

Green Infrastructure Assessment



**12 LONDON ROAD
NEATH**

Eley's Group Ltd

August 2024

Background

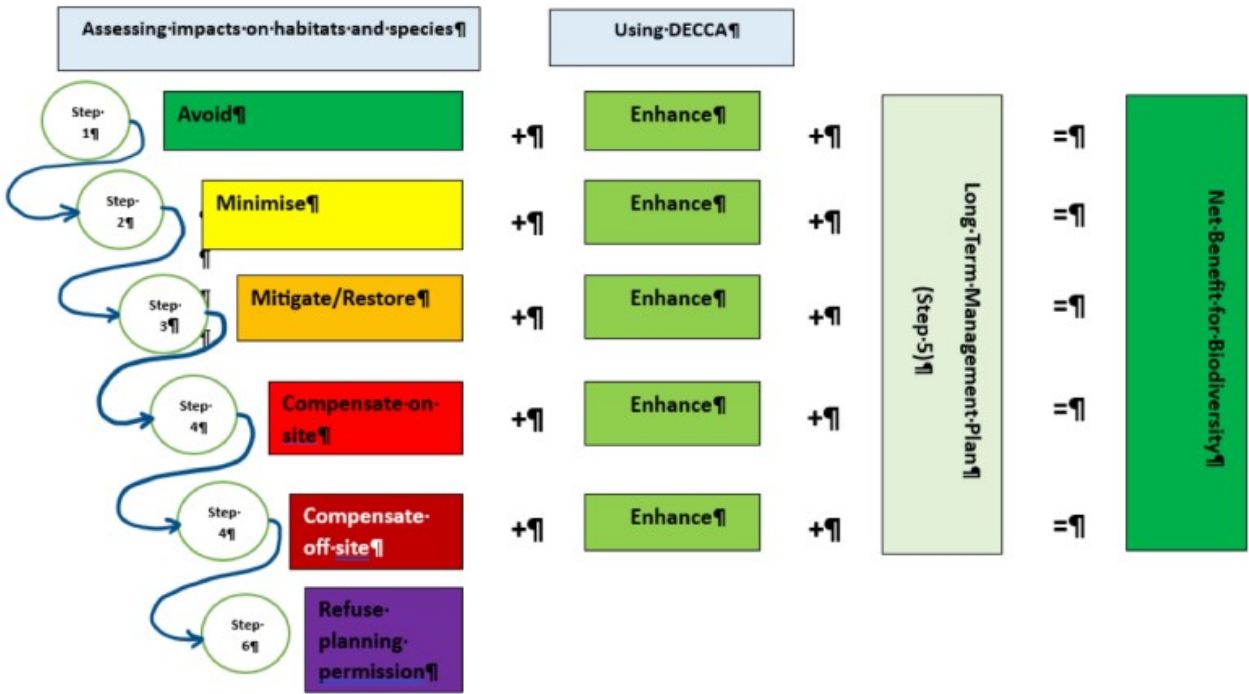
On 11th October 2023¹ the Welsh Government issued updated National Planning Policy for chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales.

The updated policy guidance recognises the value of green infrastructure within the built environment. In order to facilitate a quality built environment enhanced by integrated green infrastructure all planning applications must now include a green infrastructure statement.

“6.2.6 A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be a short description and should not be an onerous requirement for applicants. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi- functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach (Paragraph 6.4.21) has been applied.”

Figure 1 below sets out the summary of the stepwise approach as set out in the Annex2 to the published advice

Figure 1



The Proposal

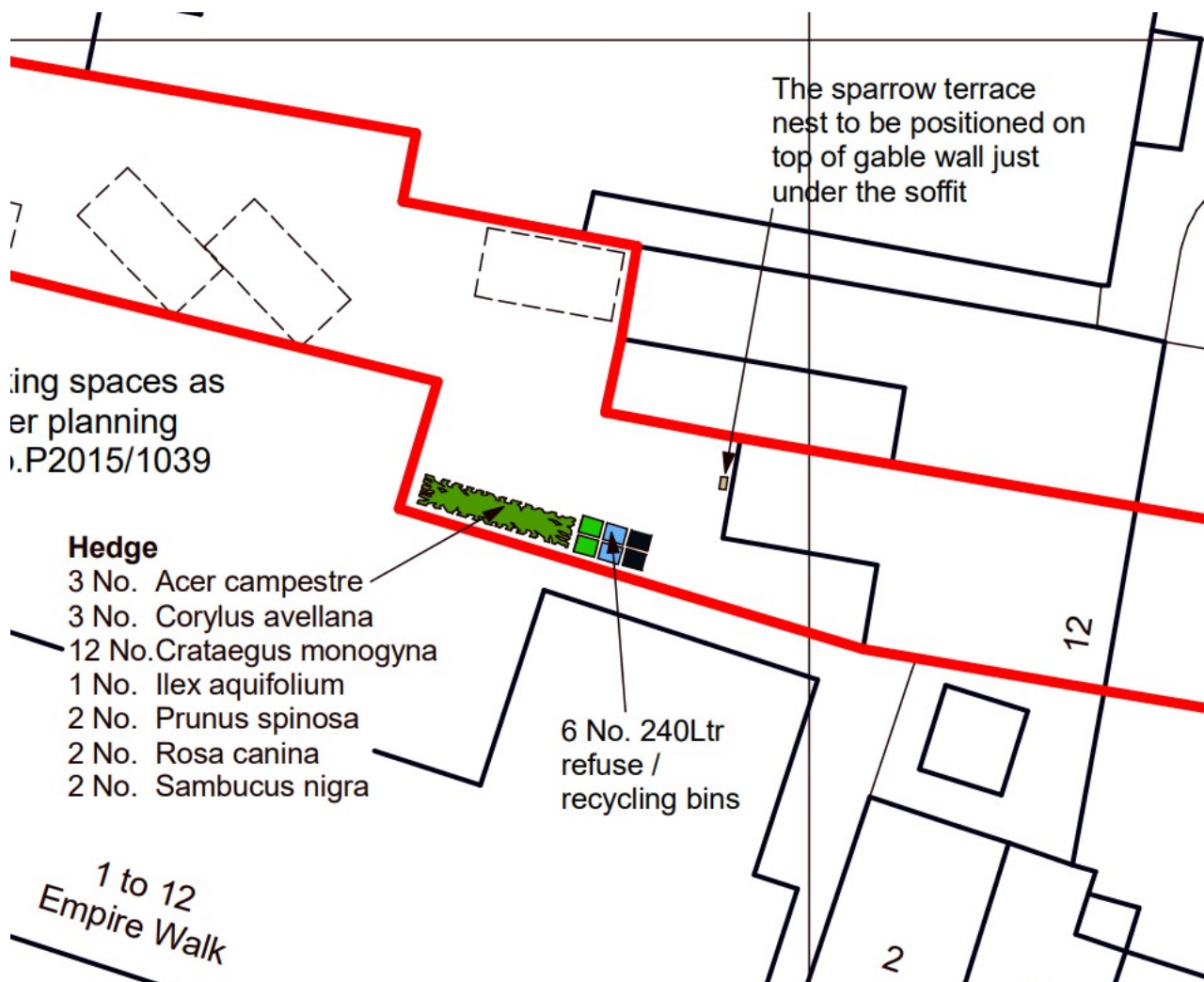
Change of use from a Children day care centre and creche (Class D1) to 5 bed HMO property (Class C4).

Proposed Enhancement

It is accepted that Future Wales now requires ecological enhancement however, it is submitted that any ecological enhancement must be proportional to the development proposed.

Given the scale of the proposal it is considered that the provision of a bird and a landscaped hedge within the site will provide adequate ecological enhancement. Details of the location and type of box & landscaped hedge is set out below in Figure 2.

Location of bird box & landscaped hedge in Figure 2



Box Specifications

1SP Schwegler Sparrow Terrace



The current UK sparrow population is declining and this is thought to be due to habitat destruction and lack of suitable nesting spaces. Sparrows are social birds and like to nest in company, this sparrow terrace is ideal for three sparrow families. Made of Schwegler's revolutionary wood-concrete mix, this terrace is durable, breathable and will last many decades. It may also occasionally attract tits, redstarts and spotted flycatchers.

The terrace can be fixed on to the surface of a suitable wall or incorporated into the wall. It is suitable for all types of houses in built-up areas, and on industrial and agricultural buildings such as barns, sheds and factories. Ideally place the terrace 2m or more above the ground. Either install on the surface of the wall using the plugs and screws provided, or install directly into the wall. Cleaning is advisable but not necessary, and the front panel can be removed by turning the screw hook.

Due to its weight, it is not suitable for fences or garden sheds.

Specification

Dimensions (brood chamber): 16cm x 10.5cm x 15cm (H x W x D)

Dimensions (external): 24.5 cm x 43cm x 20cm (H x W x D)

Weight: 15kg

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is an offence to disturb breeding birds and therefore annual cleaning cannot be undertaken between the months of March and September inclusive. Bird nest boxes should be cleaned in October to prevent the build-up of nest parasites in the boxes whilst avoiding the risk of disturbing birds using the boxes as a roost site during the cold winter months. All nesting material and other debris should be removed from the box. Ideally, it should then be scrubbed clean with boiling water to kill any parasites (avoid using any chemicals). Once the box is clean, it should be left to dry out thoroughly. Bird boxes should be left up over winter as they can provide useful roosting sites for birds in bad weather.

Site lighting and dark corridors

Measures will be taken to minimise light pollution to reduce any impact on nocturnal fauna such as bats and moths. Any lighting within the rear garden will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT 2018). Appropriate ground facing, energy-saving lighting will be used, on timers. There will be no light spillage into landscape areas such trees and hedgerows on site will not be affected that's allowing dark corridors to be maintained for Nocturnal wildlife.

Implementation

- Bird Box - Within one month of the completion of works.
- Landscaped Hedge – Hedge to be planted the first autumn after planning approval.

GIA Assessment

Table 1 below sets out the stepwise approach in assessing impacts of a development on habitats and the species.

Table 1

	Steps	Assessment	Enhancement	Long Term Maintenance	Net Benefits
1.	Avoid	No new build extensions are proposed, the existing footprint is being used. And as such accords with the stepwise approach set out in the published advice.	Bird box and a landscaped hedge to be provided	No maintenance required	Yes
2.	Minimise	Na	Na	Na	Na
3.	Mitigate/restore	Na	Na	Na	Na
4.	Compensate on site	Na	Na	Na	Na
5.	Compensate offsite	Na	Na	Na	Na

Conclusion

Applying the step-by-step approach, the assessment indicates that:

- The development avoids any damage to biodiversity
- The proposal provides an ecological enhancement proportionate to the scale of the development.
- The proposed ecological enhancement will be maintenance free.
- There is a net benefit to biodiversity as a result of the development.