

OFFICER REPORT

Application Number: P2024/0129

Site Address: Gnoll Estate Country Park Fairyland Neath SA11 3BS

Proposal: Proposed extensions to existing car park and construction of new facilities building and associated works.

Applicant: Head Of Property And Regeneration

Agent: Mr Iwan Rowlands

Ward: Neath North

Application Type: Reg 3 - Council Dev

Valid Date: 5th March 2024

Statutory Expiry Date: 29th April 2024

Ext. of Time / PPA date: 24th June 2024

Publicity Expiry Date: 21st May 2024

RECOMMENDATION - Approved

SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site comprises The Gnoll Estate Country Park in Neath. The country park is a grade II* Registered Historic Park & Garden which sits on a steep sided hill at the eastern edge of Neath. The park has retained a rich history with a large number of historic features still situated within the park that include four large duck ponds, two 18th century cascades and the Gnoll House ruins.

The site itself is circa 5 hectares in size, and contains a visitor centre with café and toilet facilities inside, a children`s playground, a fishpond, formal cascades and bridge, and waterfall and stream. There are several footpaths lying within the site which are used by visitors, and there are also three Grade II listed buildings within the site boundary,

namely:

- The Mosshouse Wood Cascades;
- The Grotto; and
- The War Memorial.

The site's immediate surroundings to the north, south and west are mostly residential, whereas east lie several fields of grassland and trees. To the west of the site is Neath town centre. The entire application site lies within Zone A in the Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Development Advice Map. The Flood Map for Planning places some parts of the site within Flood Zones 2 and 3 for surface water and small watercourses.

The application site has a sustainable location, with several bus stops in close proximity to the site. The nearest bus stop lies just before the main entry to the site along Fairyland. This stop is serviced by the 153 on a two hour basis, terminating at Neath bus station. Neath Train Station is less than ten minutes away with hourly services operated by Great Western Railway travel between Swansea and London Paddington in both directions. Transport for Wales services also call at the station, with their services terminating at destinations including Manchester Piccadilly, Cardiff Central, Carmarthen and Milford Haven. Running to the north of the site is national cycle route 47 which goes from Newport to Fishguard and forms part of the Celtic Trail West. The route itself is 121 miles long and over half of it lies in traffic free paths.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The current proposal is one of a number of planning applications submitted on behalf of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council in order to improve the visitor offering at The Gnoll Estate Country Park. The proposal has been supported by a Levelling Up Funding (LUF) from UK Government which *"is especially intended to support investment in places where it can make the biggest difference to everyday life, including ex-industrial areas, deprived towns and coastal communities."* It has been introduced to help local areas identify real local priorities for investment. The scheme aims to utilise the LUF to create an attractive environment, heritage and tourism proposition that will benefit the Country Park along with the wider area, making it a highly desirable destination with many economic benefits.

This application seeks full planning permission for an extension to the existing main visitor car park as well as the construction of a new facilities building to house grounds maintenance equipment. Both developments are proposed in order to accommodate the expected increase in visitor numbers as a consequence of the successful LUF bid including a new visitor centre, tea-room/café and holiday accommodation (see planning history above). The existing grounds maintenance yard and storage area is in a poor condition and will be partly redeveloped by the proposed holiday accommodation proposals and a new facilities building is required to maintain grounds maintenance supplies, equipment and associated staff/welfare provisions.

The proposal consists of the following:

- Extension to existing car park by creating two areas of additional parking that will accommodate 100 new spaces;
- Provision of 12 electric vehicle charging points;
- Provision of 15 no. cycle stands;
- Erection of a purpose-built service building; and
- Associated landscaping and infrastructure works.

The car park extension aims to offer additional spaces to facilitate the anticipated possible increase in visitor numbers whilst taking into consideration the character and appearance of the Park in order to minimise impact.

It is proposed that a new functional facilities building is provided in a more central location within the Park is provided. At present, the facilities building is situated to the south of the fishpond. Furthermore, the current facilities offer a lack of storage space, and containers are also being utilised which don't serve their intended purpose. The new facilities building will house the following: horse box, flail deck mower, mini compact tractor, gator and an all-terrain vehicle.

Hiraeth Architects and NPTCBC undertook a public consultation event at Gnoll Estate Country Park Visitor Centre, which displayed all information included in the Stage 1 Levelling Up Funding document. A formal pre-application consultation took place between 18th May 2023 and June 15th 2023, with site notices displayed on site, letters sent to statutory, other and community consultees, along with adjoining residents. In addition to this, a response desk was set up in the visitor centre. Further information concerning the pre-application process and the responses gathered can be found in the submitted PAC Report.

The application is accompanied by a suite of drawings and supporting technical documents/reports including:

- Ecological Assessment
- Construction Environmental Management Plan ('CEMP')
- Ground Conditions Assessment
- Drainage Strategy
- Non-mains Drainage Assessment
- Green Infrastructure Assessment
- Tree Protection Plan
- Tree Report
- Pre-Application Consultation ('PAC') Report
- Design & Access Statement
- Heritage Impact Assessment
- Transport Statement
- Project Concept Statement
- Planning Statement

All plans / documents submitted in respect of this application can be viewed on the [Council's online register](#).

NEGOTIATIONS

Improvements were negotiated to electric vehicle parking and cycle parking provision.

PLANNING HISTORY

The application site has an extensive planning history, the following being the most recent/relevant to the current application: -

- | | | |
|--------------|--|-----------------------|
| • P2023/0659 | Demolition of existing visitor centre and construction of new 2 storey visitor centre including new balustrades, sprinkler tank, external lighting of pedestrian routes from existing car park and associated landscaping and drainage works | Approved 21.03.2024 |
| • P2024/0145 | Construction of new timber footbridge across existing watercourse to connect Gnoll Park with Brynau Woods | Approved 18.04.2024 |
| • P2024/0014 | Temporary modular cafe and toilets facility with enclosed external seating area (for a maximum of 12 months) | Withdrawn 12.02.2024 |
| • P2023/0789 | Creation of new visitor accommodation comprising the reinstatement and landscaping of former kitchen gardens, reconstruction of former potting sheds to provide a new office/reception and 2 no. self-catering holiday units, construction of 14 no. new holiday cabins, a welfare/laundry building, replacement workshop/machinery store and new parking area within pumphouse service yard | Pending consideration |
| • P2023/0732 | Consolidation and repair works to Gnoll House ruins and creation of education interpretation centre in Gnoll House cellars | Pending consideration |
| • P2023/0676 | Proposed single storey rear extension and change of use of Pond Cottage to form a tea room/cafe (A3 use). | Approved 18.04.2024 |

• P2022/1055	Installation of 8m high multi play tower/equipment (to replace existing play apparatus/thick climbing unit)	Approved 01.02.2023
• P2017/0312	Extension to existing children`s playground	Approved 20.06.2017
• P1997/0491	Renovations and improvements to Pond Cottage	Permitted Development 13.06.1997
• N1993/0535	Visitor Centre	Approved 06.12.1993
• N1993/0394	De-silting first, fish and guinea ponds, and watercourse. New road and car park, visitor centre, playground, golf course	Approved 25.10.1993

CONSULTATIONS

Highways: No objection subject to the provision of pedestrian visibility splays, signage for the proposed one-way system and a revised CEMP.

Drainage: No objection. SAB approval required.

Active Travel Officer: No objection subject to the existing path next to the disabled spaces being widened to a minimum 1.8m to be active travel compliant.

Contaminated Land: Please include standard contamination conditions so that land characteristics and contamination can be assessed.

Biodiversity: No objection subject to securing a Woodland Management Plan.

Tree Officer: No objection. A proportion of replanting should address succession planting of the specimen trees that currently exist within the Gnoll grounds to dominate the skyline for future generations.

PRoW Officer: No RoWs affected.

Cadw: No objection.

GGAT: Requires archaeological mitigation and imposition of condition similar to model condition 24 of WG Circular 016/2014.

DOCO: Recommend a number of security design features including signage, lighting and CCTV.

DCWW: No objection.

NRW: No objection subject to a revised CEMP being submitted.

The Coal Authority: Low Risk Area. No comments.

Historic Garden Society: No reply received.

REPRESENTATIONS

Local Ward Members and Neath Town Council were notified on 5 March 2024.

The neighbouring properties were consulted on 6 March 2024.

A site notice was also displayed on 7 March 2024.

In response, to date no representations have been received.

REPORT

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy:

In accordance with the statutory requirements of **Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** (as amended), *“in considering whether to grant planning permission for development ... the local planning authority ... shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the [listed] building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”*.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 places a duty on the Council to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet its sustainable development (or wellbeing) objectives. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the “sustainable development principle”, as set out in the 2015 Act. In reaching the recommendation set out below, the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 enhances the protection and sustainable management of the wider historic environment for the cultural, social, economic and environmental benefit of future generations.

The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 makes walking and cycling the preferred option for shorter journeys, particularly everyday journeys, such as to and from a workplace or shops and services.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places a duty on the Council to maintain and enhance biodiversity, promote the resilience of ecosystems and increase their ability to adapt to events such as the impacts of climate change.

Cadw Guidance – Managing Change to Registered Historic Parks and Gardens in Wales is best-practice guidance produced in order to provide general advice when changes are proposed to impact upon a registered historic park and garden. Section 2.2 it states that *“it is important to consider the impact of your proposals for change on the significance of your registered historic park or garden before you begin work. In particular, you should beware of the potential cumulative impact of small-scale changes, which individually may seem insignificant.”*

Within the document, the following advice is provided:

- **Setting** - *When considering change, you should take a holistic approach to understanding its potential impact on setting. The impact of change on any one element may have unintended consequences for the setting if it is not properly considered.*
- **Views** - *Over time, views can be lost or compromised. This may result from inappropriate planting, incongruous development, or from lack of maintenance which has allowed vegetation to grow and obscure the intended view. Once you have identified the contribution of views to the significance of your registered historic park or garden, you may be able to open up and manage intended views which will enhance the site’s historic character and heritage value, as well as your appreciation of it.*
- **Archaeology** - *Significant archaeological features may be present in a historic park and garden; they may be undesignated or as yet undiscovered. When considering change that may impact on archaeological features you should contact your local planning authority’s archaeological advisors for advice.*
- **Layout** - *It is important that you understand the significant elements of the historic layout of your registered historic park or garden and interpret their evolution. This will help you to make informed and sympathetic management decisions without compromising its historic significance.*
- **Entrances and Routes** - *Wherever possible, you should keep historic circulation routes open. Information in the register entry and historic map research can help you to understand which routes are significant. If possible, you should avoid creating additional routes which subdivide parkland or alter the historic layout. If a new route is unavoidable or highly desirable, you should give it careful consideration to ensure minimal adverse impact on your registered historic park or garden. If additional routes are required, consider opportunities to open up former historic drives and tracks through the site.*
- **Historic Boundary Features** - *You should retain historic boundary features where possible and your repairs should use traditional materials and methods. Where possible, avoid additional permanent boundaries in open parkland because they fragment the landscape physically and visually, and alter the historic layout. It is also important to consider the function of the boundary.*

- **Garden Building and Ornaments** - *Built structures are often vulnerable to damage, decay and neglect. Routine management and maintenance are important to ensure longevity. Your repairs should use sympathetic materials and techniques. They need to be informed by an understanding of the historic structure and its condition. It is advisable to seek advice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional before repairing historic structures.*
- **Water Features** - *Like other historic features in your registered historic park or garden, it is essential to understand the significance of water features and associated water management structures before making changes to them.*
- **Planting** - *Registration does not place any restrictions on planting layout and choice of plants; however, understanding the significance of the planting in your registered historic park or garden can help you to manage it and enhance historic character.*

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 is the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. The development plan sets out a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and wellbeing of our communities.

The following policies are of particular relevance to the assessment of this application:

Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking

Policy 8 - Flooding

Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure

Policy 12 – Regional Connectivity

Policy 13 - Supporting Digital Communications

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) outlines the Welsh Government's commitment to the importance of 'places' and 'place-making', the importance of using previously developed land wherever possible in preference to greenfield sites, and the recognition of the health and wellbeing related benefits by creating a sense of place and improving social cohesion. PPW 12 confirms that the environmental components of places are intrinsically linked to the quality of the built and natural environment and contribute to the health and wellbeing of the people who live, work and play there. It emphasises the importance of creating sustainable communities and reducing reliance on the private car as part of a package of measures to reduce the country's carbon footprint and help tackle the climate emergency.

In addition the PPW 12 requirements for addressing the nature emergency through the planning system must be considered within any proposals. This is detailed later in the 'biodiversity' section of this response.

PPW 12 is supported by a series of more detailed [Technical Advice Notes](#) (TANs), of which the following are of relevance: -

- Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning
- Technical Advice Note 12: Design
- Technical Advice Note 13: Tourism
- Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk
- Technical Advice Note 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space
- Technical Advice Note 18: Transport
- Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development
- Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment

The Placemaking Charter, of which Neath Port Talbot Council are a signatory sets out the following principles:

People and community

The local community are involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and well-being of all people are considered at the outset. Proposals are shaped to help to meet these needs as well as create, integrate, protect and/or enhance a sense of community and promote equality.

Location

Places grow and develop in a way that uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and is well connected. The location of housing, employment and leisure and other facilities are planned to help reduce the need to travel.

Movement

Walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and avoid dependence on private vehicles. Well designed and safe active travel routes connect to the wider active travel and public transport network and public transport stations and stops are positively integrated.

Mix of uses

Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport. Development density and a mix of uses and tenures helps to support a diverse community and vibrant public realm.

Public realm

Streets and public spaces are well defined, welcoming, safe and inclusive with a distinct identity. They are designed to be robust and adaptable with landscape, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage well integrated. They are well connected to existing places and promote opportunities for social interaction and a range of activities for all people.

Identity

The positive, distinctive qualities of existing places are valued and respected. The unique features and opportunities of a location including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes are identified and responded to.

The proposed development will need to address all of the above placemaking principles and the objectives for good design. How your proposals address all of these principles will be required as part of any Planning statement/ design and access statement submitted with your application. Your application will be assessed against these principles as they are key to ensuring that development positively contributes towards building sustainable places that support active and healthy lives.

Local Planning Policies

The Local Development Plan for the area comprises the [Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan](#) which was adopted in January 2016, and within which the following policies are of relevance:

Strategic Policies

- **Policy SP1** Climate Change
- **Policy SP2** Health
- **Policy SP3** Sustainable Communities
- **Policy SP4** Infrastructure
- **Policy SP5** Development in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area
- **Policy SP10** Open Space
- **Policy SP13** Tourism
- **Policy SP14** The Countryside and the Undeveloped Coast
- **Policy SP15** Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- **Policy SP16** Environmental Protection
- **Policy SP17** Minerals
- **Policy SP18** Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- **Policy SP19** Waste Management
- **Policy SP20** Transport Network
- **Policy SP21/4(b)** Built Environment and Historic Heritage

Topic Based Policy

- **Policy SC1** Settlement limits
- **Policy SC2** Protection of Existing Community Facilities
- **Policy I1** Infrastructure Requirements
- **Policy T01** Tourism Development in the Countryside
- **Policy EN3/3** Green Wedges
- **Policy EN6** Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity sites
- **Policy EN7** Important Natural Features
- **Policy EN8** Pollution and Land Stability
- **Policy M1** Development in Mineral Safeguarding Areas
- **Policy M2/1** Surface Coal Operations
- **Policy RE2** Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Development
- **Policy TR2** Design and Access of New development

- **Policy W3** Waste Management in New Development
- **Policy BE1** Design

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

The following SPG is of relevance to this application: -

- [Parking Standards](#) (October 2016)
- [Pollution](#) (October 2016)
- [Open Space & Greenspace](#) (July 2017)
- [Renewable and Low Carbon Energy](#) (July 2017)
- [Design](#) (July 2017)
- [Biodiversity and Geodiversity](#) (May 2018)
- [The Historic Environment](#) (April 2019)

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening

Whilst the wider application site exceeds the Schedule 2 threshold for development of this nature, as outlined within the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, the extent of the development area in this particular application does not. As such the application has not been screened in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 3 of the Regulations.

The proposed development is not located within a zone of influence for any Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Candidate Special Area of Conservation (CSAC) or Ramsar sites and as such it is considered that an Appropriate Assessment as set down within the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 is not required in this case.

Issues

Having regard to the above, the main issues to consider in this application relate to the principle of development, the impact on visual amenity and heritage assets, the impact on ecology, highways and drainage considerations.

Principle of Development

The site lies outside of settlement limits, as defined by LDP Policy SC1, where new development is strictly controlled. Policy SC1 lists 12 criteria for acceptable new development and in all cases requires that any new buildings must be located adjacent to existing buildings or settlements wherever possible and be of an appropriate scale and form.

Criteria 8 of Policy SC1 permits sustainable tourism proposals that are suitable in a countryside location. In this case, The Gnoll Country Park is an established tourism and recreation facility that serves both residents and visitors to NPT and the proposal is for a new footbridge to connect existing leisure routes and improve the visitor experience. Accordingly, the development is considered to be acceptable in principle and further policy context is provided LDP Policy T01 which states that Tourism proposals outside of settlement limits will only be permitted where all of the following criteria are satisfied:

'1. It is demonstrated that the proposal is viable and contributes towards the quality and economic sustainability of the tourism industry' – **The development is underpinned by a detailed LUF bid that sets out the qualitative and quantitative business case for the proposals.**

'2. It is demonstrated that either the proposal requires a countryside location or it could not be accommodated within an existing settlement' – **The application site is a countryside location and therefore improving the tourist offering has to be located here rather than within an existing settlement.**

'3. The proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the landscape, ecology, and cultural heritage and would not adversely impact upon the social, economic, environmental or residential amenity of the area' – **These impacts are considered in subsequent sections of this report; and**

'4. The proposal does not create unacceptable levels of vehicular traffic, cause a detriment to highway safety and access can be provided by a range of transport modes' – **These impacts are considered in subsequent sections of this report.**

The application site also lies within a designated Green Wedge and LDP Policy EN3/3 contains a presumption against inappropriate development which is defined within PPW 12, would otherwise prejudice the 'openness' of the Green Wedge and is broadly designed to prevent urban sprawl and a coalescence of settlements. Appropriate development within a Green Wedge includes opportunities for recreation and countryside access and accordingly the development is acceptable in principle as it is designed to improve tourism and recreation opportunities and, being carefully assimilated within the existing grounds/woodland setting, will not result in additional urban form.

Impact on Visual Amenity and Heritage Assets

The site is located within a Registered Historic Park and Garden. Policy SP21 states:

'Policy SP21 Built Environment and Historic Heritage

The built environment and historic heritage will, where appropriate, be conserved and enhanced through the following measures:

- 1. Encouraging high quality design standards in all development proposals;*
- 2. Protecting arterial gateways from intrusive and inappropriate development;*
- 3. Safeguarding features of historic and cultural importance;*

4. The identification of the following designated sites to enable their protection and where appropriate enhancement:

- (a) Landscapes of Historic Interest;*
- (b) Historic Parks and Gardens;*
- (c) Conservation Areas;*
- (d) Scheduled Ancient Monuments; and*
- (e) Listed Buildings and their curtilage.'*

The submitted Planning Statement provides an overview of the car park and facilities building proposals and clearly references and is informed by the Conservation Management Plan for The Gnoll itself, being sympathetic to its cultural importance, historic features and wider landscape setting. There will be no detrimental impact on the setting of any of the 3 listed buildings within the Park.

The proposals seek to improve visitor capacity within the Park and wider woodland setting, thereby enhancing the visitor experience and contributing to positive place-making objectives.

The car park extension was heavily scrutinised through the pre-application design process, with several locations proposed however the submitted option was considered to be the optimal choice as it reduced the need to expand into surrounding areas, forming a natural extension to the existing parking provision. Furthermore, the facilities building has been designed to blend in with its surroundings in order to have minimal impact upon the Registered Park and Garden. A dark green metal sheeting will be used to clad the building to assist its assimilation into the woodland setting.

Overall, the proposals are considered to be beneficial to the visual amenity and historic character of the registered historic park and garden and its many visitors. Cadw raise no objection to the proposed development, it having been amended to take account of concerns they expressed at pre-application stage.

Biodiversity / Ecology

As identified above, Policies EN6 and EN7 of the Local Development Plan will be of relevance insofar as there is a need to ensure any impacts on biodiversity/ natural features are appropriately assessed and, where applicable, mitigated.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 12 sets out that “planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. This means that development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and must provide a net benefit for biodiversity”. This policy and subsequent policies in Chapter 6 of PPW 12 respond to the Section 6 Duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The ecological assessment report submitted in support of the above application has identified no significant issues. Removal of a small number of individual trees and some existing vegetative clearance is required to accommodate the proposed development however this habitat loss is mitigated for, e.g. the proposed removal of 700m² of alder/goat willow scrub is being replaced with a proposed new 2100m² area of woodland that will be subject of an active woodland management plan. The application is accompanied by a Green Infrastructure Statement and biodiversity enhancements are proposed as part of this application and the wider project plans (see planning history for details) so that overall a biodiversity net gain is achieved in accordance with Future Wales Policy 9 and PPW 12 requirements. The Council's Ecologist raises no objection to the development as submitted.

Parking and Access Requirements and Impact on Highway Safety

The extension of the existing visitor car park is proposed to accommodate the increased visitor numbers that are expected as a consequence of the wider LUF project plans (see planning history for details). This includes provision of additional car parking, including disabled and electric vehicle charging spaces and cycle parking spaces.

The site lies in a sustainable location that can be accessed via bus. The nearest bus stop lies just before the main entry to the site along Fairyland. This stop is serviced by the 153 on a two hour basis, terminating at Neath bus station. Neath Train Station is less than a ten minute drive from the application site and receives a frequent service from both Transport for Wales and Great Western Railway. Running to the north of the site is national cycle route 47 which goes from Newport to Fishguard and forms part of the Celtic Trail West. A Transport Statement accompanies the application which concludes, given the availability of non-car modes of transport together with the existing traffic to/from the site, the impact of the forecast increase in trip generation that may be expected as a consequence of the proposed development on the access and local highways network are considered to be minimal.

The Council's Highways Officer raises no objection to the application, subject to conditions. The proposal is not considered to have any adverse impact on highway or pedestrian safety. The application is considered to be compliant with LDP Policy TR2 in this regard.

Drainage

The car park extension proposes a grasscrete/permeable surface rather than hardstanding/non-porous material. Surface water runoff is proposed to discharge via infiltration at the car park. Geotechnical soak away tests suggested good infiltration rates there. As shown on the submitted Drainage Layout plan, infiltration will take place at the base of permeable paving within both car park extension zones. Foul water drainage is not required in this area as stated in the Non-Mains Drainage Assessment.

The Council's Drainage Officer raises no objection to the application, and subject to separate SAB approval of the surface water drainage arrangements.

Section 106 Planning Obligations

Local Development Plan **Policy SP 4** (Infrastructure) states that "Developments will be expected to make efficient use of existing infrastructure and where required make adequate provision for new infrastructure, ensuring that there are no detrimental effects on the area and community. Where necessary, Planning Obligations will be sought to ensure that the effects of developments are fully addressed in order to make the development acceptable".

Policy II (Infrastructure Requirements) then states that "In addition to infrastructure improvements necessary to make a development acceptable in health, safety and amenity terms, additional works or funding may be required to ensure that, where appropriate, the impact of new development is mitigated. These requirements will include consideration of and appropriate provision for: Affordable housing; Open space and recreation facilities; Welsh language infrastructure (in language Sensitive Areas); Community facilities including community hubs; Biodiversity, environmental and conservation interests; Improving access to facilities and services including the provision of walking and cycling routes; Historic and built environment and public realm improvements; Community and public transport; Education and training.

In view of the type and form of development proposed in this location, having regard to local circumstances and needs arising from the development, no planning obligations are considered necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms and to meet the policy and legislative tests for planning obligations.

CONCLUSION

The decision to recommend planning permission has been taken in accordance with Section 38 of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires that, in determining a planning application the determination must be in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan comprises Future Wales - the National Plan 2040 and the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (2011–2026) adopted January 2016.

It is considered that the proposal represents an appropriate form of development that would have no unacceptable impact on heritage assets, the visual amenity of the area, ecology, highways and drainage considerations. Accordingly, the proposed development is in accordance with Policies T01, EN3, EN6, EN7, TR2 and BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

It is further considered that the decision complies with Future Wales - the National Plan 2040 and the Council's well-being objectives and the sustainable development principle in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

RECOMMENDATION

Approved

Subject to the following conditions/reasons, which have been imposed for the reasons stated:-

Time Limit Conditions

- 1 The development shall begin no later than five years from the date of this decision.

Reason:

To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

List of Approved Plans

- 2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Green Infrastructure Statement
GI Plan - Zone 05 Main Car Park and Service Yard
Updated Ground Conditions Assessment Report
Coal Mining Risk Assessment
Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment
Transport Statement
Non-Mains Drainage Assessment
Construction Environmental Management Plan
Ecological Assessment
Tree Surveys
Tree Protection Plan
Landscaping Plan
Soft Landscape Specification
Written Scheme of Investigation
Drainage Layout Plan
Drainage Strategy
Drainage Technical Note
PAC Report
Planning Statement
Lighting Plans
Project Context Statement
Design and Access Statement with Heritage Impact Assessment
Site Location Plans

2080-05-JUB-C-DR-00501-S2 - Drainage Layout Area 05 - Carpark
Proposed Car Park extensions - External Works Layout
Proposed Facilities Building Site Plan 2080-08-HIR-A-DR-00201-S2-P3
Proposed Facilities Building Location Plan 2080-08-HIR-A-DR-00200-S2-P6
Proposed Facilities Building Fire Appliance Tracking Plan 2080-08-JUB-C-DR-00720-S2-P1 Rev P1
Proposed Facilities Building 2080-08-HIR-A-DR-00310-S2-P3

Reason:
In the interests of clarity.

Pre-Commencement Conditions

- 3 Notwithstanding any other details which may be given in the Construction and Environmental Management Plan ('CEMP') hereby approved, no development shall commence, including any works of demolition, until an amended CEMP has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The statement shall provide for:
- (a) Construction methods: details of the extent and phasing of development; details for the storage and management of plant and materials used in constructing the development
 - (b) Drainage: Details of drainage measures during construction phases to ensure that the drainage of any adjoining land, and land downstream is not interrupted or otherwise adversely affected by the development. This should include drawings that highlight the methods to control surface water flows, and be site specific.
 - (c) General Site Management: details of the construction programme including timetable; details of site clearance; details for erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing.
 - (d) Responsible Persons: details of the persons and bodies responsible for activities associated with the CEMP and emergency contact details, the CEMP must also be signed by the responsible person.
 - (e) Traffic management: Internal traffic management scheme should be provided for once the materials are at site compound, and needing to be transported to the construction area. This is required to be discussed due to possible high volume of pedestrians within the park's grounds. The current proposed delivery route is unacceptable - this would be required to not use Harle Street as this is residential street, with little off street parking. Another route would need to be provided that uses Dyfed Road. The delivery times would need to be adjusted to ensure no deliveries during school pick up and drop off times - 8am to 9.30am and 2.30pm to 4pm.
 - (f) Discharge points for temporary wheel washing areas; and

(g) If the provision of a temporary lagoon is required, e.g. for dewatering excavations and silt settlement, the CEMP must carefully consider any proposed discharge from the lagoon.

Reason:

In the interest of highway and pedestrian safety, the environment, and the amenity of residents, and to ensure accordance with Policies BE1 and TR2 of the adopted Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

Action Conditions

- 4 No surface water and/or land drainage shall be allowed to connect directly or indirectly with the public sewerage network.

Reason:

To prevent hydraulic overloading of the public sewerage system, to protect the health and safety of existing residents and ensure no pollution of or detriment to the environment.

- 5 The programme of work must be carried out fully in accordance with the requirements and standards of the Written Scheme of Investigation: Project No: FS23-010 hereby approved including the historic environment mitigation measures. The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to any archaeologist nominated by the Local Planning Authority and shall allow him/her to observe the excavations and record items of interest and finds.

Reason:

To identify and record any features of archaeological interest discovered during the works, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource and comply with Policy SP21 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan..

- 6 In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified, work on site shall cease immediately and shall be reported in writing to the Local Planning Authority. A Desk Study, Site Investigation, Risk Assessment and where necessary a Remediation Strategy must be undertaken in accordance with the following document:- Land Contamination: A Guide for Developers (WLGA, WAG & EAW, July 2006). This document shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Prior to occupation of the development, a verification report which demonstrates the effectiveness of the agreed remediation, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:

To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other off site receptors, and to ensure compliance with Policies SP16 and EN8 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

- 7 The biodiversity enhancement(s) as set out in the Green Infrastructure Plan - Zone 05 Main Car Park and Service Yard - hereby approved, shall be fully implemented on site in accordance with the approved details prior to the first beneficial use of the development and thereafter maintained in perpetuity.

Reason:

In the interest of biodiversity, and to mitigate to loss of bird nesting/foraging habitats and to accord with Policy 9 of Future Wales and Policy SP15 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

- 8 All works are to be carried out in line with the Tree Survey Reports hereby approved. All the trees/hedges shown on the approved plans to be retained and/or any trees whose canopies overhang the site shall be protected by strong fencing which must be erected prior to the start of any works and all working practises followed in accordance with BS5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations' which must be followed throughout all phases of this development.

The protective fencing shall be erected before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought onto the site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed within any fenced area, and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:

To ensure all existing trees are protected throughout the construction of the development, in the interest of visual amenity, and to ensure the development complies with Policy BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

- 9 Prior to the first beneficial use of the development hereby approved, a woodland management and maintenance plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved woodland management plan shall be implemented and adhered to in accordance with the approved details thereafter.

Reason:

In the interest of visual amenity, to ensure the long term management and maintenance of all landscaped areas and to ensure the development complies with Policies SP15 and BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

- 10 Prior to the development being brought into beneficial use, the existing footway that runs along the boundary of the proposed disabled parking bays shown on the plans hereby approved, shall be widened to 1.8m to comply with Active Travel design requirements. Directional signage for vehicles and pedestrians shall be provided in accordance with details to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to installation.

Reason:

In the interest of highway and pedestrian safety and to ensure the development complies with Policy TR2 of the Adopted Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

- 11 Pedestrian vision splays of 2.4 metres by 2.4 metres (measured back from back of footway) shall be maintained each side of each vehicular access within which nothing over 600mm in height shall be erected or allowed to grow and shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason:

In the in interest of highway and pedestrian safety and to ensure compliance with Policy TR2 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

Case Officer	Claire Hall
Telephone No.	01639 686727
Date of Recommendation	17th May 2024