

Lidl, Briton Ferry Road, Briton Ferry Green Infrastructure Statement

Introduction

CarneySweeney is instructed by Lidl Great Britain Ltd to prepare this **Green Infrastructure Statement**, which relates to a Section 73 application for the redevelopment of an existing Lidl and adjacent store, Briton Ferry Road, Briton Ferry (see figure 1 below).



Figure 1 Proposed Site Plan by HTC Architects

The Section 73 application is to vary condition 2 of planning consent P2022/0191, granted 17 March 2023. The proposal seeks to increase the store size from the approved 2,035sqm GEA to 2,097sqm and to increase the sales area from 1,251sqm to 1,334sqm in order to reflect the current and updated store format of Lidl GB Ltd.

This report provides a **Green Infrastructure (GI) Statement** and includes a summary of existing green infrastructure at the site and also explains how the design of the proposed development is based on a step-wise approach, as defined in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and is explored in chapter 6 of the Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 (February 2024).

There are no statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest located within or immediately adjacent to the application site. Moreover, there are no non-statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest located within the application site. Given the significant separation of the site from any designated sites, it is considered that the proposed development is unlikely to have any significant impacts upon statutory designated sites, during either the construction or operation phase.

Existing Green Infrastructure

Surveys have been carried out to identify the green infrastructure features at the application site and its surrounding context.



The elements that are considered to form the existing Green Infrastructure and surrounding context are as follows:

- Trees and Hedgerows
- Ecology and Habitat
- Public Access

Trees and Hedgerows

A tree survey was conducted by **David Rice Forestry** on 3rd of January 2022, revised 20th August 2022. See figure 2 of the Tree Survey & Existing Features plan of Lidl, Briton Ferry Road.

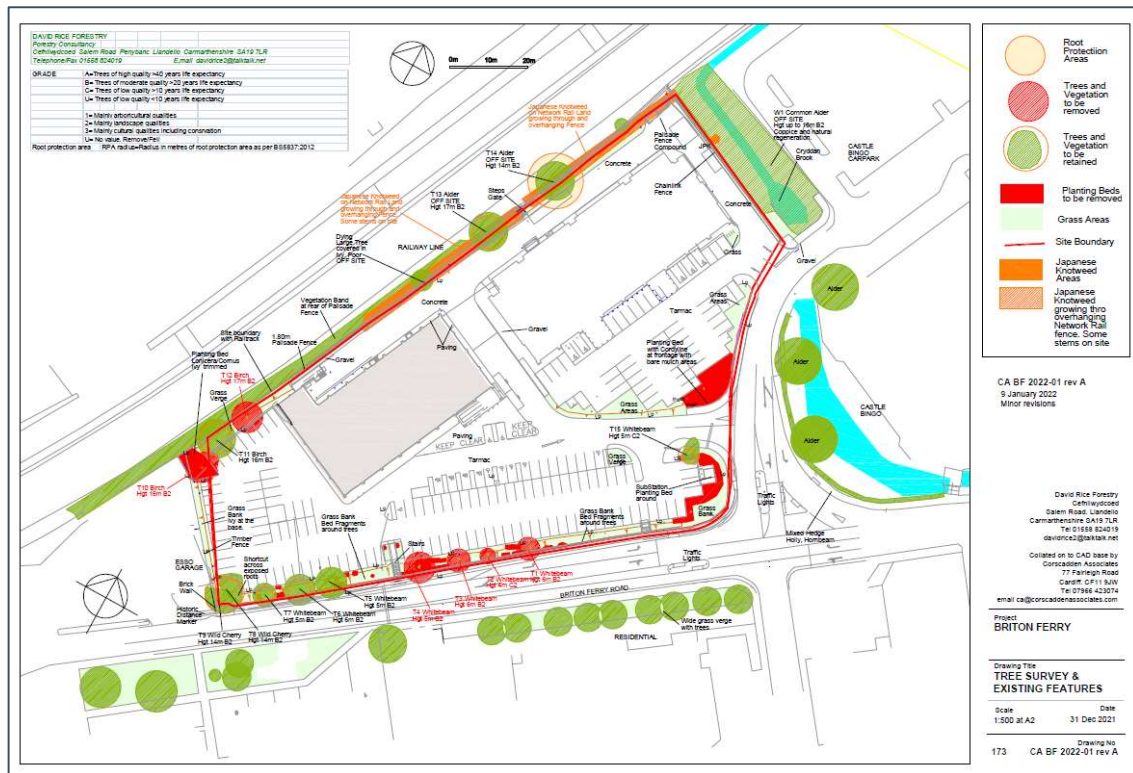


Figure 2 Tree Survey & Existing Features Plan by David Rice Forestry

The north boundary by Cryddan Brook is fenced with W1 Common Alder woodland. There is a mixed Holly/Hornbeam hedge by the Castle Bingo Land. The soft landscaping within the site application boundary and located to the south of Vitality Health and Fitness and Poundstretcher consist of grass with a planting bed with Cordylines. There is a T15 Whitebeam tree surrounded by a planting bed located by the existing sub-station by the ingress and egress of the application site.

The south eastern boundary of the site, adjacent to A474 consist of a line of T1-T7 Whitebeam trees and T8 and T9 Wild Cherry trees.

There is a T10 Birch tree in a planting bed located to the west of the existing Lidl and it leans inward into the Lidl carpark.

Offsite, there are T13 and T14 Alder trees on the Network Rail land, located to the north western boundary of the site.



Ecology and Habitat

The baseline ecological conditions of the site are described in detail within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Just Mammals, January 2022), previously submitted with planning application P2022/0191. The assessment also comprises a Phase 1 habitat survey.

It has been concluded by Just Mammals that the existing application site is assessed to be of low value with few features supporting biodiversity. This is due to the existing features of two large modern buildings (Lidl and Vitality Health and Fitness/Poundstretcher) surrounded by extensive areas of hard surfaces. There is a narrow fringe of green habitat around the site boundary that is composed of small areas of grassland containing introduced shrubs and scattered trees which provide landscape features to soften the visual appearance of the application site. Japanese knotweed is present in several locations along the north-west and north-east boundary by the Network Rail Land and it is known that Network Rail have a Knotweed Treatment programme for 5 years in place.

Public Access

No Public Rights of Way (PRoW) cross the application site.

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for the site is shown on the submitted Landscape Proposals plan (drawing ref. CA BF 2022-03 Rev H). Proposed trees, planting beds, buffer planting/zones, rain gardens and native hedgerows are to be incorporated within the development to enhance the green infrastructure of the site.

Green Infrastructure Statement

The GI elements of the site have been described above, identifying existing or potentially important habitats or species. This has been informed by the desktop studies, field surveys and specialist surveys / reports. It summarises the surveys carried out to identify and assess the GI elements of importance in advance of the Stepwise approach **Step 1 (Avoid)** and **Step 2 (Minimise)**. This statement provides a description of the effects of mitigation of the individual green infrastructure components, which forms the Stepwise **Step 3: Mitigate/Restore**, with a view to minimising any negative impacts on biodiversity as far as possible.

Trees

In accordance with Steps 1 and 2 of the Stepwise approach, it is important that the retention of trees is a priority. The number of trees that are being lost and retained will remain the same as the approved scheme (ref. P2022/0191). The removal of tree numbers T1-T4 (Whitebeam), T10 (Birch) and T12 (Birch) will help to facilitate the proposed design. There will be a retention of twelve trees, tree numbers T5-T9 (Whitebeam), T11 (Birch) and T13-T15 (Alder).

To address the loss of 6no. trees, the landscape proposals plan considers **Stepwise Step 3: Mitigate Step 4: Compensate**, and **enhancement in accordance with the DECCA Framework** through the proposed planting of 22no. trees within the application site.

Ecology and Habitat

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Just Mammals, January 2022) sets out recommendations for the ecology and habitat elements of the proposed scheme, including the recommended native tree and shrub species, flowering plants and shrubs that should be considered within the site landscape layout.



The proposed development includes an artificial holt to the northern corner of the site. The artificial holt will provide a resting place for otters moving along the Cryddan Brook watercourse. The design and the placement of the artificial holt are described in the recommendations chapter of the PEA report.

In order to enhance the bird species, six bird boxes are recommended to be attached to the retained trees on site.

The recommendations contained within the PEA report have been considered, reflected and appropriately included within the proposed landscape strategy for the site, reflecting the **Stepwise Step 3: Mitigate Step 4: Compensate**, and **enhancement in accordance with the DECCA Framework**.

Resilience of Ecosystems

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 provides a duty upon public bodies to promote the resilience of ecosystems, which is reflected in planning policy.

The proposed green infrastructure strategy would comprise retention of twelve trees and areas of habitat creation through the introduction of tree planting, planting beds, buffer plantings, rain gardens and native hedgerows. The proposed landscaping will include a range of species to enhance biodiversity and botanical diversity. The selected species would be adaptable to wet and dry conditions, and the range of species proposed enhance the biodiversity, increase species diversity, the age diversity of vegetation and improve the resilience of habitats to climate change.

Conclusion

The proposed green infrastructure strategy has considered the existing green infrastructure features within and beyond the site boundary, as recommended by the Stepwise approach. The proposed green infrastructure would increase the biodiversity, species diversity, and habitat structure within the site.

