

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (WALES)
ORDER 2012

PERMISSION GRANTED

REFERENCE: P2022/0588
DESCRIPTION: Proposed conversion of existing building from Offices (Class A2) into 7 self-contained residential units comprising: 2 No studio, 3 No 1 bed and 2 No 2 bed, three and single storey rear extension and demolition of existing detached storage to rear and construction of detached two storey building comprising: 2 No 2 bed residential units at the rear of main building together with associated works.
LOCATION: NEATH CARE, 96 GNOLL PARK ROAD, NEATH, SA11 3DD
DECISION DATE: 8th July 2022
CASE OFFICER: M. Rhodri Griffiths – r.griffiths2@npt.gov.uk

Rev A Updated text on page 3, line 1 showing nest box will be attached to a north-easterly elevation

Rev B Page 3, 1st paragraph, 'enhancements will be implemented prior to first use of the play equipment...' modified to 'prior to first occupation of any of the flats...'

Condition 3

Prior to the commencement of development, a scheme of Ecological Enhancement Measures and an Implementation Timetable shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Ecological Enhancement Measures shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved scheme and Implementation Timetable and retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

Reason:

In the interests of biodiversity and to provide Ecological Enhancement Measures on site in accordance with Policy 9 of Future Wales and so as to accord with Policy SP15 of the adopted Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

RESPONSE:

1.0 Landscape Design and Enhancements

The following information shows the ecological and landscape was considered and incorporated within the proposal:

1. Existing overgrown & unkempt grass and foliage
2. Existing hardstanding throughout the site

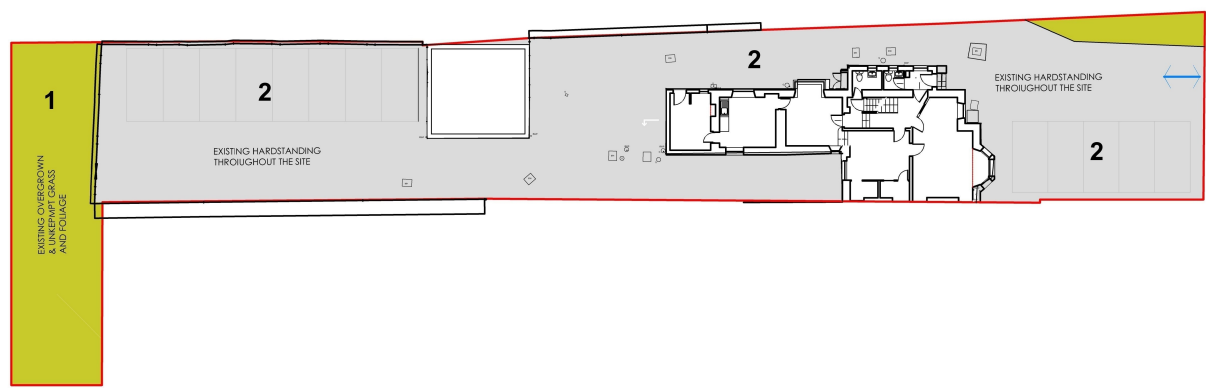


Figure 1: Existing External Conditions

Currently, the main site is a carpark made of hardstanding for the 13-car parking spaces. The existing external site is mostly hardstanding 13 car parking spaces. There is also a rectangular green area that has been neglected over the decades due to limited access via a wall separating this plot to the remaining site.

1.1 Encouraging Biodiversity Where Possible

This proposal could have maintained the existing hardstanding for additional carparking. The application also approved a reduction in car parking spaces to 7 carparking spaces. This allowed landscaping to be an important component of the project. However, from the outset, this proposal set-out to incorporate green spaces wherever possible. This was a client/design choice that encourages the formality of lawns not just to demarcate the two properties, but to soften the hardstanding and renew any sort of biodiversity where possible. From sub-soil insects and worms to birds using the lawn to pick-out insects and maintain a microcosm of ecology within the property boundary. Landscaping, no matter how large of small, does more than just look nice; it has many benefits. It can protect you from pests, diseases, and weeds, help manage soil pollution, improve mental health, and it can even help increase the value of your home.

A principal design requirement of this proposal encourages the use of open space by incorporating the green area at the back of the property that had been neglected for decades. The scheme also introduces additional new green zones within proposal.

Although the site is physically limited in area, these green zones open-up the existing hard and grey outdoor hardstanding spaces. These informal open zones serve the outdoor areas for the residents where they can sit, socialise, and enjoy these quiet spaces buffered away from the road. This proposal has increased the open green spaces by 43% as shown in Table 1.

	Hardstanding : Soft Landscape (Ratio)	Green Space Percentage (%)
Existing Area	673 : 164	24%
Proposed Area	455 : 295	64%
Net Increase		43%

Table 1: Showing the Increase of Soft Landscaping

The landscape design connects the existing and outbuilding in a holistic approach by introducing softer external garden spaces that contrast against the existing hardstanding areas. Landscaping, no matter how large or small, does more than just look nice; it has many benefits. It can protect you from pests, diseases, and weeds, help manage soil pollution, improve mental health, and it can even help increase the value of your home. The additional planting along the edges will maintain its landscape, biodiversity, and ecological value.

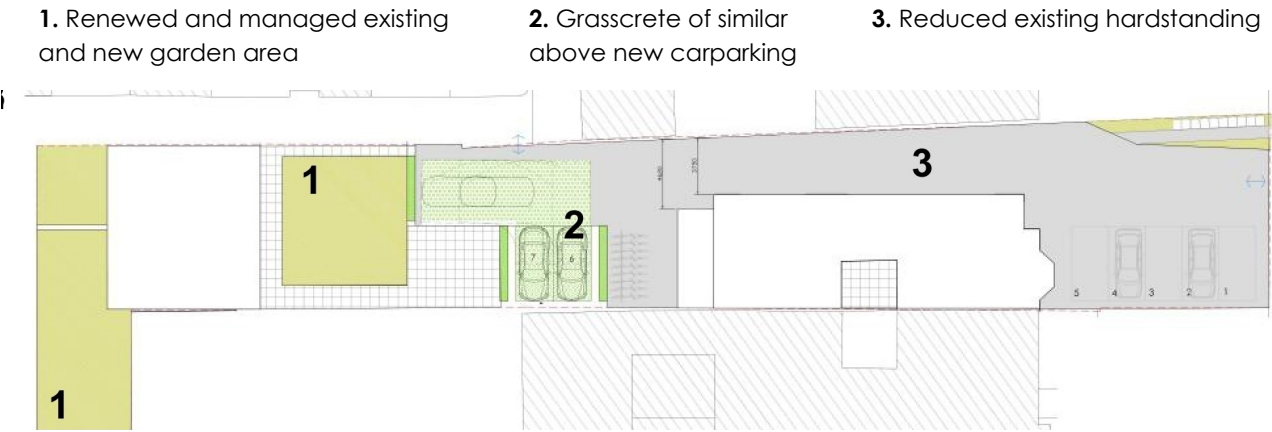


Figure 2: Proposed External Conditions

The rear neglected rectangular plot of land is also rejuvenated. This area is used as gardens servicing both the back properties. The gardens reinstate acknowledgement to the other properties along Gnoll Park Road and further enhances a physical connection between the proposal with the local context.

Gardens have long been an extension of our homes, spaces of serenity that reconnect us with nature. Yet, they are more than just an aesthetic addition, a place of floral beauty or manicured lawns. Gardens serve as significant sanctuaries for many species in the UK, often overlooked in the grand scheme of things. It is about creating a harmonious space where human living intertwines with the natural world, leading to sustainable coexistence. Whether it is a large, medium, small or a tiny city balcony, every bit of effort in this direction can make a difference in nurturing and protecting biodiversity.

The flora and fauna areas assist in dividing the length of the rear garden into zones of communal use. This also distinguishes the rear parking areas.



Figure 3: Images of a Typical Lawn & Hedge

Also included, will be 2 no. external bird nesting boxes that will be attached to a north-easterly facing elevation. The bird box will be of a size and design suitable for use by House Sparrow. It will be sited prior to first occupation of any of the flats, at a minimum of 2m, but maximum of 4m, above ground level.

A House Sparrow box was chosen for biodiversity enhancement since in parts of the UK, numbers in towns and cities have declined by 60 per cent. Because of these large population declines, the house sparrow is now red-listed as a species of high conservation concern.

The inclusion of nature is integral for this application with the inclusion of grasscrete as a means of not only supporting the parking facility but consequently allow grass to freely grow on top as a form of soft landscaping.

These are widely used pervious reinforced concrete hollow tubes/honeycomb for different types of trafficked areas that can be covered with grass: has grass growing in the voids of the structure or has stones in the voids of the structure.

Not only does this solution prevent surface water to accumulate but also gives back to the environment to allow grass and other types of plants to grow between the concrete sections. This sustainable product is widely used on many rural areas where water management is important but also unifies with the natural surroundings.



Figure 4: Grasscrete used and accepted widely for vehicle parking and as a surface drainage system

2.0 Timetable for Managing the Landscape

The soft landscape is principally the lawn, hedges, permeable paving, and existing hardstanding.

- They will be incorporated at the end of the development, thus preventing the green areas ruined by construction traffic.
- As the extent of new green areas are appropriately scaled in relation to the narrow site, the lawn and green areas will be mown and managed every four months, seasonally or whenever the grass becomes overgrown.
- The existing hardstanding will be swept regularly on a bi-monthly rota, to maintain a clean, welcoming, and safe area.

As the extent of new green areas are appropriately scaled in relation to the narrow site, the green areas will be mown and managed monthly, seasonally, or whenever the grass becomes overgrown.

The existing hardstanding will be swept regularly on a bi-monthly rota, to maintain a clean, welcoming, and safe area.

The above measures and solutions are deemed as reasonable approaches that relate to the extent and size of the soft landscaping within this site.