Application Ref: NP/12/0050

Application Type

Full

Grid Ref:

SN04590366

Applicant

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Mr A Muskett, Building Project Officer

Proposal

Agent

Re-surface car park

Site Location

Carew Castle PCNP Car Park, Carew, Tenby,

Pembrokeshire

Case Officer

Emma Langmaid

Summary

This application is to be considered by the Development Management Committee because the applicant is the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.

Planning permission is sought to provide sufficient car parking for castle visitors (which can also be used by visitors to the village and for use by local people). The existing car park already has planning consent for that use; the proposal now is purely to change its surfacing from grass to stone to make it more durable throughout the year. The proposal will also resurface the existing metalled part of the car park. The provision of an improved car park will allow for continued long term access to the site by locals and visitors.

These proposed works are part of a wider scheme of repair, renewal and improvement to the castle, for which funding has been approved (but for which separate planning applications are being processed). The proposals have been developed in close consultation with the relevant officers of the PCNPA, Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and Cadw to ensure the best possible outcome for the redevelopment of the Walled Garden and the sites historical and ecological importance.

Taking into consideration the design proposals and the reasons behind them the proposed improvements are considered to be a welcome upgrade to the existing visitor facilities to the castle to ensure the enhancement and future preservation of an important historical asset in this part of the National Park. The application is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

Consultee Response

CADW - Welsh Historic Monuments: Reply - Do not wish to raise any concerns about this proposal.

Carew Community Council: No objection
Countryside Council for Wales: No objection

PCC - Transportation & Environment: No objection

Dyfed Archaeological Trust: Conditional Consent

Environment Agency Wales: Standard Advice

Public Response

The application has been appropriately advertised, and no responses have been received at the time of this report.

Policies considered

LDP Policy 01 - National Park Purposes and Duty

LDP Policy 07 - Countryside

LDP Policy 08 - Special Qualities

LDP Policy 09 - Light Pollution

LDP Policy 10 - Local Sites of Nature Conservation or Geological Interest

LDP Policy 11 - Protection of Biodiversity

LDP Policy 14 - Protection of Buildings of Local Importance

LDP Policy 15 - Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

LDP Policy 29 - Sustainable Design

LDP Policy 30 - Amenity

LDP Policy 31 - Minimising Waste

LDP Policy 32 - Surface Water Drainage

LDP Policy 35 - Visitor Economy

LDP Policy 43 - Protection of Employment Sites and Buildings

PPW4 Chapter 04 - Planning for Sustainability

PPW4 Chapter 05 - Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast

PPW4 Chapter 06 - Conserving the Historic Environment

PPW4 Chapter 07 - Supporting the Economy

PPW4 Chapter 11 - Tourism, Sport and Recreation

PPW4 Chapter 13 - Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution

SPG03 - Sustainable Design

SPG06 - Landscape Character Assessment Study, June 2009

TAN 05 - Nature Conservation and Planning

TAN 10 - Tree Preservation Orders

TAN 11 - Noise

TAN 12 - Design

TAN 13 - Tourism

Officer's Appraisal

Background

Carew Castle lies at the head of the Carew estuary to the south west of Pembrokeshire, set within rolling farming landscape. The tidal river heads to the open sea with links to Ireland, south west England and Western Europe. The castle is located in a defensible position protected by the river and Millpond to the west and north. Although positioned at a low level, it is a prominent landmark within the landscape.

Carew Castle is leased to Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA) from the Carew Estate. PCNPA manage the site through conservation, encouraging understanding and enjoyment by the public. The castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Listed Building; the site is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and is within a Historic Landscape.

PCNPA in meeting the aim to conserve, encourage understanding and enjoyment of Carew Castle has secured funding for a scheme of repair, renewal and improvement as follows:

- Replacing the roof, windows and doors to the Lesser Hall;
- Removing the existing portakabins from the Walled Garden;
- Upgrading and extending Denis' shed in the Walled Garden to provide retail/reception facility/public conveniences; and
- Resurfacing the main car park.

This current planning application proposes the fourth element of the work to resurface the car park. Members will recall considering a previous application for the replacement of the roof, windows and doors to the Lesser Hall; members will also note that the removal of the existing portakabins and upgrading and extending Denis' shed in the walled garden, subject of a separate planning application, is also being considered on this agenda.

The principles of upgrading the car park and providing new visitor facilities in the walled garden and (application NP/12/049 also being considered on this agenda) have been the subject of discussions in principle with the Carew Estate (the Landowners), the Carew Community Council and the Carew Castle Stakeholders Group over many years and they have always agreed in principle with the proposals.

The current proposals for the car park and walled garden were forwarded to the Carew Community Council and the Carew Estate prior to the submission of the application. The proposals have also been the subject of discussions with Pembrokeshire County Council Highways, CCW, Cadw and National Park Officers including archaeologist, planning officer, building conservation officer, building maintenance staff, site manager and independent ecologists.

History

07/007 - Portakabins, renewal of consent

02/012 - Portakabins, renewal of consent

01/024 - Portakabins, renewal of consent

385/93 - Visitor centre, reception and exhibition

214/93 - Interpretation centre, exhibition building

282/92 – Conversion of existing building to workshop, store and mess room and construction of new store and toilet building

169/89 - Temporary tent site in Walled Garden

Constraints

- NPA Property within 25m
- Special Area of Conservation within 500m
- Site of Special Scientific Interest within 50m
- Mineral Safeguarding Area
- Biodiversity Issue
- Historic Landscape
- Ancient Monument
- TPO

Current Proposal

The current application proposes the resurfacing of the existing car park. Currently part of the car park is metalled and part is grass covered; no changes are proposed to the layout and scale of the car park. The car park is passively designed using simple local materials which are all reclaimable and reusable so the land can again revert to agriculture in the future. A membrane to separate the natural ground from the proposed stone covering will be employed.

In addition to the physical alterations to the castle (previously approved under NP/12/048), the following summarises supporting works/proposals for all the works proposed under NP/12/048, 049 and 050):

- Provide contractors working compound in the car park (tree protection will be provided to the northern area of the car park).
- Provide access trackway from the car park to the outer ward of the castle.
- The trackway is to be fenced (to protect adjoining land) and covered in a temporary mesh surface (to minimise impact on archaeology and ecology) (the contractor will provide an Environmental Management Plan prior to commencement of works)
- Works will be undertaken between 21st June and 1st October to avoid disturbance to bats. Additionally there will no night working and the

- use of artificial light will be prohibited for one hour each side of dawn/dusk.
- Protocols will be established to determine the periods of use of the track way (early in the morning and late in the afternoon) to reduce any visitor/contractor conflicts.
- Marshalling arrangements will be established to manage potential crossover between visitors and contractors.
- Provide a small fenced working area alongside the chapel tower with scaffolding to allow access to the Lesser Hall.
- Provide scaffolding on the courtyard side of the Lesser Hall (the contractor will provide a method statement for the use and management of the site which will include details of scaffolding design).
- Provide a temporary roof covering over the Lesser Hall to allow works to continue in inclement weather (access points will be included for bats).
- Historic fabric will be recorded before works commence and temporary protective measures will be provided. There will be an Archaeological Watching Brief during the works and provision will be made for appropriate recording.
- An independent ecological report has informed all decisions (Soltys Brewster 2011) and a Bat Mitigation Statement has also been produced to guide scheme design and site practice (Soltys Brewster 2012)
- Ecological inspections and Watching Brief will be in place during scaffold erection/dismantling and at potentially load activities together with a 'tool box' talk to the contractor.

The application is supported by the following documents:

- Drawings
- Design and Access Statement (January 2012)
- Ecological appraisal to inform work proposals (November 2011)
- Letter from Soltys Brewster Ecology (March 2012)
- Tree Survey and Report (no date)
- Transport Statement

Key Issues

The main planning matters raised by the application are:

- Principle;
- Visual amenity;
- Neighbouring amenity;
- Listed building/scheduled ancient monument/archaeology;
- Ecology;
- Trees;
- Sustainability; and
- Minerals Safeguarding.

Principle

Policy 1 of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) refers to the National Park Purposes and Duty and states that development in the National Park must be compatible with 'a' the conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the national park and 'b' the public understanding and enjoyment of these qualities. Policy 7 of the LDP refers to development outside identified centres which will only be permitted where 'e' tourist attractions or recreational activity is proposed where the need to locate in the countryside is essential. Policy 35 of the LDP refers to the visitor economy and to attracting visitors outside the peak season while ensuring the National Park environment is conserved and enhanced by 'd' permitting visitor attractions and that countryside proposals should make use of existing buildings wherever possible.

The proposed resurfacing of the car park, in association with the other proposed improvements and upgrades support fully Policy 1 and with consultation during the development of the proposals with CCW, Cadw and the officers of the National Park the proposals conserve the natural beauty and wildlife of the Park and enhance the cultural heritage. Furthermore, the proposed upgrade to the car park enhances visitor facilities at the castle, allowing more to enjoy it and understand the importance it plays within this area of the Park.

In principle, therefore, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable. Consideration therefore needs to be given to the details of the proposal and compliance with the relevant policies of the LDP.

Visual amenity

Policy 15 of the LDP seeks the conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park with criteria 'a' and 'b' resisting development that would cause significant visual intrusion and/or, that would be insensitively and unsympathetically sited within the landscape. Policy 30 of the LDP seeks to avoid development that is of an incompatible scale with its surroundings (criterion 'b') or is visually intrusive (criterion 'd').

This application proposes only to resurface the car park; part of which is metalled and part of which is grass covered. No changes are proposed to layout and scale of the car park. The resurfacing proposals have been passively designed using simple local materials which are all reclaimable and reusable so the land can again revert to agriculture in the future. A membrane to separate the natural ground from the proposed stone covering will be employed.

Whilst the far western end of the car park is currently grassed and resurfacing of this area in particular will change its character, it is not considered that the

impact will be visually intrusive. The grassed area already has planning consent to be used for car parking, the resurfacing will allow its year round use. The proposal is set in the context of an existing car park, which is sandwiched between agricultural land and Castle Lane (with boundary trees and hedge and a wall separating it further from the castle).

In addition to the works to the car park, some enabling works are proposed including contractors compounds in the existing car park plus a vehicular access track alongside the existing pedestrian access into the castle. These works are necessary for the period of the construction works, and their impact will be for a temporary period only and viewed in the context of works being undertaken to the castle.

Overall the proposals for the resurfacing of the car park are welcomed and are considered to be acceptable in visual terms, having been developed in close consultation with the PCNPA's Building Conservation Officer and Cadw and supported by a detailed Design and Access Statement.

Neighbouring Amenity

Policy 30 of the LDP refers to 'amenity' in general seeking to avoid incompatible development and significant adverse impact upon the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring properties by virtue of the development leading to an increase in traffic or noise or odour or light and/or the development is visually intrusive.

Whilst Carew Castle is close to the settlement of Carew, the proposed alterations to the car park will not be visible from outside the context of the existing car parking and castle complex. In order to facilitate the works, it will be necessary to have compounds for the storage of materials and construction traffic visiting the site, however given the castle is open to the public these areas and vehicular visits will be managed to ensure the castle as a tourist facility remains fully functioning. This then has the knock-on effect of reducing the impact on neighbouring amenity. The actual construction period will be for a temporary period only and working hours can be adequately controlled by condition to ensure limited noise and disturbance. At the time of writing the report no comments had been received as a result of public consultation.

Given the above it is not considered that the proposal will have any significant adverse impact on the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring properties.

Impact upon the listed building, scheduled ancient monument and archaeology

Policy 8 of the LDP refers to the Special Qualities with criterion'd' seeking to ensure that the historic environment is protected and where possible enhanced.

The application proposals have been developed in consultation with Cadw, PCNPA's Building Conservation Officer and PCNPA's Archaeologist. It should be noted that scheduled ancient monument consent has already been granted by Cadw for all the proposals at Carew Castle.

Dyfed Archaeological Trust (DAT) has responded to the consultation on the application and suggests that areas of the proposed development may contain undisturbed buried archaeological levels and consequently they advise that archaeology is a dimension and constraint to this proposed development. DAT recommend that historic environment issues should be protected through the attachment of a Grampian Style condition such that no development shall take place until the applicants, agents or successors in title have secured a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to the National Park Authority for approval. A written scheme of investigation and watching brief have been submitted with the application and are included as an appendix in the Design and Access Statement – and work in accordance with these will be secured with an appropriate condition.

Cadw has commented on the application and identified that the proposed development works lie outside the scheduled area of the site but extend up to the boundary of a detached part of the scheduled area at its western end. which contains the remains of Civil War earthworks. Part of the existing car park is metalled and part is grass covered. The objective of the proposal is to improve the surface of the car park and give it an all year use. There is an archaeological written scheme of investigation attached to the application. This identifies that all the groundwork will be subject to an archaeological watching brief by the applicant's ecologist. This is in Cadw's opinion a sufficient response to the potential impact of the proposal. Cadw would also suggest that the ground is scanned by a metal detector prior to excavation to recover any finds especially those associated with the Civil War. In Cadw's opinion there will be no effect upon the setting of the castle as there is a mature hedge and tall stone between the car park and the castle, shielding the car park from views of the main castle. Cadw does not wish to raise any concerns about these proposals.

Ecology

Policy 11 of the LDP seeks to ensure that development that would disturb or otherwise harm protected species will only be permitted where the effects will be acceptably minimised or mitigated through careful design, work scheduling or other measures.

The applicant's ecologists were commissioned to undertake an ecological appraisal of Carew Castle site. The castle as previously identified is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the buildings and grounds, with the exception of the inner part of the Walled Garden, are also designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) largely on the basis of the presence of roosting Greater Horseshoe bats. Carew Castle is nationally and internationally important for its Lesser and Greater Horseshoe bat

populations. The site also forms a constituent part of the Pembrokeshire Bat Sites and Bosherton Lakes Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The SSSI citation in addition to bats refers to the notable wall flora associated with the castle and walled garden as well as colonies of regionally rare species within the grounds.

Ecological Appraisal

In order to inform the ecological constraints/opportunities associated with the proposed works to the Lesser Hall the applicant's ecologist were commissioned to update a previous habitat survey of the site undertaken in 2004 which also included mapping the extent/distribution of rare plant colonies within the grounds, which also covered the walled garden. The accompanying Ecological Appraisal describes the findings of the repeat survey and identifies measures to limit potential impacts on rare plants/habitats associated with contractor access to the work areas and maintaining public access to the castle and walled garden. A letter from the applicant's ecologist dated March 2012, also provides updated information regarding ecological survey work undertaken specific to the car park proposals.

In considering the potential impacts (and avoidance/mitigation measures) on habitats and notable plant species as part of the proposed works, the findings of the most up to date survey have been used in the first instance since the September 2011 survey represents the most up to date description of ecological conditions at the site and the distribution /extent of the rare plant species. This survey characterised the existing car park as a mixture of bare ground and species-poor amenity grassland of little or no ecological interest. The hedgerow along the northern boundary of the proposed car park was characterised as defunct, species poor, although the relative importance of this as a linear flight corridor for bats is recognised.

A supplementary check of the car park area in February 2012, undertaken as part of a site visit for an unrelated development at Carew, confirmed the Phase 1 characterisation and also identified evidence that the car park is traversed by Badgers, presumably to access grassland foraging habitat to the north (within the castle grounds) or to the south. No setts were identified within the northern boundary hedgerow or within 30m of the proposed car park works.

The proposed works to the car park would result in the replacement of species-poor amenity grassland with a compacted gravel/stone surface. The amenity grassland was considered of little or no ecological value and its loss would not require any particular consideration/mitigation. However, retention of the northern boundary hedgerow and consideration of protected species, specifically nesting birds, foraging/commuting bats and badgers requires some consideration as part of the works.

Hedgerow Retention/Protection

The northern boundary hedge would be retained as part of the works, with the exception of some 'cutting back' along the southern face to provide the minimum working footprint required (15m width) for the resurfacing of the car park. A separate Arboricultural assessment has been undertaken and protective measures relating to trees and shrubs identified, based on maintaining a buffer of 2-3m from the hedgerow base to edge of the car park. This is discussed in more detail in the following Tree section of this report.

Bats

Retention and protection of the northern boundary hedgerow as described above (and in the arboricultural report would maintain this linear corridor as a flight route for bats, which form part of the SSSI citation at Carew. In addition, it is considered appropriate that no artificial lighting is installed/utilised during either the construction or operational phases of the development so as to avoid any potential impacts on bats foraging or commuting along the hedgerow.

Nesting Birds

Any required 'cutting back' of the northern boundary hedgerow should be undertaken so as to avoid the bird nesting season, which typically runs from March-August inclusive. The nests of all wild birds are protected against damage or destruction whilst they are in use or contain eggs/dependent young under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). In the event that works to the hedgerow were required between March and August, they would need to be preceded by a check for any evidence of nesting birds by a suitably experienced ecologist (e.g. local authority ecologist).

Badgers

No Badger setts were identified within or adjacent to the proposed works area although evidence that Badgers do traverse the area was recorded. On the basis that excavation works would be to a depth of around 250mm and that works would be undertaken during normal daylight hours, specific consideration of Badgers is unlikely to be required. However, any excavation over 250mm would need be covered overnight and/or a means of escape provided. The level of use of the car park, and its hours of operation (i.e. during castle opening times) would also limit any potential effects on the movement of Badgers following completion of the works.

Consideration of Statutory site designations

As set out in the accompanying Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey report (sections 4.10-4.12), Carew Castle is a designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and forms part of the Pembrokeshire Bat Sites Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Mill Pond (River Carew) to the north of the castle also falls within the boundary of the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC (as a

tributary of the tidal Cleddau). The existing car park – and the proposed works are located outside the boundary of any designated sites and would not result in any direct loss of habitats or represent a 'potentially damaging operation' for the purpose of the SSSI designation.

Based on the nature and extent of the proposed car park works, and the protective measures described above the risk of any indirect adverse impact on the designated sites, of their qualifying interests, is considered negligible. On a precautionary basis, and as described in the Extended Phase 1 report (section 4.12) adoption of additional protective measures during site construction could be set out in a Contractors Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Conditions similar to those attached on the two associated applications are therefore suggested requiring compliance with the submitted Ecology surveys and updated information and the submission of a CEMP.

Trees

With regard to the issue of the site TPOs, PCNPA's Tree Officer has been consulted and commented that the proposal does not appear to have any serious implications regarding trees and landscape. There are however trees in proximity to the application site. A Tree Survey and Report for the proposed development of the car park has been submitted in support of the application, which has been reviewed by PCNPA's Tree Officer.

The Tree Survey and Report adopts the principles of BS 5837 – Trees in relation to construction; carrying out a tree survey, categorising trees, producing a tree constraints plan, root protection area and finally a construction exclusion zone. The submitted report has been reviewed by PCNPA's Tree Officer, and whilst there is no objection, additional information has been requested with regard to pre-development tree work; tree protection (in particular with regard to the construction exclusion zone, where it is currently difficult to either agree or disagree with the theory of bundle-planting suggested), excavation and methodology and post development landscaping. A suitably worded condition is suggested to ensure submission of supplementary information for review and approval by PCNPA's Tree Officer.

On the previous application for the Lesser Hall PCNPA's Tree Officer had commented (which is equally relevant to this application) that the location of the main contractor's compound is in proximity to the protected trees along Castle Lane. It was noted in initial advice that the information included with the application showed construction access and egress for the site will be tightly controlled through the implementation of defined routes (fenced) and designated compounds for the storage of materials (fenced), which will ensure that the construction materials and traffic will not come into proximity of the trees and hedges on the site. To ensure that the trees in close proximity to the main contractor compound are not affected by the development PCNPA's Tree Officer has recommended advisory notes are considered in particular to ensure that trees and hedges are not affected chemically (through contaminants) or physically (through compaction) below ground along the northern boundary of the compound.

It is considered that in the light of the PCNPA's Tree Officer comments there will be no detrimental impact on protected trees on the site. To ensure that trees and hedges are not affected, a condition is suggested with regard the submission of further information including pre-development tree work, scaled tree protection plan, calculated root protection area, excavation details and post-development landscaping in accordance with best practice and the suggested advisory notes will be attached.

Sustainability

Policy 29 of the LDP refers to sustainable design and expects all proposals for development to demonstrate an integrated approach to design and construction in terms of 'a' place and local distinctiveness, 'b' environment and biodiversity, 'c' community cohesion and health, 'd' accessibility, 'e' energy use, 'f' energy generation, 'g' materials and resources, 'h' water and drainage, 'i' waste and 'j' resilience to climate change. Policy 31 of the LDP refers to minimising waste requiring development to minimise, re-use and recycle waste generated during demolition and construction. Policy 32 of the LDP requires development to incorporate sustainable drainage systems for the disposal of surface water on site.

Currently part of the car park is metalled and part is grass covered; no changes are proposed to the layout and scale of the car park. The car park is passively designed using simple local materials which are all reclaimable and reusable so the land can again revert to agriculture in the future. A membrane to separate the natural ground from the proposed stone covering will be employed.

Minerals Safeguarding

The site lies over an area of minerals safeguarding. Considering these proposals against the Safeguarding Minerals Zones SPG (June 2011) the applicant has provided the following conclusions:

- c. The proposals are located within 50m of the castle which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade I Listed Building. To extract any mineral deposits from this site (the norm for limestone being by blasting) is accordingly inappropriate; and
- d. There are existing buildings at this site which would preclude extraction of the mineral.

These conclusions are considered acceptable.

Conclusion

Taking into consideration the proposal for the resurfacing of the car park and the reasons behind them it is a welcome upgrade to allow year round use enhancing the provision of visitor facilities at the castle which in turn contributes to the enhancement and future preservation of an important historical asset in this part of the National Park.

Recommendation

That full permission be granted

Conditions / Reasons

That condition be applied in relation to:-

- 1. Standard Time and Drawing Compliance
- 2. Landscaping and Trees
- 3. Requirements for a Construction Phase Management Plan
- 4. Archaeology
- 5. Ecology

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