

OFFICER REPORT

Application Number: P2026/0158

Site Address: Swansea University Bay Campus Fabian Way Crymlyn
Burrows Neath Port Talbot SA1 8EN
Proposal: Variation of condition 1 of planning permission P2021/0129
(approved on 18/03/2021) to allow retention of the active
classroom building for a further 2 years

Applicant: Mr Stuart Henson

Agent: Mr Thomas Gronow

Ward: Coedffranc West

Application Type: Full Plans

Valid Date: 18th March 2026

Statutory Expiry Date: 12th May 2026

Ext. of Time / PPA date:

Publicity Expiry Date: 21st April 2026

RECOMMENDATION - Approved

SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site lies within the wider Bay Campus development. The ESRI academic building lies to the north, the service access road, and beyond it, the SSSI to the East, existing external teaching and cycle store to the West, and the screened service yard to the South.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The application seeks a variation of condition 1 to allow the temporary consent to be extended for a further 2 years. The application originally sought permission for a further 5 years however due to the emergence of a new RLDP and 'drop dead date' for the current LDP, this was amended to 2 years prior to registration.

This application originally gave planning permission for the erection of a temporary classroom building for a period of five years which was renewed for a further 5 year period in 2021. The building provides an "active classroom" and demonstration and in its construction, showcases innovative products for construction and sustainable energy production.

The building is designed to promote sustainability by its very nature. Materials have been carefully chosen, that are recycled, recyclable or re-useable. As the building is semi-permanent, it has been designed for deconstruction, enabling it to be taken down and relocated to another site without generating waste. There are no concrete foundations, so once the building is moved the landscape can be restored back to its former state, or another building erected in its place.

This is a single storey building measuring 17.664m by 11.8m, with a split mono-pitch roof rising from an eaves level of 2.8m to a maximum height of 4.8m.

It is finished externally with metal cladding produced by TATA that is currently not available on the public market, and incorporates cladding to a section of the southern elevation that is perforated to allow for air flow that converts the heat to warm or cool the building. The roof is also clad, the this incorporates imbedded photovoltaic cells that will generate energy for the building, without the need for "bolt on " panels.

The colours of the cladding are chosen to reflect the adjoining ESRI academic building.

South Elevation- TATA horizontal cladding: Black (section perforated)

West Elevation- TATA horizontal cladding: Copper.

North Elevation: TATA horizontal cladding: Pearlescent gold.

East Elevation: TATA horizontal cladding: Pearlescent gold. Incorporating a section of living wall

Roof: TATA colourcoat urban roofing: Anthracite with integrated photovoltaics.

In addition the building includes a section of green/living walling incorporating bird and insect boxes, and a section that is planted with wildlife friendly species.

PLANNING HISTORY

The application site has the following relevant planning history: -

P2016/0371- Active classroom - Approved 26/05/2016

P2021/0129 - Variation of Condition 1 of Planning Application P2016/0371 (Approved on the 26/05/2016) to allow retention of the active classroom building for a further 5 years - Approved 18/03/2021

CONSULTATIONS

Highways: No objection.

Biodiversity: No objection.

REPRESENTATIONS

The Ward Members and Coedffranc Town Council were notified on 23 March 2026.

A site notice was also displayed on 31 March 2026.

In response, to date no representations have been received.

REPORT

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.

National Planning Policy:

Future Wales forms part of the Development Plan for all parts of Wales, comprising 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 well-being of our communities. All Development Management decisions, strategic and local development plans, planning appeals and all other work directed by the development plan need to accord with Future Wales.

The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

PPW12 takes the seven *Well-being Goals* and the five *Ways of Working* as overarching themes and embodies a placemaking approach throughout, with the aim of delivering *Active and Social Places*, *Productive and Enterprising Places* and *Distinctive and Natural Places*. It also identifies the planning system as one of the main tools to create sustainable places, and that placemaking principles are a tool to achieving this through both plan making and the decision making process.

Local Planning Policies

The Local Development Plan for the area comprises the Adopted 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 SP4 Infrastructure
- Policy SP5 Development in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area
- Policy SP15 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy SP16 Environmental Protection
- Policy SP18 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Topic Based Policies :

- Policy I1 Infrastructure Requirements
- Policy CCUC1 Coastal Corridor University Campus
- Policy EN6 Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites
- Policy EN7 Important Natural Features
- Policy EN8 Pollution and Land Stability
- Policy RE2 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Development
- Policy TR2 Design and Access of New Development
- Policy BE1 Design

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

The following SPG is of relevance to this application: -

- Parking Standards (October 2016)
- Renewable and Low Carbon Energy ([July 2017](#))
- Design (July 2017)
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity ([May 2018](#))

Issues

Having regard to the above, the main issues to consider in this application relate to the principle of development, together with the impact on the visual amenity of the area, that would be affected by the retention of the development for a further 2 years.

Principle of Development

This has already been established, and the building will continue to be used for uses associated with the campus. As such it is considered to accord within the overarching CCUC1 policy for the campus.

Impact on Visual Amenity

There have been no material changes in circumstances, beyond further development being approved in proximity to the site, which is unaffected by this application.

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 proposed development provides an acceptable addition to the campus, and can be sited within the development without impacting detrimentally on the future development of this site. Therefore subject to conditions, limiting this permission for an additional period of 2 years, that the proposals would accord with Policies CCUC1 and BE1 of the Adopted 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.

Appendix 1: Original application report.

Officer Report
Application Reference: P2016/0371

Planning History:

P2010/0222- University Campus including innovation park, mixed academic, R & D facilities (Use Class B1) University residential accommodation and ancillary student/staff facilities, car parking, engineering, and landscaping works (Outline)- Approved- 30/8/12

P2012/0888- Reserved Matters phase 1 Bay Campus- Approved- 4/12/12

Publicity and Responses if applicable:

The application was advertised on site.

Description of Site and its Surroundings:

The application site lies within the wider Bay Campus development, and will in the future be developed for a more permanent building. At this time it is landscaped. The ESRI building lies to the north, the service access road, and beyond it, the SSSI to the East, existing external teaching and cycle store to the West, and the screened service yard to the South.

Brief description of proposal:

This application seeks permission for the erection of a temporary building for a period of five years. This building will provide an “active classroom” and demonstration and will in its construction showcase innovative products for construction and sustainable energy production.

The building is designed to promote sustainability by its very nature. Materials have been carefully chosen, that are recycled, recyclable or re-useable. As the building is only semi-permanent, it has been designed for deconstruction, enabling it to be taken down and relocated to another site without generating waste. There are no concrete foundations, so once the building is moved the landscape can be restored back to its former state, or another building erected in its place.

This is a single storey building measuring 17.664m by 11.8m, with a split mono-pitch roof rising from an eaves level of 2.8m to a maximum height of 4.8m.

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the building. The roof is also clad, the this incorporates imbedded photovoltaic cells that will generate energy for the building, without the need for “bolt on “ panels.

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Roof: TATA colourcoat urban roofing: Anthracite with integrated photovoltaics.

In addition the building includes a section of walling incorporated bird and insect boxes, and a section of living wall that will be planted with wildlife friendly species.

Material Considerations:

Land use and development plan policy, visual amenity and the character of the area as a whole, impacts upon the amenity of adjoining development, together with overarching compliance with the design strategy for the site as a whole.

Policy Context:

The development lies within the wider Bay Campus development site. Policy CCUC1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan refers specifically to this wider development site.

Policy CCUC1 Coastal Corridor University Campus

Land is allocated on Fabian Way for the development of the Swansea University Science and Innovation Campus, comprising academic university facilities, research and development and student residential accommodation.

4.0.26 The Swansea University Science and Innovation Campus is a significant development in Neath Port Talbot and has the potential to promote growth within the local area and also within the City Region.

4.0.27 Outline Planning Permission was granted in August 2012 for the Science and Innovation Campus for Swansea University, with facilities for academic, university residential uses, industrial / research and development (R&D) space (Use Class B1). Reserved matters were subsequently approved for Phase 1 in December 2012. It will include capacity to accommodate up to 4,000 full time student residents, with academic facilities for a total of up to 5,100 students.

4.0.28 The remainder of the site allows for further expansion of this integrated research / education campus facility, which also has the potential to extend beyond the

Authority's boundary to the west. The development is seen as significant in terms of attaining the aspirations and key principles for socio-economic growth in the region as set out within the Wales Spatial Plan, acting as a major contributor to the knowledge economy in providing an innovation campus where higher education and research and development can be fully integrated.

4.0.29 Applications for ancillary services and facilities will be assessed on the merits of the proposal to ensure schemes are appropriate in scale and to the function of the campus. Such facilities may include small scale retail, commercial services and additional R&D facilities.

It is considered that this proposal would accord with this overarching policy, and provide a development in keeping with the overall uses on the site.

In respect of design, Policy BE1 refers;

Policy BE1 Design

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.

Proposals will only be permitted where all of the following criteria, where relevant, are satisfied:

1. 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;
2. 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;
3. It utilises materials appropriate to its surroundings and incorporates hard and soft landscaping and screening where appropriate;
4. It would not have a significant adverse impact on highway safety, the amenity of occupiers of adjacent land or the community;
5. Important local features (including buildings, amenity areas, green spaces and green infrastructure, biodiversity and ecological connectivity) are retained and enhanced as far as possible;
6. It achieves and creates attractive, safe places and public spaces, taking account of 'Secured by Design' principles (including where appropriate natural surveillance, visibility, well lit environments and areas of public movement);
7. It plays a full role in achieving and enhancing an integrated transport and communications network promoting the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and ensures linkages with the existing surrounding community;
8. It uses resources, including land and energy, as efficiently as possible through:
(a) Making the best and most efficient use of the land available through being of appropriate density taking into account the character and appearance of

the area, normally a minimum of 35 dwellings per hectare in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area or a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare in the Valleys Strategy Area;

(b) The layout and form of the development does not preclude the reasonable use of other adjacent land;

(c) Developing brownfield land in preference to greenfield land where possible;

(d) Minimising building exposure while maximising solar gain.

9. Its drainage systems are designed to limit surface water run-off and flood risk and prevent pollution;

10. The layout and design of the development achieves inclusive design by ensuring barrier free environments, allowing access by all and making full provision for people with disabilities.

It is considered that the overall design of the campus would not be undermined through the introduction of this temporary building, and any future development on the site will not be prejudiced due to the siting of the building for a temporary period. In fact, the nature of the building and construction allows for its re-siting within the wider site, should need arise.

The overall design is dictated by its purpose, and sustainability aims. As such it aims to showcase product and innovation within its physical fabric. It is sited within the campus itself, screened from public vantage points, and whilst it will be an interesting addition to the campus, is not one that will unduly detract from the overall character due to its scale, location, and temporary nature.

It is therefore considered that the proposals would accord with Policy BE1.

Visual Amenity:

The proposed development provides an appropriate addition to the wider campus development, and as stated previously, the design of the building is led by its use and sustainability aims. It is considered that the proposals on a temporary basis would not result in any significant impacts upon visual amenity.

Amenity of adjoining uses and occupiers:

The building is to be sited on a landscaped area, and due to its scale and location is not likely to result in any significant impacts upon the amenity of adjoining building, or users of the campus as a whole.

Conclusion:

It is considered that the proposed development provides an acceptable addition to the campus, and that due to its temporary nature, can be sited within the development without impacting detrimentally on the future development of this parcel of land. Therefore subject to conditions, limiting this permission for a period of 5 years only, that

the proposals would accord with Policies CCUC1 and BE1 of the Local Development Plan.

Recommendation:

Approval, subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

Approved

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

Time Limit Conditions

- 1 This permission benefits for a period of 2 years from the date of this permission only. After this period, or within 1 month of the cessation of the use of the development hereby approved, whichever is the sooner, the development shall be removed from site, and the land restored to its former condition and use.

Reason:

In the interests of clarity, the nature of the development being applied for and to accord with Policies CCUC1 and BE1 of the Adopted Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (2011-2026).

List of Approved Plans

- 2 The permission relates to the following plans:

L02- Proposed plans, section and 3D views.

L03- Proposed elevations.

Active Classroom SLP

Landscape GA-150170_PL(90)91000

The development shall be retained in accordance with these plans.

Reason:

In the interests of clarity, and Policy BE1 of the Local Development Plan.

Case Officer	Claire Hall
Telephone No.	01639 686727
Date of Recommendation	13th May 2026