

OFFICER REPORT

Application Number: P2025/0143

Site Address: Dream Fields Llandarcy Neath Port Talbot SA10 6JU

Proposal: Agricultural barn for storage of agricultural machinery and hay.

Applicant: Mr Jonathan Hale

Agent: Mr Alex Smith

Ward: Coedffranc West

Application Type: Prior Notification Agricultural

Valid Date: 13th March 2025

Statutory Expiry Date: 9th April 2025

Ext. of Time / PPA date:

Publicity Expiry Date: 4th April 2025

RECOMMENDATION - Prior Notification Approval Required and Refused

PRIOR NOTIFICATION AGRICULTURE

SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site comprises part of a wider land holding formerly known as Gelli- Bwch Farm, now known as Dreamfields, and comprising approximately 129 acres (52ha) of agricultural land, a farmhouse and associated buildings located on the western side of the of the B4290 in Llandarcy. The settlement of Jersey Marine is located approximately 800m southwest of the application site, and Briton Ferry is located approximately 1.8km to the east. Main vehicular access to the site is obtained from the B4290 on the eastern side of the site, with secondary field accesses located off the unclassified highway on the western side near to Llandarcy village.

The application site itself lies approximately 25 metres to the northeast of the existing farmhouse in an area dominated by scrub, being south of Llandarcy village in open countryside with a north facing aspect. The site lies to the south of an existing ditch and wooded bank running along an existing access track to the main Llandarcy village road which is approximately 350 metres to the north.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

This is a prior notification application for a proposed barn to store machinery and hay. It has been submitted under Part 6 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended for Wales¹). Under Condition A.2 (2) the developer is required to apply to the Local Planning Authority to determine whether 'Prior Approval' for the siting, design and external appearance of the building is required.

The submission follows the dismissal of a planning appeal on 12 February 2025 for the construction of a new outbuilding to house poultry, farm equipment, hay, and 2 no. biomass boilers (ref. P2023/0182). Whilst the Inspector accepted there was a justified rural enterprise need for an agricultural outbuilding, the size and position of the proposed outbuilding was considered to harm the openness of the Green Wedge, noting in particular that:

'Whilst the proposed outbuilding would be of a modest height, its length and width would be out of keeping with the smaller footprints of the existing built form at the holding, which predominantly includes narrow barns and farmhouses. It would be sizeable resulting in a large-scale detached building positioned away from the main farmstead. As such, its visual relationship would be more strongly associated with the surrounding countryside and in this context, it would be an isolated and prominent feature', going on to conclude that 'I am not satisfied that the size, scale and form of the outbuilding as proposed is necessary or appropriate in this location' and *'would not comply with the siting and scale requirements of the [LDP SC1] policy.'*

The Local Planning Authority has 28 days in which to decide whether or not it is necessary for it to give its prior approval to the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed development. The 28 day determination period runs from the date of receipt of the written description of the proposed development by the planning authority. If the Local Planning Authority gives notice that prior approval is required, it will then have the normal 8 week period from the receipt of the submitted details to issue its decision, or such longer period as may be agreed in writing.

¹ By the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (Wales) (No. 2 Order) 2012 and the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 3) (Wales) Order 2020

PLANNING HISTORY

The application site has the following relevant planning history: -

Ref.	Description	Decision	Date
P2024/0352	Clearance works (removal of ash, oak, gorse and bramble) in an area of woodland protected by Llandarcy Village Conservation Area as part of a proposed National Grid upgrade to replace the existing 11kV overhead line with new underground cables (part retrospective).	Pending consideration	
P2023/0356	Proposed ground mounted solar PV array with a generating capacity of up to 1.3MW, including development of ancillary structures, fencing and landscaping works	Pending consideration	
P2023/0550	Widening and resurfacing of existing access and construction of new security gates, adjoining walls, piers and proposed bin storage area (part retrospective)	Pending consideration	
P2023/0182	Erection of new outbuilding to house poultry, farm equipment, hay, and 2 no. biomass boilers with solar panels on the roof	Refused	12.08.2024
		Appeal Dismissed	12.02.2025
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	EIA Screening Not Required	05.01.2023
P2013/0894	Request for a screening opinion under Regulation 5 of the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England & Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended) for the erection of a wind turbine with height of 79.6m to tip	EIA Screening Not Required	28.10.2013
P2001/0527	Erection of stables (12 no. boxes) and store for use of public	Approved	24.07.2001

2000/1036	Erection of stables (12 no. Boxes) and store for use of public (diversification of farm)	Refused	21.11.2000
N1995/0531	New farmhouse to replace existing	Refused	08.01.1996
N1985/0600	Installation of septic tank to serve proposed granny flat extension	Status not recorded	18.11.1985
N1985/0241	Amendments of planning approval 85/0045/03 for conversion and extension of outbuilding to living accommodation	Approved	03.06.1985
N1985/0045	Conversion of outbuildings to living accommodation	Approved	19.02.1985
N1982/0083	Dwelling for agricultural worker	Refused	14.04.1982

CONSULTATIONS

Biodiversity: No comments.

Highways: No reply received.

Drainage: No reply received.

DCWW: No comments.

NRW: Concerns expressed over discrepancies in the information provided. Significant effect on the SAC, SSSI and Ramsar site cannot be ruled out.

REPRESENTATIONS

The Ward Councillors and Coedffranc Town Council were notified on 14 March 2025.

In response, to date no representations have been received.

POLICY

National Planning Policy

[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.

[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.

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

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 6 Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (July 2010):

'A3. Planning authorities should use the determination procedure to verify that the intended development does benefit from permitted development rights, and does not require a planning application. There is no scope to extend the 28 day determination period, nor should the discretionary second stage concerning the approval of certain details be triggered for irrelevant reasons. A planning authority will therefore need to take a view during the initial stage as to whether Part 6 rights apply.'

'A4. Provided all the GPDO requirements are met, the principle of whether the development should be permitted is not for consideration. Only in cases where the authority considers that a specific proposal is likely to have a significant impact on its surroundings would the Welsh Assembly Government consider it necessary for the authority to require the formal submission of details for approval. By no means all the development proposals notified to authorities under the GPDO will have such an impact.'

'A7. When details are submitted for approval under the terms of the GPDO, the objective should be to consider the effect of the development upon the landscape in terms of visual amenity, as well as the desirability of preserving ancient monuments and their settings, archaeological sites, listed buildings and their settings, and sites of recognised nature conservation value. Details should be regarded in much the same light as applications for approval of reserved matters following the grant of outline planning permission. In operating these controls, planning authorities should always have full regard to the operational needs of the agricultural and forestry industries and to the need to avoid imposing any unnecessary or excessively costly requirements. Long term conservation objectives will often be served best by ensuring that the rural economy, including farming and forestry which are prominent in the rural landscape, is able to function successfully.'

‘A8. Subject to the normal criteria governing the use of conditions in planning permission, conditions may be imposed when approval is given. Developers required to submit details for approval will have the right of appeal to Welsh Ministers if approval is refused or is granted subject to conditions with which they disagree, or if notice of a decision on the details submitted is not given within the period for a decision (normally 8 weeks). There is no right of appeal against the decision of a planning authority to require approval of details. No compensation is payable under Section 108 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 if approval of submitted details is withheld by the planning authority.’

Local Planning Policy

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 SP3 Sustainable Communities
- Policy SP14 The Countryside and the Undeveloped Coast

Topic Based Policies

- Policy SC1 Settlement limits
- Policy EN3 Green Wedges
- Policy EN6 Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites
- Policy EN7 Important Natural Features
- Policy BE1 Design

REPORT

Assessment: siting, design and external appearance of the proposed building

The very recent appeal decision is considered to be material to the assessment of this prior notification application. The appeal Inspector accepted there was a need for a *‘suitably sized outbuilding to house large-scale agricultural machinery’* but did not accept the proposed size, siting or appearance of the outbuilding proposed, commenting that *‘its length and width would be out of keeping with the smaller footprints of the existing built form at the holding’* and *‘it would be sizeable, resulting in a large-*

scale detached building positioned away from the main farmstead....and, in this context, it would be an isolated and prominent feature.'

The current submission proposes to reduce the footprint of the proposed building and site it closer to the existing group of farm buildings, in an effort to address the Inspector's concerns.

Given the appeal Inspector's comments, it is evident that careful consideration needs to be given to a new building in this location. The site is located within a sensitive landscape, outside of settlement limits, and within the open countryside. It also forms part of a Green Wedge. Prior approval is therefore required in order that the impact of any proposed building can be carefully assessed. The current proposal has still not fully addressed the Inspector's comments, particularly with regard to siting, design and external appearance, in this regard. Therefore the recommendation is to require prior approval and to refuse the details as currently submitted.

CONCLUSION

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed development, by virtue of its siting, design and external appearance, would be harmful to the visual amenity of the wider landscape to the detriment of its rural character and appearance and the openness of the Green Wedge. The development is therefore contrary to Policies SP3, SP14, SC1, EN3 and BE1 of the Adopted Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan such that prior approval is required and hereby refused.

RECOMMENDATION

Prior Notification Approval Required and Refused

Subject to the following reasons:-

- 1 In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed development, by virtue of its siting, design and external appearance, would be harmful to the visual amenity of the wider landscape to the detriment of its rural character and appearance and the openness of the Green Wedge. The development is therefore contrary to Policies SP3, SP14, SC1, EN3 and BE1 of the Adopted Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan such that prior approval is required and hereby refused.

Case Officer	Claire Hall
Telephone No.	01639 686727
Date of Recommendation	4th April 2025