

Green Infrastructure Statement:

Minor Development / Homeowner

Site Address: 30 Taillwyd Road, Neath Abbey, SA10 7DY

Proposed Development: Household extension

Site description:

Detached 2 storey property with concrete patio / hard standing to the rear and front of the house. Immediately adjacent to the house and within the footprint of the proposed extension, there is amenity grassland.

Behind the house (beyond the patio) there is a lower terraced area which has now scrubbed over, then sloping down to the river, merging into a small wooded area along the riparian corridor.

There is a line of trees along the Northern edge of the property boundary (consisting of hazel x 2, sycamore x 1 and a mature garden shrub), providing some connectivity to the woodland area, although dissected by a path. The boundary between the extension area and the highway is built wall.

The woodland is in a poor condition, with extensive Himalayan Balsam, occasional Montbretia, Rhododendron and an established area of Bamboo. There are very large conifer species, including a line of conifer (Monterey Cypress) which were likely planted as a hedgerow in the past. The conifers are noted as low value in the Tree Survey and there were notable signs of needles browning off during the survey, suggesting these trees have a limited future (as noted in the report).

The area is also suffering from extensive dumping of rubbish and horse manure from previous owners, as the adjacent field was used to house horses. The manure has covered much of the woodland floor and is currently banked up against some of the better specimen of trees (Oak and Sycamore).

There is a small paddock to the other side of the line of trees, which was previously used for horses. There is a small area of hard standing (currently housing a caravan), grassland area and approximately half developing into scrub (bramble).

Surrounding Area description: Application site is at the furthest end of Taillwyd Road, with a housing estate opposite and agricultural land (currently used for grazing) to the North and woodland and river to the rear of the property. As part of the riparian corridor, the site connects to Coed Bach and the Cwm, a Council owned woodland area / park and an area of woodland TPO to the South West.

Development Impacts:

Proposed extension is to be constructed on the area of lawn / amenity grassland, which will lead to a loss of permeable surface within this area. The garage (demolition and rebuild) will be built on existing concrete / hard standing.

Trees and existing hedge boundaries are unaffected by the proposed development (see Tree Survey), noting a requirement to protect the root zone.

Work will impact on the roof and a bat survey has been carried out, confirming no presence of bats.

Biodiversity Enhancements Proposed

The most significant opportunity for biodiversity enhancement on this site is to address the issue of invasives on site, improve the condition of the wooded area and bring the grassland area into meadow management before it is lost to bramble encroachment.

It's proposed to:

- Carry out a programme of invasives removal (HB, Montbretia, Rhododendron)
- Reduce extent of 'compost / horse manure' and rubbish from the woodland, particularly where piled up against the Oak and Sycamore
- Remove the line of conifers, which will allow light to reach the woodland floor and favour natural regeneration of native broadleaf species (Hazel, Holly, Oak and Horse Chestnut already present) and Sycamore.
- Commence a programme of bramble management, with a view to restoring the grassland area, which can then be managed with a meadow cut.

On the property itself, swift and bat boxes are to be integrated into the design.

Water run off from the roof will be reduced through use of water butts, 'mini drainpipe wetlands' (see <https://www.wwt.org.uk/discover-wetlands/gardening-for-wetlands/how-to-build-a-mini-drainpipe-wetland/>) or drainpipe planters (e.g. see <https://www.groundwork.org.uk/how-to-create-a-rain-garden-planter/>). These features would also provide benefit to biodiversity through provision of water, shelter and food source.

Conclusion.

It is considered that subject to the above, that the proposed development would enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity by improving condition of the woodland habitat, providing nesting provision for bats and swifts, improve condition of the grassland habitat.

Impacts on flooding by loss of permeable surface (lawn) would be mitigated by introduction of SUDS features to utilise rainwater and create mini habitats.

Thus ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are mitigated and in the case of biodiversity, enhanced.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chris', written on a light blue background.

22/8/24