

**Application Ref: NP/11/425**

**Application Type** Full  
**Grid Ref:**  
**Applicant** Mr P Odley  
**Agent** Mr Charles Hopkinson, Graham H. Evans  
**Proposal** Change of use from horticultural uses to commercial vehicle parking & storage compound, location of container used as builders store & construction of bunds to south-west & north-west boundaries.

**Site Location** Land Adjoining, Bethesda Manse, Narberth Road, Saundersfoot, Pembrokeshire, SA69 9DS

**Case Officer** Liam Jones

**Summary**

This application proposes the change of use of a parcel of land within the area known as Bethesda, which lies to the south west of Saundersfoot, into a commercial vehicle parking and storage compound. The site is considered to be an unsuitable location for the proposed use as it fails to accord to the policies of the Adopted Local Development Plan and the use will impact to an unacceptable degree on the surrounding landscape of the National Park.

The application has been directed to the Development Management Committee as it has been determined contrary to the view expressed by the Community Council recommending full support for the application.

**Consultee Response**

**Countryside Council for Wales:** Reply - Does not wish to comment.

**PCC - Head of Public Protection:** Reply - Restricting the operating hours of the site to no later than 1200hrs on any day, or before 0700hrs.

**Saundersfoot Community Council:** No objection - Fully support application. The re-siting of the applicants large vehicles would alleviate the parking problems on the Whitlow estate. Pembrokeshire County Council already has a depot in the vicinity so there should be no access issues for vehicles entering or leaving the site.

**PCC - Transportation & Environment:** No objection - Recommended conditions

**PCC - Head of Public Protection:** Conditional Consent - No objection with a recommended condition restricting operating hours to no later than 2100 on any date, or before 0700.

**PCC - Transportation & Environment:** Conditional Consent

**Dwr Cymru Welsh Water:** No Response Received

**Environment Agency Wales:** No Response Received

### **Public Response**

The application was advertised by a site notice displayed at the front of site on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011. Letters were also forwarded to those occupiers surrounding the site including Bethesda Manse, Bethesda Church, 1 Bethesda Cottages, 2 Bethesda Cottages, The Leys, Oaktree cottage, Newpark Farm and Newpark Farm Shop.

2 No. letters of objection have been received from the residents of Newpark. The issues raised are as follows:

- Vehicle parking and storage not a good idea on that site, not only in the National Park but would create another traffic hazard
- Site is opposite a busy farm shop and alterations to road made it faster

1 No. letter of support has been received from the County Councillor for Saundersfoot with the main points raised being as follows:

- The site is adjacent to a chapel which has car parking and opposite is a well established and popular drive in farm shop which frequently has large delivery wagons. In addition it is believed that Pembrokeshire County Council also retain a similar yard on the same side of the road a little further to the east. There are caravan and camping sites all along the same road between the various villages all the way to Tenby.
- It is considered that the proposal has merit, giving Mr Odley access and egress to a main road in an area which is already used for chapel attendance and shopping.

Due to the application being in direct conflict to the Local Development Plan it has also been advertised as a departure in the local press on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2011. Any comments received as a result of this process will be reported verbally at Committee.

### **Policies considered**

LDP Policy 01 - National Park Purposes and Duty

LDP Policy 07 - Countryside

LDP Policy 08 - Special Qualities

LDP Policy 11 - Protection of Biodiversity

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 42 - Employment Sites and Live/Work Units

LDP Policy 53 - Impacts on traffic

PPW4 Chapter 04 - Planning for Sustainability

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

PPW4 Chapter 07 - Supporting the Economy

TAN 06 - Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities

TAN 11 - Noise

TAN 12 - Design

TAN 18 - Transport

### **Officer's Appraisal**

#### **Background & Description**

The application site relates to a parcel of land adjoining a property referred to as the 'Manse' in the area known as Bethesda. The site lies immediately adjacent to the A478, is located to the south west of Saundersfoot and lies on the boundary of the National Park.

#### **History**

No planning history

#### **Current proposal**

The application proposes a change of use of a parcel of land into a commercial vehicle parking base and storage compound. Plans show the provision of bunds around the site perimeter as well as a proposed storage container to be located to the rear of the site. The proposed container measures 6m in length by 2.4m in width with a box like appearance upto a height of 2.5m.

The application indicates that the site would be used for the storage of mobile catering trailers in connection with the applicant's series of businesses in the Saundersfoot area. Furthermore the storage compound would provide space for the applicant's brother a builder residing within Tenby.

Details supplied indicate it is intended to site 5 No. commercial trailers, upto 3 No. vans as well as a storage container as shown on the plans.

The application has been supported with the following documentation:

- A Design and Access Statement
- Transport Statement
- Tree Survey

## Key Issues

The main issues to consider in this application relate to the principle of the use in the proposed location, impact upon visual amenity and the special qualities of the National Park as well as impact upon highway safety.

### Site Context & Principle of development

The site relates to a near rectangular parcel of land which sits to the immediate north of the A478 a busy link road between Tenby and Kilgetty. Whilst there are properties in the near vicinity of the application site including a small cluster of dwellings, a chapel and farm shop the area known locally as 'Bethesda' does not lie within a Centre Boundary or indeed a Rural Boundary as designated within the Local Development Plan. The site is within countryside, with the nearest defined Centre at Saundersfoot located approximately 1km to the north east. In this respect the application falls to be considered under Policy 7 – Countryside of the Local Development Plan which deals with proposals for development outside identified Centres as well as Policy 42 – Employment Sites & Live/Work Units.

Policy 7 of the LDP explains that outside identified centres development will only be permitted in certain instances. These include the development being a) sensitive filling in of small gaps or minor extensions to isolated groups of dwellings is proposed, b) housing for essential farming or forestry needs, c) farm diversification, d) conversion of appropriate buildings to a range of uses, e) tourist attractions or recreational activity, f) the enhancement of community facilities, g) low impact development making a positive contribution or h) new farm buildings justified for agricultural purposes. The proposal does not provide an acceptable form of development under any of the criteria listed within Policy 7 particularly as it cannot be considered to be an agricultural related development, a minor extension to a group of dwellings or a conversion opportunity.

Policy 42 considers employment sites and states that employment should be directed to identified Centres or buildings suitable for conversion. As mentioned above, this site is a considerable distance from the nearest Centre within the National Park and it would also result in the introduction of a new employment use in the countryside rather than the expansion of an existing use which the Policy looks to promote.

In view of the above it is considered that the development would provide an inappropriate extension into the countryside where development must continue to be strictly controlled (Planning Policy Wales, Edition 4 February 2011, Para. 4.6.8). Planning Policy Wales (2011) at paragraph 7.3.2 confirms that new employment sites are likely to be small and with the exception of farm diversification and agricultural development in which separate criteria apply, should generally be located within or adjacent to defined settlement boundaries. The expansion of existing businesses within the open countryside should be supported provided there are no unacceptable impacts on local amenity. Given that the site is not located within or adjacent to a settlement

boundary (Centre boundary within the LDP) and this is the introduction of a new employment storage use as opposed to the expansion of an existing use the proposal is considered to be contrary to the Policies of the Local Development Plan as well as National Planning Policy.

Notwithstanding the unacceptability of the site for the principle of the proposed use it is nonetheless important to consider its impact upon visual amenity and highway safety as well as look at whether there are material considerations which would justify a departure from the Local and National Planning Policy.

#### Character and Appearance

The site adjoins surrounding agricultural land as well as a residential dwelling known as the Manse on its east boundary. A car park serving Bethesda Church is located to the rear of the Manse whilst there are other uses including a farm shop and touring caravan site to the south which lie outside the National Park boundary. The site at present is set back from the highway and lies on the fringe of the National Park boundary. From the roadside the land is considered to form a pleasing natural bufferzone between the highway and surrounding built developments to the south. It is understood from the Authority's enforcement investigation records that engineering works took place at this site in 2010 providing for earth bunds as well as the laying of hardcore material. These works have not received the benefit of planning permission although form part of this application.

Whilst the bunds which the plans show measure upto 1.2m along the frontage and 2m along the northern boundary would help screen some storage at the site, these bunds and the hedgerow to the front are unlikely to preclude all views of the parked and stored vehicles.

The statutory duty of the National Park Authority is to conserve or enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the park which is set out in Policy 1 of the Local Development Plan. The proposed use will clearly neither conserve nor enhance upon the character of the land within the National Park. The development will introduce the parking of a number of vehicles and associated materials on a parcel of undeveloped land in the countryside. The use proposed fails to meet the aims of criteria a) to d) of Policy 15 in that the use will cause significant visual intrusion, will be insensitively sited within the landscape, be incompatible with its location and fail to harmonise with, or enhance the landform and landscape character of the National Park.

#### Highway Safety

As part of the application the Authority has consulted with officers of Pembrokeshire County Council Highways Authority. A response received suggests the recommendation of approval subject to conditions specifying that the use shall be for light goods vehicles only upto a maximum of 7.5 tonnes, adequate parking and turning facilities to be provided, surface

material details and an access gate being located a minimum of 10m from the edge of the carriageway.

Whilst these comments are of note officers consider that the potential use of this site will impact upon highway safety to some extent particularly through the coming and going of large vehicles onto the main A478. The applicant anticipates 2 private car trips to the site each day and upto 10 commercial vehicles per day seasonally. Given the comments of the Highway Authority, however, it is considered that a refusal could not be justified solely on grounds of impact on highway safety.

#### Material Considerations

The submitted Design and Access Statement states that the applicant and his family run a series of businesses within the coastal village of Saundersfoot comprising of a sandwich bar/cafe, sweet shop, burger kiosk and ice cream kiosk together with running a mobile catering business. The submission identifies at present that the mobile catering trailers when not in use are parked on the driveway at the parent's property in the Whitlow estate of Saundersfoot. The applicant states that relocation of the commercial vehicles to the application site would not only benefit the residents of the Whitlow estate but would also assist in road safety as rather than having to take the trailers through the estate and village direct access is afforded onto the A478. Whilst this may be a personal benefit to the applicant and benefit the residents in the area the storage of commercial vehicles within the residential curtilage of a dwellinghouse may in itself have resulted in a material change of use of the land for which planning permission should have been sought. In this respect it is considered that the relocation of the activity is not sufficient to outweigh the direct conflict with both local and national planning policies which direct such storage uses to within appropriate locations within Centre boundaries or existing employment sites.

Saundersfoot Community Council support the application on the above ground that it will alleviate parking problems at the Whitlow estate but also on access grounds stating that Pembrokeshire County Council already has a depot in the vicinity of the site. This view is mirrored by the local Councillor for the area who cites existing chapel and car parking as well as business uses along the same road. Whilst the existing uses of land are noted these cannot be used as an overriding justification to allow a new use in an unacceptable location which is contrary to the Local Development Plan. Approval of the application on these grounds could set a future precedent to allow employment related businesses in countryside locations where there are existing uses and surrounding buildings.

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is considered that the application is unacceptable in principle in that the site lies within an unsustainable countryside location that cannot be supported under the Policy framework of the Adopted Local Development Plan. Policies 7 and 42 direct employment related uses to appropriate

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locations with Centre boundaries and the site lies a considerable distance from the nearest Centre boundary. The use itself is also considered to be in conflict with Policies 8 and 15 in that the development will cause significant visual intrusion, will be insensitively sited within the landscape, be incompatible with its location and fail to harmonise with, or enhance the landform and landscape character of the National Park.

### **Recommendation**

That the application be delegated to officers to refuse permission following the expiry of the press advertisement on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012 for the following reasons:

### **Reasons**

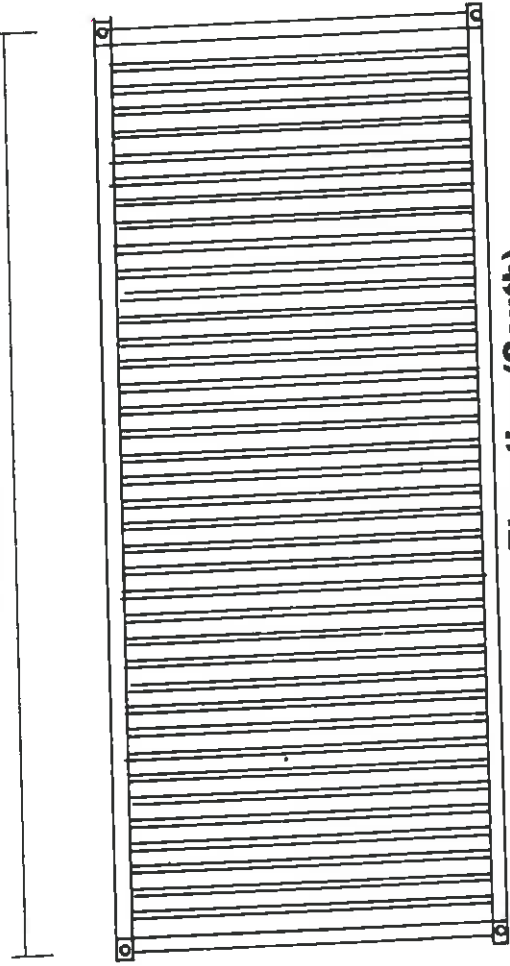
1. The site lies outside a centre boundary as defined within the Local Development Plan where development must continue to be strictly controlled and accordingly the proposed use of the land as a commercial parking and storage compound cannot be justified as being an appropriate form of development in the Countryside. The development therefore fails to comply with the aims of Policy 7 (Countryside) as well as Policy 43 (Employment Sites and Live/Work Units) of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Adopted Local Development Plan (September 2010).
2. The proposed use of the land as a storage compound with associated vehicles and a storage container will adversely affect the sensitive environment and landscape value of the National Park together with its natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage which the Authority has a statutory duty to conserve and enhance which is contrary to Policy 1 (National Park Purposes and Duty). The development proposed would introduce an unsustainable use which will be incompatible with its location and will cause a significant visual intrusion within the wider landscape on the boundary of the National Park and is therefore considered contrary to Policy 8 (Special Qualities) and Policy 15 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park) of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Adopted Local Development Plan (September 2010).





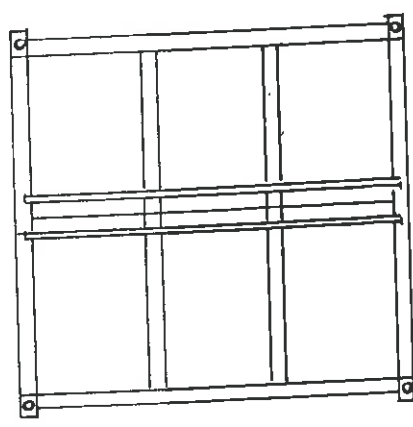
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6.058m



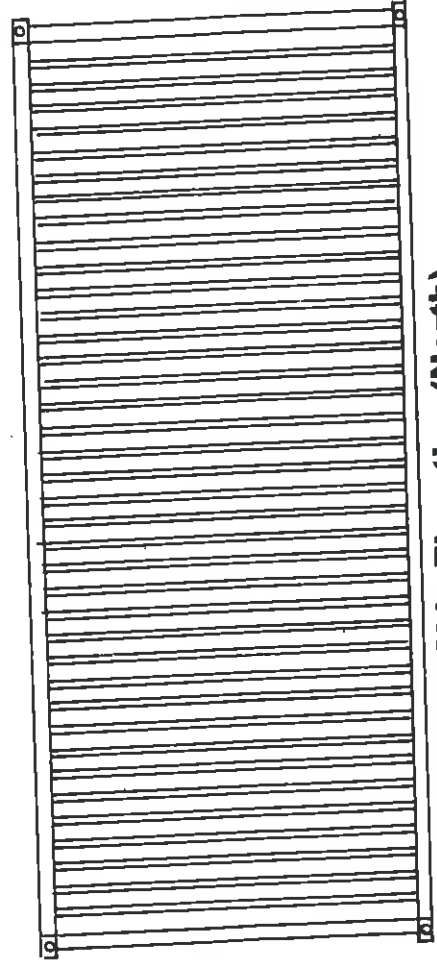
Side Elevation (South)

2.438m

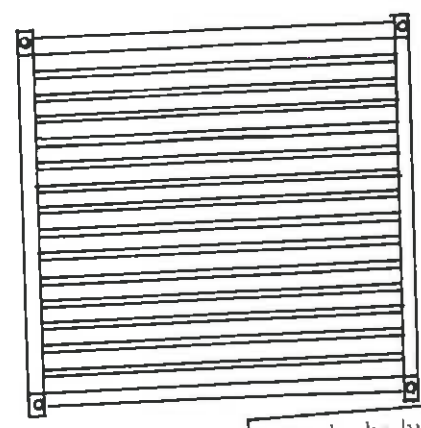


Front Elevation

2.591m



Side Elevation (North)



Rear Elevation

Scale: 1:50

Pembrokeshire Coast  
21 OCT 2011  
National Park Authority

Proposed Storage Container, Land Adjoining Bethesda Manse, Narberth Road, Saundersfoot, Pembrokeshire.

