



PLANNING STATEMENT

PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF FORMER CAR SALES SITE TO A
SMALL STORAGE CONTAINER BUSINESS
AT LAND AT FORMER DAY'S MOTOR GROUP SITE, NEATH ABBEY
ROAD, NEATH, SA10 7DN

on behalf of
Green Oaks Logistics Ltd T/A Safe Depot

Our Ref: 1847.b
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Prepared by: Rhydian Gore

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Evans Banks Planning Ltd. has been instructed by Green Oaks Logistics Ltd T/A Safe Depot to prepare and submit a planning statement for the proposed change of use of a former car sales site to a small storage container business at land at the former Day's Motor Group Site, Neath Abbey Road, Neath.
- 1.2 This Statement therefore forms part of the submissions to be considered by the Authority, and provides information on the following points:
- A brief description of the site and surrounding area
 - A description of the proposed development
 - Consideration of relevant planning policy

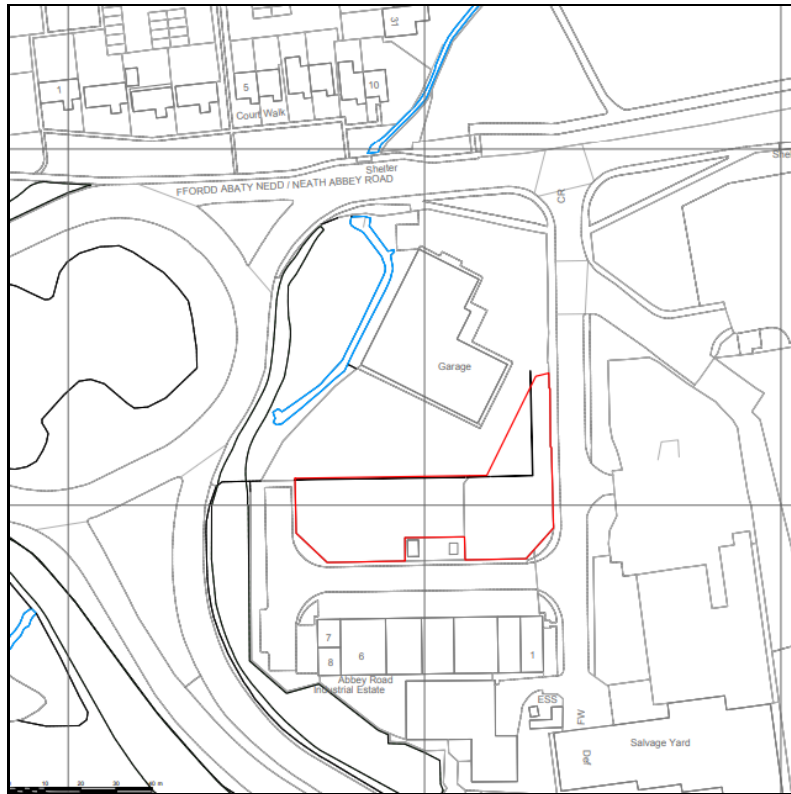
2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 THE SITE

- 2.1.1 The application site relates to a parcel of previously developed land (outlined in red below in Photograph 1 and Plan A), located at the former Day's Motor Group Site within Neath Abbey Industrial Estate, Neath.



Photograph 1



Plan A

2.1.2 The site comprises an area of existing hardstanding formerly occupied by the Day's Motor Group car sales premises. It is irregular in shape and enclosed along all of its boundaries by established fencing which provides screening from the adjacent industrial buildings. To the north of the site is the existing Toolstation and Howdens building, while Neath Abbey Road forms the western boundary, with further industrial buildings located to the south and further east. To the west, vegetation forms a natural boundary from the A474 Court Herbert Roundabout.

2.1.3 The current condition of the site, adjoining businesses, and boundary treatments can be seen in Photographs 2 to 8 below.



Photograph 2 – The Site Looking South



Photograph 3 – The Site Looking North with Toolstation Visible



Photograph 4 – The Site Looking West



Photograph 5 – The Site Looking Southwest from Toolstation Car Park



Photograph 6 – The Site Looking South from its Most Northern Point



Photograph 7 – The Southern Boundary of the Site



Photograph 8 – The Proposed Access Point

- 2.1.4 The site itself is accessible via the western flank of the unclassified road known as 'Neath Abbey Industrial Estate', which itself is accessible via the southern flank of the A-Road known as 'Neath Abbey'

2.2 THE SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.2.1 As mentioned previously, the site lies within an Industrial Estate and is therefore adjacent to many existing businesses, such as Toolstation, Howdens, LBS Builders Merchants, Macron Sports Hub, Aldi, Tesco and LH Evans to name just a few. To the north of the site and Neath Abbey Road, lies the Cwrt Herbert Sports Pitches, Dŵr Y Felin Comprehensive School, and large residential housing estates.
- 2.2.2 In the wider sense, Neath provides a diverse range of community facilities and services. These include multiple supermarkets and local shops, primary and secondary schools, sports clubs and leisure facilities such as Neath Leisure Centre, places of worship

serving various denominations, medical centres and healthcare services, as well as cultural and recreational amenities including Neath Library, Gnoll Park, and the Neath Civic Centre. The town also benefits from a well-connected transport network, including bus routes and rail connections, which support access to facilities both locally and regionally.

- 2.2.3 In the immediate vicinity of the site are the 'Days', 'Days Car Hire', and 'Cwrt Herbert' bus stops, which connect the area with the larger settlements of Neath and Swansea via the **4, 34, 38, 58, 155, 204, 901, 902, 903, 906, and 907** bus services respectively.

2.3 PROJECT DESIGN PARAMETERS AND PRINCIPLES

- 2.3.1 As a result of the local context and the requirements of the Applicant, the following design principles and parameters have influenced the design of the proposal subject of this planning application: -

- **Scale** – To make efficient use of the application site but remain respectful of any units located nearby.
- **Layout** – To provide a sufficient level of space at the site to serve the Applicant's business requirements.
- **Design** – To draw on existing storage container examples, but to be influenced by on-site attributes.
- **Landscaping** – To include an appropriate means of enclosure that remains reflective of those found in the surrounding area.
- **Access** – To provide a safe means of access to and from the site in terms of both vehicular and pedestrian.

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

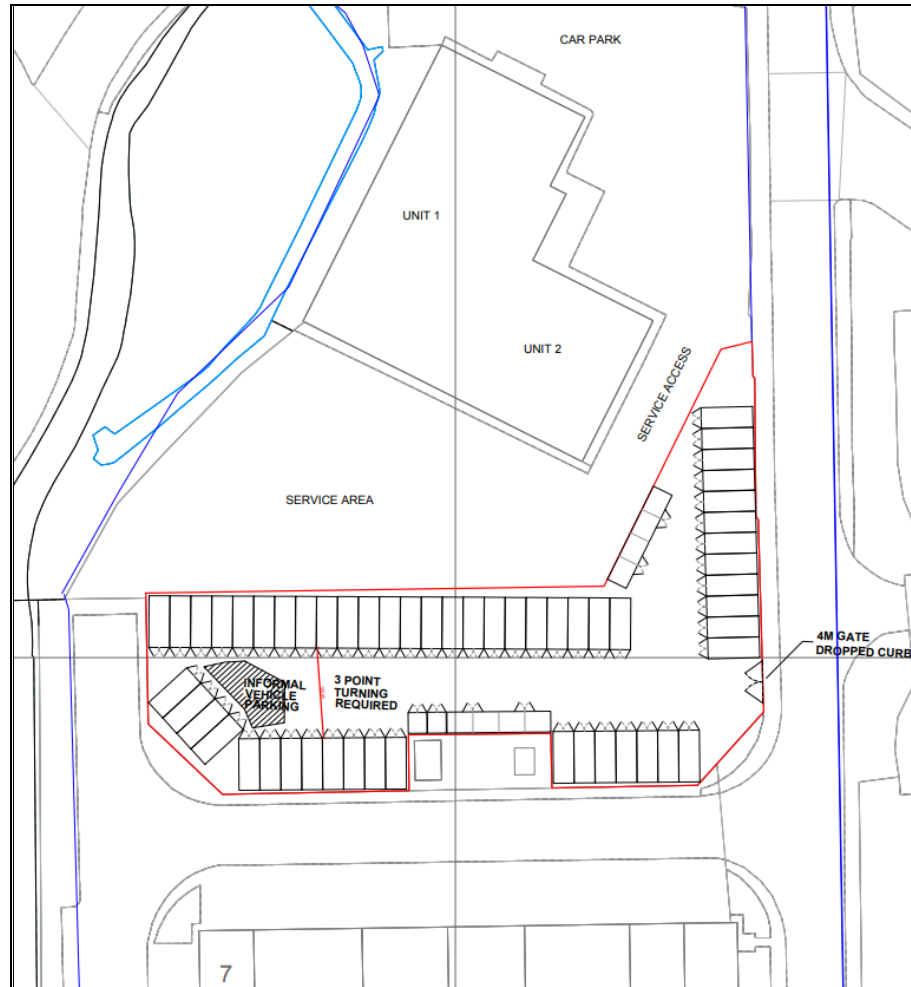
- 3.1 The development subject of this Planning Statement is for the proposed change of use of a former car sales site to a small storage container business (use class B) at land at the former Day's Motor Group Site at Neath Abbey Road, Neath. The following information therefore provides details of the proposed development and should be read in conjunction with the accompanying information.

Project Overview

- 3.2 The proposed development has been designed with the Applicant's business requirements in mind, as it continues to grow significantly. Therefore, a new additional facility of 56 containers is proposed, which will enable the use of a previously developed site for a small storage container business. The proposed development will ensure that it respects the both the site's topography and the existing businesses adjacent to the site.

General Sitting and Design

- 3.3 The proposed scheme comprises of an area of consolidated hardcore, over a number of storage containers will be safely and appropriately stored. The hardstanding upon which the containers will be situated will remain as existing, in order to fit seamlessly into the site's current surroundings. The proposal will retain all existing fencing to the perimeters of the site, while the proposed access will be in fully compliance with the required standards for this development.
- 3.4 The Proposed Site Layout Plan is reproduced below in Plan B.



Plan B – Proposed Site Layout Plan

Means of Enclosure

- 3.5 All existing fencing around the site boundaries will be retained. This includes the northern, eastern, southern, and western perimeters, which collectively provide clear definition of the site and maintain screening and separation from the adjoining industrial and commercial units within Neath Abbey Road Industrial Estate. The retained fencing ensures the operational area of the storage container business is contained and visually coherent within the industrial estate setting, with any necessary alterations matching those found at the site.

Access and Parking

- 3.6 The proposed means of access to the site will be in full accordance with adopted standards.
- 3.7 Parking will be provided at the site, in accordance with adopted standards.

Drainage

- 3.8 As the proposal will continue to represent a hard-surface site, no change to the current surface water drainage system serving it is proposed.
- 3.9 Despite this, due to the site's location within a flood risk area, the containers will be sited on levelling pads which will raise the base of the containers to a maximum of 0.26m above existing ground level. The internal floor of the container is a further 0.15m above the container base; therefore, the floor level will be 0.41m above ground level. Additional flood resistant and flood resilient design is incorporated within the container to improve flood resilience.

Operational Arrangements

- 3.10 The proposed storage container facility is intended solely for use by domestic customers requiring additional storage space for personal belongings. The site is not designed to accommodate commercial operations or serve as a base for tradespeople or businesses. Access and use of the containers will be managed to ensure that the facility remains low-impact and consistent with domestic storage needs, with measures in place to prevent business-related activities or regular commercial traffic.
- 3.11 The operational times of the site will be restricted to 08:00 – 20:00 daily to ensure the lowest possible impact and avoid periods in the late evening and night where background sound levels are low and the potential for impact is high.

4.0 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

4.01 In terms of *Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, the adopted development plan for the area within which the application site is positioned is the *Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan (LDP)*.

4.02 On the basis of the above, the following policies are considered of particular relevance to the application proposal and so have been given full consideration in its preparation:

- Policy SP3 – Sustainable Communities
- Policy SC1 – Settlement Limits
- Policy TR2 – Design and Access of New Development
- Policy BE1 – Design

4.1 POLICY SP3 – SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

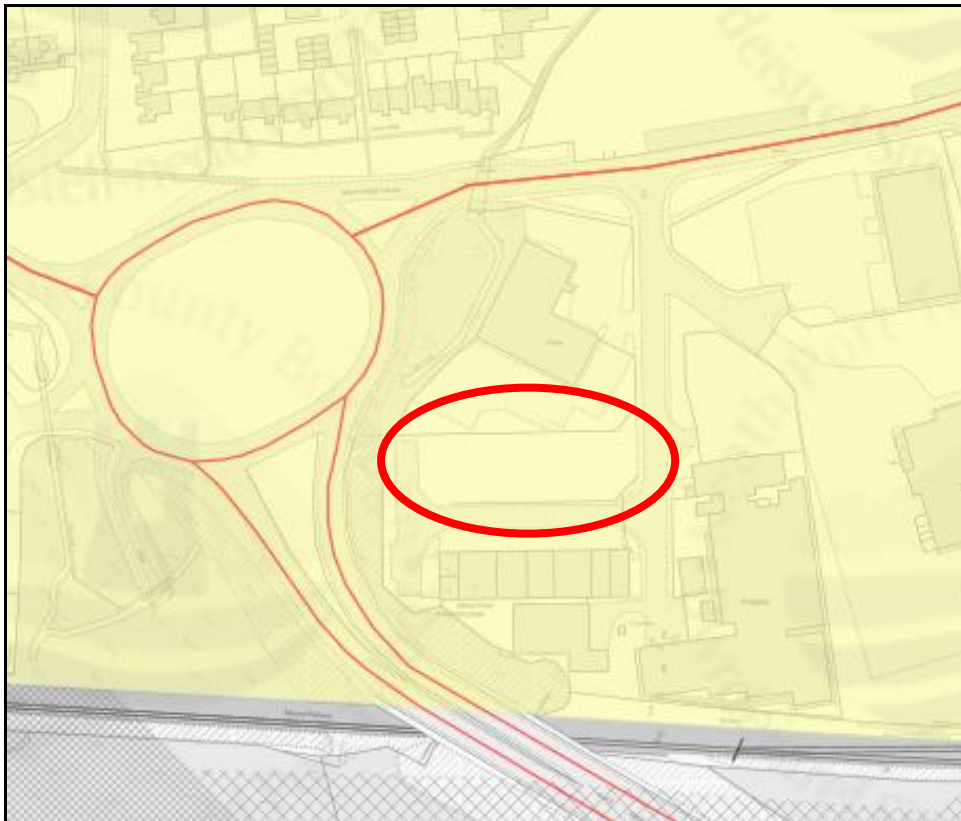
4.1.1 Policy SP3 (*Sustainable Communities*) states that the delivery of “*sustainable, healthy and cohesive communities and the conservation of the countryside*” will be promoted by “*the identification of a settlement hierarchy that reflects the role and function of settlements*”. New development will therefore be steered towards the more sustainable locations of the county.

4.1.2 The proposed development is located within Neath Abbey. Table 3.1 of the LDP ‘Settlement Hierarchy for Neath Port Talbot’ identifies Neath Abbey as a ‘Large Local Centre’ as the settlement has adequate transport links with clusters of one or more retail units and local services, with one or more community facilities and employment provision. It is 3rd out of a 6-tier hierarchy, highlighting that it is considered to be a sustainable settlement by the Authority.

- 4.1.3 In light of the above, the application site is clearly positioned well within the Settlement Hierarchy and will therefore promote sustainable development in adherence to the requirements of Policy SP3.

4.2 POLICY SC1 – SETTLEMENT LIMITS

- 4.2.1 The proposed application site is positioned within the settlement limits defined by Policy SC1 (*Settlement Limits*), as shown in Map C below.



Plan C – Extract from LDP Proposals Map

- 4.2.2 Policy SC1 states that “*development within settlement limits that is proportionate in scale and form to the role and function of the settlement as set out in the Settlement Hierarchy will be acceptable in principle*”. With no change to the external physical form

or nature of the application building, it is considered that this development is proportionate in scale to its surroundings.

4.3 POLICY TR2 – DESIGN AND ACCESS OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

- 4.3.1 For Policy TR2 (Design and Access of New Development) provides the overarching framework for ensuring that development proposals achieve safe and appropriate access arrangements. For development proposals to be permitted they must accord, where relevant, to four criteria. Taking into account the nature and form of the application proposal, it is considered that three are of relevance to the proposed development and an assessment of the application proposal against each now follows:
- 4.3.2 Criterion 1 requires that the development *“does not compromise the safe, effective and efficient use of the highway network and does not have an adverse impact on highway safety or create unacceptable levels of traffic generation”*. The proposed development seeks to utilise the existing access arrangements serving the site from Neath Abbey Road, which have historically accommodated commercial traffic without issue. The nature of the proposed storage-container use will generate low levels of vehicle activity and will not adversely impact on the operation or safety of the surrounding highway network.
- 4.3.3 Criterion 2 requires that the development provides *“appropriate levels of parking and cycling facilities”* and that access arrangements allow for the safe manoeuvring of service vehicles. The proposed layout incorporates sufficient space within the site to accommodate parking and manoeuvring in a safe and efficient manner, including for vehicles accessing individual storage containers. The existing hardstanding allows for the safe turning of vehicles within the site, ensuring that the proposal accords with the requirements of Criterion 2.
- 4.3.4 Criterion 3 requires that the development is *“accessible by a range of travel means, including public transport and safe cycle and pedestrian routes”*. The site benefits from

established pedestrian footways along Neath Abbey Road and lies within an existing industrial estate accessible by public transport services operating in the area. The retention of the existing access therefore ensures that the development remains safely accessible by a range of travel modes.

4.4 POLICY BE1 - DESIGN

- 4.4.1 Policy BE1 (Design) provides the overarching framework for high-quality design within Neath Port Talbot. For development proposals to be permitted they must accord, where relevant, with a series of criteria. Taking into account the nature and form of the application proposal, it is considered that a number of these criteria are of direct relevance to the proposed development and an assessment against each now follows:
- 4.4.2 Criterion 1 requires that development *“complements and enhances the character and appearance of the site, building or area in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing and elevation treatment”*. The proposed development has given full consideration to its setting within an established industrial estate, ensuring that the scale, layout and positioning of the containers respect the surrounding commercial and industrial uses. The proposal makes efficient use of the existing level hardstanding, with no changes to the site's existing layout other than the raising of levels for flood-mitigation purposes. This also satisfies the requirements of Criterion 2, insofar as the development respects the site's topography and its position within the wider industrial context, without affecting any townscape, skylines or landscape features.
- 4.4.3 Criterion 4 then requires that the proposal does not have a significant adverse impact on highway safety, the amenity of occupiers of adjacent land or the community. The application site is located within a designated industrial estate and is well separated from any residential properties. The operational characteristics of a small-scale storage-container business are low-impact and are not considered to give rise to noise, disturbance or amenity concerns. The proposal seeks to utilise the existing access

point, which provides suitable visibility and has historically served a commercial use without issue. As such, the proposal satisfies the requirements of Criterion 4.

- 4.4.4 Criterion 5 requires that important local features, including biodiversity and ecological connectivity, are retained and enhanced as far as possible. While the site is entirely hard-surfaced and contains no existing green infrastructure, a proportionate level of enhancement will be delivered through the installation of bird boxes along the western boundary. This ensures that opportunities for biodiversity enhancement are incorporated where feasible.
- 4.4.5 The above therefore ensures that the requirements of Criterion 5 are fully supported and satisfied by the application proposal.
- 4.4.6 Criterion 9 states that drainage systems must be designed to limit surface-water run-off, manage flood risk and prevent pollution. The site lies within a recognised flood zone; however, as part of the proposal the containers will be sited on levelling pads which will raise the base of the containers to a maximum of 0.26m above existing ground level. The internal floor of the container is a further 0.15m above the container base; therefore, the floor level will be 0.41m above ground level. Additional flood resistant and flood resilient design is incorporated within the containers to improve flood resilience. No changes are proposed to the existing surface-water drainage arrangements beyond this mitigation measure, ensuring that the development accords with Criterion 9.
- 4.4.7 Finally, Criterion 10 requires that the development achieves inclusive design, ensuring barrier-free environments and access for all. The proposal maintains level access across the site, with the operational nature of the development ensuring that ease of access is retained for all users.
- 4.4.8 In conclusion, it is therefore considered that the proposed development complies with all relevant aspects of Policy BE1 (Design).

4.5 POLICY SP 15 – BIODIVERSITY AND GEODIVERSITY

- 4.5.1 Policy SP15 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) states that important habitats, species and sites of geological interest will be protected, conserved, enhanced and appropriately managed. This includes internationally and nationally designated sites, regionally and locally important areas, and key natural heritage features. Development proposals must therefore demonstrate that they will not adversely affect such interests and, where possible, will provide opportunities for enhancement.
- 4.5.2 Firstly, it should be noted that a Green Infrastructure Statement accompanies this submission and confirms that there are no existing biodiversity assets, ecological features or green infrastructure present within the site boundary. The site is entirely hard-surfaced and forms part of an established industrial estate.
- 4.5.3 Notwithstanding the above, biodiversity enhancements are proposed in the form of the installation of bird boxes along the western boundary. This measure will ensure that the proposal results in a proportionate biodiversity enhancement, contributing to improved habitat provision within the local area. This ensures that the proposal delivers appropriate ecological benefits and protects nearby ecological interests in accordance with the relevant requirements of Policy SP15.
- 4.5.4 In summary, the proposed development presented by this application fully complies with the guidance and requirements of the relevant adopted local planning policy.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The proposal represents an opportunity for the redevelopment of a non-residential site, through the change of use of a former car sales site to a small storage container business (use class B), at land at the former Day's Motor Group Site, Neath Abbey, Neath.
- 5.2 The details presented have given full consideration to those of the adopted local planning policy. The net result is for a new storage container facility at the site, to accommodate the Applicant's growing business needs, at an appropriate and sustainable location. Due to the storage facility being proposed on previously developed land, as well as the presence of adjoining existing businesses, it can be deemed that the site represents an extremely sustainable and suitable location for a development of this nature. Therefore, it can be deemed that the proposal represents a development that is respectful of its position within the existing locality, and in relation to nearby properties, as well as being harmonious with the existing urban setting of the area.
- 5.3 The proposal has ensured that it has a regard for biodiversity at its core, through the introduction of bird boxes on site, in order to increase biodiversity levels.
- 5.4 Therefore, the proposal adheres to the requirements of all relevant elements of both national and local planning policy, and it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted for the proposed development.