
Application Ref: NP/13/0527

Application Type	Full
Grid Ref:	SN11773887
Applicant	PCNPA
Agent	Mr R Smith, Smith Roberts Associates
Proposal	Change of use from educational centre to visitor centre and extensions and alterations, landscaping within the car park, change of use of Pantglas from visitor centre to office and staff use. Extension to existing toilet block and erection of tent structure (semi-permanent).
Site Location	Castell Henllys Iron Age Fort, Felindre Farchog, Crymych, Pembrokeshire, SA41 3UT
Case Officer	Liam Jones

Summary

This is an application for planning permission proposing various works at the Castell Henllys Iron Age Fort visitor site. The scheme involves a change in the use of an existing educational centre at the site into a visitor centre which would have internal rooms providing a kitchen, office, exhibition, toilets and an open plan room providing space for a new cafe with exhibition/interpretation and a retail area. A side extension to the building is proposed along with a covered porch and surrounding balcony. Improved pedestrian access into the site, a change in use of the building Pant Glas from a visitor centre into an office and staff use, an extended toilet block and demountable tented structure are also proposed.

The application will result in an improved visitor experience at Castell Henllys with improvements to the use of the existing education centre on site and enhancement to access and facilities. The works will complement the existing character of the site and have no harmful impact upon the special qualities of the surrounding area within the National Park. Subject to suitable conditions to require diversion of the public right of way adjoining the toilet block and tented structures, approval of details relating to the appearance and form of the ramp and other enclosures and developing in accordance with the submitted details and protected species and trees reports the development is considered to be acceptable and complies with policies 1, 7, 8, 9, 11 15, 29, 30, 31, 32, 35 and 53 of the Local Development Plan.

This application has been referred to the Development Management Committee as the applicant is the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.

Consultee Response

PCNPA Rights of Way Officer: The proposed development affects a public right of way, public footpath 64/26. The public footpath is affected by the proposed extension to the toilet and also the children's tented structure. The

proposal would therefore obstruct the public right of way in one place (toilet extension) and temporarily impede passage along the public right of way in another (tented structure) as it would not be possible to ensure that the public rights of way would remain available for use at all times. If the National Park is minded to approve the application then a diversion of the public footpath would be required as a condition of planning permission

CADW - Welsh Historic Monuments: No objection. From the information supplied it will not have a direct, physical impact on any part of the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Ecologist - Pembrokeshire County Council: No objection. The development will have no impact on the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) of local bat species, or have any adverse impact on other protected species or the surrounding habitat.

Natural Resources Wales: No objection. Comments recommending upgrading of existing drainage to a more suitable method of foul drainage.

PCNPA Building Conservation Officer - No objection.

PCC – Transportation & Environment – No objection.

Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water – No response received at the time of this report. A verbal report will be made to members on receipt of any representation.

Public Response

The application was advertised by site notices displayed at both the site entrance off the A487 Trunk Road and at the access to the car park on site on 6th December 2013. Letters were forwarded to the owner/occupiers of Glanduad Fawr, St Dogfael's Church, The Old Rectory and Ffynnonlas. No letters have been received at the time of this report.

Policies considered

Please note that these policies can be viewed on the Policies page Pembrokeshire Coast National Park website - <http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/default.asp?PID=549>

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 34 - Flooding and Coastal Inundation

LDP Policy 35 - Visitor Economy

LDP Policy 53 - Impacts on traffic

PPW5 Chapter 03 - Making and Enforcing Planning Decisions
PPW5 Chapter 04 - Planning for Sustainability
PPW5 Chapter 05 - Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast
PPW5 Chapter 06 - Conserving the Historic Environment
PPW5 Chapter 07 - Economic Development
PPW5 Chapter 13 - Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution
SPG05 - Sustainable Design
SPG06 - Landscape
TAN 05 - Nature Conservation and Planning
TAN 06 - Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities
TAN 12 - Design
TAN 13 - Tourism
TAN 15 - Development and Flood Risk

Officer's Appraisal

Background

'The Origins Project'

Castell Henllys is one of many prehistoric promontory forts in the National Park with replica Iron Age roundhouses, built right on top of the excavated remains of an existing hill fort. It is situated north of the A487 approximately 6.4km east from Newport.

The origins project is part of the 'Makers of Wales' prehistoric strand of the CADW pan-Wales interpretation plan. The funding comes from the Welsh Government's Heritage Tourism Project, which is backed with European funding. The project aims to maximise the economic value of heritage through increasing the volume, length and value of visits to Wales, linking themes of Welsh heritage at national, regional and local levels. The project will also make sure that Wales's outstanding heritage is more accessible and enjoyable to visit – for those who live in Wales and for visitors.

The funding will support the following PCNPA project:

- To enhance the site at Castell Henllys including developing it as a regional hub for the origins and prehistory of Wales
- The upgrading of the Castell Henllys site, together with directional signs and interpretation panels all form part of this project.

In addition, the project is proposing the installation of interpretation panels/sign at various prehistory satellite sites throughout the North of the county within the National Park. This application put forward is one of a

package of applications being considered in relation to the erection of signage and entrance features at the site.

Relevant Planning History

- NP/178/92 – Education/Interpretation Centre – Withdrawn 11th June 1992
- NP/363/92 – Educational Centre – Approved 7th October 1992
- NP/113/93 – Car Park – Approved 28th April 1993
- NP/262/96 – Portaloo – Approved 26th September 1996
- NP/008/97 – Erection of Toilet block for Public use – Approved 8th January 1997
- NP/041/98 – Iron Age Roundhouse – Approved 1st April 1998
- NP/99/403 – Portaloo toilet building – Approved 22nd October 1999
- NP/00/299 – Temporary residential occupation of roundhouse for historical documentary – Approved 15th September 2000
- NP/01/031 – Additional car parking – Cancelled 16th January 2001
- NP/01/141 – Provision of cattle access – Approved 23rd April 2001
- NP/01/143 – Erection of Oak post at entrance to car park – Approved 23rd April 2001
- NP/03/144 – Portaloo – Approved 23rd April 2003
- NP/04/258 – Erection of 2.5kw wind turbine & greenhouse – Approved 9th August 2004
- NP/04/561 – Erection of 2.5kw wind turbine – Approved 17th January 2005
- NP/05/295 – Temporary siting of portaloo for archaeology students – Cancelled 14th June 2005
- NP/06/373 – Temporary Portaloo for 5 years – Approved 13th December 2006
- NP/06/072 – Temporary change of use to living history exhibition with re-enactor living on site – Approved 24th March 2006

Constraints

NPA Property – within 25m
Technical Advice Note 15
Biodiversity Issue
Rights of Way Inland – within 50m
Ancient Monument – within 50m
Potential for surface water flooding
Recreation Character Areas

Current Proposal

Planning permission is sought for various works at the site comprising the following proposals;

- Change in the use of an existing educational centre at the site into a visitor centre with internal rooms providing a kitchen, office, exhibition,

toilets and an open plan room providing space for a cafe and exhibition/interpretation and a retail area.

- A side extension to the building measuring 6.4m width and 3.5m in depth to house a bio-mass boiler and fuel store. The building would be finished in materials to match the existing building with a turf roof and wooden finish. A covered porch is proposed to project from the extension.
- An extension to the existing narrow balcony structure to provide an outdoor siting area in connection with the cafe use
- Provision of a re-defined access from the existing car park to the visitor building to provide for an orientation point and to provide for a disabled access ramp with a length of 8m and gradient of 1 in 12. An enclosure consisting of soil and turf is proposed to define the orientation point.
- A conversion of the building 'Pant Glas' which is presently a visitor centre into office and staff use.
- Extension of existing toilet structure to its sides along with a canopied area providing a waiting space to the front. The building is proposed to be extended to both sides enlarging from a width of 6.2m to 9.2m. The canopy is proposed to project from the front of the building upto approximately 4m. Finishes include boarded construction to match the existing building and the canopy would be comprised of round pole construction with beam and a purlin roof and single ply membrane on grooved plywood. The extensions and canopy would comprise of a flat roof.
- A demountable tent structure to provide a covered outside gathering space. This is proposed to be positioned to the north west of the toilet block and would be measure approximately 7m in diameter and 5.5m in height. The tent structure would be fabricated from a matt PVC fabric and its form and appearance takes its reference from the Round Houses and would sit beneath the canopy of the surrounding trees.

The application has been supported with;

- A Design and Access Statement
- Tree Report
- Bat Survey Report

Key Issues

- Principle of Development
- Siting, Sustainable Design and Special Qualities of the National Park
- Access and Highway Safety
- Neighbouring Amenity

- Protected Species
- Drainage and flooding

Principle of development

The application site is situated at Castell Henllys Iron Age Fort and is considered to be in the countryside as defined within Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan (LDP). The principle of the development proposals to provide enhancements to the range of facilities at the site meets the aims of criterion (e) of Policy 7 in that this proposal is a tourist attraction or recreational activity where the need to locate in the countryside is essential. The development is functionally attributed to the tourist attraction at Castell Henllys and, as such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle subject to conditions restricting the use of Pant Glas to the main activities at Castell Henllys.

Siting, sustainable design and special qualities of the National Park

Policy 8 of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) is a strategy policy which ensures that the special qualities of the National Park will be protected and enhanced. Of particular relevance is Policy 15 of the LDP which states that development will not be permitted if it causes significant visual intrusion (criterion a); failing to harmonise with, or enhance the landform and landscape character of the National Park (criterion d); losing or failing to incorporate traditional features (criterion e). Furthermore policy 29 of the LDP states that all proposals will be expected to demonstrate an integrated approach to design and construction.

The proposed extensions to the existing educational centre at the site involve a small side extension to accommodate a plant room, a covered porch and balcony area. The extensions would be finished in materials to match those of the existing building including an extended grass roof and oak boarding. The design of the extensions and decked area is reflective of the character of the existing building and would not look at odds with or out of keeping with its setting at this key tourist destination. The stainless steel flue to the bio-mass boiler would be apparent along the rear access of the site extending from the turf roof, however, this would replace an existing similar flue on the building and is not considered to be harmful to overall unique character to this building or setting.

The extensions to the toilet block would result in a larger building to accommodate additional male and female toilets. The form and appearance of the existing building would remain albeit with the extensions taking the form of a wooden flat roof to either end of the building. A covered canopy area would be provided to the front which would provide a waiting/group gathering area. The extensions are designed to be subservient to the toilet block and would not be of an adverse appearance in this setting. The canopy area is a light and transparent addition to the building which would fit in with the existing character.

The scheme proposes an additional structure to comprise of a demountable tented structure near the toilet block building. This would be a seasonal provision and provide a covered outdoor gathering space. This is proposed to nestle below the existing canopies of a number of surrounding trees and be finished in a PVC fabric material with its scale and form taking reference to the Round Houses. The tent is considered to be an acceptable functional addition to the site and will help the learning experiences on site. Whilst not of a traditional or built form the tent will not have an adverse impact upon surrounding visual amenity or the special qualities of the National Park particularly due to its siting near a copse of trees.

No works are proposed to the external appearance of Pant Glas and as such there is no objection to this aspect of the proposals.

Works are proposed near the car park to provide a better access to the building than is currently on site. These works include creation of an orientation point with soil/turf enclosures and a new disabled access ramp and gates. A new sign is also proposed on site although this forms part of a separate application. With regard to these works the improved access into the site is supported and subject to approval of the detail of finishes to the enclosures, additional ramp and gate details by planning condition the works are considered to be acceptable.

In relation to trees at the site it is noted from the submitted tree survey that the proposals would involve the removal of nine trees in total. These include three alders to make space for information boards and access ramp, one ash in poor form, two horn beam trees which would be affected by grading and three crab apple trees to facilitate the development. Protected fencing is proposed to be erected in order to protect the surrounding trees. Whilst it is accepted that the development will result in the loss of some trees at the site, nine in total, this is considered to be a very small percentage of trees on the present site. On the basis of the existing level of tree cover throughout the site a requirement for further landscaping would not be reasonable or necessary in this instance.

In summary of these issues it is considered that the proposals are of an acceptable scale, mass and design and are sympathetic to the character of the surrounding environs. As such the development will not cause a significant visual intrusion on the immediate and distant landscape or adversely impact on the special qualities of the National Park. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with policies 8, 15, 29 and 30 of the Local Development Plan.

Access and highway safety

The improvements to the pedestrian access in the site are welcomed and there is no change proposed to the existing car parking facilities at the site. The Highway Authority note that a new cafe will be created within the existing footprint of the existing building, which might mean that visitor numbers will increase or visitors will extend their stay. They advise that the existing car

parking facilities should be sufficient; however, there is no highways concern as the site is over 300m from the County Road.

The Authority's Access and Rights of Way Manager has been consulted and advises that the proposed development affects a public right of way, public footpath 64/26. As such the application has been advertised appropriately under the requirements of Part 2, paragraph 12(2)(c) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure Order) (Wales) 2012.

The Authority is advised that the public footpath is affected by the proposed extension to the toilet and also the children's' tented structure. It is understood that both of these proposed structures would function as areas to assemble gatherings of groups of children visiting Castell Henllys and it would not therefore remain available for use at all times. It would not be appropriate to grant planning permission for two structures over a public right of way that will function periodically to accommodate gatherings of children. Advice has been sought by the Access and Rights of Way Manager from Institute of Public Rights of Way (IPROW) and the Institute confirms the view that it will affect the free passage of the public right of way leaving the Authority open to allegations of obstructing the public right of way.

It is of relevance to note that the registered route of the public right of way at Pantglas is different to the route that is managed on the ground and this is not an uncommon situation either in the National Park or elsewhere. The land has been surveyed and officers are aware that there is sufficient land to accommodate an alternative route for the diversion between the stream and two proposed structures.

If the National Park Authority is minded to approve the application then a diversion of the public footpath would be required due to the obstruction caused by the proposed development. This could be subject to a suitable planning condition to provide an alternative route for the footpath. Subject to this provision the application is considered to be acceptable on access and highway safety grounds and complies with the above listed policies

Neighbouring amenity

Policy 30 of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development is a criteria based policy which states that development will not be permitted where it has an unacceptable impact on amenity particularly where a) the development is for a use inappropriate for where people live or visit and/or; b) the development is of a scale incompatible with its surroundings and/or; d) the development is visually intrusive.

The proposal is situated within a remote location at Castell Henllys and is not in close proximity to neighbouring occupiers. The provision of a cafe use at the site has the potential to increase visits, however, this would not be of a harmful scale given the potential of the existing use to attract a large number of visits and the distance of neighbours from the site itself. As such, it is considered that the proposal will have no adverse impact upon the amenity of

neighbouring properties or to visitors. As such the proposal is considered to be compliant with Policy 30 of the LDP and can be supported.

Protected species

The application was supported with a Protected Species survey which was carried out on the visitor centre and retail centre. A scoping and activity surveys were carried out in July 2013. Common and soprano Pipistrelle bats were recorded emerging from the building with lots of activity recorded in the vicinity. The proposed works however will not impact roosting bats and as long as the works are carried out as per the survey report and mitigation statement the Planning Ecologist advises that there is unlikely to be any adverse impact on protected species. As such the development is not considered to have any impact on the Favourable Conservation Status (FCA) of local bat species, or an adverse impact on other protected species or surrounding habit and complies with the aims of Policy 11 of the Local Development Plan.

Drainage and flooding

The site lies nestled around a stream and wooded area and there is evidently a potential for flooding generally around the site. The extension to the visitor centre relates to a room to accommodate plant and the floor levels of the building will remain as existing. There is a good level of surrounding vegetation and natural drainage afforded by the stream, woodland and grassed areas and as such the development is unlikely to result in an adverse impact upon surface water management or flooding. The application has been considered with regard to TAN15 Development and Flood Risk and Natural Resources Wales has raised no objection on flooding grounds.

However, NRW has provided comments in relation to the existing foul drainage which would be disposed of via an existing cesspit. NRW have advised the applicant to check whether the cesspit can accommodate the change in use to an office and staff use, making reference to the Pant Glas building. NRW recommend that the drainage be upgraded to a more sustainable method of foul drainage i.e. through a septic tank or package treatment plant. Given there are no objections raised to the scheme proposed such information can be relayed to the applicant as part of an informative. As such the development is considered to comply with the aims of policies 32 and 34 of the LDP.

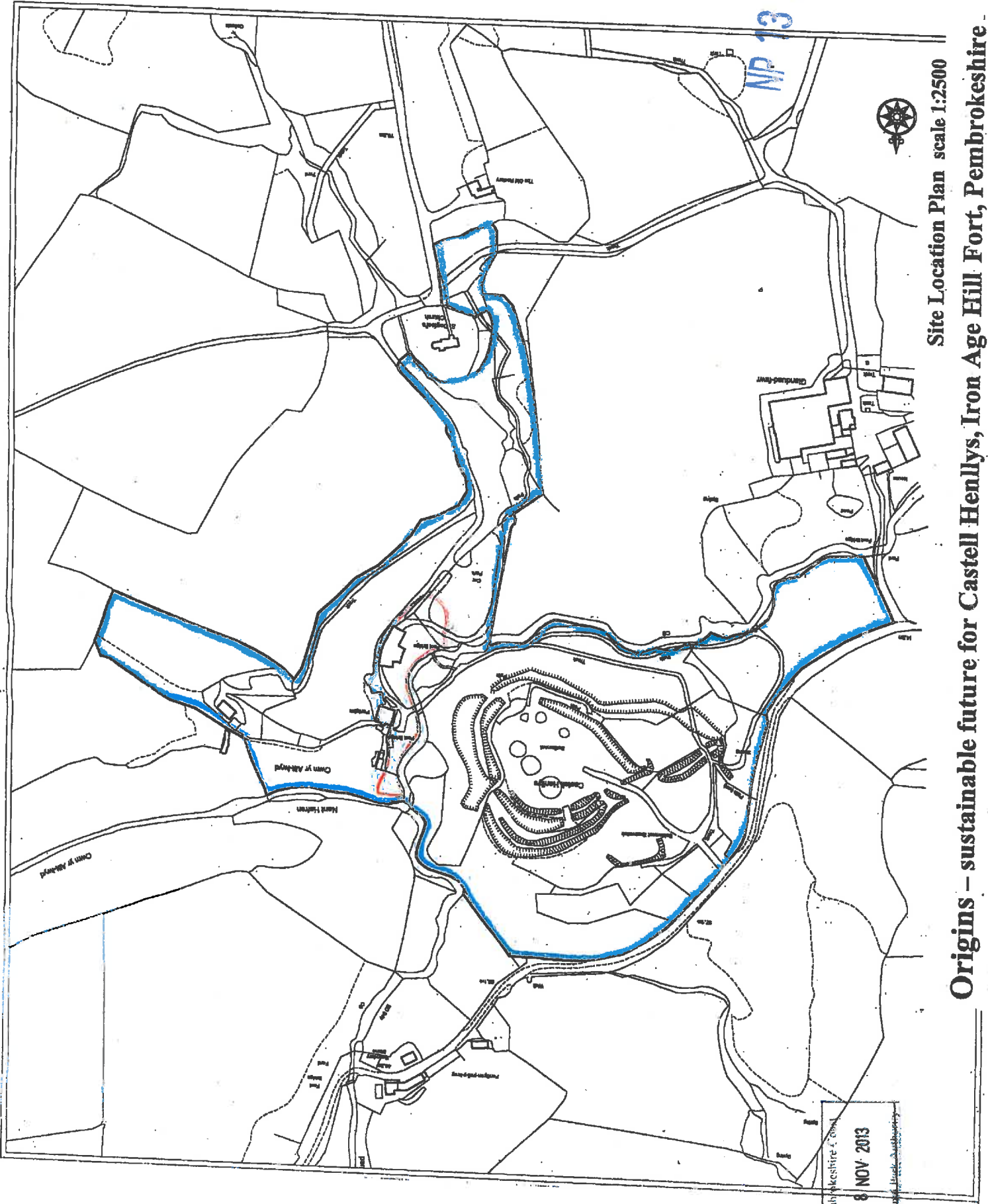
Conclusion

The application will result in an improved visitor experience at Castell Henllys with improvements to the use of the existing education centre on site and enhancement to access and facilities. The works will complement the existing character of the site and have no harmful impact upon the special qualities of the surrounding area within the National Park. Subject to suitable conditions the development is considered to be acceptable and complies with policies 1, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35 and 53 of the Local Development Plan.

Recommendation

That the application be approved subject to the conditions relating to the standard time of 5 years, the development to be undertaken strictly in accordance with the deposited plans restricting the use of Pant Glas to office/staff facilities in association with Castell Henllys, the requirement for a diversion of the public right of way adjoining the toilet block and tented structures, approval of details relating to the appearance and form of the ramp and other enclosures and developing in accordance with the submitted protected species and trees reports.

NP 13 5 27



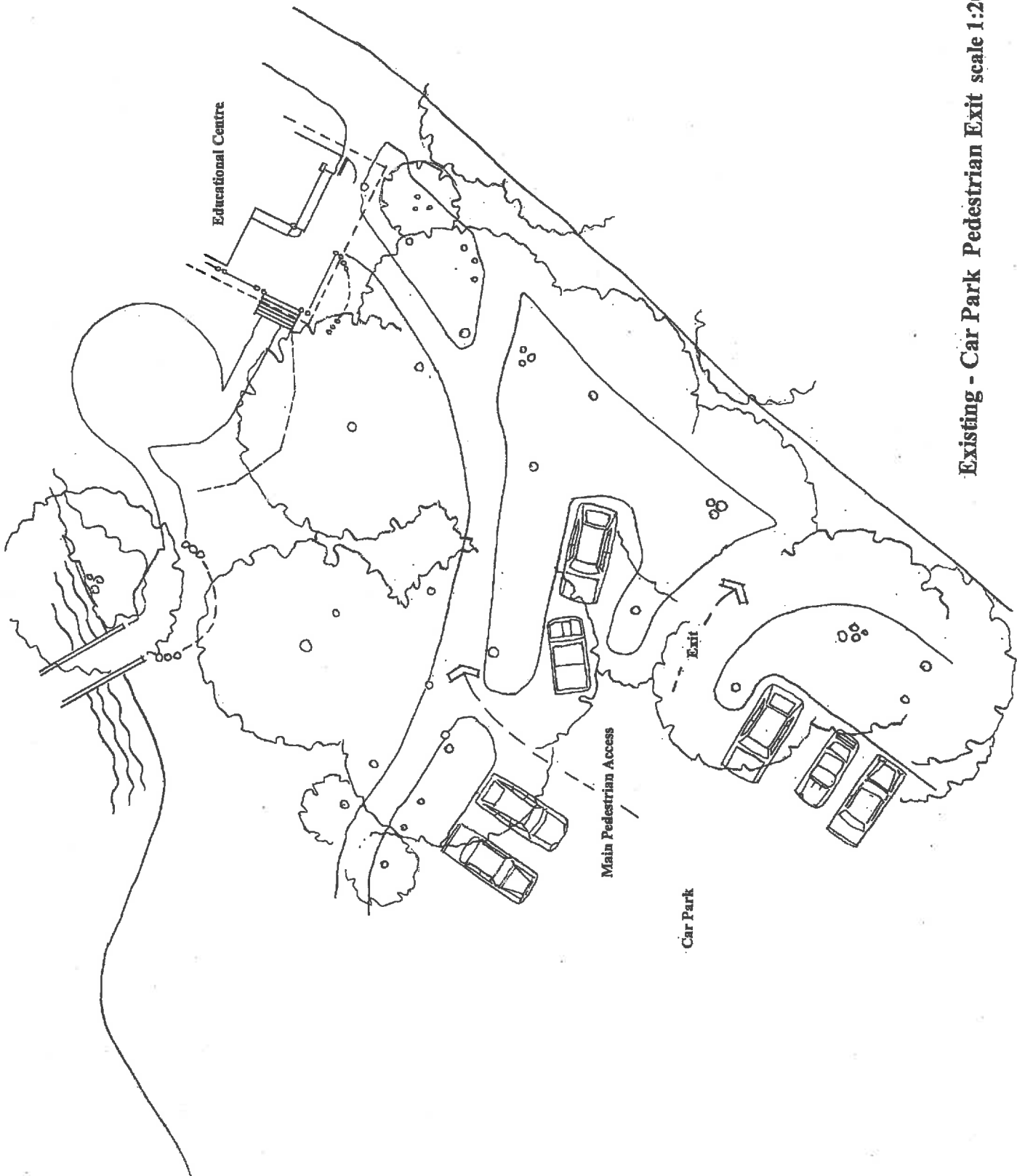
Site Location Plan scale 1:2500

Origins – sustainable future for Castell Henllys, Iron Age Hill Fort, Pembrokehire

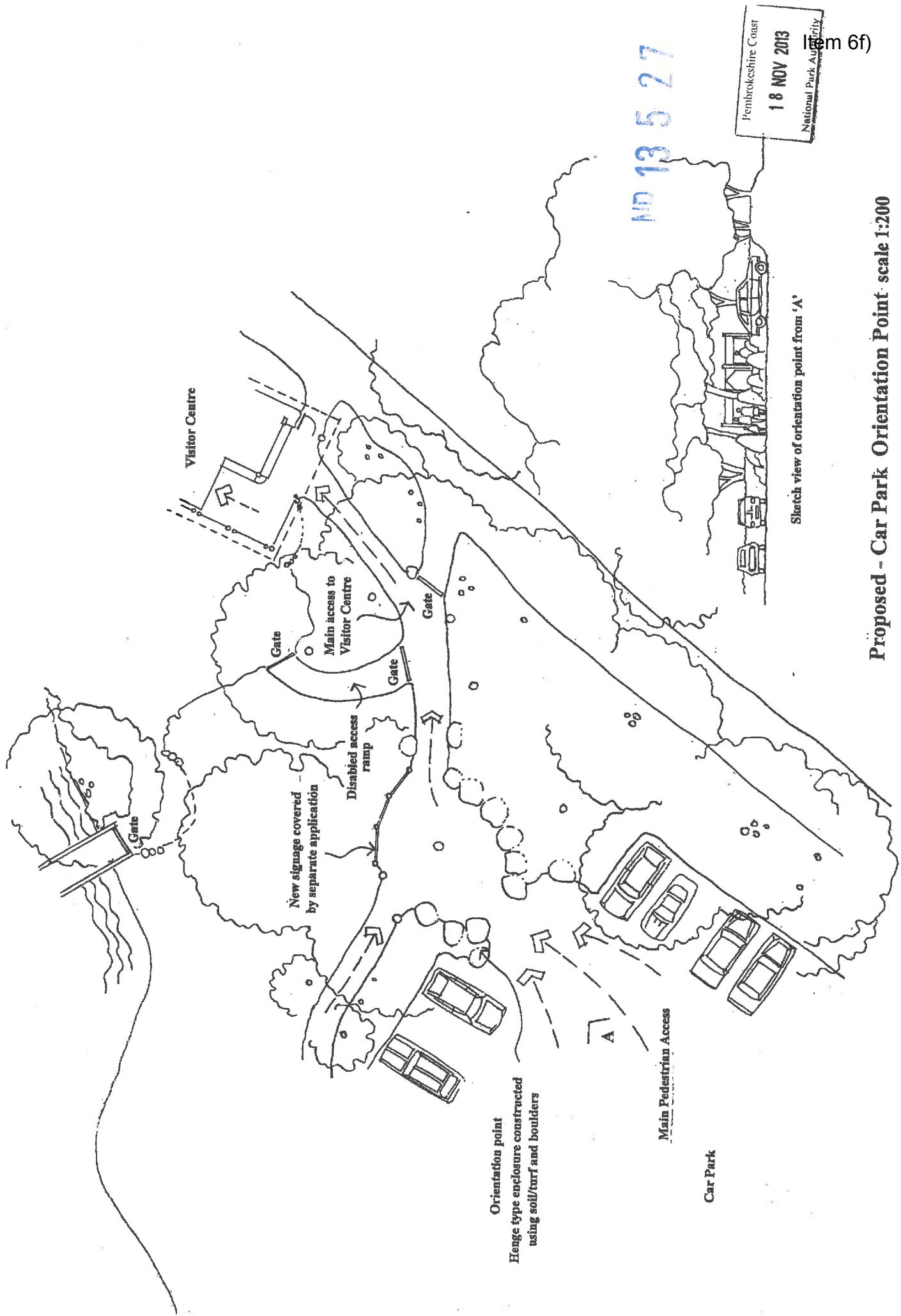
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 National Grid Authority

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Pembrokeshire Coast 18 NOV 2013 Merivale Park Authority
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Existing - Car Park Pedestrian Exit scale 1:200

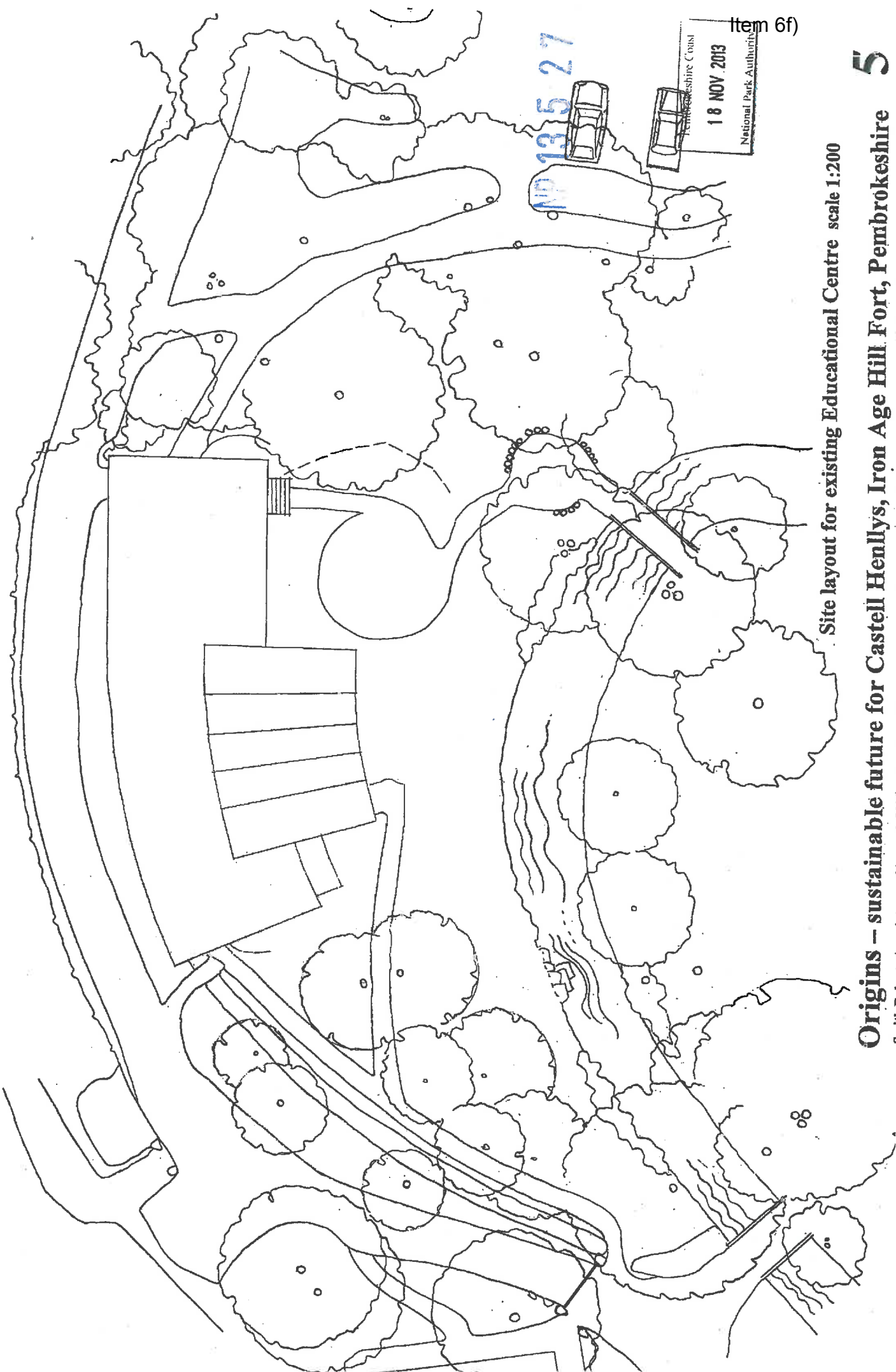


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 18 NOV 2013
 National Park Authority

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Sketch view of orientation point from 'A'

Proposed - Car Park Orientation Point scale 1:200



Site layout for existing Educational Centre scale 1:200

Existing enclosure with enlarged
hedgebanks and gate access to roadway

Proposed area for
refuse storage for
new kitchen

Roadway re-surfaced

Extension

Adventure play

Line of new fencing

Gate

Gate

Gate

modified
tanks

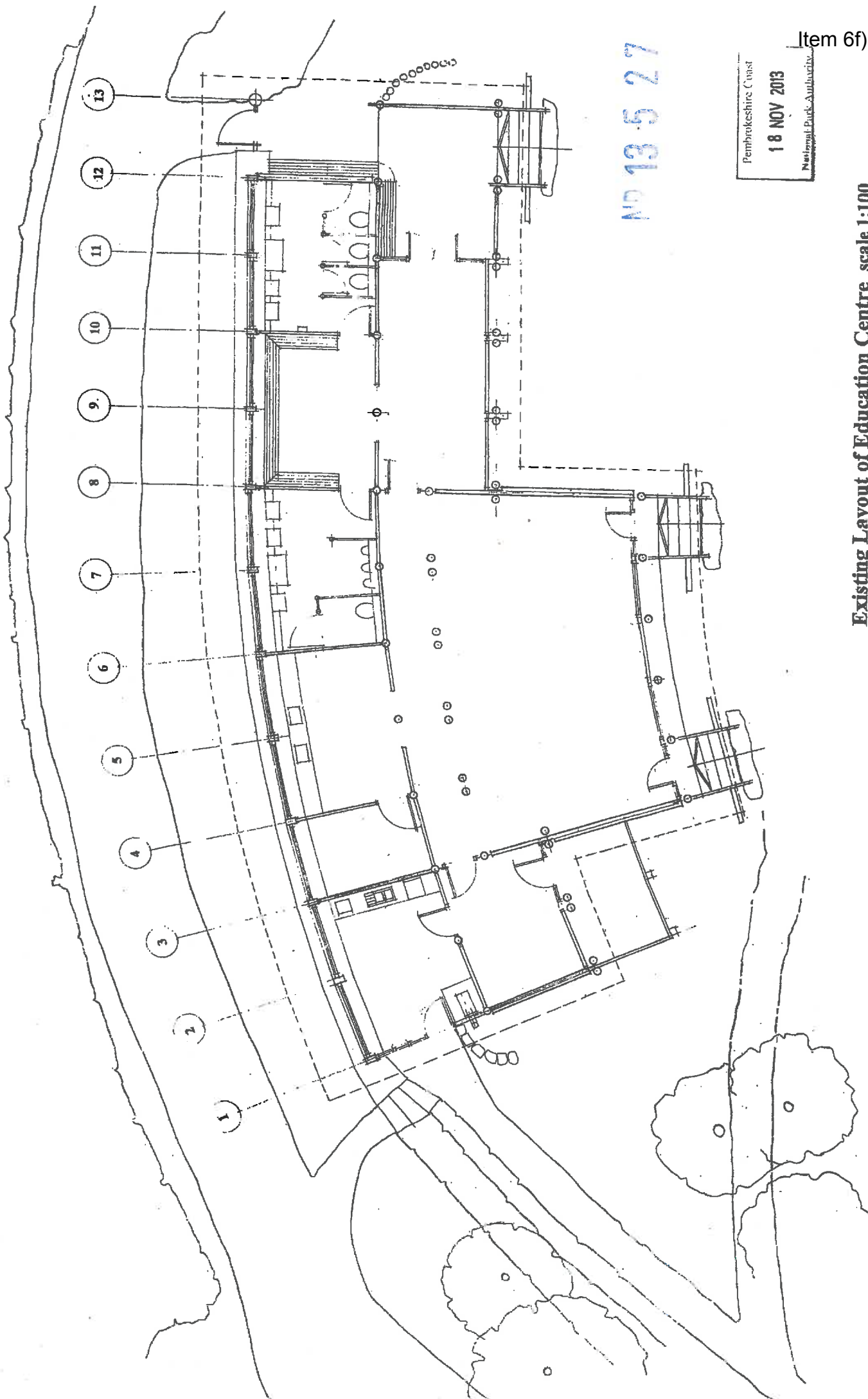
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Pembrokeshire Coast
see dwg 4 for new
orientation point in car park NOV 2013
National Park Authority

Proposed Site Layout for Visitor Centre conversion scale 1:200

Origins – sustainable future for Castell Henllys, Iron Age Hill Fort, Pembrokeshire

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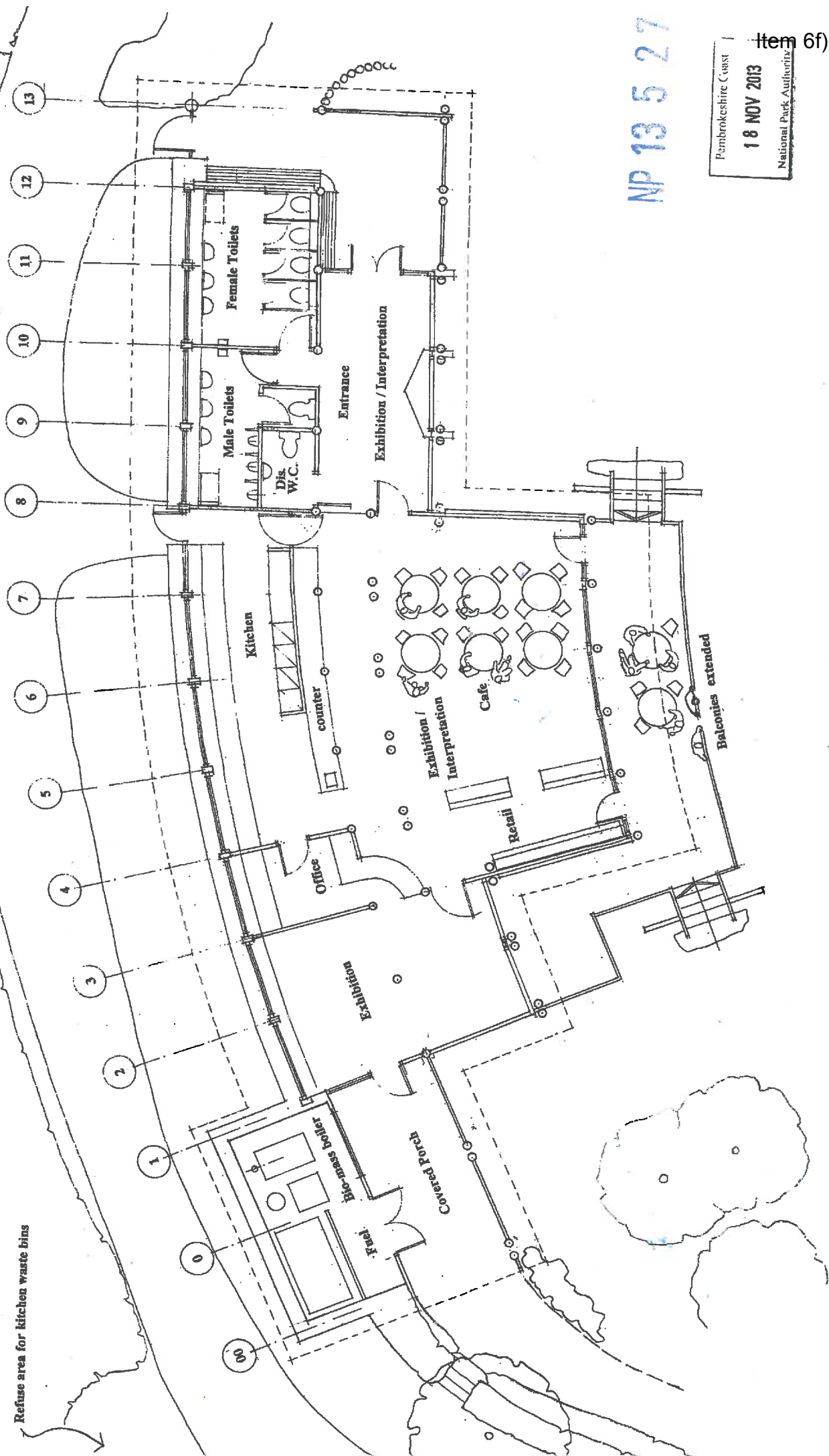
Item 6f)

Pembrokeshire Coast
 18 NOV 2013
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No 13.5 27

Existing Layout of Education Centre scale 1:100

Refuse area for kitchen waste bins



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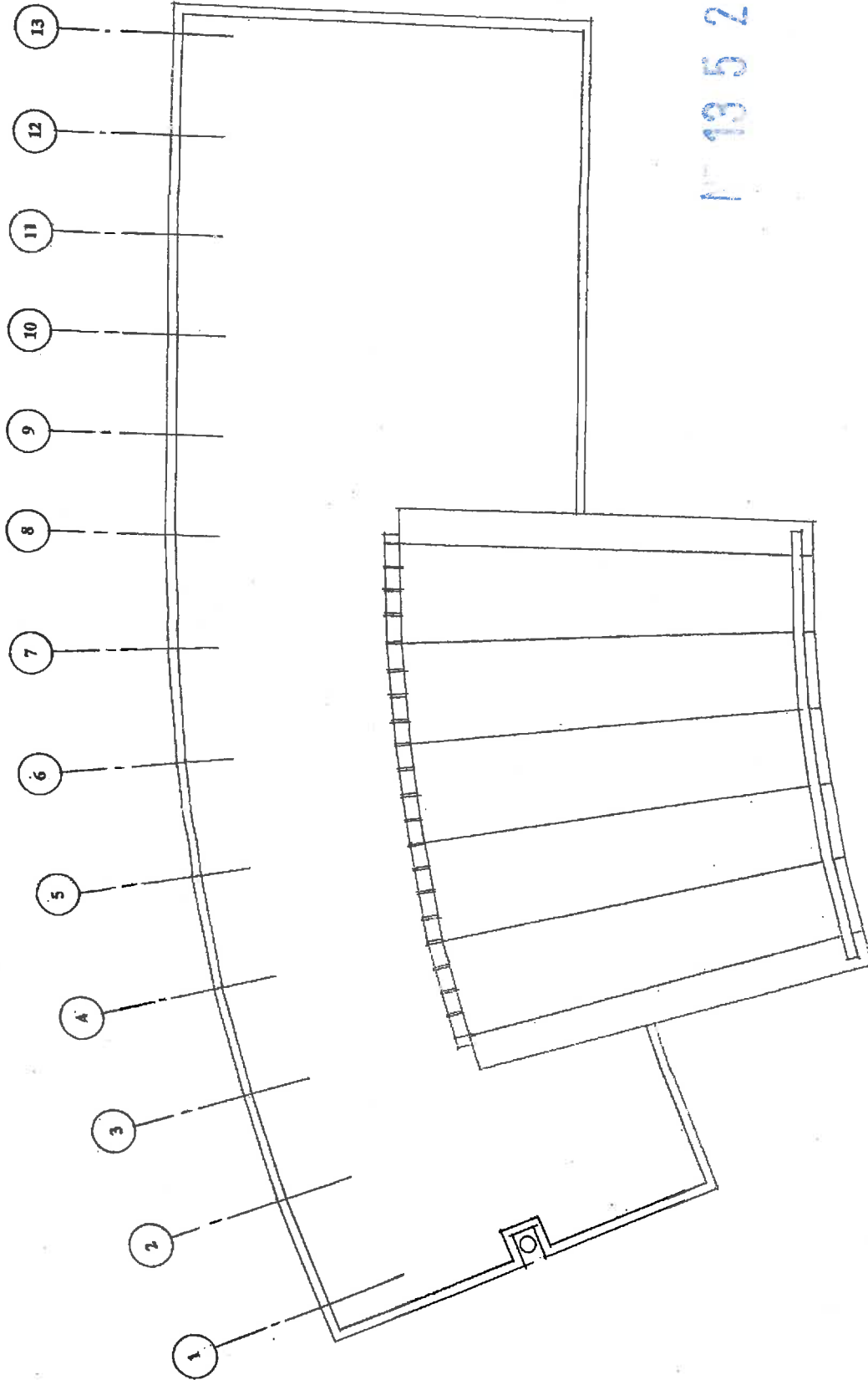
Pembrokeshire Coast
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Proposed Layout for Visitor Centre conversion scale 1:100

Origins – sustainable future for Castell Henllys, Iron Age Hill Fort, Pembrokeshire

Smith Roberts Associates Architects, 2 Old London Road, Winton-under-Edge, Clive, CV3 19 7TA, T.J. 01452 611100.

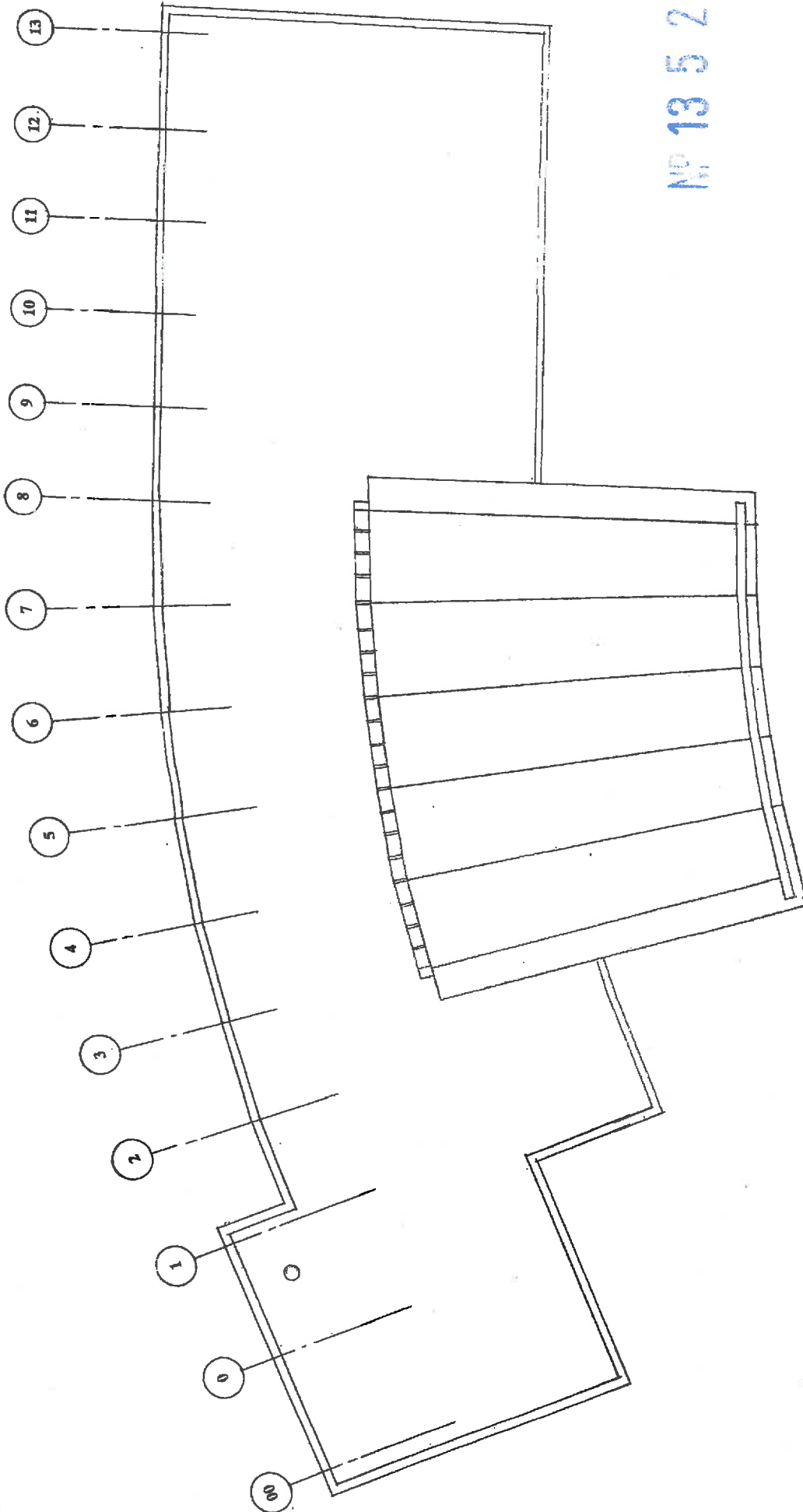
Pembrokeshire Coast
18 NOV 2013
National Park Authority



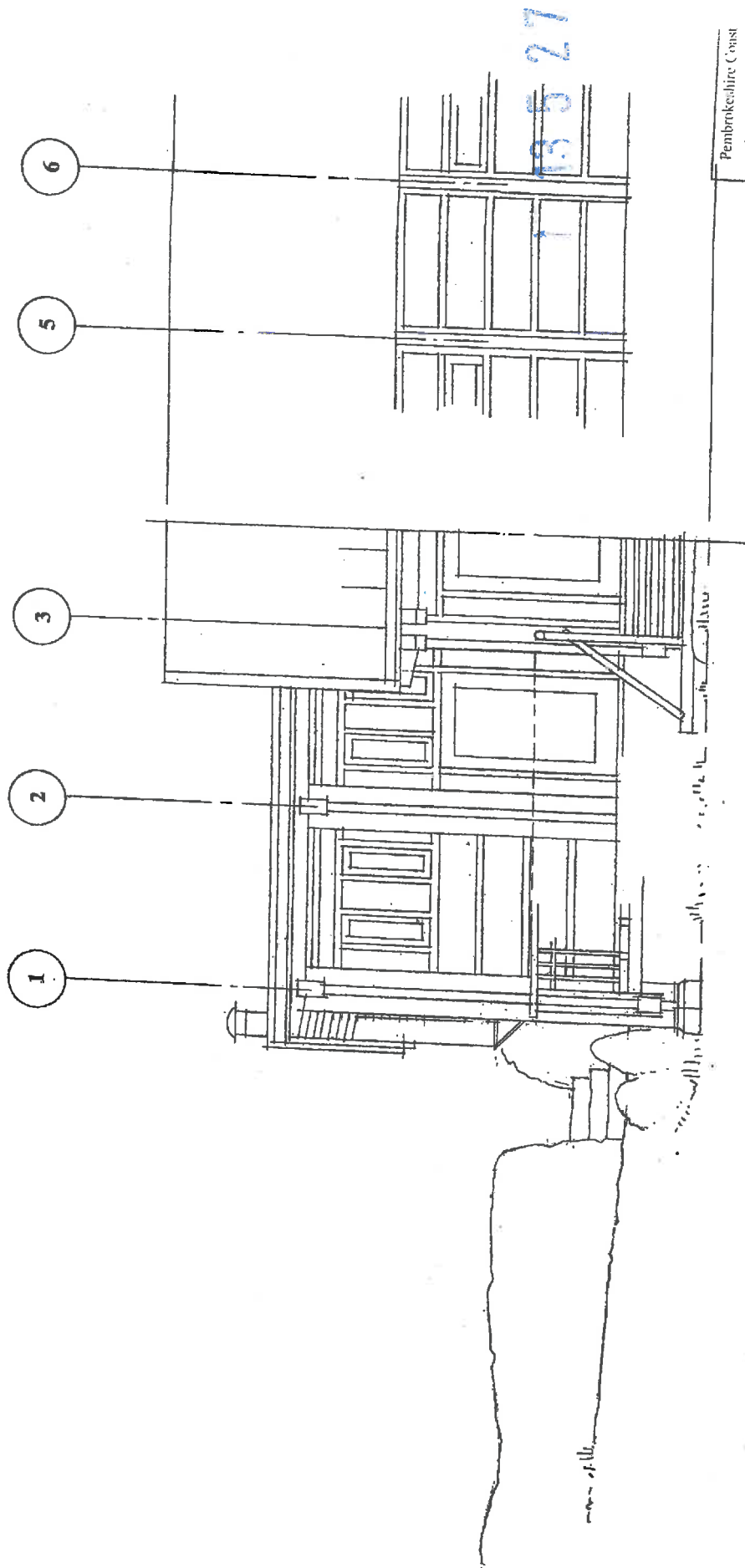
Existing Roof Plan of Educational Centre scale 1:100

Pembrokeshire Council
18 NOV 2013
National Park Authority

NP 13 5 27

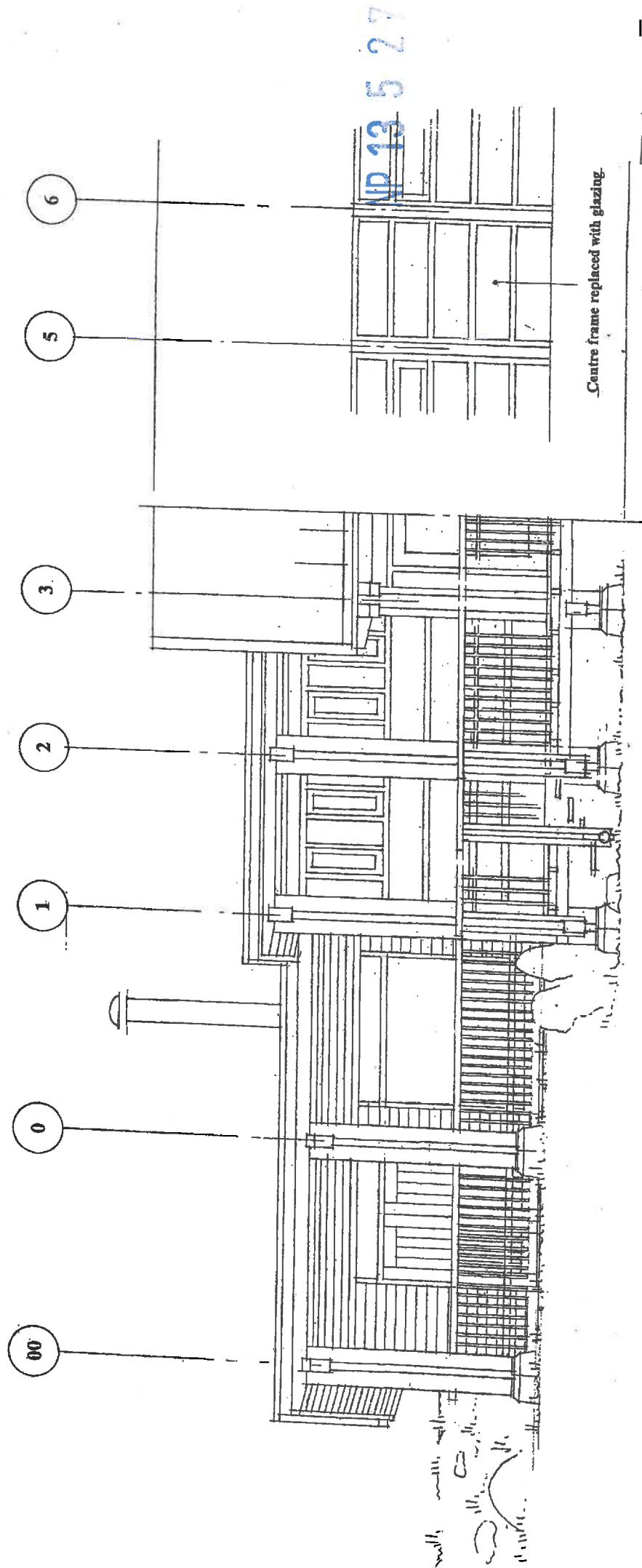


Proposed Roof Plan for Visitor Centre conversion scale 1:100



Pembrokeshire Coast
18 NOV 2013
National Park Authority

Existing Riverside (west) Elevation Education Centre scale 1:50

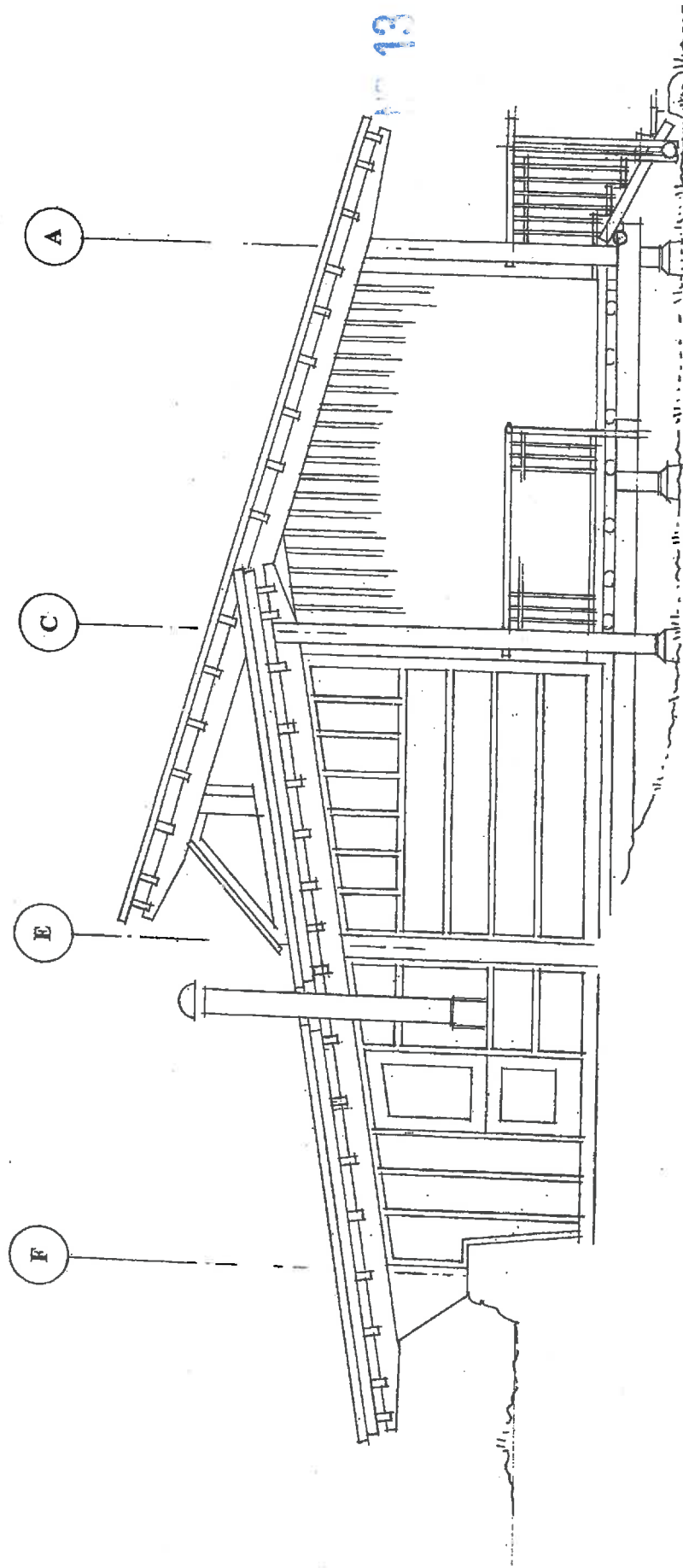


WP 13 5 27

Centre frame replaced with glazing.

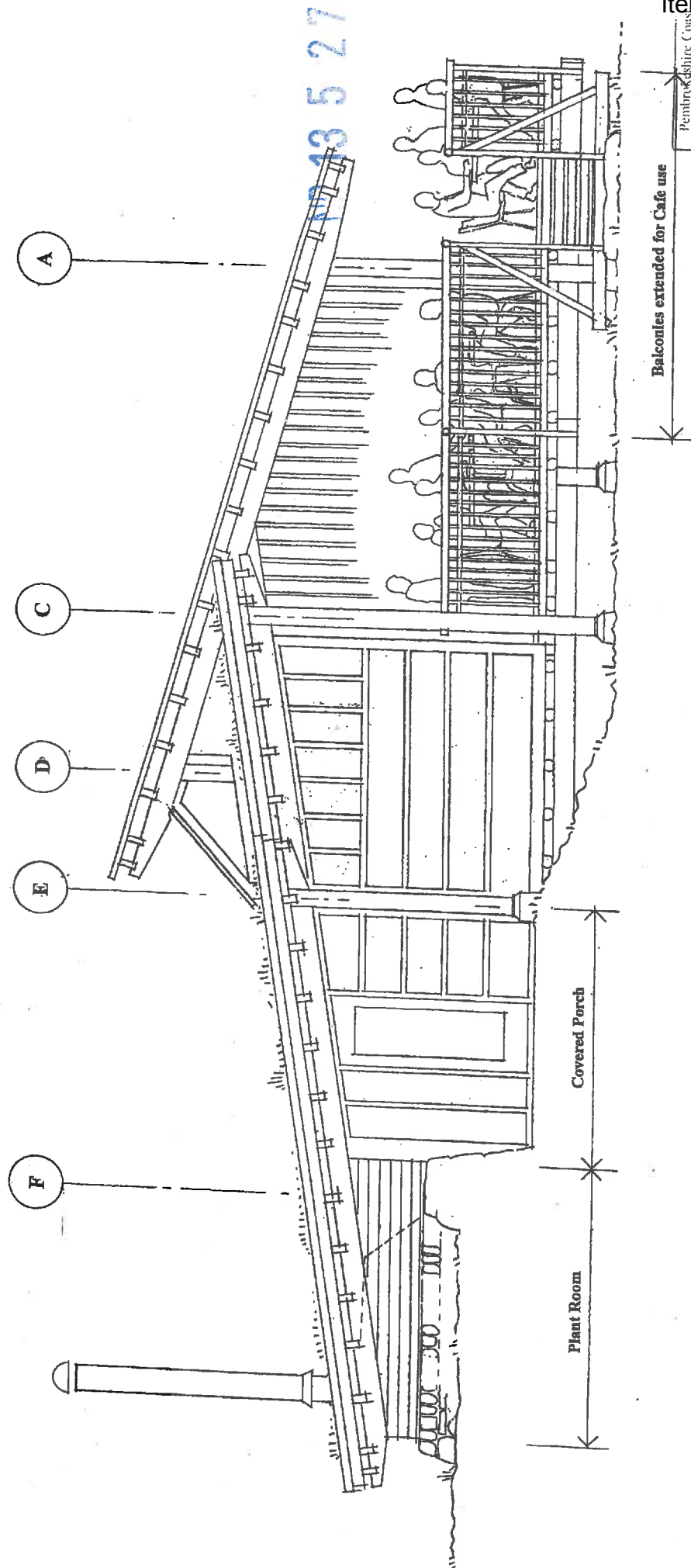
Item 6f)
 Pembrokeshire Co.
 18 NOV 2013
 National Park Authority

Proposed Riverside (west) Elevation Visitor Centre conversion scale 1:50



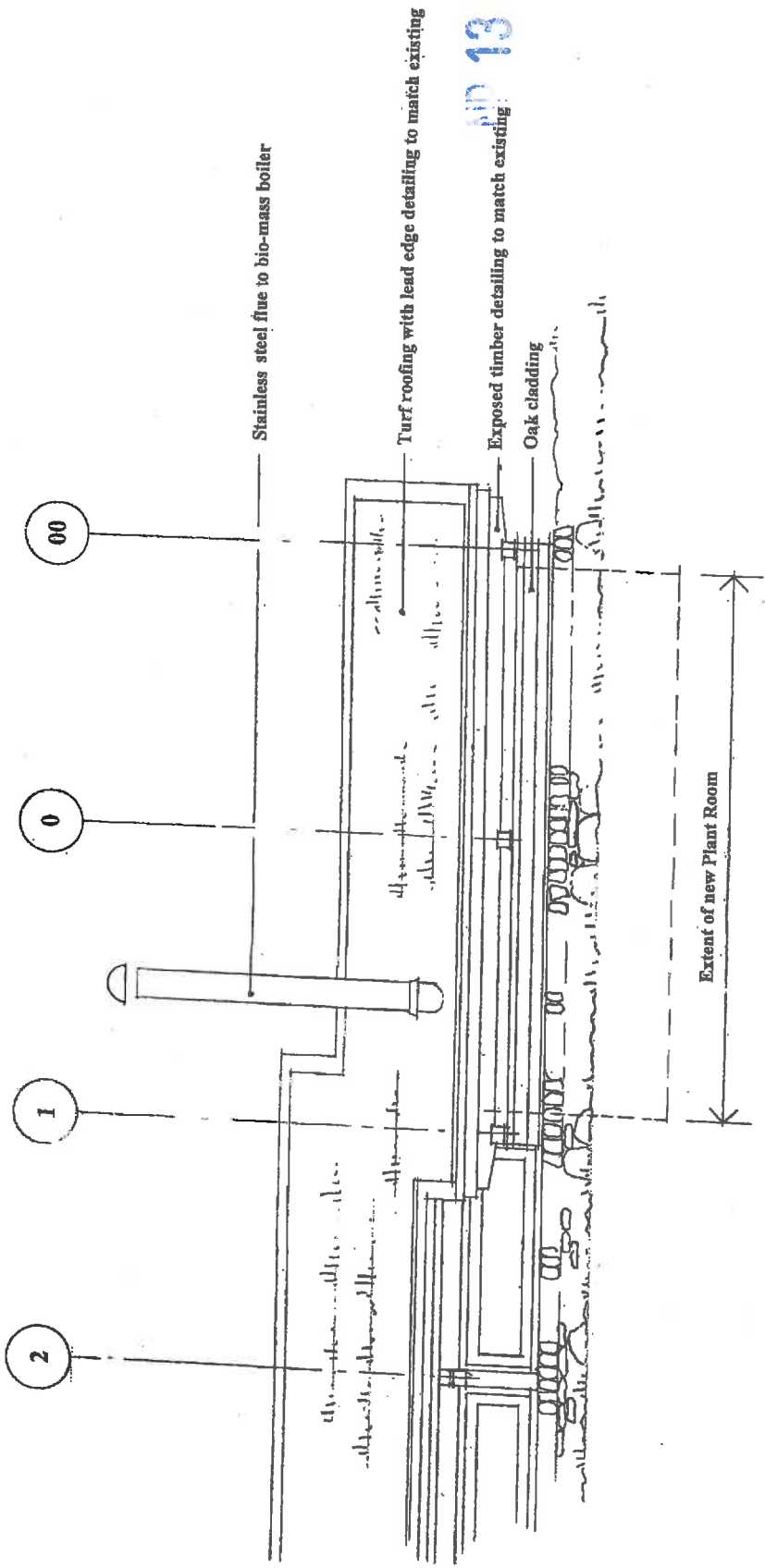
Pembrokeshire Council
18 NOV 2013
National Lib. Authority

Existing (north) Elevation Education Centre scale 1:50



Item 6f)
 Pembrokeshire Coast
 18 NOV 2013
 National Park Authority

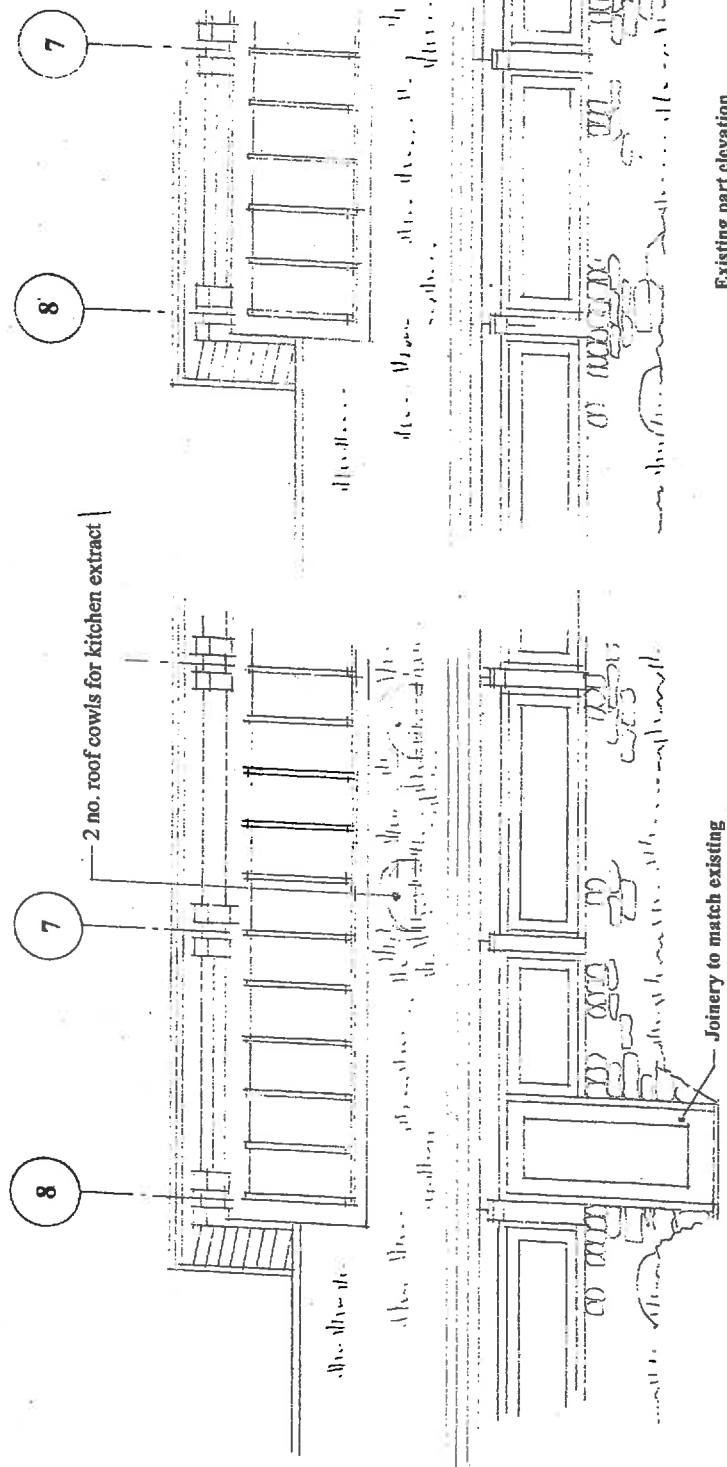
Proposed (north) Elevation Visitor Centre conversion scale 1:50



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Pembrokeshire Council
 18 NOV 2013
 National Park Authority

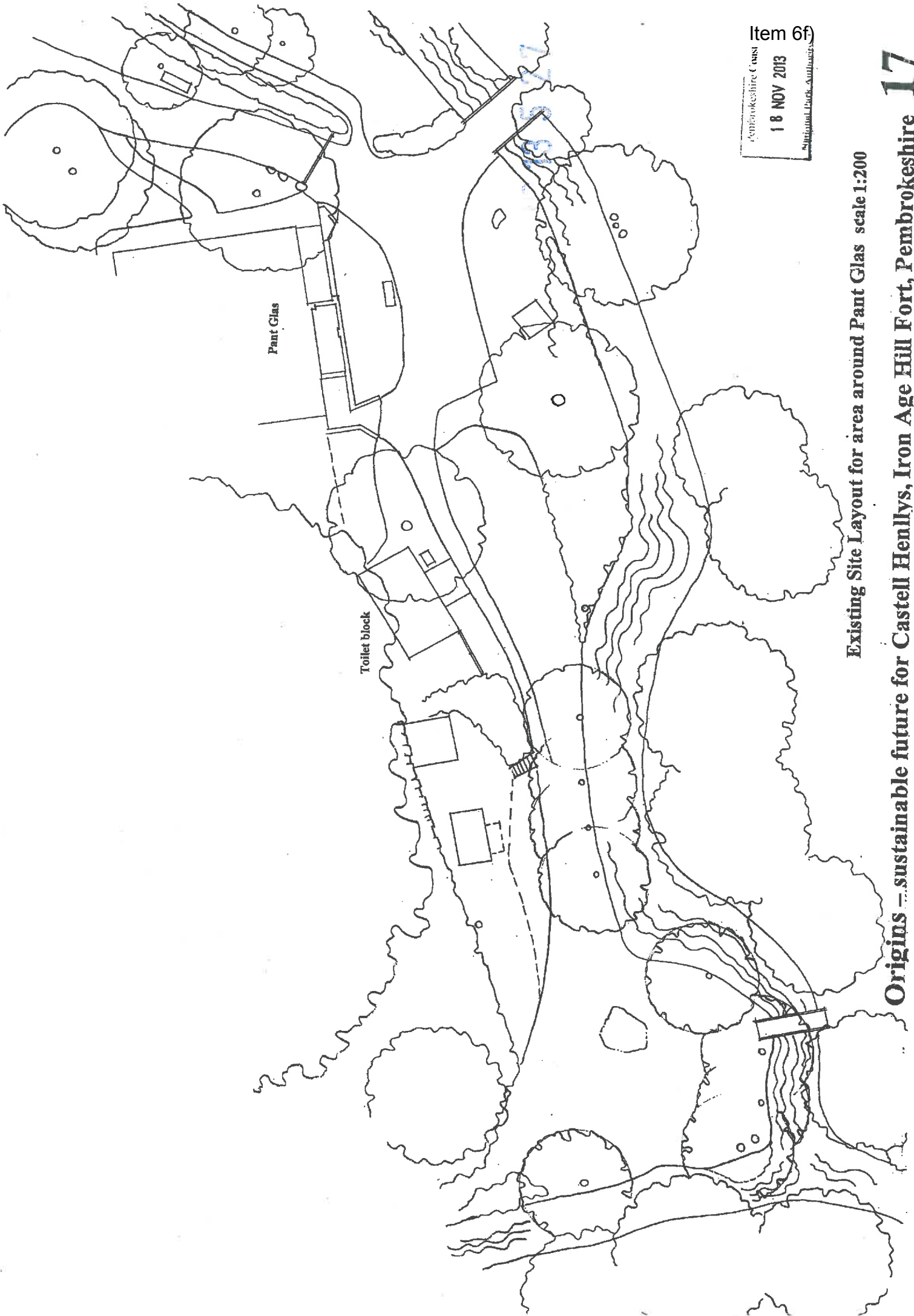
Proposed Rear East Elevation Visitor Centre conversion scale 1:50



NP 13 5 27

Pembrokeshire Council
 18 NOV 2013
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Existing and Proposed Part East Elevation Visitor Centre Conversion scale 1:50



Item 6f)
Pembrokeshire Coast
18 NOV 2013
National Park Authority

Existing Site Layout for area around Pant Glas scale 1:200

Item 6f)

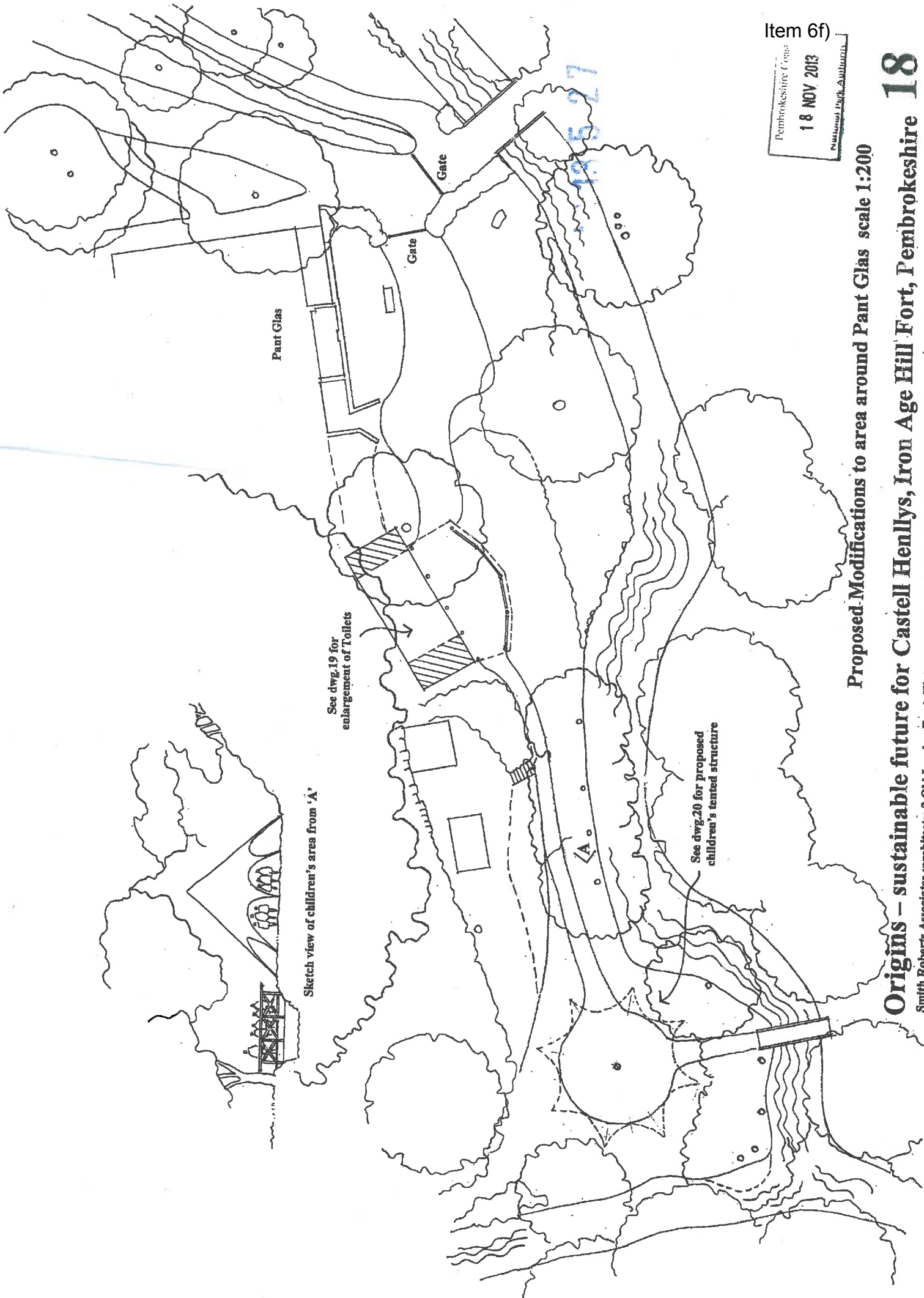
Pembrokeshire Coast
18 NOV 2013
National Park Authority

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Origins – sustainable future for Castell Henllys, Iron Age Hill Fort, Pembrokeshire

Smith Roberts Associates

Proposed Modifications to area around Pant Glas scale 1:200



Sketch view of children's area from 'A'

See dwg.19 for enlargement of Toilets

See dwg.20 for proposed children's tented structure

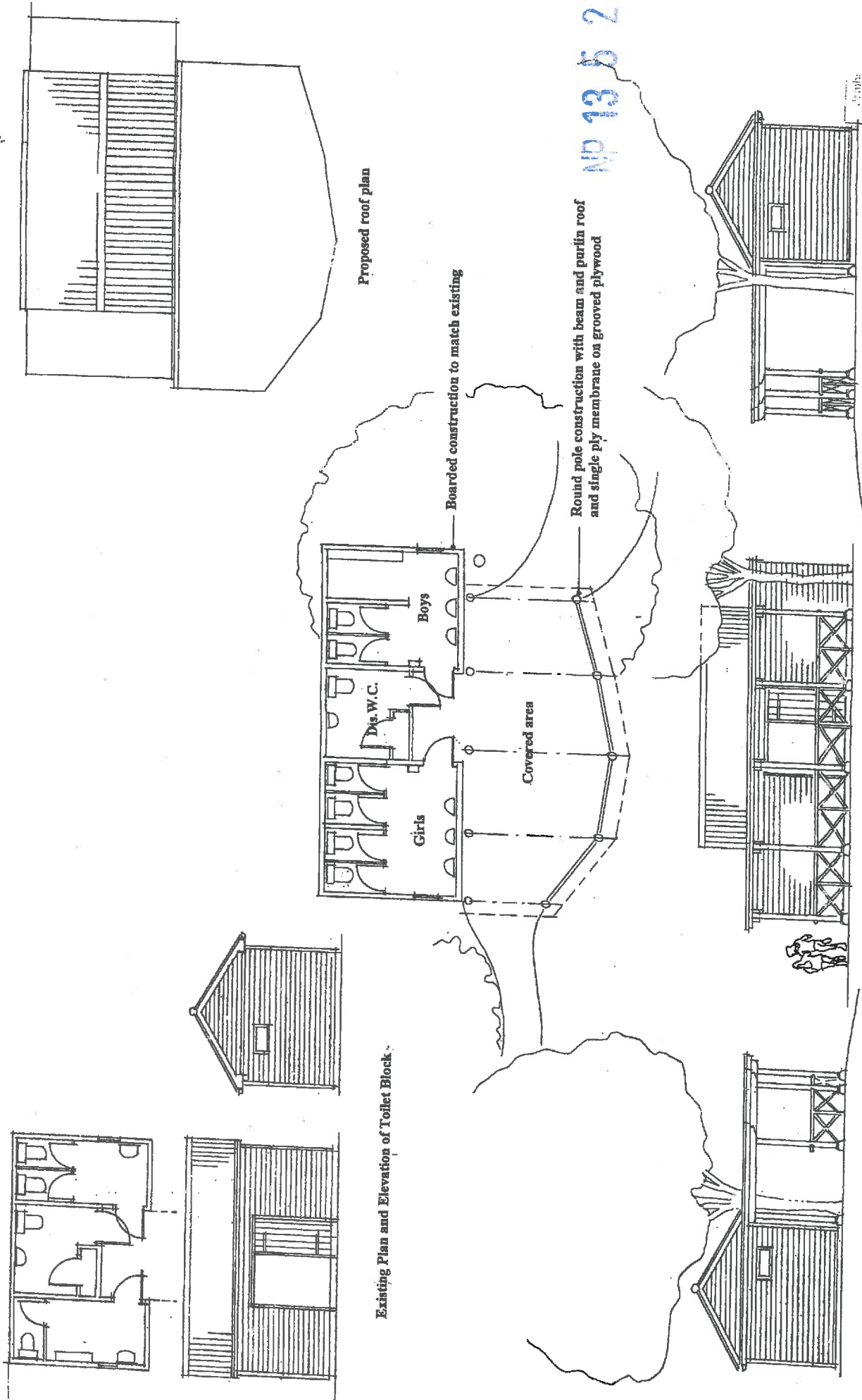
A-A

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National Park Authority



Proposed roof plan

Existing Plan and Elevation of Toilet Block

Boarded construction to match existing

Covered area

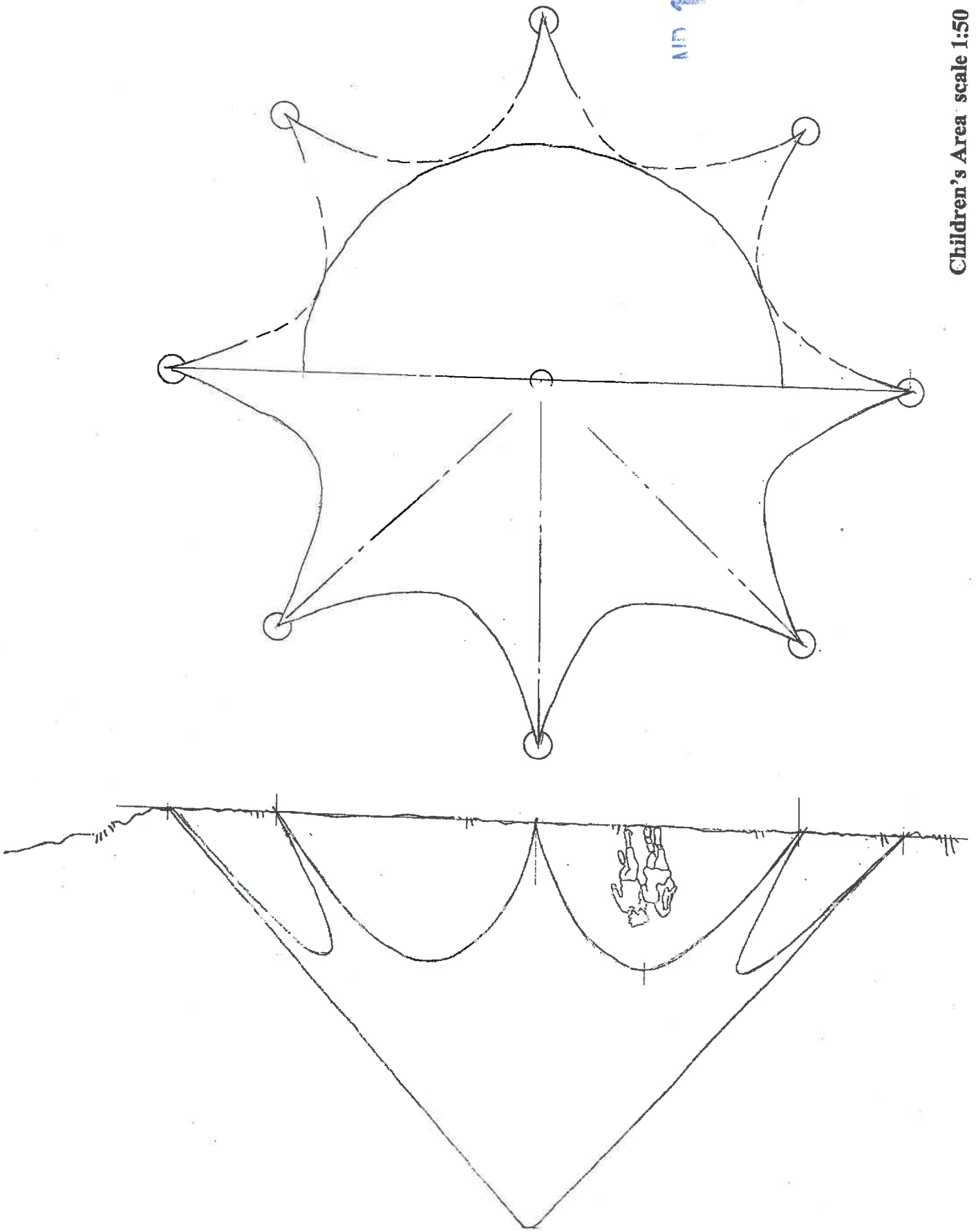
Round pole construction with beam and purlin roof and single ply membrane on grooved plywood

Proposed North Elevation

Proposed West Elevation

Proposed South Elevation

Proposed Extensions and Alterations to Toilet Block at rear of Pant Glas scale 1:100



Demountable tented structure

NOV 18 5 27

Item 6f)
18 NOV 2013
Pembrol College
Pembrol College

Children's Area scale 1:50

Origins – sustainable future for Castell Henllys, Iron Age Hill Fort, Pembrokeshire 20
Smith Roberts Associates Architects 7 Old London Road Watton-under-Tree Cam CJ11 7DA Tel: 01423 571100