facilities;*
- 6. Has no unacceptable impact on the amenity and character of the locality by way of noise, traffic congestion and parking; and*
- 7. Makes appropriate provision for community infrastructure to meet the needs of future occupiers."*

The proposal will not involve any change in building footprint or scale of the Annexe. External changes are minor in terms of widening windows or doorways and will not impact upon any neighbours or create visual intrusion for the wider public. It is of a scale, form, layout and character that is sympathetic to and respects its immediate setting and the wider surroundings. It has no unacceptable impact on the amenity and character of the locality by way of noise, traffic congestion and parking.

MD7 – Environmental Protection

"Development proposals will be required to demonstrate they will not result in an unacceptable impact on people, residential amenity, property and / or the natural environment from either:

- 1. Pollution of land, surface water, ground water and the air;*
- 2. Land contamination;*
- 3. Hazardous substances;*
- 4. Noise, vibration, odour nuisance and light pollution;*
- 5. Flood risk and consequences;*
- 6. Coastal erosion or land stability;*
- 7. The loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land; or*
- 8. Any other identified risk to public health and safety.*

Where impacts are identified the Council will require applicants to demonstrate that appropriate measures can be taken to minimise the impact identified to an acceptable level. Planning conditions may be imposed or legal obligation entered into, to secure any necessary mitigation and monitoring processes.

In respect of flood risk, new developments will be expected to avoid unnecessary flood risk and meet the requirements of TAN15. No highly vulnerable development will be permitted within Development Advice Map (DAM) zone C2. Development will only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding where it can be demonstrated that the site can comply with the justification and assessment requirements set out in TAN15."

Having regard to objections to the proposal, they mainly relate to concerns over noise generation and potential increase in traffic in and around the site. With regard to these concerns RAC has commissioned a noise survey and a traffic survey, which are provided with this Statement. The Applicant has also provided legal obligations in line with policy expectations to ensure that the operating standards are maintained throughout the 175 day period that the school will be functioning.

The noise survey, undertaken by Acoustics and Noise Ltd, concluded that:

"The results of this assessment indicate that the noise emissions from the proposed development will be significantly below the required criterion of 50 dB LAeq,1hr at all times and result in a very low impact at all sensitive receptors surrounding the development."

The traffic survey, undertaken by DW Transportation Ltd, identified that:

"The traffic impact of the proposed school would be negligible. The only new vehicle trips would be those generated by the two members of teaching staff. The negligible number of new vehicle trips would have no material impact on highway safety.

It has been demonstrated that the traffic volumes on Twyncyn are extremely low with only 6 cars per hour during the proposed school's set down/pick up periods. The impact on pedestrian safety would therefore be negligible."

6.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES AND OBJECTIONS

Detail and summarise responses

- 6.1 Matters in relation to noise and transport/highway safety are addressed in the appended sections of this report. However, concerned residents may be assured by the fact that the permission which is sought is temporary and it is not intended that the use will continue beyond the 17th July 2020.
- 6.2 Helpful and detailed conversations were held with local authority officers following RAC's appointment as agents for the Applicant. Their concerns related to the lack of detail in the submitted documents and it is acknowledged that this would have caused some concerns for local residents too. The Applicant has been living at The Spinneys for 10 years and has no intention to cause any ill will to neighbours or any other residents within the area. As a consequence, neighbours' concerns have been taken on-board and the walking bus option has been adopted, with a prescribed route, to reduce any possible traffic and noise impact on the Twyncyn.
- 6.3 The comments from the Highway Authority, dated 12th August 2019, can be summarised as:
- Concerns over visibility westwards from the shared access drive off the Twyncyn. They suggest mitigation measures of cutting back overgrown hedgerow vegetation and the introduction of 'Slow / Araf' markings on the road;
 - No drawing of the proposed parking and access arrangements within the property have been provided;
 - The access serving the existing dwelling along the private access is not wide enough to allow two vehicles to pass;
 - Details of numbers and types of vehicles serving the school and associated parking provision;
 - The limited availability of footways along the Twyncyn or along the joint private access road to the school
- 6.4 These matters have been addressed in the DW Transportation Technical Note and are summarised in the following section.

7.0 TRANSPORT, PARKING AND HIGHWAY SAFETY

- 7.1 Children attending the school travel from a wider catchment than standard state schools, albeit mostly from within the Vale of Glamorgan (Fig. 5) reflecting the non-exclusionary nature of the project. The reasoning for this is that there are no other schools offering this type of educational

system which is tailored to the individual child, and some of the children have had bad experiences in mainstream school.

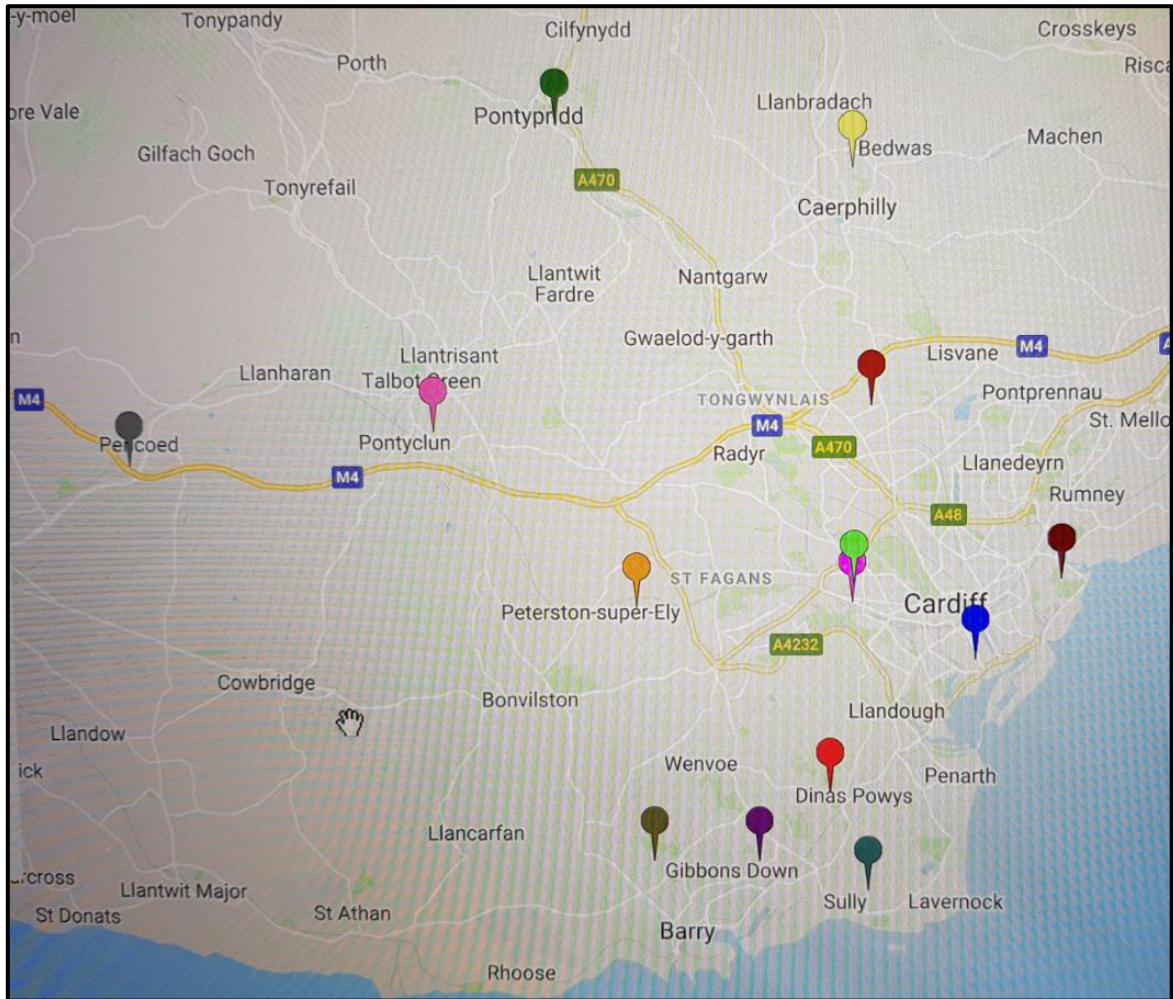


Figure 5. Location of pupils homes in relation to the application site (red pin).

7.2 Sustainability is enshrined within the Awen Project and children are constantly reminded through day-to-day tasks that they need to live in a sustainable way. This extends to life at home as well as how the children get to school. Methods of sustainable transport are encouraged which is in line with the transport hierarchy set out in Planning Policy Wales. Where the distance is too great to walk or cycle, the use of public transport and car sharing is encouraged. Four of the children car share with the teachers, whilst others car share with parents on a rota system. Eventually, when the school has matured, and in new premises, even the school vehicle will be electric with electric charging points available at the school grounds for the use of teachers and the community.

7.3 There are two adults living at The Spinney, with a single car, hence requiring one private parking space. The DW Transportation report notes that the adopted parking standards for the Vale of Glamorgan advise that schools should be provided with the following levels of parking provision:

- 1 commercial vehicle space;
- 1 space per each member of teaching staff;
- 1 space per 2 ancillary staff;
- Visitor spaces (to include 1 space for disabled people); and
- Bus parking as required.

7.4 Due to the limited scale and temporary nature of the school, a commercial parking space is not considered necessary. Furthermore, the infrequency of visitors would not warrant three full-time dedicated spaces, and likewise a disabled parking space is reserved but seldom used. It is considered that the current level of parking is deemed sufficient which can comfortably accommodate teachers' vehicles and meet any other parking requirement as well as not adversely affecting the parking requirement at the dwelling. The parking plan for the site is shown in Fig.6.

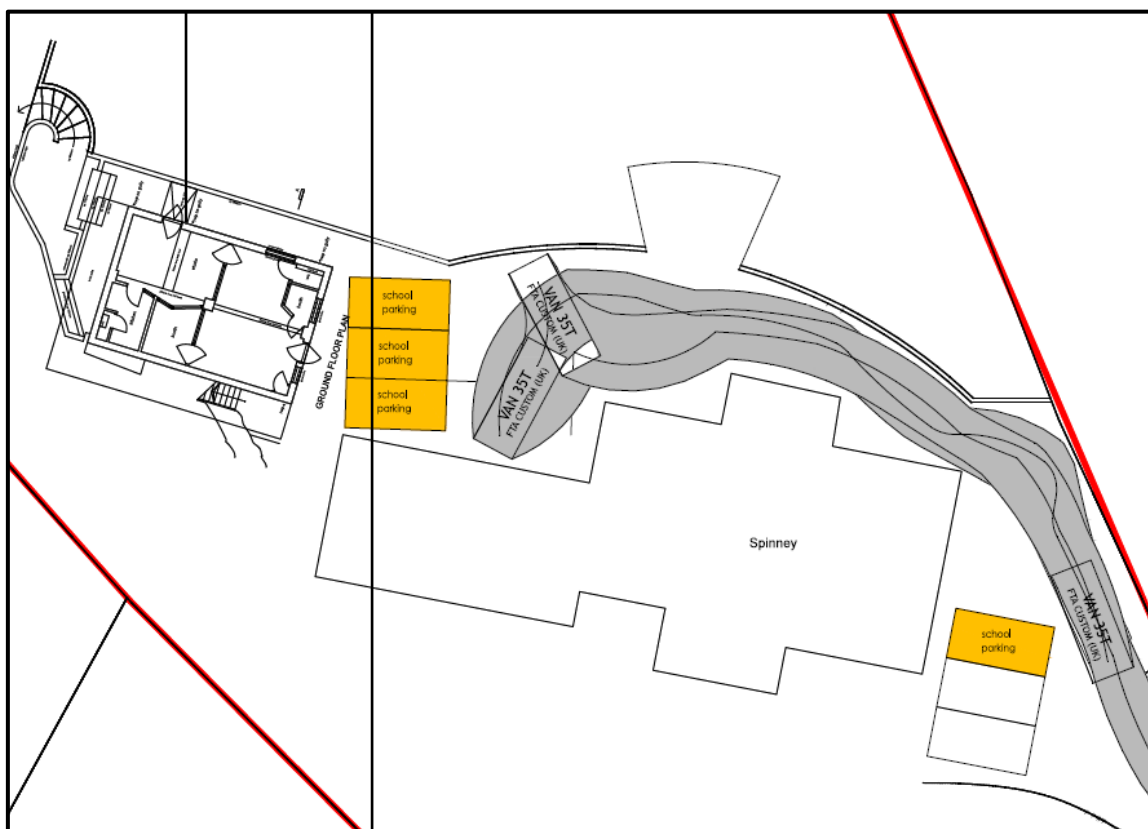


Figure 6. School and private-related parking at The Spinney.

Walking bus.

7.5 A lower parking provision can be partly justified on the basis that as part of their normal school day, children are dropped off at Dinas Powys Bowling Club rather than at The Spinney. Only in exceptional circumstances outside of the control of the school will parents drop-off or collect their children from

the property. However, because of the low number of students, this is likely to be a rarity. Furthermore, the later teaching time allows, for example, medical appointments to be made before the school day, although it is appreciated that this is not always possible.

- 7.6 The signed legal agreement between the school and Dinas Powys Bowling Club, St Andrews Road to allow parking for The Spinney within its car park accompanies this application. In addition, a copy of a Unilateral Undertaking is also submitted for the Council to consider. The Bowling Club is located approximately 150 metres from the southern-most point of the Twyncyn. All students will congregate in the car park whether arriving by car or other means and will be collected by teachers and walked in a 'walking bus' 650 metres distance to the school. At the end of the school day, the walking bus will depart for the Bowling Club and follow the same route, where they will be met by parents. The route is shown in Fig. 7 below. The walking bus operates with a teacher leading up the front and a second at the rear.

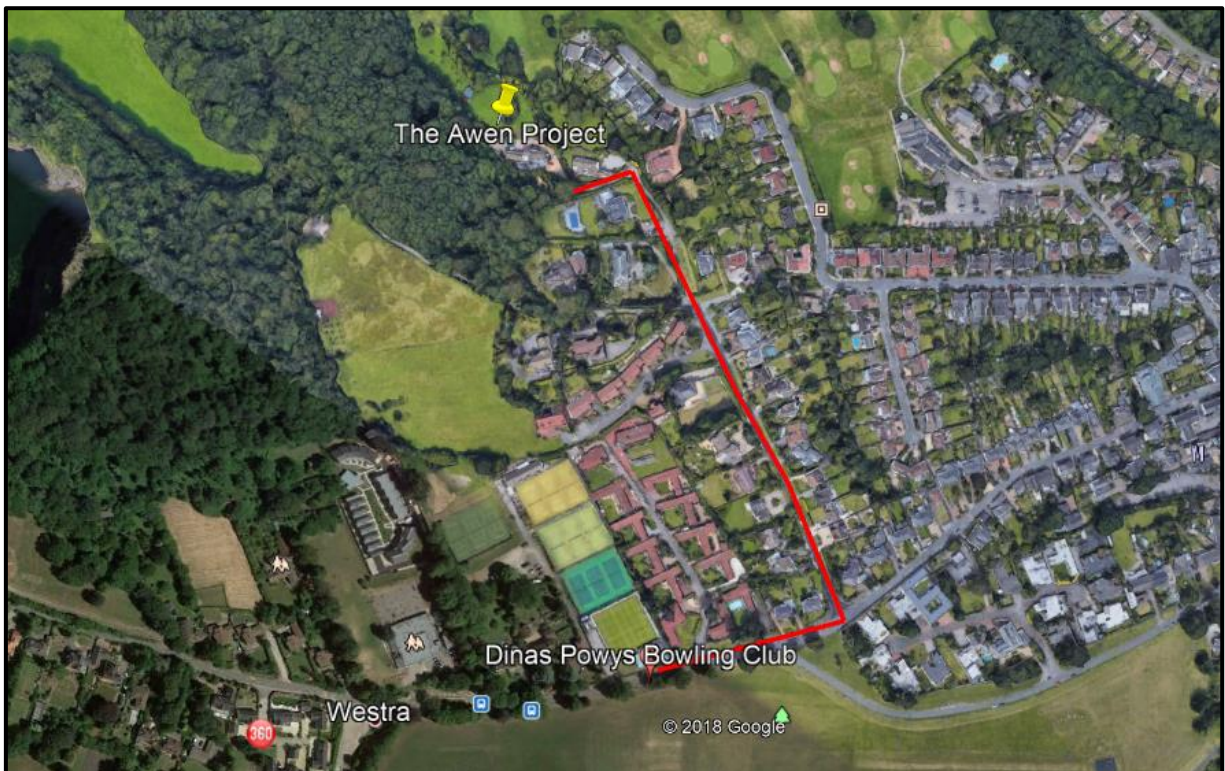


Figure 7. Route of the walking bus from the Bowling Club to the school.

- 7.7 The Twyncyn is characterised by a wide highway with no pavement and extensive highway verges which provide adequate refuge in the event of a passing car. The fact that traffic volumes are low, with only 6 cars/ hour during the proposed school's set down/pick up periods, would result in a negligible impact upon the safety of the walking bus.

8.0 RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

- 8.1 A professional independent noise assessment has been undertaken by Acoustics and Noise Ltd and found that:

“The results of this assessment indicate that the noise emissions from the proposed development will be significantly below the required criterion of 50 dB LAeq,1hr and result in a very low impact at all sensitive receptors surrounding the development.

The absolute noise levels will be significantly below the levels at which the World Health Organisation would expect the majority of people to start to be moderately annoyed. Even though the noise levels are significantly below the criteria level, the children would still be occasionally audible, but will be at levels that only the most sensitive receptors would possibly find disturbing. To place this in context, the absolute noise levels predicted at the sensitive receptors is at most 38 dB LAeq,1hr and would be lower than those expected in a quiet office and approaching levels experienced within a library.”

- 8.2 Children arriving and leaving The Spinney will be accompanied by teachers at all times and will behave in a respectable manner. Later morning starts will help to allay any concern that there will be disruption during the early hours as a result of the school. School children will not leave the premises without an adult chaperone. There will be no significant increase in vehicular noise because children will utilise the walking bus to school and are instructed to be quiet and respectful at all times. The two teachers' cars would generally be the only additional daily vehicles to the site.
- 8.3 School activity will not extend beyond the area shown in orange (Fig.8), apart from the daily walk to and from school, to prevent neighbours becoming concerned that their residential amenity will be at risk from noise disturbance. This will be demarcated on the lawned area by a rope, with a pegged 'No Entry' notice.



Figure 8. The Applicant's land ownership (blue) and the school inclusion zone (orange).

9.0 WASTE

9.1 In accord with the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, the school aims to be zero waste, embedding sustainability philosophies into all parts of the curriculum and the school day. Composting of waste generated will be explored where possible and the resulting product will be used in the horticultural area as part of the learning process. Children will be encouraged to take their own non-compostable waste from lunches, for example, home with them. Any increase in waste beyond the level of the existing residential property will be marginal and will not result in any additional refuse collections for commercial waste.

9.2 Slow food principles will be followed in terms of sourcing and preparing food and the 7 r's of sustainability (reuse, repurpose, rot, repair, return, refill and refuse) will be intrinsic in day-to-day life at the school and consequently work towards being a zero-waste school.

10.0 CONCLUSION

10.1 This planning application seeks the temporary change of use of the residential annexe associated with The Spinney, Dinas Powys into a school (D1 Use Class) for 10-12 year-old children for a period of 175 days – until the end of term, July 2020. The school would comprise 20 children who will be taught in an innovative manner with small class sizes and individual, self-generated teaching programme, based upon best teaching practices gleaned from all over the world.

10.2 The children would arrive and depart the site *via* a walking bus under teacher supervision.

10.3 Professional noise and travel assessments have been undertaken and found that the proposal would not result in any noticeable increase in harm to the amenity of any of the neighbouring residents.

10.4 The proposal is a pioneer project and after this inaugural year it will relocate to a permanent site and pupil numbers will increase as the age bracket of pupils will increase annually.

10.5 Due to the absence of harm and the temporary nature of the proposal, it is considered that the application should be acceptable and meets all the appropriate planning policies.

Appendix 1

Walking Bus Risk Assessment – The Spinney School, Twncyn, Dinas Powys

The Spinney Walking Bus Route Risk Assessment Form

It is important that you do your risk assessment 'walk about' at 10am on a normal week day, as this is the time the event takes place.

How many children are taking part? 18

STEP ONE: Your risk assessment 'walk about'

Walk the route you are planning to use and fill in the sections below.

Route details	
Length of route	<u>650</u> metres
What is the route?	Along St Andrews Rd as far as the junction with Twyncyn. Turn left into Twyncyn, and then onto the 'private drive' at the top of Twyncyn until it reaches the entrance to The Spinney. The reverse route will operate in the afternoon.
Are there pavements on the entire route that are wide enough for two children to walk hand-in-hand, and that don't have any hazards on them (e.g. major pot holes)	Yes on St Andrews Rd. No on Twyncyn, but the verge is wide. No on the private drive but the verge is wide for some 60m, then becomes narrow for 40m.
Will the children have to cross any roads?	Yes If yes, how many? <u>3</u> Crossing place 1: Jnc of Merevale and St Andrews Rd. – quiet junction of cul-de-sac Crossing place 2: Jnc of Kings Parade and Twyncyn - quiet junction of cul-de-sac Crossing place 3: Jnc of Beauville Lane and Twyncyn - quiet junction of dead-end country lane
What are the speed limits on the route?	30mph
Do you think the traffic is breaking speed limits or not slowing down enough on the route, e.g. on bends or where there are parked cars?	No
Are the children separated from traffic in any way? (e.g. railings, or a wide verge of grass) (This isn't compulsory, but helps us understand the safety of your route)	No
Have you identified any particular hazards on the route that means a child could be hit by a vehicle while on the Giant Walking Bus?	No

If you have identified any particular hazards, use the table below to record these hazards and how you are preventing children being exposed to the hazard.

Hazard	What you are doing about it
Private drive	The 40m narrow stretch of private drive will require the 'driver' to act as a 'lookout' before the walking bus proceeds safely.

STEP TWO: Walking safely

YOUR COMMITMENT	Tick here that you are doing these things, or explain why not:
The children will all hold hands in twos and walk calmly in a 'crocodile'	Yes
The children will have practised doing this off-road in a play ground or on a previous occasion.	Yes
The children will all be year 3 or older	Yes
There will be at least one adult to every 8 children in year 3 or older (you need more if children are younger)	Yes
The adults will have been instructed before the event to ensure children walk calmly and hold hands throughout the walk, and stay on the pavement / verge	Yes
The children will all be wearing high visibility vests	Yes
The adults will all be wearing high visibility vests	Yes

Please check the route again on the day of Walking Bus to check there are no new or unexpected hazards and also take into account the weather conditions and whether they require any additional precautions.

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