

15 August 2025

Attention: **Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council – Planning East Team**
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Civic Centre
Port Talbot
SA13 1PJ

SLR Project No.: 407.V13175.00WA1

RE: Application for Retrospective Planning Permission

**The retention of Video Assistant Referee Infrastructure comprising 1no. kiosk (Video Operations Room) and associated development.
The Renewable Centre Stadium, Old Road, Briton Ferry, SA11 2HA**

I would advise that Wardell Armstrong LLP part of SLR Consulting Ltd ('SLR') (the agent) has been instructed by the Football Association Wales (FAW, the applicant) to submit a retrospective planning application in respect of Video Assisted Referee (VAR) infrastructure and associated works that have taken place at Briton Ferry Llansawel AFC's stadium (The Renewable Centre Stadium), located at Old Road, Briton Ferry, SA11 2BS.



Plate 1 – Satellite image showing Briton Ferry Llansawel AFC's Stadium (centre)

Need for the Proposals

The Football Association Wales has recognised opportunities to strengthen, improve and build the standard of football and the image associated with Wales's top football league. The launch of the Cymru Premier Strategy 2024-2030 has detailed plans to improve the standard of the Cymru Premier League's club facilities, brands, and awareness, alongside strengthening the Cymru Premier 'on pitch' product over a six-year period. The implementation of VAR as part of this plan will allow referees to perform at the highest possible level, providing quality decision-making to benefit players, fans and television audiences.

What is VAR?

VAR comprises of a Video Assistant Referee who is a qualified official that watches video footage of the game with access to multiple screens, angles and replays with the purpose of assisting the on-field officials to come to the correct decision. VAR is used globally, currently assisting referees in associated football leagues of over 70 countries to minimise the risk of human error and to enable the referee to make the correct decision using video technology.

VAR Light will be deployed in the Cymru Premier during season 2025/2026 covering all Cymru Premier matches. VAR Light works on the same principles as VAR – with a Video Assistant Referee but without a replay operator. It has the functionality to operate with a maximum of 8no. cameras on any given fixture but overall operations much follow the same stringent FIFA approval as VAR and match officials will have completed appropriate training to ensure they are competent and FIFA VAR accredited.

Imagery from VAR camera installations will be sent to a self-contained Video Operations Room, where the VAR will be situated. The match referee will undertake any recommended on-field reviews in a designated Referee Review Area adjacent to the pitch, where a monitor will be installed on match days.

Proposed Development

A review of the infrastructure at Briton Ferry Llansawel AFC's stadium concluded that the Video Operations Room could not be provided within existing buildings and as such it was necessary to provide new additional accommodation in close proximity to the pitch.

Therefore, a new kiosk building has been constructed that measures 2.4 metres in width and 3 metres in length. The maximum height of the kiosk is 2.5 metres with a 4° pitched roof that slopes down to 2.3 metres at the roofs lowest point. The kiosk has been finished with red facing render panels to match the surrounding aesthetic of the stadium and the club colours associated with Briton Ferry Llansawel AFC. The kiosk is ply lined so that the walls are able to hold the weight of internally-mounted video review equipment, consisting of up to 5no. monitors and a 500mm work surface for a keyboard and associated playback equipment.

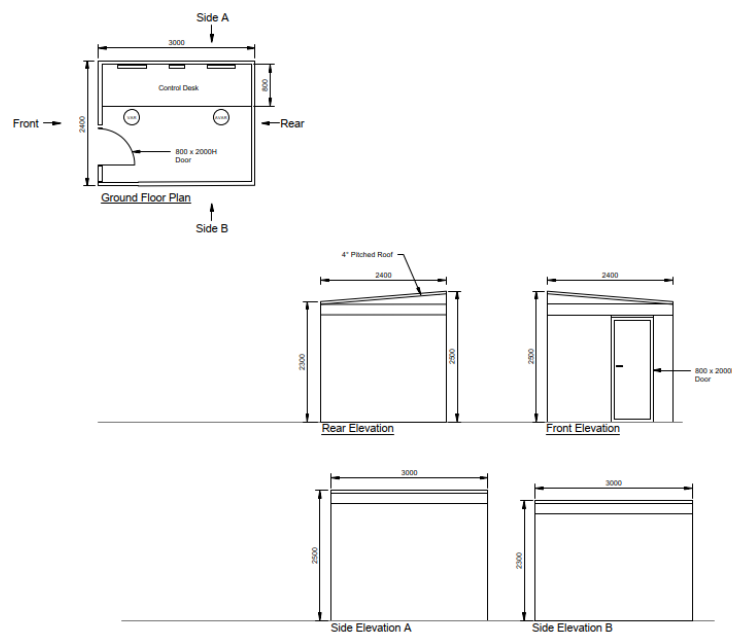


Plate 2 – Details of the design and elevations of the proposed kiosk (extracted from plan ref. CA13175-020 REV A)



It has been necessary to site the proposed kiosk at a location that doesn't obstruct the existing spectator access or sporting activities within the football stadium. Therefore, an area of hardstanding to the north of the eastern pitch side has been utilised to site the Video Operations Room. The kiosk has been positioned adjacent to the perimeter wall that demarcates the boundary along the north of the stadium to spectators. The siting of the Kiosk ensures that it does not obstruct the spectator access around the stadium or obstruct on any spectator standing accommodation. The exact location of the kiosk is shown on the Proposed Block Plan (ref. CA13175-019 REV A).

Additional VAR cameras will also be sited along the opposite (western) pitch side as deemed necessary for each Cymru Premier game. The pitch side already includes a halfway line camera gantry (see Plate 3 below), and this structure will be utilised to house VAR cameras when required.



Plate 3 – Image showing the existing spectator stand along the western pitch side, containing the camera gantry positioned at the centre of the stand

It will be necessary for additional cameras to be sited along the western pitch side at positions adjacent to each 18-yard penalty box. The technical requirement for VAR cameras is that they be positioned 6m above ground level, necessitating the use of the existing floodlighting structures to support the camera equipment. Both 18-yard temporary cameras will be fixed to the floodlights that are located along the east and west pitch side. These cameras will be temporary in nature with no associated foundations and removed when not in use. Noting that these cameras are not intended to be permanent installations but will in any case be sited within the existing lighting infrastructure, it is considered that these elements will not fall under the definition of development requiring further consideration under the planning process. Such details are included here for information only and as part of explaining the full VAR installation context.

Green Infrastructure Statement

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Section 6 requires local authorities in Wales to maintain and enhance biodiversity functions and promote the resilience of ecosystems within relation to Wales. As such, Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) considers green infrastructure an important way for local authorities to deliver their Section 6 duty and requires a green



infrastructure statement to be submitted with all planning applications proportionate to the scale of the proposal.

The proposed works have been undertaken on an area of existing hard standing. No important ecological features or designated nature conservation sites have been directly affected by the development, and therefore the Stepwise Approach is met. Nevertheless, it is proposed to install 2no. Insect hotel towers to the exterior elevations of the kiosk, with the rear (north) elevation considered to be the optimum location.

Significant quantities of green infrastructure (GI) are not being promoted at this site due to both the limited impact of the works, as they have been undertaken on existing hard standing, and the necessary management of the wider site as a sporting facility limiting the GI that could be proposed. However, a net gain in GI will be achieved on site through the introduction of a raised planter. It is proposed that this take the form of a 'beepot', with the structure allowing space for the growing of plants as well as crevices to be used by solitary bees for nesting - see Plate 3 below for an example of a beepot. The planter is considered proportionate for the scale and type of proposed development.



Plate 4 – Example image of a typical beepot feature

Closure

To accompany this application, Wardell Armstrong submit the following for consideration:

- Site Location Plan (Plan ref. CA13175-018 REV A)
- Proposed Block Plan (Plan ref. CA13175-019 REV A)
- Proposed Kiosk Design and Elevations (Plan ref. CA13175-020 REV A)

(Continued)



A planning application fee payment for the sum of £315.00 has been paid at the time of submission of the application via the Planning Portal. I therefore trust that you will be able to register the application without further delay and I therefore look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours Sincerely,

Wardell Armstrong LLP



Freddie Brickell
Undergraduate Planner

Office phone +44 3300 886631
Email freddie.brickell@slrconsulting.com

