



Green Infrastructure Statement

Proposed Residential Dwellings (2 No.)
On Land Adjacent to Camelot
Graig Road
Godre'r Graig
Neath Port Talbot

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 DKEcology was commissioned to produce a Green Infrastructure Statement to support the planning application for proposed residential dwellings (2 No.) On Land adjacent to Camelot Graig Road, Godre'r Graig, Neath Port Talbot.
- 1.2 The planning policy for Wales (PPW) now states that a green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. In order to demonstrate that appropriate positive multi-functional outcomes will be put in place.
- 1.3 The current proposal is to construct 2 detached residential dwellings on the plot. The development will result in the loss of approximately 0.05ha of semi-natural broadleaved woodland. For the most part the area of woodland to be lost is composed of young thin-trunked native trees. It's estimated that these trees make up approximately 54% of the cover with cherry laurel making up 36% of the cover. The bulk of the woodland to be lost has been categorised as "low quality – optional for retention" in the accompanying Tree Report (ArbTS, 2021) and will include the loss of 13 mature native trees (5 oak, 2 birch (including one dead), 1 ash and 5 hazel).

2 Existing green infrastructure

- 2.1 The proposed plot consists of a small area of poor quality woodland which has been left unmanaged for a number of years, situated within a linear strip of well-spaced housing. It is part of a larger area of woodland to the north and south of the site and is well connected to adjacent habitats particularly to the north.
- 2.2 The proposed development plot is 0.12ha in size. The plot interior currently consists entirely of semi natural broad leaved woodland. This woodland would qualify as "lowland broadleaved woodland", a priority habitat under section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, although it is a poor example of this habitat. Species include mature pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) and a mix of younger trees including hazel (*Corylus avellana*), birch (*Betula pubescens*), grey willow (*Salix cinerea* subsp. *oleifolia*) and some alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). The understorey of the woodland is characterised by abundant cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), a non-native species and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and the ground flora is sparse consisting mostly of bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) see plan 1.
- 2.3 The adjacent property Camelot has little mature vegetation consisting mainly of hardstanding and well managed amenity grassland. It has a small area of semi improved woodland which connects to the woodland in the proposed development plot and a boundary hedge consisting mainly of hazel and privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*), see plan 1.

3 Proposed green infrastructure

- 3.1 Lowland Broad-leaved Woodlands are listed as priority habitats under section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Section 7 lists the living organisms and types of habitat in Wales that are considered to be of key significance to sustain and improve biodiversity in



relation to Wales. As such the loss of any woodland or sections of woodland resulting from the proposed development will need to be mitigated or compensated for.

- 3.2 Planning Policy Wales 12 (PPW12) states that any mature native trees that are removed need to be replaced on a 3:1 basis and that the replacement trees should be of a similar type and compensatory size.
- 3.3 The development will result in the loss of 0.05ha of low quality semi-natural broadleaved woodland including 13 mature native trees (see plan 2 for the locations of the trees to be removed).
- 3.4 In order to ensure that there will be no net loss in habitat as a result of the development and to ensure that the development area retains connectivity to the wider landscape the following measures will be put in place, see plan 3:-
- Compensatory native tree planting at a ratio of 3:1 within the development plot. This will amount to the planting of a minimum of 39 native trees.
 - Retain the area of semi improved woodland in the north section of the development plot and woodland corridors to the west and east of the development plot.
 - Planting of a native species hedge along the boundary between the 2 proposed dwellings.
 - Planting a mix of native and non- native wildlife friendly shrubs/plants within the boundary of the development plot.

Retention of woodland areas and compensatory native tree planting

- 3.5 An area of existing semi natural woodland in the north section of the proposed development site (approx. 400m² in size) is to be retained. Aswell as 2 woodland corridors (3m x 26m) along the east and west boundaries of the plot (approx. 290m² in size). A 2m rough grassland strip will also be established along the length of both woodland corridors.
- 3.6 The retained woodland areas currently consist of 36% cherry laurel. Therefore in order to improve the quality of the retained woodland all of the cherry laurel within the retained areas will be cleared and replaced with native broadleaved tree species. This will include the planting of 44 native trees in total, 20 within the northern section (planted with 3m spacing), and 12 within each of the woodland corridors (planted with 2m spacing). The mix of species to be planted (with trees sourced as locally and to be as large as possible in size) will include 17 oak, 7 birch, 16 hazel and 4 ash. This will allow for the replacement of the mature trees lost to the development at more than a ratio of 1:3.
- 3.7 A further 2 native tree species will be planted within the development plot consisting of any of the native species listed in section 3.6. All tree planting should be carried out in autumn/winter. Water the trees at least once a week for the first two years after planting. Increase frequency during dry periods and decrease during wet periods.



Native hedgerow planting

- 3.8 A native species hedgerow will be planted along the boundary between the 2 proposed dwellings. The species planted should reflect the native species composition of hedgerows/woodland within the local area. Species should include hawthorn, holly, hazel, ash and pedunculate oak. If possible the hedgerow should be planted in a double staggered row as this is better for wildlife than single rows as they are wider and provide more shelter and habitat. As a general rule at least 40cm needs to be left between each row and 4-6 plants planted per metre. Any plants that die in the first few years may need to be replaced to prevent gaps developing. All planting should be carried out in autumn/winter. Light, regular, trimming of the hedgerow in its early years will encourage dense, bushy growth and is recommended. Once established the hedgerow should be trimmed on a two or three year rotation, targeting different sections each year. If the trees die in the first few years may need to be replaced to prevent gaps developing.

Planting of wildlife friendly shrubs and plants

- 3.9 In order to provide a variety of more mature vegetation, to attract pollinators and provide food for wildlife a variety of wildlife friendly shrubs/plant species will be planted within the boundary of the development plot. These can be both native and non-native species. See a list of some recommended species below (non-native species are marked in red) :-

Shrubs/Trees

Prunus avium wild & edible cherries

Rubus fruticosus agg.

Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)

Rosa species rose

Dog rose (*Rosa canina*)

Fruit trees

Wild privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*)

Buddleia (butterfly bush)

Hebe species

Common holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

Bay tree (Laurus nobilis)

Crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*)

Strawberry tree (Arbutus unedo)

Pyracantha

Snowberry (Symphoricarpos albus)

Berberis species

Flowering plants

Sedum (Hylotelephium spectabile)

Common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*)

Hemp Agrimony (Eupatorium cannabinum)

Field scabious (*Knautia arvensis*)

Red valerian (Centranthus ruber)

Lavender (Lavandula angustifolia)

Clematis

Verbena bonariensis

English ivy (*Hedera helix*)

Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*)

Common mallow (*Malva sylvestris*)

Common snowdrop (*Alanthus nivalis*)

Rosemary (Rosmarinus officinalis)

Crocus (Crocus vernus)

Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*)

Bell heather (*Erica cinerea*)

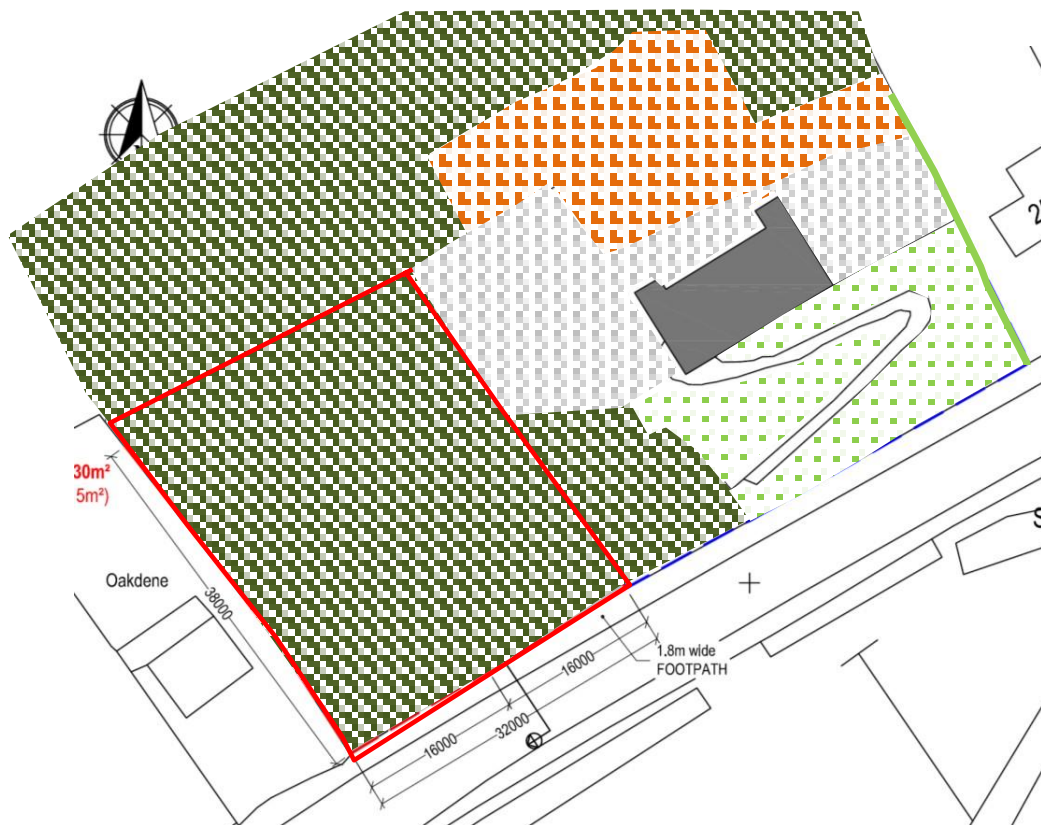
Thymus species thyme



Salvia species sage (autumn-flowering types)

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 The proposed development plot is currently set within a well-connected landscape with a good diversity of habitats. The plot lies adjacent to more extensive areas of semi improved broad leaved woodland and connectivity to these areas will be maintained. The proposed plot consists entirely of poor quality semi improved broad leaved woodland. Although the development will result in the loss of 0.05ha of low quality, semi improved broad leaved woodland and 13 mature native trees. Compensatory planting of native tree species at more than a ratio of 3:1 both within the development plot as well as works to remove the areas of the non-native cherry laurel will result in a significant increase in the number of native tree species and will improve the quality of the retained woodland areas. Connectivity will be improved further by the planting of a native hedgerow and wildlife friendly shrubs/plants Resulting in the overall increase in habitat diversity, quality and connectivity.



Key	
	Semi natural broad leaved woodland
	Amenity neutral grassland
	Scrub and native sapling trees
	Hardstanding
	Development boundary
	Intact hedge

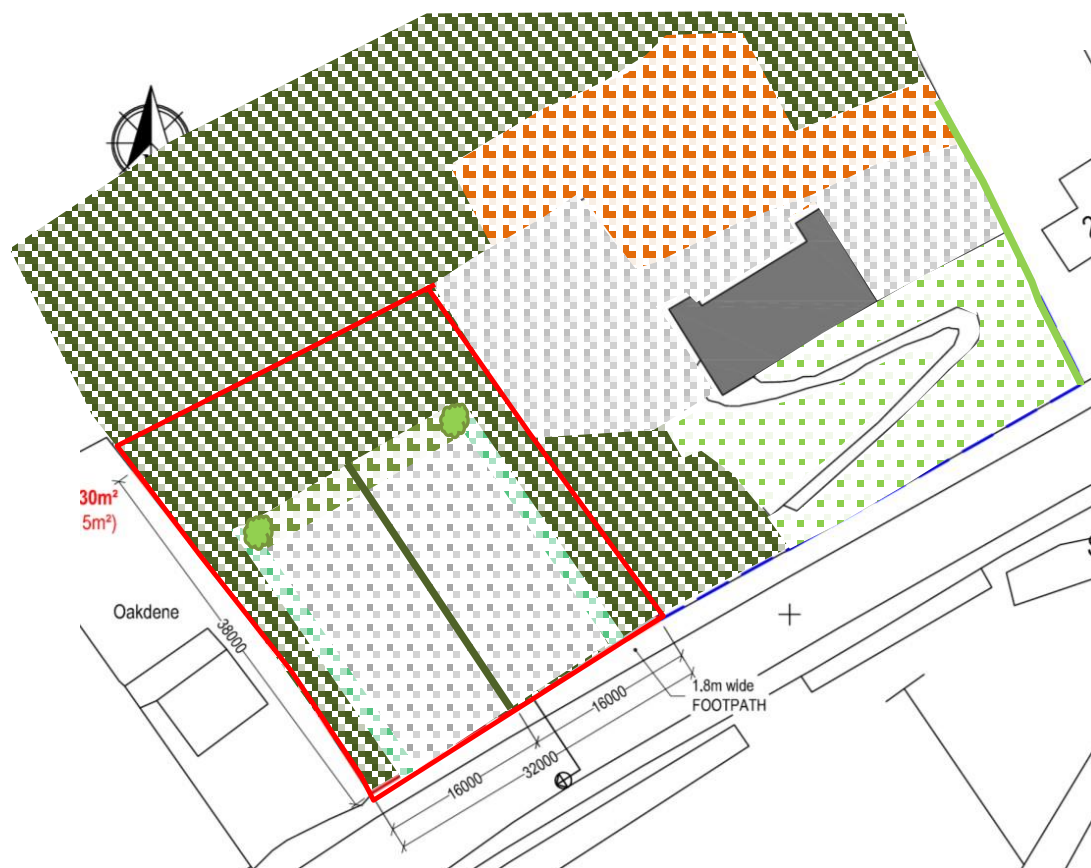
Plan 1 Existing green infrastructure



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Plan 2 Locations of the trees to be removed as part of the development



Key	
	Semi natural broadleaved woodland
	Mix of native and non - native wildlife friendly shrubs/plants
	Neutral grassland buffer strip (2m)
	Amenity neutral grassland
	Scrub and native sapling trees
	Hardstanding
	Development boundary
	Intact hedge
	Native trees
	Native species hedge

Plan 3 Proposed green infrastructure