



Planning Services
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
The Quay
Brunel Way
Baglan Energy Park
Neath
SA11 2GG

26th April 2023

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Full Planning Application for the Erection of an Outbuilding to Store Poultry, Farm Equipment, Hay and 2x Biomass Boilers
Dream Fields, Llandarcy, Neath, SA10 6JU**

This covering letter has been prepared by Simply Planning Limited ('SPL') on behalf of our client, Mr Jonathan Hale, and is submitted in support of a planning application for the erection of an outbuilding to store farm equipment and hay, and house 2x biomass boilers to serve the existing properties at Dream Fields, Llandarcy, Neath, SA10 6JU.

The full description of development is as follows:

"The erection of an outbuilding to store farm equipment and hay, house poultry and 2x biomass boilers, and associated ancillary works"

In support of this full planning application, the following plans and documents are submitted for consideration by the Local Planning Authority;

- Covering Planning Letter, prepared by Simply Planning Ltd;
- Architectural Plans and Drawings, prepared by Chamberlain King Moss, consisting of as follows:

Document Title	Document Reference
Site Location Plan	N395-A04 Rev D
Proposed Site Plan	N395-A05 Rev D
Proposed Elevations and Floorplan	N395-A06 Rev C

The planning application fee of £460 will be paid to the Local Planning Authority upon submission of the application. Once the fee has been received, we consider that all the local and national validation checklist requirements will have been met and the application can be validated accordingly.

Site Context and Planning Background

This application relates to the site of Dream Fields, Llandarcy, located on the western side of the of the B4290. The nearest settlement is Jersey Marine, which is located approximately 800m southwest of the application site, whilst Briton Ferry is located approximately 1.8km east.



Approximate Site Location

The property has recently changed names and was formerly known as Gelli Bwch Farm. The site was purchased by our client, Mr Jonathan Hale, in January 2022. The subject of this planning application does not relate to all of the land contained within the wider site, but focuses on an area closely related to the existing cluster of buildings on the land, situated just northwest of these buildings. The proposed outbuilding is located on vacant land, adjacent to an existing track. The existing cluster of buildings on the site consist of a terrace of three farmhouses and a number of stone agricultural buildings, in varying degrees of condition.

Statutory and Policy Constraints

A review of the Neath Port Talbot LDP Interactive Mapping shows that the site is located outside any settlement boundary. The application site is located within the designated Green Wedge and an area for Safeguarded Minerals. Whilst not located within a site of ecological protection, Crymlyn Bog, a designated Special Area of Conservation, Site of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserve, is located approximately 540m south. There are no further policy designations upon the application site.

There are no buildings of designated heritage value on the site, however, Gelli Bwch Round Cairn is located approximately 350m southeast and Llandarcy Round Cairn is located approximately 310m north. Both Cairns are designated scheduled monuments. The application site is located within Flood Zone A which is considered to be at little or no risk of fluvial or coastal / tidal flooding. The site is located within a coal mine reporting area, however it is not within an area of development high risk.

Planning History

A planning history search undertaken via the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council website shows no historic planning applications at the site. The wider site owned by the client has been subject to a number of planning applications however. The most recent planning history on the wider site was a *“Request for Screening opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 for a proposed ground mounted solar PV array with a generating capacity of up to 1.41 MW”*. Prior to this, the most recent application was a *“Request for EIA screening opinion for the erection of a wind turbine with height of 79.6m*

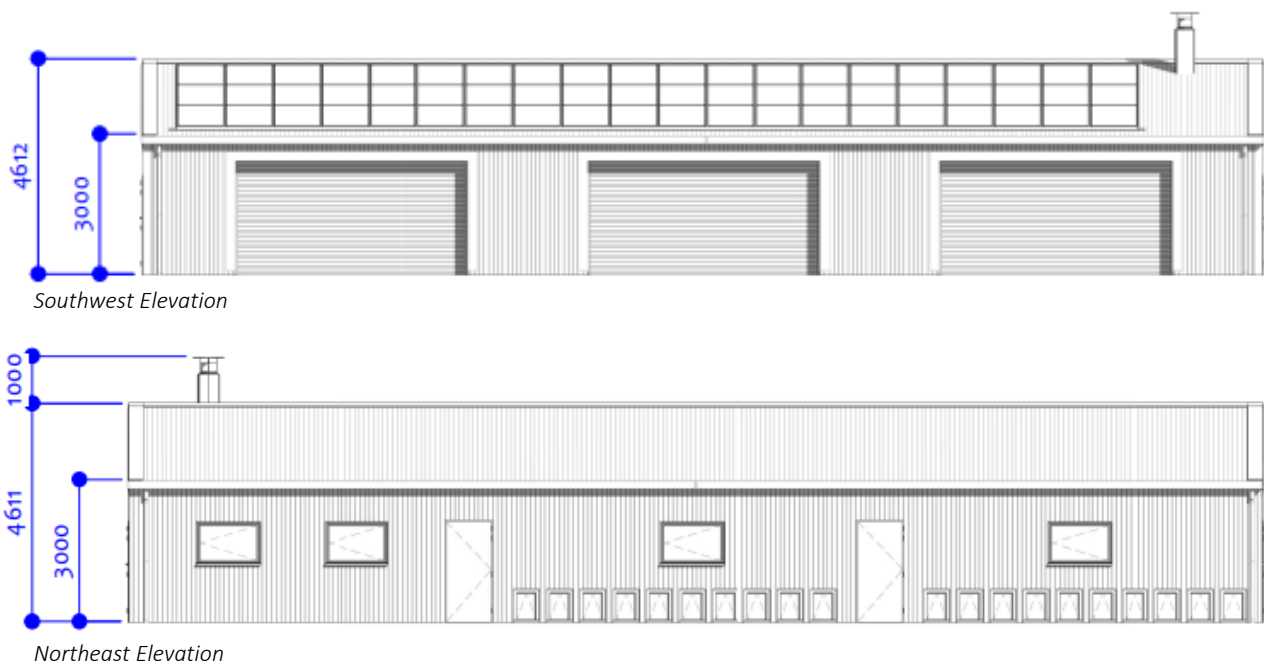
to tip". Both applications were considered not Environmental Impact Assessment applicable development and were decided on 5th January 2023 and 28th October 2013 respectively.

Planning Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
N1982/0083	Dwelling for agricultural worker	Refused	15 th February 1982
N1985/0045	Conservation of outbuilding to living accommodation	Granted	19 th February 1985
N1985/0241	Amendment of Planning Approval 85/0045/003 for conversion and extension of outbuilding to living accommodation	Granted	3 rd June 1985
N1985/0600	Installation of Septic Tank to serve proposed Granny Flat Extension	Granted	18 th November 1985
N1995/0531	New farmhouse to replace existing	Refused	8 th January 1996
P2001/0527	Erection of stables (12 No boxes) and store for use of public	Granted	24 th July 2001
P2013/0894	Request for EIA screening opinion for the erection of a wind turbine with height of 79.6m to tip	Not EIA Development	28 th October 2013
P2022/1050	Request for Screening opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 for a proposed ground mounted solar PV array with a generating capacity of up to 1.41 MW	Not EIA Development	5 th January 2023

There have been no other applications upon the wider site within this Plan period, whilst local and national policy has also been superseded since their determination. As such, any other historic applications are not considered to be material to this planning application.

The Proposed Development

This application seeks planning permission for an outbuilding to store farm equipment and hay, and house poultry and 2x biomass boilers. The proposed outbuilding is located to the northwest of the existing cluster of farm buildings, along the existing farm track. The building would be single storey, measuring 3m from ground to the eaves, and 4.6m from ground to the ridge. The proposed building would have a footprint of 12m x 24m. The southwest elevation features 3 large entrances, suitable for providing access to the farm equipment and hay storage. The northeast elevation features two pedestrian entrances and 4 windows to provide light into the biomass boiler area and coop part of the property. Solar panels are proposed on the southwestern facing roof.



The side elevations will also feature doors for pedestrian access and an additional window on each elevation. “Pop” doors are proposed at low level on the northeastern elevation, for use by the poultry. The external materials proposed are green metal sheeting for both the roof and walls. Timber composite will be used for windows.

The scheme is necessary as the farming operation of the site is to be intensified and expanded, therefore, there is need for the storage of additional farm equipment. The need for further storage space for hay is also required as a result of the increased farming operation. In addition, the existing LPG boilers service the residential properties, and heating systems as a whole, are of some age and in poor condition. They therefore need to be replaced. The applicant wishes to switch to a more environmentally sustainable fuel to reduce carbon emissions. Biomass boilers also run at a much lower cost than oil boilers. There are currently no buildings on the site appropriate to house biomass boilers or act as a coop.

The building is designed to store farming equipment and hay on the southwest part, whilst the boilers will be housed on the northeastern part. The remaining space is to be used as a coop for the poultry.

The wider site benefits from other barns which are used for the agricultural operation of the land. Due to the close proximity of these barns to the existing dwellings, they are not suitable for housing the biomass boilers as the deliveries of the fuel would be very disruptive and the design of the barns is not compatible with modern boilers. The barns are also not suitable for storing the fuel, as they would require a large industrial-sized door to unload the fuel deliveries. Therefore, to meet these requirements a new barn is required on the site.

Key Material Considerations

The application site falls within the boundaries of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and so the Development Plan for the determination of any future planning applications at the site would be Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (adopted February 2021) and the ‘Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan 2011-2026’ (‘LDP’). Also of relevance is national planning guidance, Planning Policy Wales 11 (‘PPW11’) and the Technical Advice Notes.

After reviewing the above Planning Policy context, we consider the key material considerations to be as follows:

- Principle of Development;
- Green Wedge and Mineral Safeguarding Designation; and
- Landscape & Design.

The proposed development is assessed against the identified local and national planning policies below.

Principle of Development

Strategic Policy SP1 (Climate Change) sets out a number of ways that the causes and consequences of climate change will be addressed. Of most relevance to the proposed scheme is, in relation to the causes of climate change, provision will be made for the County Borough's appropriate contribution to renewable and low carbon energy generation.

Policy SC1 (Settlement Limits) states that outside settlement limits, development will only be permitted under set circumstances. Of most relevance to this proposal is development that is associated with agriculture and energy generation.

The proposed scheme is for an outbuilding to store 2x biomass boilers, farm equipment and hay. Solar panels are also included on the southwestern roof slope. This is an agriculture and energy generating development, in accordance with Policy SC1 of the LDP. The proposals would result in a much more efficient heating system than the current LPG heating system and therefore, the emissions produced will be greatly reduced from the existing system. It is estimated that biomass boilers produce 50% of the emissions of their LPG counterparts, whilst solar panels do not emit emissions at all. Therefore, the scheme is in compliance with LDP Policy SP1. Biomass boilers and solar panels are also much more cost effective to run than oil boilers.

Policy RE1 (Criteria for the Assessment of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development) states that states that proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development will only be permitted subject to a number of criteria. Of most relevance is the requirement of all renewable energy or low carbon energy development proposals to demonstrate that:

- (a) Measures have been taken to minimise impacts on visual amenity and the natural environment; and
- (b) There will be no unacceptable impacts on residential amenity.

The proposed outbuilding has been located in an area where the visual amenity is most protected. The location is surrounded by trees, which screen short and long range views of the application site. In addition, it has been located sufficient distance from the existing dwellings to prevent unacceptable impacts on residential amenity, especially when the fuel is being delivered and taking into account the movements of farm vehicles which are to be stored there.

Therefore, the principle of erecting an outbuilding to house 2x biomass boilers and poultry, and store farm equipment and hay in this location is acceptable, in compliance with Policies SP1, SC1 and RE1 of the LDP.

Green Wedge and Mineral Safeguarding

Policy EN3 (Green Wedges) designates the application site as part of a Green Wedge, which is designed to prevent the coalescence of Crymlyn Bog, Crymlyn Burrows and Llandarcy. Within the Green Wedge, there is a presumption against inappropriate development. PPW 11 paragraph 3.75 sets out when development should not be considered inappropriate within the Green Belt. This includes:

- Justified rural enterprise needs;
- Essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, cemeteries, and other uses of land which maintain the openness of the Green Belt or green wedge and which do not conflict with the purpose of including land within it;
- Limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings; or
- Small scale diversification within farm complexes where this is run as part of the farm business.

The outbuilding is proposed to service the existing rural enterprise, the farming operation of the land. In addition, it is an extension of the existing dwellings, as the biomass boilers will serve these properties. The raising of poultry represents a diversification of the existing farm business. The proposed scheme is therefore considered to be appropriate development within the Green Wedge, as it meets the criteria set out in paragraph 3.75 of PPW.

Policy M1 (Development in Mineral Safeguarding Areas) states that development proposals within mineral safeguarding areas will only be permitted if they meet any of the set criteria. Of most relevance to this application is the overriding need for the development; and the scale and location of the development would have no significant impact on the possible working of the resource.

There is an overriding need for the storage space for the vehicles and hay, or this would prevent the expansion of the existing business. In addition, the proposed location of the property in close proximity to the existing cluster of farm buildings means that mineral working would not be possible in this location. As such, the scheme would have no impact on the possible working of the resource.

The above shows that the proposed scheme would constitute appropriate development within the Green Belt and is acceptable within a Mineral Safeguarding Area. The proposals therefore comply with Policies EN3 and M1 of the LDP and the relevant paragraphs of PPW 11.

Landscape & Design

Policy BE1 of the LDP relates to 'Design' and this states that all development proposals will be expected to demonstrate high quality design which fully takes into account the natural, historic and built environmental context and contributes to the creation of attractive, sustainable places. In order to achieve this, it provides criteria to be met. Of most relevance to this scheme are the following:

- It complements and enhances the character and appearance of the site, building or area in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing and elevation treatment;
- It respects the context of the site and its place within the local landscape, including its impact on the important arterial gateways into the County Borough, its effects on townscape and the local historic and cultural heritage and it takes account of the site topography and prominent skylines or ridges; and

- It utilises materials appropriate to its surroundings and incorporates hard and soft landscaping and screening where appropriate.

The proposed development is small in scale and so is unlikely to have any significant impact upon long or short range views into the site. The development will be single storey, and the ridge line measures 4.6m in height. The location of the proposed development ensures that it is screened from long range views via the natural foliage which surrounds it, in particular the large trees present. The site is on near level topography as the existing cluster of farm buildings, to ensure that it will be seen in this context, and not be more visible than the existing buildings on the site. The materiality chosen is typical of farm buildings and is coloured green to blend the building into its rural setting. The decision to position the outbuilding, set slightly away from the existing cluster of buildings, was taken so that residential amenity can be protected, when taking into account the noise generated by the poultry, delivery of pellets for the boilers and the traversal of the farm equipment. It is considered that the erection of a single building to adequately address each of these needs, would be of lower landscape impact than erecting a new building for each purpose.

As such, siting, appearance, scale, height, massing and elevation treatment has been considered from the outset of the project and the proposed building compliments and enhances the character and appearance of the site. The existing soft landscaping screens the site and the building utilises materials appropriate to the surroundings and the use of the land. The application complies with all relevant criteria of Policy BE1 and should be considered acceptable on landscape and design grounds.

Summary and Conclusions

In accordance with Section 38(6) of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant development plan for the area is the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan 2011-2026 (LDP).

The proposed scheme will allow for the supply of biomass boilers and the siting of solar panels, which are a carbon zero developments. The outbuilding will also be used for the storage of farming equipment and hay, as a result of the intensification of the farming operation on the site. The housing of poultry allows for the diversification of the existing farm business. Therefore, the proposals are for sustainable energy generation and agriculture purposes, in compliance with LDP Policy SC1 (Settlement Limits) and the erection of an outbuilding for these purposes outside of existing settlement limits is acceptable in principle.

The carbon neutral energy generation will result in considerably lower emissions than the existing LPG boilers present on the site. The outbuilding has been located sufficient distance from the existing dwellings to ensure that there will be no harm to residential amenity, however its siting ensures that it will be seen as part of the existing cluster of buildings from the public realm. Therefore, the scheme meets the requirements of LDP Policy RE1 (Criteria for the Assessment of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development).

The outbuilding will be used to store farm equipment and hay and as such is a justified rural enterprise need. The biomass boiler will also serve the existing dwellings on the site, therefore should be seen as the limited extension of existing dwellings. The housing of poultry represents diversification of the existing farming operation. These uses constitute appropriate development within the Green Wedge and are acceptable, as set out within paragraph 3.75 of PPW 11 and Policy EN3 (Green Wedges) of the NPT LDP.



The property has been designed to limit its landscape impact by situating it close to the existing cluster of buildings and using the existing vegetation to screen it from long range views. The outbuilding will use materials prevalent in the locality and that are traditional on farmland. This ensures that the outbuilding will conserve and enhance the local context and comply with Policy BE1 (Design) of the NPT LDP.

The proposals consist of development which is appropriate and acceptable within the Green Wedge and outside the settlement boundary. There will be negligible landscape impact and the scheme will make a small contribution towards lowering the emissions generated within the Local Authority. The proposed scheme is consistent with all relevant local and national policies. Therefore, we consider that planning permission can be granted for the erection of an outbuilding at the application site.

Yours faithfully,



Josh Downey

Senior Planner

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