

HAWKESWOOD ECOLOGY

Specialists in Ecological Survey and Assessment

Tel: 07957 154794 E-mail: hawkeswoodecology@btinternet.com
VAT Reg No 926 9271 93



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GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT, 7 TEN ACRE WOODS, MARGAM.

Introduction

The Green Infrastructure Assessment is a requirement placed upon Local Planning Authorities (LPA) to adopt a strategic and proactive approach to the green infrastructure (ecological connectivity for example), biodiversity and ecosystem resilience (Planning Policy Wales Section 6, Biodiversity Duty, updated October 2-23). The LPA is required to produce regularly updated mapped outputs offering appropriate information on Green Infrastructure at a Landscape Scale, i.e. *'habitats, species and other green features and resources'*, to allow development management decisions to be based on current data relating to it.

A further strand to this is that all planning applications must be accompanied by a Green Infrastructure Statement that will be *'proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe the how the Green Infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal'*. The Statement should demonstrate how a step wise approach, reflecting the Mitigation Hierarchy, has been utilised to maintain and enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity.

Statement for 7, Ten Acre Woods

The proposals relating to 7, Ten Acre Woods require demolishing an existing building and development of a new house fit for purpose for a young family and constructed to current standards of efficiency and well-being. The approach taken in supporting the application from an ecological viewpoint were to address the current value of the Site as an ecological resource, to address that value in accordance with the step-wise approach.

Key ecological issues were the discovery of bat roosts within the existing structure. The building sits within a well wooded area and is adjacent to Margam Country Park. Using the step wise approach, avoidance, or minimising the impact upon the bat roost was not possible. Therefore compensation was proposed with a custom built bat loft being offered in the new build.

Minimising impacts was based upon locating access points to the loft in a similar location to those in the existing building and providing similar opportunities within the new building in relation to geographical positioning of pitches (offering similar potential for natural heating and cool areas). The potential benefit to bats is that the new loft is integral to the building with permanent access points rather than reliant upon loose slated and gaps in the roof verge.

Avoidance to existing tree growth was maintained with the majority of mature trees on Site being retained and connections from the roost access points to the wider tree network maintained offering continuing connectivity to Margam Countryside Park and woodland to the south west.

Enhancements considered included further tree planting to afford foraging and commuting roosts for bats and birds across the garden. As a result native tree planting is proposed on the southern garden boundary to complement the existing shrubbery. In addition, the provision of bird boxes in the garden trees and integral to the house are proposed offering a variety of opportunities for them.

To reinforce the value of the Site for bats and birds, it was also considered appropriate to enhance the value of the Site for invertebrates, as such shrubbery plantings will be of pollinator species and invertebrates in general offering benefits of increased prey items for predators and value for pollinators.

The provision of rain gardens and a Suds basin complete a suite of ecological enhancements that are Net Benefit for Biodiversity gains in this location.

In conclusion, the proposals are both positive and more than proportionate to the development proposals.

Eric Hawkeswood
Principal Ecologist