

## Item 5 - Report on Planning Applications

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### **Application Ref: NP/15/0010/FUL**

<b>Case Officer</b>	Caroline Bowen		
<b>Applicant</b>	Mr J Spikes		
<b>Agent</b>			
<b>Proposal</b>	Retention of an existing works shelter, tool store and parking area ancillary to land management and horticulture activities and restoration of biodiversity at Allt Tabor		
<b>Site Location</b>	Allt Tabor, Dinas Cross, Newport, Pembrokeshire		
<b>Grid Ref</b>	SN00673816		
<b>Date Valid</b>	28-Jan-2015	<b>Target Date</b>	24-Mar-2015

### **Summary**

Planning permission is sought retrospectively for the retention of a temporary work shelter and tool store, which was constructed in 2013 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. In addition, it is proposed to complete an area of hardstanding and parking area by infilling a sloping section of land with a mixture of stone and soil to make a low key parking and turning area.

Retrospective planning permission was originally sought in 2014 for the development, but was refused on the grounds that the work shelter had not been justified for agricultural purposes within the open countryside.

Allt Tabor is an area of land falling on a steep hillside between the more cultivated lowland landscape surrounding Dinas Cross and the upland landscape of Dinas Mountain. 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 not associated with a dwelling nor as part of a farm.

Following consultation of the proposal, Dinas Cross Community Council have advised that they have discussed this application and further to the previous application to which the Council objected, the Council also objects to this current application. A letter of support was received from a neighbour to the site. No other objections have been received to the proposal.

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, the evidence provided illustrates that the area of land has benefited from low-impact management and enhancement. The terrain of the land is rugged and the extent of the land area is significant. Whilst the management of the land is clearly a lifestyle choice by the applicant, officers consider that it is undertaken using sustainable, low impact principles; and that it would not be unreasonable for a shelter/tool store to be provided given the terrain and

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limited vehicular access to the site. The building itself is not considered to be a prominent addition or feature in the landscape, and does not cause visual intrusion in the wider countryside setting.

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 7, July 2014); and having regard to all material considerations, it is considered that the development is acceptable for the purposes of the management of this land. However, given the nature of the management and the structure, officers would recommend a 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.

### Consultee Response

**Dinas Cross Community Council:** Objecting

**Natural Resources Wales:** No objection

**PCNPA - Access Manager:** Conditional Consent - Red line area affects public footpath 16/23

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

**PCC - Ecologist:** No adverse comments

### Public Response

The application was advertised by a site notice displayed at the site, as well through the local press as development affecting a public right of way, in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition to this, notification letters were sent to neighbouring occupiers to the site.

To date, no letters of objection have been received to the proposal. A letter of support has been received, who comment as follows.

- I write again in support of Mr Spikes' application for a shelter and parking space on Allt Tabor. He has been working on the Allt for more than 5 years and has been responsible for a great improvement in the use of the land – clearing paths, planting hundreds of native hardwood trees and thinning out the bracken and brambles. He uses the natural springs to irrigate an allotment area and makes visitors interested in his conservation work very welcome. The landscape is now much closer to what it would have been before it was allowed to grow for horse fodder. His activities seem entirely in keeping with the objective of the National Park and should surely be encouraged. A shelter seems a very reasonable request and is much preferable to a caravan in the site or any other moveable arrangement for storage and rest. I hope you will do what you can to enable him to continue the good work and not let the Allt revert to the unproductive wilderness that it had become.

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### **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>

Circular 60/96 - Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology  
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  
PPW7 Chapter 03 - Making and Enforcing Planning Decisions  
TAN 12 - Design

### **Officer's Appraisal**

#### **Site characteristics**

The site consists of a 12 acre rugged hillside on land to the south of Dinas Cross in the open countryside. The land slopes from 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 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, wand was burnt off sporadically in an attempt to keep the bracken and gorse in check.

#### **Background planning history**

The Authority originally received a complaint in February 2014 relating to the construction of a building on land to the South of Dinas Cross near Pen-y-Mynydd. Through an enforcement investigation (EC/14/0009) officers were alerted to the fact that the owner had constructed two roundhouse buildings and polytunnel on the land. The owner explained that the land referred to as 'Allt Tabor' has been managed by him in an attempt to maintain and improve its biodiversity.

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Following the initial investigation, the owner advised that he had removed the polytunnel structure, and also dismantled the older of the two roundhouse structures, with a view to seek planning permission to retain the more recent roundhouse erected on the land for rest and storage purposes.

A planning application was submitted in 2014 for the retention of the hut and the creation of a small parking/hardstanding area. This was refused as it was considered that the shelter had not been justified for agricultural purposes within the open countryside and is not an essential requirement in order to undertake the management and restoration of the site in the interests of biodiversity.

### **Current Proposal**

The application proposes the retention of 'a temporary work shelter and tool store, ancillary to the management and restoration of biodiversity (land registration 7723)'. In addition it is proposed to complete an area of hardstanding and parking area by infilling a sloping section of land with a mixture of stone and soil and make a parking and turning area.

The roundhouse building 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 double glazed units and the door opening is covered by a rug with a canvas storm sheet. Internally, the floorplans show that the building provides a surface for gas rings with storage below, a work surface with storage below, a wall unit, a 5kw woodstove, a raised platform with storage below and an additional wall unit – all of which are handmade. Although not detailed in the application description, the roundhouse structure has an adjoining small wooden decked platform and storage space underneath the platform and building.

In terms of the proposed parking area, the plans show an area of approximately 7.5m in width and up to a maximum height of 0.5m a is proposed to be infilled with locally sourced stone and soil which will be left to grass over.

This application includes supporting information in the form of the following:

- A Design and Access Statement.
- A Management Strategy for the land.
- Information in respect of the botanic species at the site.

### **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

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- Other Material Planning Considerations

### *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.

Whilst the work at the site to manage the land is not one being carried out as an agricultural business in the conventional sense, the applicant is committed to the restoration, improvement and maintenance of the land. The application is supported by a more substantial 'Management Strategy' for the site than was originally submitted, which explains that he visits and works on the land on average for 20 hours a week, although this can rise to 50 hours in the summer months. He wishes to retain the special qualities of the largely uncultivated tract of the land, by optimising biodiversity through the clearance of bracken and bramble, the establishment of coppice and a kitchen garden, and the planting of native fruit and woodland trees. His broad goal has been to maintain a third of the land as scrub (which has encourages snipe, pheasants and woodcock to shelter on the land), to clear a third as grassways and open clearings, and to establish a third as clumps of trees, coppice, garden and orchard. The terrain of the land favours the use of hand tools as opposed to larger scale mechanical 'topping' of the land, with there being three main seasons of activity in the working year.

Following a site visit to Allt Tabor, the land is very natural in appearance, and it is clear that significant work to improve the site has been undertaken. The shelter lies to the south west of the site and is practically undetectable as it is sheltered and screened within the existing mature trees at this part of the site. The shelter can only be accessed by foot, with the vehicular access confined to the track at the southern edge of the site. The shelter contains a wood burner stove, shelving, a gas stove, storage of food and some limited personal possessions, and a raised seating platform.

Whilst it is recognised that this is a lifestyle choice of the applicant, the work being carried out would reasonably require breaks for rest and refreshment, and the retention of the building would offer space for rest periods and from inclement weather. The site tools are stored both underneath and within the shelter, as this is more practical than carrying implements to and from the site for each visit. It is considered 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 shelter/tool store to be provided so as to achieve the land management, given the terrain and limited vehicular access to the site. The building itself is not considered to be a prominent addition or feature in the landscape, and does not cause visual intrusion in the wider countryside setting. On balance, it is considered that the shelter would serve a genuine purpose, and subject to conditions to limit the terms of the occupancy of the shelter, and require performance of the land management in

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accordance with the management plan provided, 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 is located on the hillside and is set amongst a copse of various trees. 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.

The proposed works to complete the hardstanding/parking area are very low key resulting in the provision of some additional stone material in surface part of an existing area.

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.

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### *Other Material Planning Considerations*

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.

### **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 7, July 2014) and having regard to all the material considerations identified for the proposal, it is considered that, on balance, the development is acceptable in that the use of the building 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 tied to the land management of the site, confined to a temporary period of 5 years to allow the monitoring of the site, and to use only for rest and shelter from the elements through appropriately worded conditions

### **Recommendation**

The application be approved subject to the following conditions:

1. The building and parking area hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition on or before the expiry of 5 years from the date of this decision, 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, as set out in the management strategy dated 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2015. 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).

Item 5d)



OLD TRACK

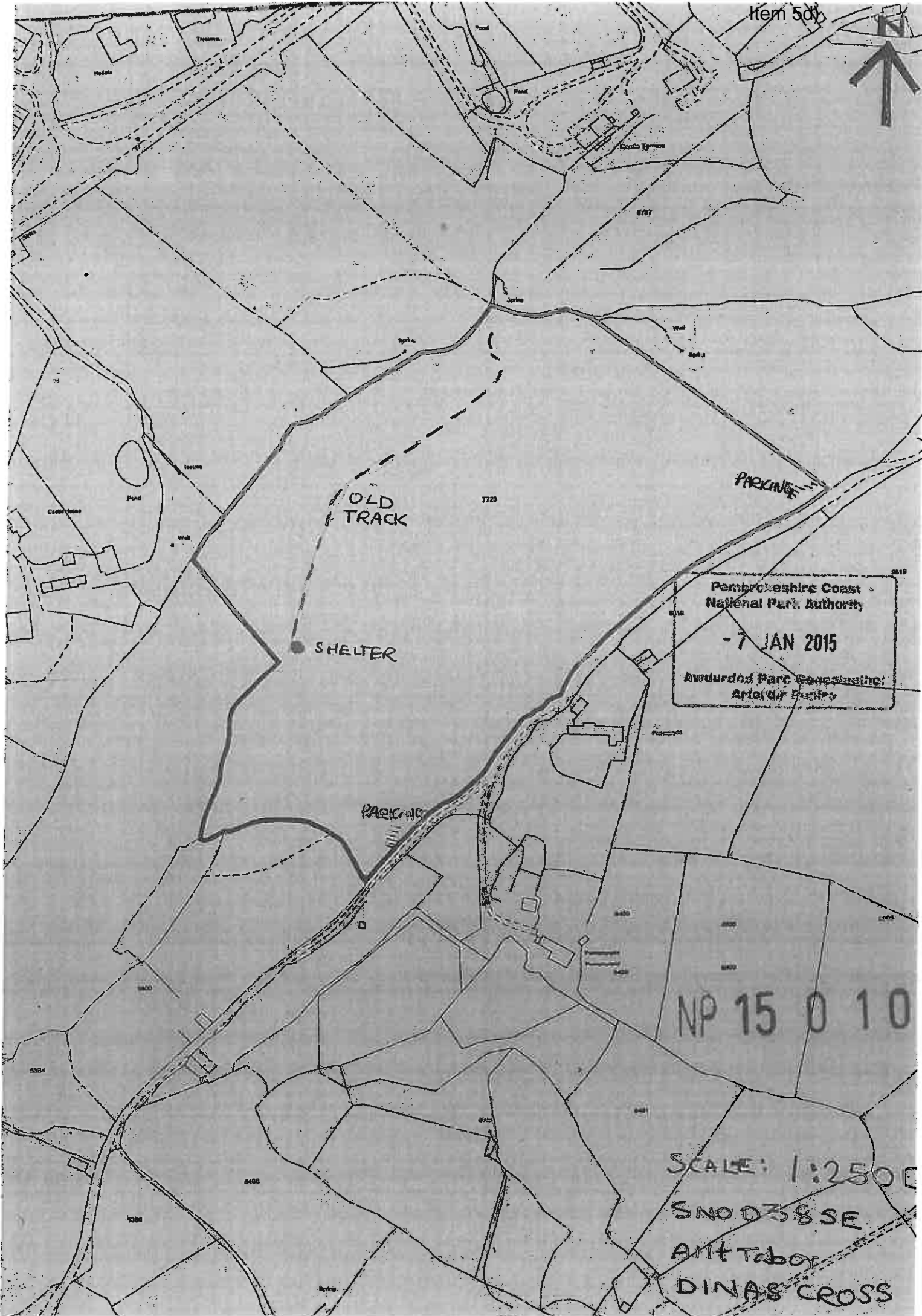
PARKING

SHELTER

Pembrokeshire Coast  
National Park Authority  
- 7 JAN 2015  
Awdurdod Parc Cenedlaethol  
Arfordir Penryn

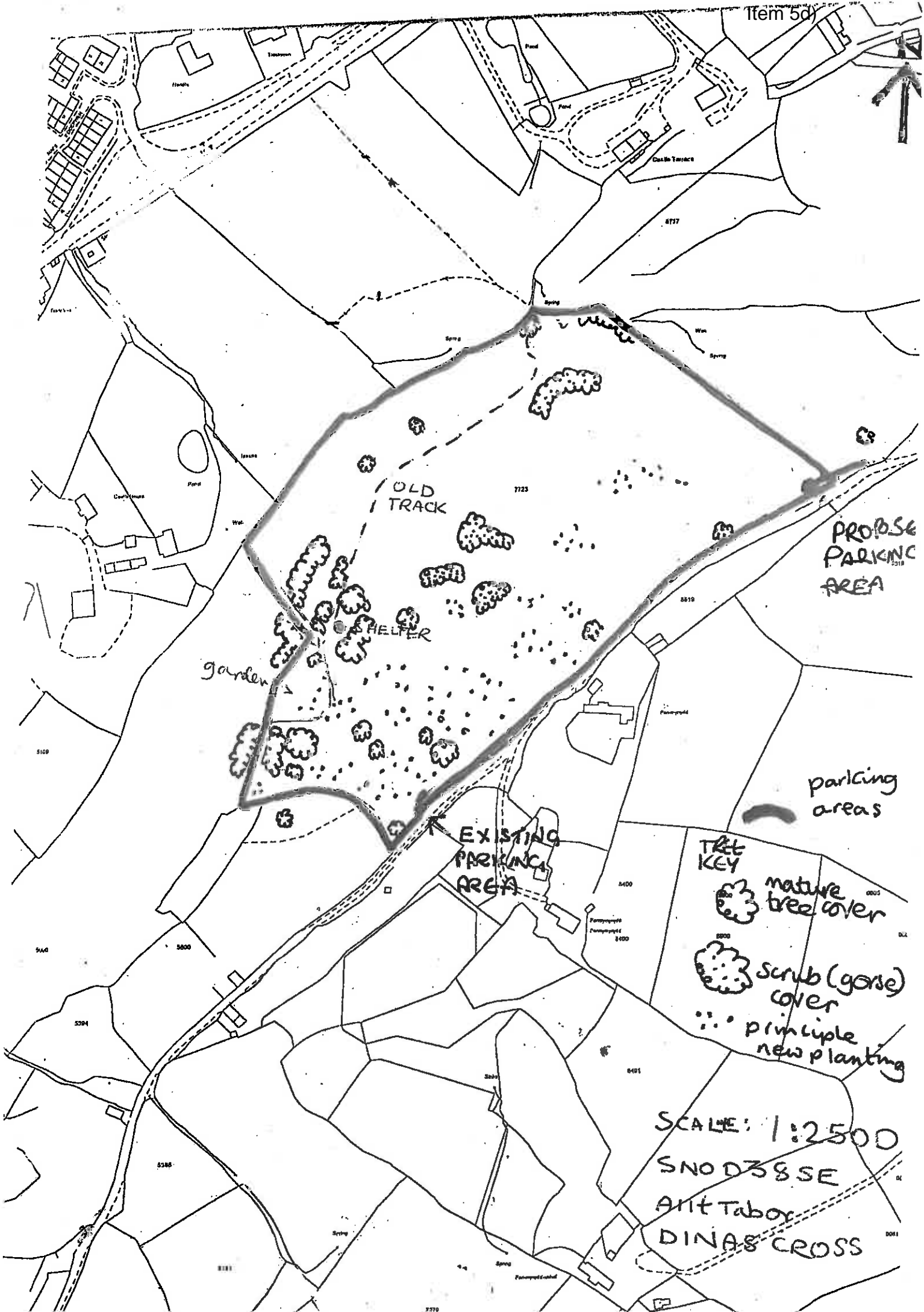
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ANT Tabor  
DINAS CROSS





Item 5d)



PROPOSED  
PARKING  
AREA

Garden

EXISTING  
PARKING  
AREA

parking  
areas

TREE  
KEY

native  
tree cover

scrub (gorse)  
cover

principle  
new planting

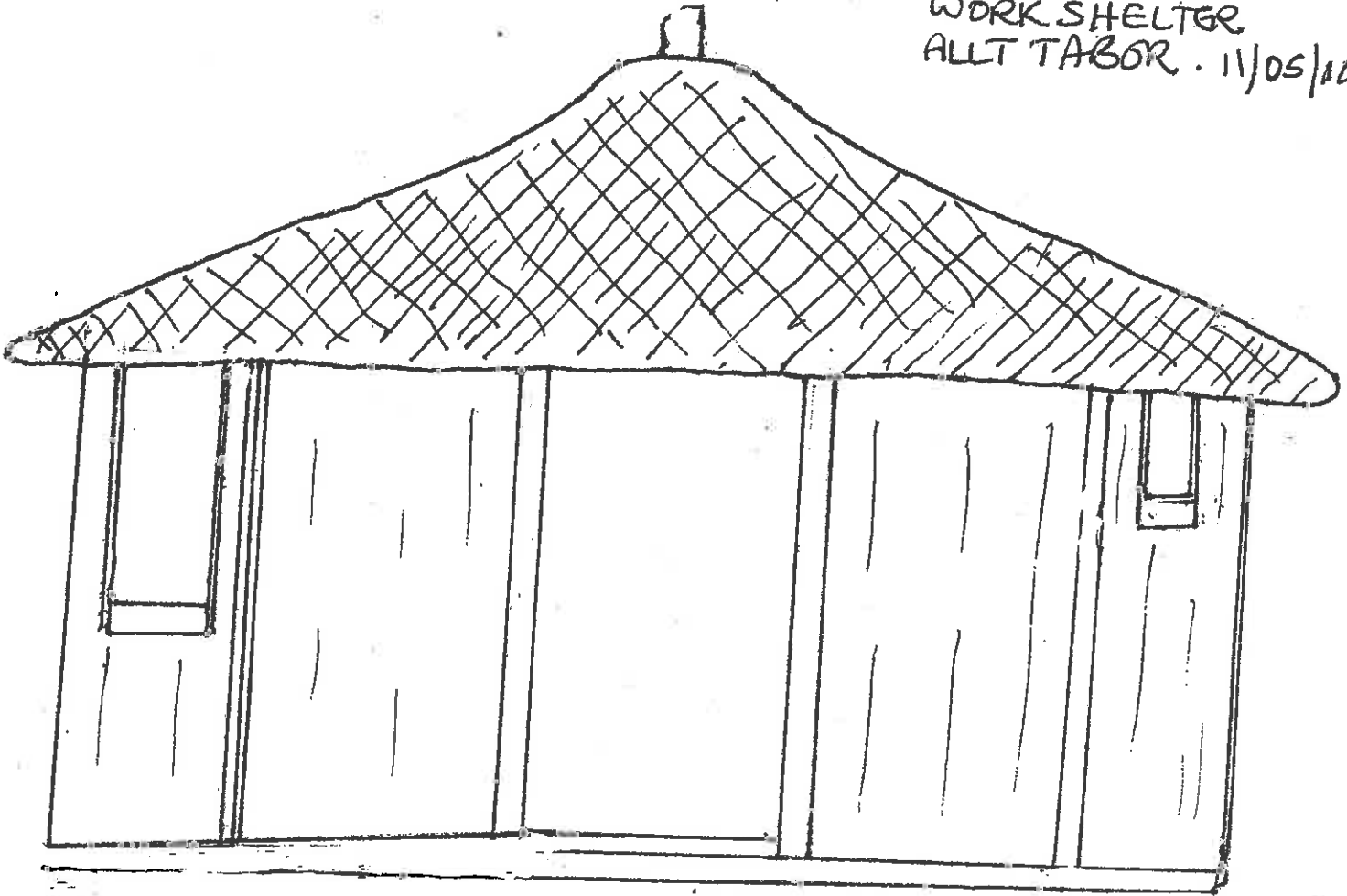
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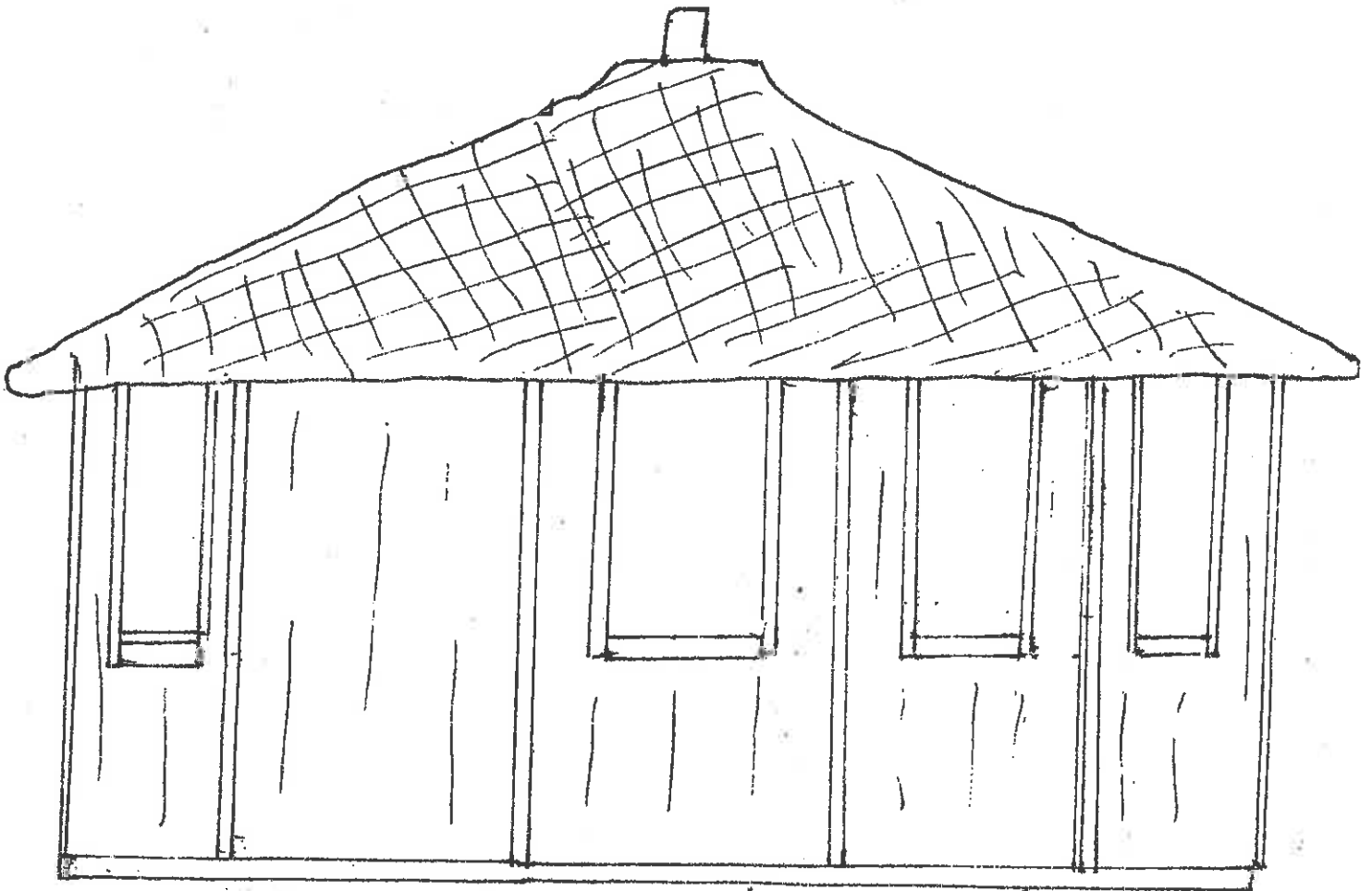
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WORK SHELTER  
ALLT TABOR . 11/05/12

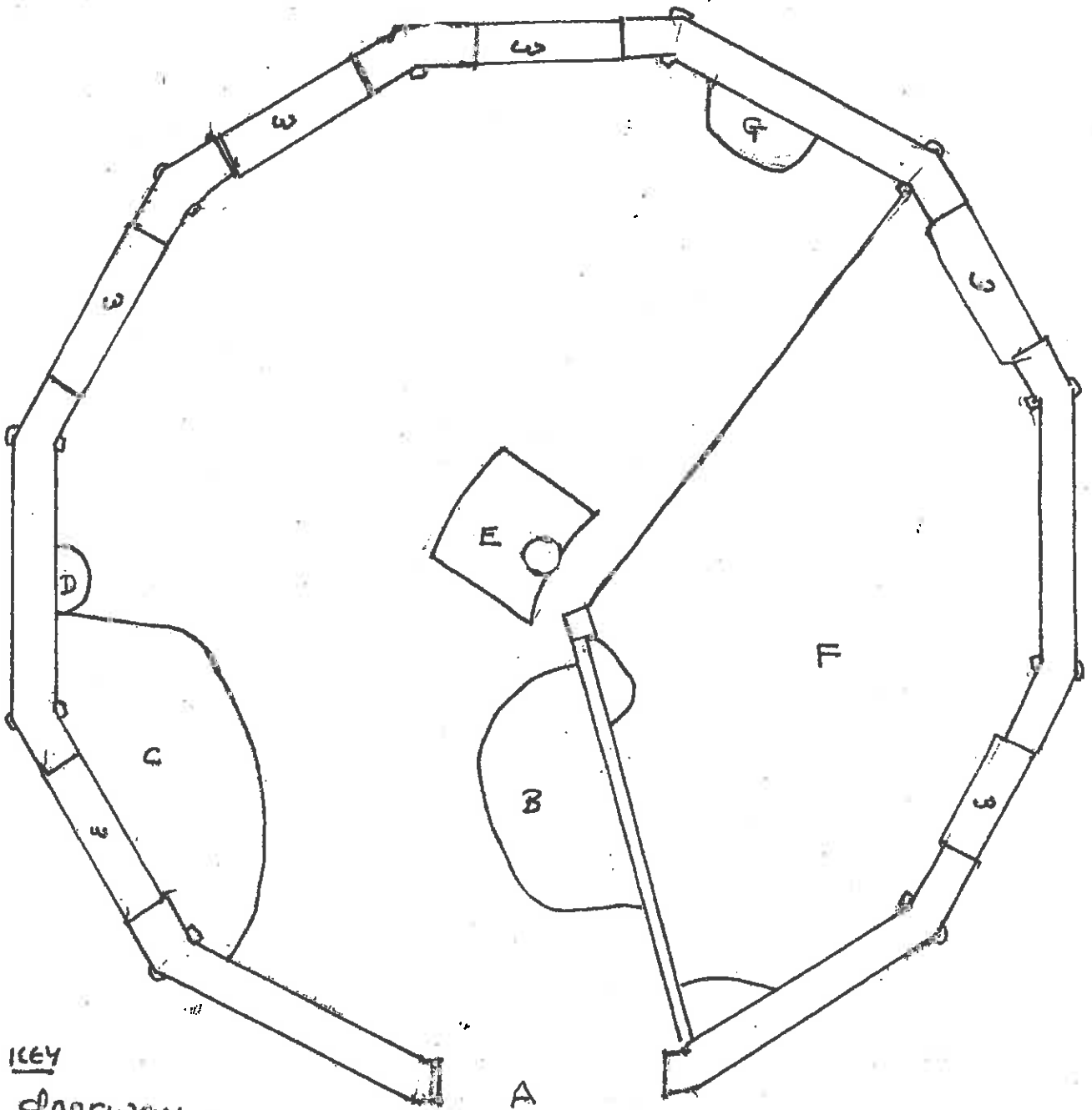


Elevation from South East



SCALE 1:20

Elevation from Northwest



KEY

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

ALLTAROR  
WORKSHELTER

Scale 1 : 20

11/05/14