
 Item 5 - Report on Planning Applications

Application Ref: NP/16/0470/FUL

Case Officer	Caroline Bowen		
Applicant	Mr J Spikes		
Agent			
Proposal	Erection of modular shelter for use by seasonal volunteers to help in conservation work on Allt Tabor, Dinas		
Site Location	Allt Tabor, Dinas Cross, Newport, Pembrokeshire		
Grid Ref	SN00673816		
Date Valid	08-Sep-2016	Target Date	14-Dec-2016

Summary

Planning permission was approved retrospectively in 2015 for a work shelter and tool store for use by the applicant whilst undertaking the management and restoration of a 12 acre hillside site situated adjacent to Pen y Mynydd, south of Dinas Cross. The land falls outside of the Rural Centre boundary defined for Dinas Cross in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan, hence is considered to be open countryside for policy purposes. The land is managed in its own right, and is not associated with a dwelling nor is part of a farm.

Following consultation of the proposal, Dinas Cross Community Council object on the grounds that the proposal is an inappropriate development in an area of natural beauty, which will set a precedent for other similar developments, and that the development is outside the permitted building area as stated by the National Park Plan.

As originally reported in 2015, this planning application refers to land management that does not fall within the maintenance of a residential/domestic curtilage, an allotment space, nor is land in use as an existing agricultural business. Nevertheless, from the evidence provided, and from subsequent visits by officers to the site, it is evident that the area of land has benefited from low-impact management and enhancement. Officers can support the sustainable, low impact principles; and, accordingly the provision of a further shelter for use by volunteers also working on the land. The new building itself replicates the design and scale of the existing structure, and – due to its appearance and careful siting close to the original structure - is not considered to be a prominent addition or feature in the countryside landscape.

Following consideration of the policies contained within the Local Development Plan (adopted 2010), and National Planning Policy in the form of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9, November 2016); and having regard to all material considerations, it is considered that the development is acceptable for the purposes of the management of this land. Officers would recommend, therefore, that the new shelter be tied in time period to the original temporary planning permission of 5 years, to allow the Authority to monitor the land management of the site, and to decide after the expiry of the temporary consent whether there is sufficient justification to grant a permanent permission.

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Consultee Response

Dinas Cross Community Council: Inappropriate development in an area which is of natural beauty, which will set a precedent for other similar developments, this development is outside the permitted building area as stated by the National Park Plan.

PCNPA - Tree and Landscape Officer: Further information required

PCC - Transportation & Environment: Conditional Consent

Natural Resources Wales: No adverse comments

PCNPA - Ecologist: No adverse comments

PCNPA - Access Manager: No adverse comments

Public Response

The application was appropriately advertised in accordance with statutory requirements. To date, no responses have been received to the proposal.

Policies considered

Please note that these policies can be viewed on the Policies page of 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 15 - Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

LDP Policy 29 - Sustainable Design

LDP Policy 30 - Amenity

LDP Policy 52 - Sustainable Transport

LDP Policy 53 - Impacts on traffic

PPW8 Chapter 03 - Making and Enforcing Planning Decisions

SPG02 - Low Impact Development making a positive contribution

TAN 12 - Design

Constraints

LDP Mineral Safeguard

Rights of Way Inland - within 50m

Recreation Character Areas

Officer's Appraisal

Site characteristics

The site consists of 12 acres of rugged hillside which falls between the cultivated lowland 'domestic' landscape of Dinas Cross and the remoter upland landscape of Dinas Mountain. The land slopes down from the south at Dinas Mountain to the North towards the sea, and can be accessed along a track road along its southern boundary. The applicant has described the land in the management strategy as being dominantly covered by bracken and bramble, with occasional hawthorn, sycamore, willow and gorse and a significant ash tree. The land has outcrops of rhyolite at the steeper eastern

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end, and a scattering of post glacial erratics. It has two reliable springs and a stream. Historically it appeared to be wooded and still hosts wood anemone, wood sorrel, bluebells and occasional wood sedge. More recently it became rough grazing, which was burnt off sporadically in an attempt to keep the bracken and gorse in check.

Since permission was granted for the original shelter, the applicant has planted a significant number of native trees, maintains a small organic garden and continues to clear bracken and gorse. The building is well maintained, and the site retains a natural appearance.

Planning history

- NP/15/0010/FUL – Retention of temporary work shelter. Approved for 5 years.

Current Proposal

The application proposes the construction of a second temporary work shelter and tool store, which will also be used ancillary to the management and restoration of biodiversity on the land. The roundhouse building mimics the existing structure, and measures approximately 2.0m in height and approximately 3.45m in width. It is finished in locally sourced untreated western red cedar to its walls whilst the roof contains a netted bracken thatch. The building contains wooden windows and the door opening is covered by a rug with a canvas storm sheet. Internally, this building will be kept clear of fittings, as the intention here is simply to provide a shelter for workers away from the elements.

Key Issues

The application raises the following planning matters:-

- Policy and Principle of Development
- Visual Amenity and Special Qualities of the National Park
- Highway Safety, Access and Parking
- Other Matters

Policy and Principle of Development

The key consideration is considered to be whether the development meets the requirements of Policy 7 – Countryside. This policy sets out the types of developments that can be undertaken in the countryside, and criterion h allows new farm buildings where justified for agricultural purposes.

The applicant continues to be committed to the restoration, improvement and maintenance of the land. The application is supported by an updated 'Management Strategy' for the site, which explains that;

The broad intention of my original management plan for Allt Tabor remains the same. It is to remove and weaken the hold of bracken upon the hill, thus allowing native grasses and flowering plants to re-emerge, and to establish areas of tree cover. A key aspect is to achieve this gradually using mainly hand tools, and thus to be able to learn and respond to perceived changes. It

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is a dynamic, exciting and interactive process. However, as cleared areas have increased, so has the amount of basic maintenance cutting and pruning.

As my scything of paths and glades has increased the variety and presence of grasses, the rabbit population has noticeably prospered and even reoccupied old warrens in a few places. They provide a valuable food source for raptors and other predators (evidence of polecat presence), broadening the hillside's beneficial species.

The result of successive years of tree planting and glade cutting [together with having to actively protect the young trees from being eaten back by wildlife] is noticeable and encouraging.

However, I am increasingly aware that I would benefit from assistance in this project. There are large lower areas with an unusual degree of shelter and residual bilberry growth, where I made preliminary path-clearing forays in, and established some sweet chestnuts five seasons ago, that I have not found time since to continue work on. I have found from practice and observation that larger glades and clearances, such as wider pathways, are more effective in subduing bracken growth, but requires more effort to establish. Bracken clearance, tree clearance and grassland restoration by such means is a process that needs a continuity of effort.

A solution is to seek occasional volunteer help... ..The nature of the tasks here are simple, safe and diverse, and would nurture skills and help participants connect to nature...

To this end, I wish to construct a small, temporary hut, near to the existing shelter, thus sharing its visual discretion within the landscape and its facilities. It would be the same size as the existing shelter...I would welcome such a shelter being included in the timescale of the existing temporary arrangement. As both of these small wooden structures are modular, they will be easy to remove, with no permanent environmental impact...'

Following a site visit to Allt Tabor, it is clear that significant work to improve the site has been undertaken. The existing shelter lies to the south west of the site and is practically undetectable as it is sheltered and screened in a natural dip within the existing mature trees at this part of the site – the additional structure would share this sheltered setting. The shelter can only be accessed by foot, with the vehicular access confined to the track at the southern edge of the site.

It was originally recognised that the work being carried out would reasonably require breaks for rest and refreshment, and that the retention of the original building would offer space for rest periods and from inclement weather. Officers are satisfied that the applicant is undertaking a genuine, sustainable, low impact form of land management in a countryside setting; and that it would not be unreasonable for a further shelter/tool store to be provided for volunteers, given the terrain and limited vehicular access to the site. The existing building itself is not considered to be a prominent addition or feature in the landscape, and it is considered that – together with a further building – there would not be significant visual impact in the wider countryside setting. On balance, it is considered that the additional shelter would serve a genuine purpose, and subject to conditions to limit the terms of the occupancy of the

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shelter, and to tie the new shelter to the original temporary planning permission, the proposal can be accepted as reasonable necessary in this countryside setting.

Visual Amenity and Special Qualities of the National Park

Policy 8 of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) is a strategic policy which refers to the special qualities of the National Park and lists priorities to ensure that these special qualities will be protected and enhanced. 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. Criterion 'c' resists development that would introduce or intensify a use which is incompatible with its location. Criteria 'd' and 'e' resists development that would fail to harmonise with, or enhance the landform and landscape character of the National Park, and/or fail to incorporate important traditional features.

Policy 29 of the LDP requires all development proposals to be well designed in terms of place and local distinctiveness (criterion 'a'). 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').

The building will be located on the same hillside, set amongst the copse of various mature trees as with the original structure. The building is round in form and contains a sedum roof and - due to the topography of the land and its positioning - is not visible from the access road along the south facing boundary or indeed the land forming the majority of the site. The building is also well hidden from the A487 highway to the north of the site but in less covered winter months there may be brief glimpses of its windows/solar panels in passing the site.

In all, it is considered that the building and hardstanding do not cause harm to the visual amenity or special qualities of the National Park.

Highway Safety, Access and Parking

Policies 52 and 53 of the Local Development Plan refer to sustainable transport and the traffic impacts of proposed development. The Highway Authority have responded to consultation raising no objection on highway safety grounds subject to any proposed gates being set back by 5m and that the areas be completed and retained for parking and turning.

Other Matters

Natural Resources Wales and the Authority's Ecologist have been consulted. NRW raise no objection, subject to their standard planning advice. No adverse comments have been raised by the Authority's Ecologist.

The Authority's Tree and Landscape Officer has advised that there are no tree preservation orders on the site and that, subject to details of tree/hedge protection being provided, there is no objection to the proposal.

Conclusion

Following consideration of the policies contained within the Local Development Plan (adopted 2010) and in National Planning Policy in the form of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9, November 2016); and having regard to all the material considerations identified for the proposal, it is considered that - on balance - the development is acceptable. The proposed construction of a further building for use by volunteers has been demonstrated as being justified for the current land management being undertaken at the site. The building itself is not a prominent addition to the landscape, nor causes visual intrusion in the countryside. The use of the shelter can be confined to a temporary period of 5 years – to tie into the original planning permission - to allow the continued monitoring of the site; and can be conditioned for the use only for rest and shelter from the elements.

Recommendation

The application be approved subject to the following conditions:

1. The building hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition on or before the 17th April 2020, in accordance with a scheme of work which shall first have been submitted to and approved by the National Park Authority.
Reason: The materials and form of construction are of a temporary nature and are not conducive to a permanent permission, and to allow the monitoring of the land management of the site. Local Development Plan Policy 7 (Countryside), 8 (Special Qualities), 15 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park) and 30 (Amenity).
2. The building hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the management of the land known as Allt Tabor. The building shall not be used as a main/sole residence nor for any commercial purposes whatsoever.
Reason: In order to be clear on the type of use sought and approved, as the development would not be approved as a residential unit in the countryside. Local Development Plan Policy 7 (Countryside), 8 (Special Qualities), 15 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park) and 30 (Amenity).
3. No development shall take place, nor any demolition works or site clearance, until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority details of a scheme for the protection of trees. The approved scheme shall be carried out throughout the course of the development.
Reason: To prevent detrimental impact to trees, hedges and other landscape features which contribute to the amenity, landscape & biodiversity of the site and surrounding area. Policy: Local Development Plan - Policies: 1 (National Park Purposes and Duty), 8 (Special Qualities), 11 (Protection of Biodiversity), 15 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park), and 30 (Amenity).

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4. The parking and turning area as shown on the submitted drawings shall be completed before the development is brought into use and thereafter shall be used for no purpose other than parking and turning.

Reason: To reduce the likelihood of obstruction of the highway or danger to road users. Local Development Plan, Policy 53 - Impacts of Traffic.

5. Any access gates shall be set back to a distance of at least 5 metres behind the highway boundary and shall open inwards only.

Reason: In order to reduce the likelihood of obstruction and danger to road users whilst right of entry is secured or gates are being opened or closed. Local Development Plan Policy 53 - Impacts of Traffic.

Informative:

The crossing of the Highway verge/footway requires further consent from the Highway Authority under Section 184 of the Highways Act 1980, and that working in the Highway must be done by an approved contractor. The attached letter produced by the Highways Authority includes the application form, contractors list and explanatory notes.

APPROVED PLAN
SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS, WHERE APPLICABLE
AS REFERRED TO IN
PLANNING CONSENT REF:
NP/15/000

208

NP.16 4 70

PROPS.
PARKING
AREA

OLD
TRACK




SHELTER

Garden

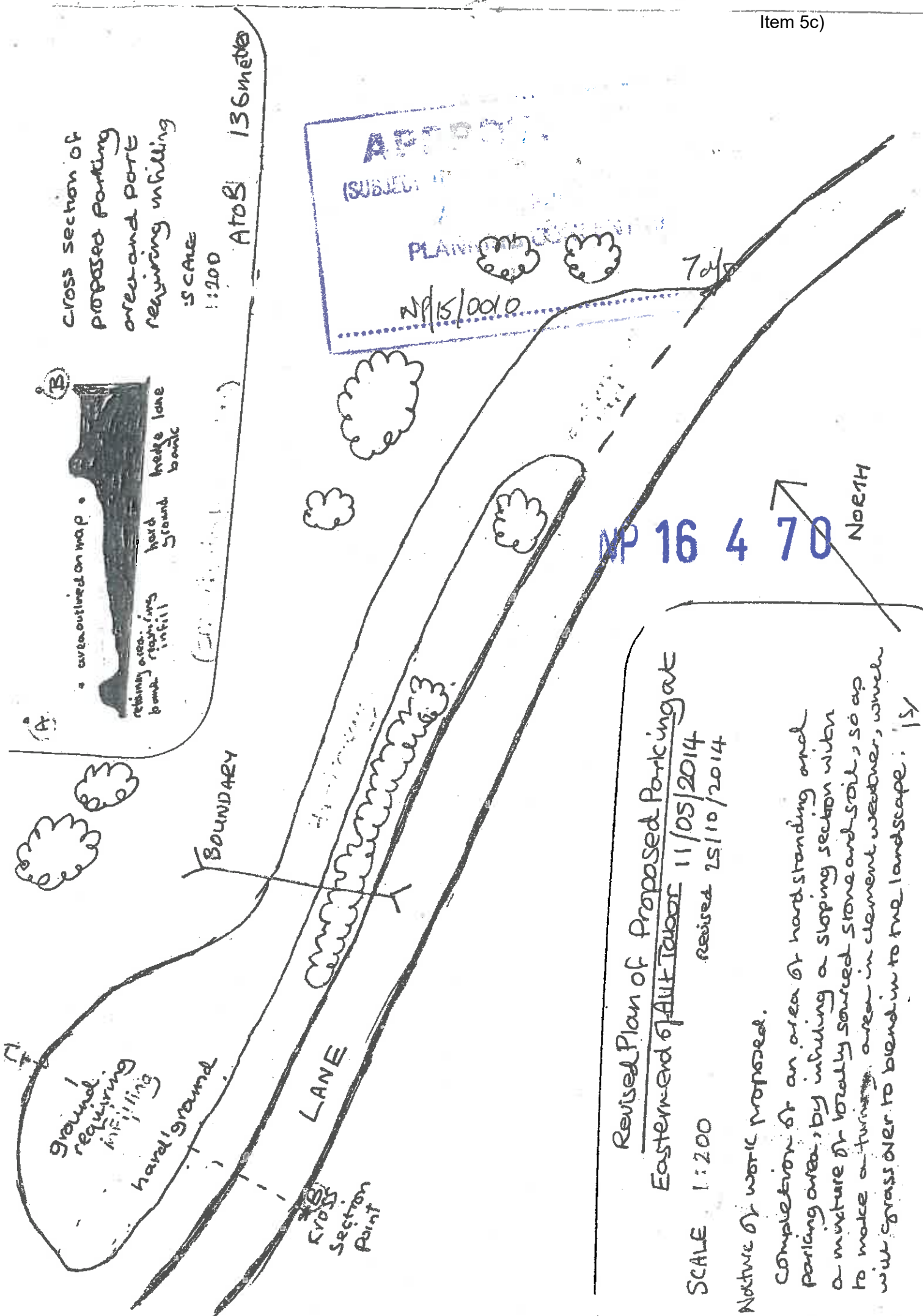
parking
areas

EXISTING
PARKING
AREA

THE KEY

-  natural tree cover
-  scrub (gorse) cover
-  principle new planting

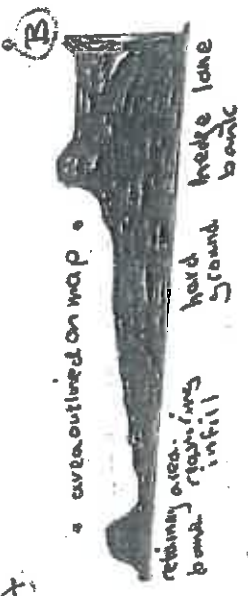
SCALE 1:2500
SNO D38 SE
Airtabor
DINAS CROSS



Cross section of proposed parking area and part requiring infilling

SCALE 1:200

Atos 136 meters



curve outlined on map

retaining area: hard ground infill

make lane bank

Revised Plan of Proposed Parking at Eastern-end of Alit Tabat

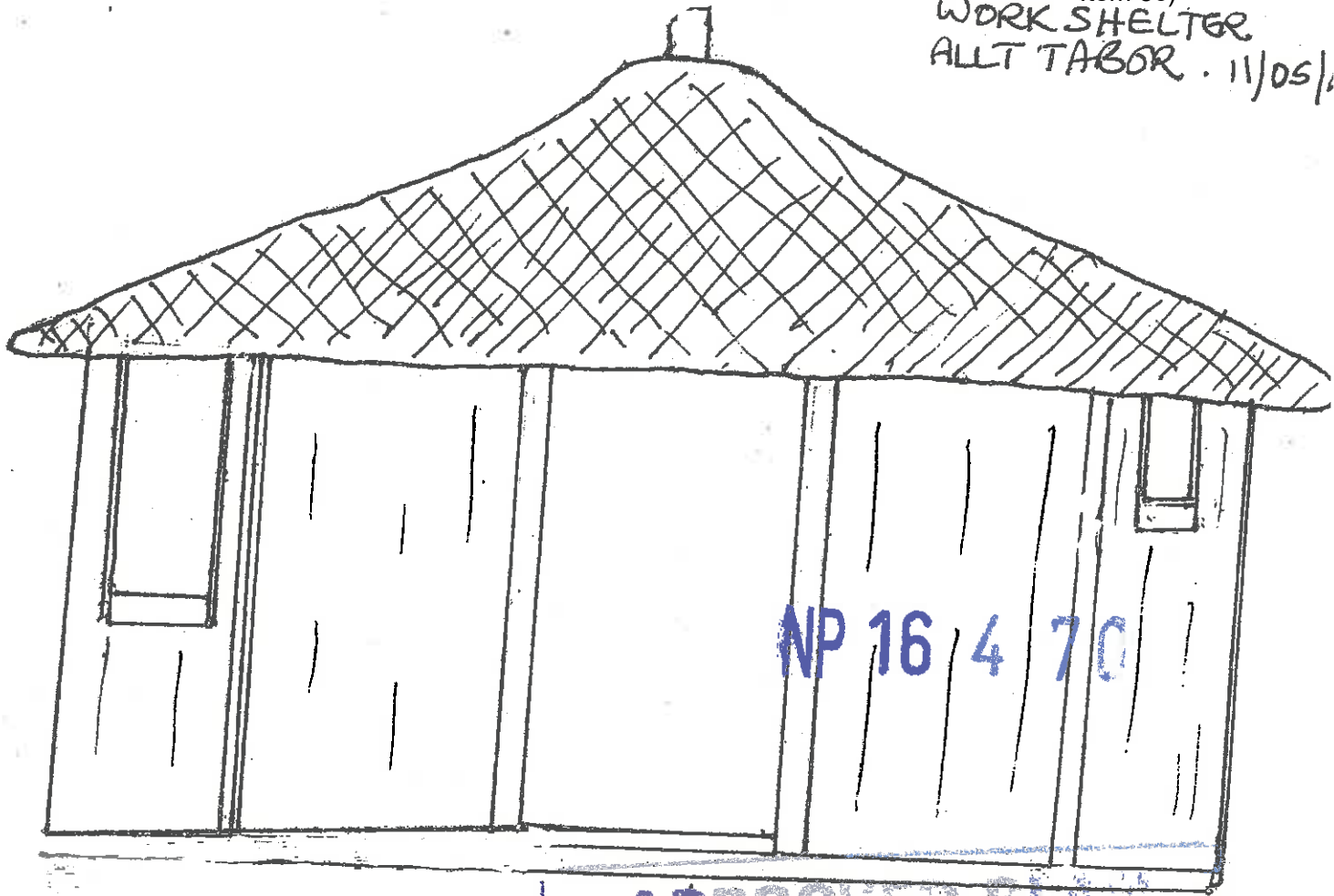
11/05/2014 revised 25/10/2014

SCALE 1:200

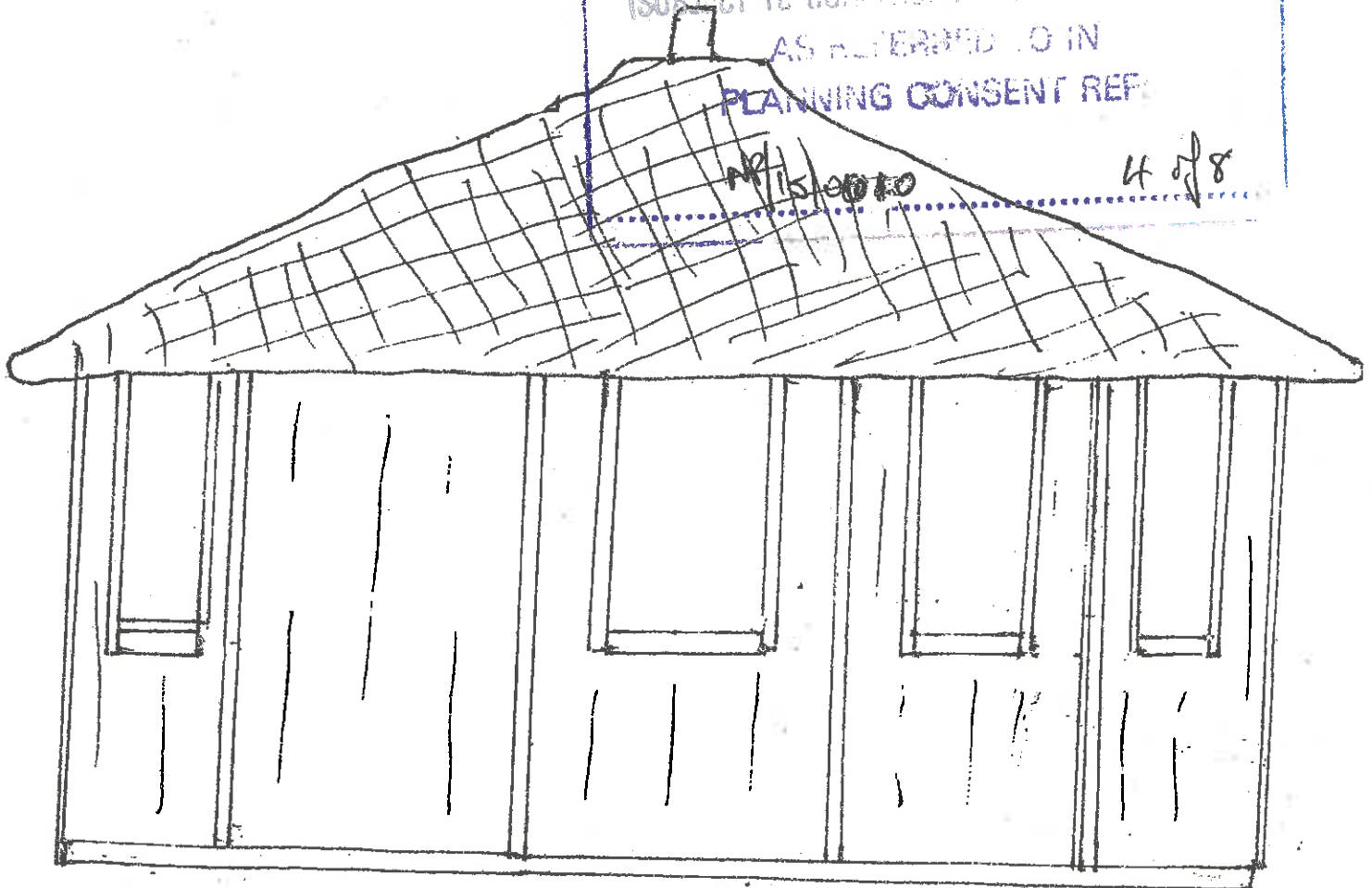
Nature of work proposed.

Completion of an area of hardstanding and parking area, by infilling a sloping section with a mixture of locally sourced stone and soil, so as to make a turning area in element weather, which will grass over to blend in to the landscape.

Item 5c)
WORK SHELTER
ALLT TABOR . 11/05/16



APPROVED PLAN
Elevation from South East
(SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS WHERE APPLICABLE)
AS REFERRED TO IN
PLANNING CONSENT REF:

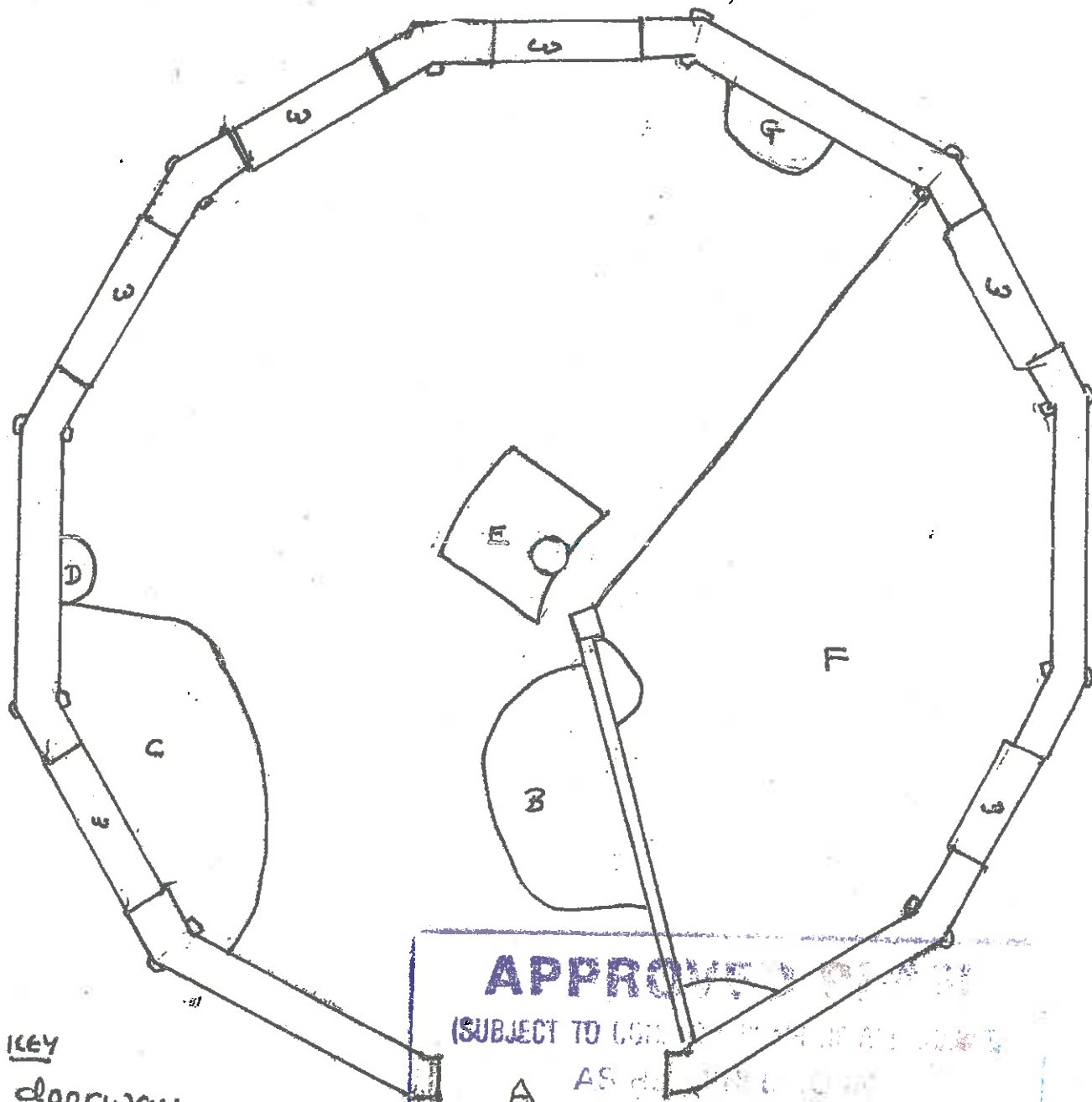


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SCALE 1:20

Elevation from Northwest

NORTH



APPROVED
 (SUBJECT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY PLANNING CONSENT REF)

16/10/10

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- KEY**
- A doorway
 - B surface for gas rings. storage below (firewood, pins, vegetables, water bottles)
 - C work surface. storage below
 - D wall unit. jars etc
 - E woodstove skw
 - F raised rest platform. storage below (clothes, tools, food box)
 - G wall unit. bowls etc
 - w window

ALLIAROR
WORKSHEETER

Scale 1:20
 11/05/14